

----- 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	Nobleanum Album - white, tall
Nobleanum Coccineum - red, tall	Nobleanum Venustum - rose pink, tall
Sashi - pink, medium	Tabitha - red, tall
R. dauricum - rosy purple, 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 - lavender pink, tall
Etta Burroughs - bright red, tall	Goosander - light yellow, low
Helen Scott Richey - pink, low	Olive - 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 Bianca) - pink (white), medium	Vemus - pale pink, tall
Wisp - pink, medium	R. barbatum - red, medium
R. irroratum - cream or pink/spotted, tall	R. lanigerum - rosy purple, medium
R. moupinense - white / pink, low	R. pemakoense - pink, low
R. praevernum - white/rose, tall	R. strigillosum - blood red, 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
P.J.M. - lavender-pink, medium	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. russatum - purple, medium
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!

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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	Daphnoides - purple, medium
Goldsworth Orange - salmon, tall	Gomer Waterer- white/mauve pink, tall
Judy Spillane - pink, medium	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

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.

Aladdin - pink, tall, fragrant	Europa - rosy lilac, tall
Good News - crimson, medium	Independence Day - red, tall
Pearce's American Beauty - red, tall	Polar Bear - White, tall, fragrant
Romany Chal - red, tall	R. auriculatum - white, tall, fragrant
R. bakeri 'Camps Red' - red azalea, medium	R. diaprepes 'Gargantua' - white, tall, fragrant
R. facetum - crimson-red, tall	R. maximum 'Mt Mitchell' - red, tall
R. thayeranum - pink or white/pink, medium	R. viscosum - white or pink azalea, tall, fragrant

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.

Midsummer - rosy pink, tall	R. arborescens - white azalea, tall, fragrant
R. nakaharae - brick red azalea, low	R. prunifolium - red or orange azalea, medium
R. serotinum - white/rose, tall	R. serrulatum - white azalea, tall

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".

Bob's Blue - electric blue, medium	Blue bird - blue, low-medium
Camubia - red, tall	Elizabeth - red, low
Ernie Dee - purple, low	Yellowhammer - yellow, medium
R. impeditum - purple, low	R. fastigiatum - blue-purple, low
R. prunifolium - red or orange azalea, medium	R. yakushmanum hybrids (many)

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.

Lee's Scarlet - red, medium	Nobleanum Coccineum - red, tall
Nobleanum Venustum - soft pink, tall	R. dauricum - rose-purple, medium

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.

Courtesy of District 2, American Rhododendron Society
<http://www.rhododendron.org>