

# Flame Azalea

## *Rhododendron calendulaceum*

**Plant Type:** Native Flowering Shrub  
**Sun Exposure:** Full Sun, Part Sun, Shade  
**Season of Interest:** Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter  
**Bloom Time:** April - June  
**Bloom Color:** Orange, Red  
**Height:** 4 to 7 ft.  
**Spread:** 4 to 8 ft.  
**Spacing:** 8 ft.  
**Water Needs:** Average  
**Maintenance:** Very little  
**Soil Type:** Loam, Sandy  
**Soil pH:** Acidic (pH < 6.0)  
**Soil Drainage:** Well drained  
**Pests:** Aphids, Thrips, Whiteflies  
**Diseases:** Powdery mildew, Root rot  
**Wildlife:** Bees, Butterflies, Hummingbirds



**Description:** Flame azalea is among the most spectacular North American native shrubs you can grow. It lights up the spring garden with its colorful blooms and shines brightly in the fall with its brilliant foliage. It attracts butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. Flame azalea's common name refers to the resemblance of its colorful, upright flower buds to candle flames. It's a low-maintenance plant, perfectly suited for hedges, shrub borders, or naturalized areas. Despite its beauty, it withstands rabbit and deer browsing. The fall foliage shows stunning red and burgundy shades, while its unique gray-brown bark provides winter interest. For more information see: [plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/rhododendron-calendulaceum](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/rhododendron-calendulaceum) .



**Care and Growing Tips:** Between four and six hours of sunlight is ideal for flame azaleas. Although they prefer partial shade, this shrub can grow in full sun if the heat is moderate. In areas with very hot summers, choose a spot that receives some shade during the heat of the day to protect the plant from scorching. Like other azalea species, flame azaleas prefer acidic soil. Ideally, the soil should be moist but the shrub does exhibit drought tolerance. It's important that the soil is well-draining to prevent oversaturation and problems with root rot. Flame azalea does not grow well in heavy clay soil. In most cases, rainfall should be sufficient but supplemental watering may be needed if top two inches of soil feels dry to the touch. When planted in acidic soil with plenty of organic matter, flame azalea will not need any fertilizer.