

## **Wild Honeysuckle and Restless Natives**

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The Ultimate reference for Native American Azaleas is American Azaleas by L. Clarence Towe, Timber Press 1-800-327-5680

### **American Azaleas**

**Rhododendron alabamense** - The Alabama Azalea flower is typically white with a bright yellow blotch, but is sometimes flushed with pink. The attractive lemon fragrance is most distinctive. It blooms mid to late April on plants growing from three to eight feet in height.

**Rhododendron arborescens** - The Sweet azalea is considered by many authorities to be the best of the native white azaleas. It is white, can be flushed with pink, with a strongly contrasting red style and is highly fragrant. The southern form of the plant blooms from July into August. It is a large plant ranging in height from eight to ten feet.

**Rhododendron atlanticum** - The Coastal Azalea is a low growing stoloniferous species, ranging from two to five feet with beautiful blue-green foliage. The flowers, appearing in late May, are pure white or white flushed with pink, some with a distinct yellow blotch and a most attractive fragrance.

**Rhododendron austrinum** - The Florida Azalea ranges in color from clear yellow to orange-red. It has a pleasant honeysuckle fragrance. It blooms in late March to early April and can attain a height exceeding ten feet.

**Rhododendron bakeri** - The Cumberland Azalea flowers in orange to red shades. *R. bakeri* generally grows two to five feet in height, and blooms in June with no fragrance. The name has recently been changed to *R. cumberlandense*.

**Rhododendron calendulaceum** - The Flame Azalea produces flowers that are variable in color; from distinct clear yellow through orange to red. Some forms may start blooming in early May, while others flower mid to late June. The blossoms are generally larger than those of the other species, and do not possess fragrance. The height can ultimately exceed ten feet.

**Rhododendron canescens** - The Piedmont Azalea has flowers that range in color from pure white to blush pink to strong rose, with a robust honeysuckle fragrance. It can be a large grower attaining an ultimate height in excess of ten feet. It is one of the earliest bloomers, with flowers appearing in late March through mid April.

**Rhododendron flammeum** - The Oconee Azalea, also known as *Rhododendron speciosum*, is possibly the most variable of all the native azaleas, with the flowers of seed grown plants ranging from salmon and strong pink to yellow to orange to red. It varies from low mounding shrubs to plants six feet or more in height. The non-fragrant flowers are produced in early to mid-April, following Piedmont azalea and before the Swamp azalea and the Alabama azalea. This plant has been referred to as “resplendently

handsome”.

**Rhododendron periclymenoides** - The Pinxterbloom Azalea is also known as *Rhododendron nudiflorum*. The fragrant flowers open in mid-April and vary from white, through pale pink to deep violet red in color. Plants are usually medium in height commonly ranging from four to six feet.

**Rhododendron prunifolium** - The Plumleaf Azalea has a flower that ranges in color from orange to red and possesses no fragrance. It is a large grower, to ten feet. It blooms from July through August and flowers best in semi-shade which provides some protection from the mid-summer sun. This is the signature plant of Callaway Gardens.

**Rhododendron serrulatum** - The Hammocksweet Azalea produces small white, clove scented flowers in late July through August. This plant is usually the last native azalea to bloom. It is a tall plant growing to ten feet.

**Rhododendron vaseyi** - The Pinkshell Azalea is a tall, upright plant that grows six to eight feet. The scentless, bell-shaped flowers appearing in early April are various shades of pink with a green throat and orange-red dots at the base of the upper petal.

**Rhododendron viscosum** - The Swamp Azalea produces spicy fragrant white flowers that are borne in mid-May to early June. It's height is variable from a low, mounding shrub up to eight feet.

**R. alabamense 'Frosty'** - A Lazy K Nursery introduction. Discovered by renowned plantsman Clarence Towe, this plant is unique with its small-textured dark green foliage with white undersides. Flowers are pure white with the classic yellow blotch and have the unforgettable fragrance characteristic of this species.

**R. alabamense 'Nancy Callaway'** - A Lazy K Nursery selection and introduction. A well grown plant can be covered in intensely fragrant white and yellow blotched flowers that can take on a pink sheen in good light. Named for our friend, a remarkable gardener and member of Georgia's First Family of horticulture whose favorite native azalea is the Alabama.

**R. atlanticum 'Marydel'** - Collected by noted plantswoman Polly Hill and long thought to be a natural hybrid between *R. periclymenoides* and *R. atlanticum*. Most experts now consider it to be a particularly excellent example of *R. atlanticum*. Whatever the parentage it is a beautiful medium pink with a lovely fragrance.

**R. austrinum 'Escatawpa'** - Collected on the Escatawpa River by Bill Dodd of Mobile, Alabama. This plant is considered by many to be the standard for *austrinum*. It features large trusses of bright yellow flowers with a delightful fragrance.

**R. austrinum 'Millie Mac'** - Absolutely unique flowers are vivid yellow; bordered with a pure white margin.

**R. calendulaceum. 'Gamecock'** - Of all the Clarence Towe selections, this is possibly the most unique (thus far!). It is a bright orange-red version of the flame azalea. The flowers are held in ball trusses and

have strap petals resulting in an extraordinarily beautiful effect.

**R. canescens 'Biltmore'** - A very cold hardy pure white flowered canescens from the azalea collection at Biltmore Estate.

**R. canescens 'Phlox Pink'** - A deep pink early blooming plant.

**R. 'Choice Cream'** - (*R. Austrinum X R. Atlanticum*) One of the five azaleas selected by our friend, the late Fred Galle, and probably his best. The flower is light yellow with a pink tube and a yellow blotch on the upper petal. It is nicely fragrant.

**R. prunifolium X R. arborescens** - Midsummer blooming salmon flowers with a bright yellow blotch on the upper petal.

**R. 'Snowbird'** - (*R. atlanticum X R. canescens*) Another natural hybrid from Biltmore Estate. This plant appears to be more atlanticum than canescens. Pure white flowers on a medium-size plant with bluish foliage and a fine fragrance.