Encore Azaleas



Rhododendron

Fall is a great time of year for our zone to plant Encore azaleas. There are more than 20 varieties of Encores, providing a huge scope of choices in color and size. There's a growth habit and bloom color for everyone!

Characteristics:

Dimensions: Varies by variety! There's an Encore in every height. 2-5 feet in height, with a usual spread of 3-5 feet.

Foliage: Bright green foliage that tends to fade in color a bit during the colder months

Blooms: Medium to heavy blooming, depending on variety. Encores come in a variety of colors, including white, red, pink, and deep reds!

Hardiness: Hardy in zones 6-9. They might need some winter protection, however. When needed, cover young or newly planted azaleas with a breathable fabric. If your plants have not had a chance to develop strong root systems before cold weather arrives, take precautions to protect them!

Toxicity: All parts of azaleas are considered toxic to humans and pets.

Care Requirements:

Light: Morning sun with partial afternoon shade. Providing your plants with 4-6 hours of direct sun per day will promote blooming.

Water: When planted in the winter, Encores will require less water than they would if they were being planted in spring or summer. Once the weather warms up, however, they will require more water for the first year and summer than they will later on. In extreme drought or heat, you might have to soak the soil at least three times a week. (Make sure that your azaleas are well hydrated in the days BEFORE cold weather hits. If they are allowed to remain dry during cold periods, they can become damaged.)

Soil: Well-draining soil is one of the most important parts of successful azalea growing! If the roots stay wet, they will rot. If you're having a problem with clay, it will be necessary to amend your soil before planting. When choosing a soil, organic matter and drainage are important considerations. Azaleas prefer a slightly acidic environment. Bark mulches and pink straw are the recommended mulches.

Fertilizer: Fertilize your Encore azaleas in spring. Do so with a balanced granular right after the spring bloom. You may also choose an azalea/camellia specific feed. Many people

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choose to feed their shrubs twice a year. If you do a second feeding, do so before August.

Pruning: The best time to prune is immediately after spring flowering. Lightly prune to stimulate growth. If you prune in the fall, it is possible to cut off your flowers for the next bloom cycle.

Uses:

- Specimen or mass plantings in the landscape
- Smaller varieties are suitable for large containers

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