

Album	white w/ green blotch
America	deep red
Boule de Neige	pure white
Lord Robert's	red w/ dark blotch
Nova Zembla	red

There are many types of the small-leaved rhododendrons. Not only are their flowers attractive, but the foliage turns a deep maroon from fall through winter.

PJM	lavender pink
PJM Compact	dwarf, lavender pink
PJM Aglo	bright pink
Purple Gem	dwarf, purple
PJM Regal	upright habit

## AZALEAS

Azaleas and rhododendrons are very similar in cultural needs.

Major differences are:

- 1) Most azaleas are deciduous; most rhododendrons are evergreen.
- 2) Azaleas usually have "hairy" leaves; rhododendron leaves are smooth.
- 3) Azalea flowers are usually funnel shaped; rhododendron flowers are bell shaped.
- 4) Azaleas perform better in full sun; rhododendrons prefer partial shade.

The University of Minnesota has developed an excellent line of hardy azaleas. These are the Northern Lights series:

Golden Lights	golden fragrant flowers
Lemon Lights	yellow, almost bi-color
Mandarin Lights	mandarin orange
Northern Lights	light to deep pink
Orchid Lights	dwarf, lilac
Rosy Lights	fragrant, dark pink
White Lights	fragrant, blush pink

## Other Evergreens

<i>Buxus</i>	Boxwood
	Chicagoland Green
	Green Gem
	Green Mountain
	Green Velvet
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Euonymus
	Emerald Gaiety
	Emerald 'n' Gold
	Ivory Jade
	Moonshadow
	Sarcoxie
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry Holly
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i>	Hybrid Holly
	Kid's Collection
	Royalty Collection
	Blue Prince
	Blue Princess

# BROADLEAF EVERGREENS



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## BROADLEAF EVERGREENS

Every gardener has the desire for something different in their garden, and quite often the allure of the beautiful flowering rhododendron quenches this lust. But upon inquiry of any gardener one will come across the reputation of the rhododendron as being difficult to keep alive, yet alone perform well in a Midwest landscape. Most difficulties with rhododendrons can be experienced with cultivation of other broadleaf evergreens like boxwood and holly.

In general, broadleaf evergreens have large, fleshy leaves that remain on the plant year round. Although leaves are shed as they age, the plant is never entirely leafless. The root system of these plants is quite fibrous and shallow compared to other deciduous shrubs and trees. Often it is the unique foliage of the broadleaved evergreens that is the reason for purchase; however, the rhododendrons also offer a spectacular floral display.

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## HOW CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL IN GROWING THESE EVERGREENS?

**Understand the cultural requirements of these unique plants.**

There are many hardy selections available, but hardiness is not the most common cause of plant failure. Placing the plant in unfavorable cultural conditions is the leading cause of broadleaf evergreen death. Proper site selection and/or preparation is extremely important.

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## CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

### DRAINAGE

First, it is important to have very well drained soil for a broadleaf evergreen. Heavy clay soils can retain water, causing the roots to rot resulting in death. From above ground, it is difficult to differentiate between a drowning plant and one that is not getting enough water. The foliage begins to wilt in both cases, often causing the owner to believe they are not watering adequately.

In addition, heavy clay soils can fluctuate radically in soil moisture from wet to bone dry. Broadleaf evergreens appreciate an evenly moist soil that drains well. Amending heavy soils with compost and other organic matter will assist in loosening its texture. Raised beds or berms can be constructed to improve soil drainage.

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### MOISTURE

Second, because of the shallow root system, the plants can become stressed during periods of hot and dry weather. To conserve moisture place 2 to 4 inches of mulch around the plant, but not touching the stems/trunk. Watering during prolonged dry spells is recommended since dry spells in the Midwest correlate to the mid-summer, a time when rhododendrons and mountain laurel are developing flower buds for the next year.

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### LOCATION

Third, these evergreens often suffer extensive leaf burn during the winter months when grown in sunny, windy and exposed sites. Most evergreens have needles which are small, thin and covered with resin to

protect them from the drying effects of the winter sun and wind. Broadleaf evergreens have large, fleshy leaves that have more surface area capable of losing water. Place broadleaf evergreens in partial shade and areas that are protected from harsh winter winds. Be cautious, what is partial shade in summer may be full sun in winter after trees have lost their leaves. Anti-desiccant sprays can help prevent foliage from drying out, as well as wrapping the plants with burlap. Some small leaved rhododendrons will curl their leaves in cold weather; however, they will return to normal as temperatures rise.

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## SOIL PH

Lastly, broadleaf evergreens generally prefer a more acidic soil than is traditionally found in Illinois. Illinois soils range from 6.0 to 8.0 and most broadleaf evergreens would grow well in a pH of 5.5. The pH of a soil can be lowered by adding sphagnum peat, soil sulfur, or fertilizing with an acidifying fertilizer.

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## RHODODENDRONS

There are two major types of rhododendron; large-leaf and small-leaf. Large-leaf are those most people are familiar with calling rhododendron, those associated with the lush flowering bushes of the East coast and the Pacific northwest. The small-leaf rhododendron have recently become quite popular in the Midwest because of their hardiness. With smaller leaves, these plants are not as prone to water loss as those rhododendron with larger leaves. Some of the common large-leaf varieties hardy here in Illinois are: