Twelve Months of Flowering Rhododendrons

Many in the Northwest have rhododendrons in bloom in April and May. One big splash of color is great, but what if your garden were to show some color for all 12 months? With some planning, some plant hunting and a little extra money you can have the joy of these wonderful flowers all year long.

**January** is the month for the earliest bloomers. [A very cold winter will delay bloom].

- Abigale - pink, tall
- Harry Carter - pink, tall
- Lee’s Scarlet - red, medium
- Nobleannum Album - white, tall
- Nobleannum Cocccineum - red, tall
- Nobleannum Venustum - rose pink, tall
- R. dauricum - rosy purple or white, medium
- R. mucronulatum - bright rosy pink, medium

**February** brings a little warmth or a little more snow. But these rhododendrons will bloom through it all. (In colder years or locales, some of these will bloom in March).

- Babylon - white/chocolate, tall
- Bodega Crystal Pink - pink, medium
- Bo-peep - lemon yellow, medium
- Bric-a-Brac - pink/white, low
- Christmas Cheer - pink, medium
- Conemaugh - lavendar pink, tall
- Etta Burroughs - bright red, tall
- Goosander - light yellow, low
- Helen Scott Richey - pink, low
- Olivia - orchid pink, medium
- Peter Faulk - red, medium
- Pink Prelude - pink, tall
- Pink Snowflakes - pink/white, low
- Pioneer - bright pink, medium
- Praecox - rosy lilac, medium
- Promise of Spring - rose, tall
- Red Majesty - red, tall
- Quaver - yellow, low
- Seta - light/deep pink, tall
- Sausalito - pink/red, tall
- Tessa (& Tessa Blanca) - pink (white), medium
- Venus - pale pink, tall
- Wisp - pink, medium
- R. barbatum - red, medium
- R. irroratum - cream or pink/spotted, tall
- R. lanigerum - rosy purple, medium
- R. moutinense - rose/white, medium
- R. oreadoxa - soft pink, tall
- R. racemosum - pink, medium
- R. recurvoides - white/rose, low
- R. rubiginosum - rose, tall
- R. schlippenbachii - pink azalea, medium
- R. sutchuenense - lilac or rose, tall
- R. principis (vellereum) - white or rose, tall

**March** brings us the first hints of spring. These plants get a jump on the crowd of rhododendrons in the next 2 months. This is but a sample of the many dozens of March-blooming varieties.

- Cilpinense - white / pink, low
- Elya - rose, medium
- Ginny Gee - pink, low
- Lucy Lou - white, low
- Rosamund! - light pink, medium
- Shamrock - yellow-green, low
- Small Gem - white/pink, low
- Small Wonder - red, low
- Snow Lady - white, low
- Unknown Warrior - red, tall
- R. calophytum - white with pink blotch, tall
- R. ciliatum - white/pink, medium
- R. hodgsonii - rosy-purple, tall
- R. leucaspis - white/pink, low
- R. oreodoxa - soft pink, tall
- R. racemosum - pink, medium
- R. recurvoides - white/rose, low
- R. rubiginosum - rose, tall
- R. schlippenbachii - pink azalea, medium
- R. sutchuenense - lilac or rose, tall
- R. principis (vellereum) - white or rose, tall

**April** brings hundreds more rhododendrons to bloom. Yellows and purples predominate but whites, pinks and some reds can be found. A visit to your local nursery is in order. The Species Study Group of the Seattle Rhododendron Society has a show in late March or early April. There you will find many of these wonderful plants to view and to buy.

**May** is the peak of the blooming season with hundreds of varieties in bloom. Find a chapter of The American Rhododendron Society in near you which may have an annual show during this month. This is the best place to view the common and the most unusual rhododendrons. View the show with care making notes of your favorites. Remember you don't have the room to plant them all. Then visit the chapter's plant sale where members will help you find the ones you just have to have!

**June** is the start of summer, but in Puget Sound it's often cool & wet! Most of the June bloomers need light shade to be at their best.

- Autumn Gold - salmon-apricot, tall
- Betty Arrington - rosy pink, tall, fragrant
- Blanc-Mange - white, tall
- Daphnoides - purple, medium
- Edward Dunn - apricot-pink, tall
- Goldsworth Orange - salmon, tall
- Gomer Waterer - white/mauve pink, tall
- Kilimanjaro - red, tall
- Lemon Marmalade - yellow, medium
- Leo - red, tall
- Lodauric - white / yellow, tall, fragrant
- Purple Lace - purple, tall
- Trilby - red, tall
- Whitney's Late Orange - orange, medium
- R. bakeri - orange, salmon, yellow azalea, med
- R. brachycarpum - creamy white, medium
- R. diaprepes - white/rose, tall, fragrant
- R. discolor - white or pink, tall, fragrant
- R. ferrugineum - rose or pink, low
- R. hemsleyanum - white, tall
- R. hirsutum - white or pink, low
- R. maximum - white to rose, tall
- R. occidentale - white to pink/yellow azalea, tall
- R. ungemii - pinky white, medium

Courtesy of Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens • 3531 Meerkerk Lane
meerkerk@whidbey.net • 360.678.1912 • PO Box 154, Greenbank, WA 98253
www.meerkerkgardens.org
**July** may be the middle of summer but there are still some rhododendrons that will bloom protected by the shade of your trees. Some are the best hardy fragrant rhododendrons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aladdin</td>
<td>pink, tall, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europa</td>
<td>rosy lilac, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good News</td>
<td>crimson, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce's American Beauty</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Bear</td>
<td>White, tall, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romany Chal</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. auriculatum</td>
<td>white, tall, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. bakeri 'Camps Red'</td>
<td>red azalea, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. diaprepes 'Gargantua'</td>
<td>white, tall, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. facetum</td>
<td>crimson-red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. maximum 'Mt Mitchell'</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. thayeranum</td>
<td>pink or white/pink, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. viscosum</td>
<td>white or pink azalea, tall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**August** is the time for most of us to go on vacation, lie around and sip iced tea. Most of the rhododendrons in your garden are growing and setting buds for next year. These few plants may be hard to find but well worth the effort. Try the Rhododendron Species Foundation for most of the species in this list, and many other early and late bloomers not included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midsummer</td>
<td>rosy pink, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. arborescens</td>
<td>white azalea, tall, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. nakaharae</td>
<td>brick red azalea, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. prunifolium</td>
<td>red or orange azalea, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. serotinum</td>
<td>white/rose, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. serrulatum</td>
<td>white azalea, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. prunifolium</td>
<td>red or orange azalea, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. yakushimanum hybrids</td>
<td>(many)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**September and October** and our weather begins to cool. Many rhododendrons have the habit of "second blooming" in these months. Stressful conditions may cause flowering in the Fall. This is a partial list. 'Elizabeth' is one of the best and most floriferous "second bloomers".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob's Blue</td>
<td>electric blue, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue bird</td>
<td>blue, low-medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camubia</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>red, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernie Dee</td>
<td>purple, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowhammer</td>
<td>yellow, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. impeditum</td>
<td>purple, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. fastigiatum</td>
<td>blue-purple, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. prunifolium</td>
<td>red or orange azalea, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. yakushimanum hybrids</td>
<td>(many)</td>
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During mild **November** and **December** months, especially for those who live near Puget Sound, several rhododendrons will bloom regularly every year. Most may only have a few flowers. These plants may bloom into the month of January depending on the weather. This makes every year just a little bit different than the last.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee's Scarlet</td>
<td>red, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobleanum Venustum</td>
<td>soft pink, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobleanum Coccineum</td>
<td>red, tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. dauricum</td>
<td>rose-purple, medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Flowering times may vary by three or more weeks depending on microclimate, planting location, locale and "unseasonable" temperatures.

Many rhododendrons have beautiful foliage and make outstanding garden plants year-round, in bloom or not.

Heights: Low = 2’ or less; medium = 3-4’; tall = 5’ or more, at 10 years age.

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