

# AZALEAS AND RHODODENDRONS

**Lighting.** The ideal sun exposure for azaleas and rhododendrons is a mixture of morning and afternoon shade.

**Soil.** *Azaleas and rhododendrons must have soil that is carefully and thoroughly prepared. Good drainage is essential!* Amend soil with Cotton Boll compost and peat moss.

**Mulch.** Mulch insulates the soil to even out soil temperature extremes. It also helps to keep the root zone moist, reduces water runoff, and reduces weeds. Apply 2-3" of desired mulch around base of plants. Do not mulch with river rock or gravel products, as this can reflect excessive heat onto the leaves of the plant.

**Fertilizer.** Use a specially formulated fertilizer like Holly-tone or Family Tree Nursery brand Azalea, Camellia and Rhododendron food, spring and fall.

**Pruning.** There is little need for pruning azaleas and rhododendrons. However, if growth becomes excessive, reduce the size with light pruning.

**Water.** About an inch of rainfall each week is ideal for azaleas and rhododendrons. Many rhododendrons have been killed where drainage was faulty. To test drainage, dig a hole 6 inches deep in the bed and fill it with water. If the water has not drained from the hole in four hours, the soil needs more amending, or you can build raised beds.

