

Rhododendron

Rhododendron spp.

QUICK FACTS

USDA ZONES

4–9

SUNLIGHT

Part Shade

BLOOM

Spring

HEIGHT

2–8 ft

DEER

Vulnerable

POLLINATORS

Yes

AT A GLANCE

Rhododendrons fail for two reasons more than any others: wrong soil pH and poor drainage. The soil pH must be between 4.5 and 6.0. Per Clemson HGIC, "rhododendrons have a few requirements: excellent drainage, a soil pH between 4.5 and 6.0, and protection from hot afternoon sun." Meet those three conditions and rhododendrons are relatively trouble-free. Violate any one of them and the plant will decline slowly or die within a few seasons.

PLANTING CHECKLIST

- Match site to sun requirements above before buying
- Test soil drainage — dig a 12" hole, fill with water, time it (should drain in 1–2 hrs)
- Dig hole 2x wider than rootball, same depth
- Backfill with native soil — do NOT amend the planting hole
- Water deeply at planting and weekly for first 3 weeks
- Mulch 2" deep, keep mulch 2" away from trunk/stems

FULL GUIDE WITH SOURCES

<https://outdoorplantcare.com/plants/rhododendron-care/>