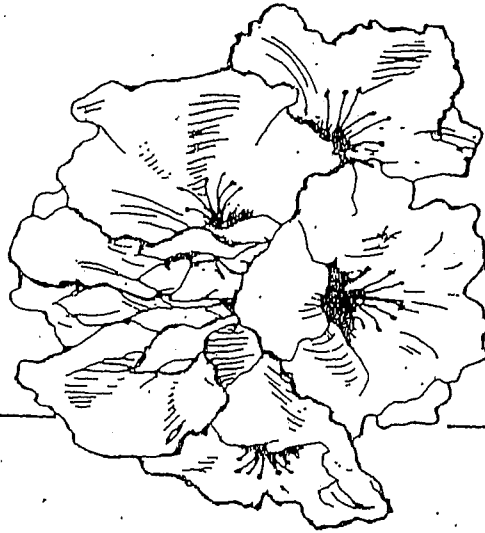


# RHODODENDRON CARE & MAINTENANCE



 **Sunnyside  
Nursery**  
"Come garden with us"



## PLANTING

The major cause of loss of Rhododendrons in the landscape is improper planting depth. Rhododendrons have a very fine fibrous root system that will not allow deep planting or a large quantity of mulch over the roots. They should be planted in a well drained area with the top of the root ball even with any additional mulch that is applied to the planting bed. If planting into a clay soil, it is suggested that the plants be placed on top of the soil, and a mixture of soil and peat be mounded up around the plants forming a raised mound. The proper planting of Rhododendrons will eliminate 90+% of the problems usually associated with Rhododendrons.

## FERTILIZATION

We suggest any good quality garden fertilizer high in phosphate be used twice a year, once in the spring around bloom time and again about mid-July. A rule of thumb would be to use a small handful for each 18 inches of width of the plant, sprinkled around the drip line. Almost all fertilizers are acid in nature, so we try to stay away from the highly acid types and go with fertilizers that are mildly acid.

## PRUNING

Rhododendrons can be pruned the same as any other shrub. We suggest pruning an overgrown plant right after blooming. The cut should be made at the start of a growth so the dormant growth buds will develop. This will not leave unsightly stubs above the new growth. If these stubs do appear, they can easily be pruned off as time allows. If the pruning is severe, the plants may not set any flower buds for the next year, but the second year they usually do. If severe pruning is required or desired, we suggest that half of the pruning be done one year and the balance the next year, thereby preserving some bloom each year.

## DEAD HEADING

The old blooms should be removed from the plants as soon as they finish blooming. This will remove the unsightly seed pods and also put more strength into plants and increase the bud set for the next spring.

## INSECTS

Rhododendrons' main insect pests are aphids and root weevils. Use a good general purpose insecticide that is safe to use around the home and will do a

good job on both of these pests. We suggest spraying the plants every four weeks starting in April and continuing through October. When spraying, thoroughly wet all of the foliage on the plants.

## DISEASE

Rhododendrons are relatively free from disease with the exception of Phytophthora. Phytophthora may be controlled by the use of Subdue. It should be applied according to the instructions on the label. Many times plants in the landscape are diagnosed as having Phytophthora when they have been planted too deep. Many times, raising the plants to the proper depth will correct the problem. Some other diseases do exist and local authorities should be consulted for control suggestions.

## WATERING

Rhododendrons require a moist but not too wet root zone. The first year after planting is the most critical for watering. After the plants become established in the landscape, Rhododendrons will do best if slightly under-watered. Overwatering will cause the leaves to droop and will eventually result in root decay.