Azaleas, Camellias and Rhododendrons

Azaleas, Camellias and Rhododendrons are the most beautiful of all flowering shrubs. They brighten the cool, shady spots in your landscape. While each has its own characteristics, they can be grouped together because of similar planting, care and feeding requirements. Follow these simple guidelines for best performance.

SELECT THE PROPER SITE
Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Japanese Camellias are all shade loving. Some varieties will tolerate early morning sun. If you have an area with a bit more sun, Sasanqua Camellias are hardier than other Camellias and may tolerate sun as late as 10:30.

SELECT THE PROPER PLANT
Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Camellias come in all sizes and colors. Most bloom in spring, and some Azaleas will bloom in Summer and Fall. Sasanqua and Hybrid Camellias bloom in fall and winter, and may be used to extend the blooming season in your shade garden. Ask one of our California Certified Nursery Professionals for assistance in selecting those varieties best suited for your garden.

PREPARING THE SOIL
1. Deeply water your plant in its nursery container.
2. Dig a hole 1" shallower and 2-3 times wider than the root ball. (These plants are shallow rooted and their root ball should rise slightly above the surrounding soil areas.)
3. Spread 1/2 cup **Iron Sulfate or Iron Plus** within the perimeter of the hole and work lightly into soil.
4. Prepare a back fill soil by mixing 2/3 **Acid Planting Mix** with 1/3 native soil. Fertilize this soil by mixing in **Master Start Fertilizer** or **EB Stone Organic Sure Start**. Refer to the chart below to know how much to use.
5. Remove the plant from its container. Set it in the hole and confirm the crown is 1" above soil level. Make adjustments as necessary. If the root ball is tightly compacted, loosen the outer roots by gently slicing with a knife 1/2" deep vertical cuts about every 3" around the root ball.
6. Partially fill the hole around the root ball with the back fill mix. Tamp the soil lightly. Never place soil above the root ball, covering the stem. Azaleas are very particular about this.
7. Make a water basin around the outside of the hole, large enough to hold a generous amount of water. Add a nice layer of bark mulch 2-3" deep around the base of the plant, within the water basin, but again, not against the stem of the plant.
8. Water deeply. Flooding the water basin will allow moisture to soak into the root ball.

WATERING & FEEDING
Make sure to check your plants for water regularly. While this planting method is great for the plants over time, it is easy for transplants to dry out soon after planting. Keep the root zone moist but not soggy. Maintaining the 3" layer of bark mulch will help to retain moisture and acidify the root zone. We recommend you feed your plants with **Master Nursery Camellia Azalea Gardenia Rhododendron Food** or **EB Stone Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food** monthly March through September. Supplement this with **Iron Sulfate or Iron Plus** in March, May and September. During bud set and blooming season (October through February for most of these plants) feed monthly with **Master Nursery Master Bloom** or **EB Stone Ultra Bloom** for bigger, more prolific blossoms.

PRUNING & CARE
As a rule, Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Camellias are simply pruned to shape. After blooming, frequent pinching of the branch tips will result in a fuller, bushier plant. Faded flowers should be removed and thrown away as diseases and insects may be harbored within this debris if not removed regularly.

Size	Starter Fertilizer	Acid Planting Mix
1 Gallon	2 Tbs.	1/3 cubic ft.
2-3 Gallon	4 Tbs.	3/4 cubic ft.
5 Gallon	8 Tbs.	1-1/2 cubic ft.
15 Gallon	1 cup	3 cubic ft.

WHAT YOU NEED
- Acid Planting Mix
- Starter Fertilizer
- Azalea Camellia Gardenia Rhododendron Food
- Master Bloom or Ultra Bloom Fertilizer
- Iron Sulfate or Iron Plus