

The Growing of Camellias and Azaleas

Selecting a position in the garden

- Camellias and Azaleas are shade lovers, yet require plenty of light.
- Choose a cool position, protected from the afternoon heat. Facing east, south or south east is ideal. A veranda, patio, in between buildings or in the presence of large shrubs or trees usually offer the desired protection.
- Ensure protection from the dry hot north wind.
- Filtered sunlight through 50 to 70% shade cloth is ideal.
- Avoid planting close to established trees; root competition can be attracted by improved conditions. An answer is to grow them above the ground in a pot.
- Consider Camellia sasanqua and the “sun tolerant” selection of Azaleas for the more exposed positions.

The Soil

- Camellias and Azaleas prefer an acidic, rich friable soil with a high content of decomposed organic matter.
- A soil pH reading of 5-6 is desirable.
- Acidity and soil structure can be improved greatly by incorporating generous quantities of soil conditioners such as pulverised pine bark or well composted organic matter.
- To improve soil acidity for existing plants apply sulphur or Alum. If in doubt bring a soil sample to the nursery for testing and advice.
- Clay type soils are improved by the addition of gypsum and organic soil conditioners, better drainage and aeration will result.
- Sandy soils are improved with generous quantities of soil conditioners and composted organic matter dug in thoroughly.

Preparing a Garden Bed

- Prepare an area at least 1 metre square, incorporating compost and organic soil conditioners.
- Raise the bed 10 to 20 cm above the surrounding ground to improve drainage.
- Soil depth need only be 30-40 cm deep as camellias and azaleas are shallow rooted plants.

Planting

- Remove the plant from the container, not allowing the root ball to break up in your hands.
- Plant no deeper than it was originally in its pot.
- Back fill, gently firming the soil down whilst ensuring the plant remains upright and straight.
- Stake, fertilise and water in.
- Planting is best carried out from March through to October.

Growing in a Pot

- Tub culture has many advantages. Where soil and climatic conditions are unsuitable or where garden space is limited.
- Tub plants are ideal for furnishing a veranda, patio or courtyard areas.
- When potting, use Newman’s quality Acidic Camellia and Azalea potting mix.
- Azaleas and Camellias can be grown in tubs for many years with the correct maintenance.
- Do not over pot. When starting with a small plant, pot only into a slightly larger container, eg. a 15 cm pot should only go into a 20 or 25 cm pot; there it can remain for up to 2 to 3 years. The next potting, take it to a 30 or 40 cm container, staying there up to 3 to 4 years.
- From this stage go to a larger tub or barrel, as long as the plant is growing vigorously. Every 3 to 5 years re-pot back into the same tub.
- Maintenance involves regular fertilising, watering and mulching.
- Ask at Newman’s if you are unsure when or how to re-pot.
- Potting is best carried out from March to October.

Watering

- The frequency of watering varies with the prevailing weather and your type of soils.
- One or two deep soakings a week rather than daily light watering is best.
- After watering allow the surface of the soil to dry a little before the next watering.
- Maintain a humid atmosphere, spray the foliage and its surroundings regularly during the hottest days.

Mulching

- Mulching the soil surface in pots and the soil around plants in the ground keeps the soil cool, conserves moisture and suppresses weeds.
- Use a mulch which decomposes readily and the soil will benefit too.
- Some ideal mulches are cow manure, pulverised pine bark, copra peat, mushroom compost or pea straw.
- Do not allow mulch to build up around the trunk.
- Soil wetting agents applied before and during summer are recommended.

Pruning

- Prune to increase bushiness, to stimulate vigour and improve general shape, prune during the late winter/early spring or early in the New Year.
- Avoid pruning in winter.
- Ask Newman’s experienced team how!

Insect Pests

- Camellias and Azaleas are generally resistant to insect attacks.
- Should a problem occur control can be achieved by the following,
 - Aphids and Thrips - use Pyrethrin, Pest Oil or Confidor. Often washing a small infestation off with a hose is effective.
 - Scale insects - use Pest Oil or Eco Oil.
 - Caterpillars and leaf miner- use Yates Success or if they persist use Mavrik.
 - Mites or Red Spider - use Wettable Sulphur or Pest Oil, if the infestation is persistent ask the Newman’s team for advice.
- Keep strictly to the manufacturers recommendations and always read safety directions carefully.

General Care

Fertiliser

- Apply fertiliser only during spring, summer and autumn
- Do not over fertilise! Never exceed the directions on the container.
- Symptoms of over feeding can be marginal leaf burn, leaf discolouration, bud drop, leaf drop, or buds failing to open properly.
- We recommend slow release fertiliser for potted plants. Apply slow release fertiliser in spring, it will continue to feed until autumn, this can be followed by an application of Blood and Bone in March/April.
- For Camellias and Azaleas grown in the garden use either Neutrog “Kahoona” or Yates or Blood and Bone at the rate of a cupful to a square metre in September, December and February.
- Always water well after applying fertiliser.

SEMI DOUBLE
Two or more overlapping layers of petals surrounding the stamens, sometimes tipped with petaloids.



‘Yours Truly’



DOUBLE CENTRE (Anemone) Large outer petals surrounding a prominent cluster of dense petaloids.

‘Elegans Splendor’

INFORMAL DOUBLE (Peony) Many layers of petals, twisted and intermingled with stamens and petaloids



‘Hawaii’

SINGLE

One layer of petals, up to nine surrounding the stamens, sometimes tipped with petaloids.



‘Yuletide’