

Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron ponticum*)

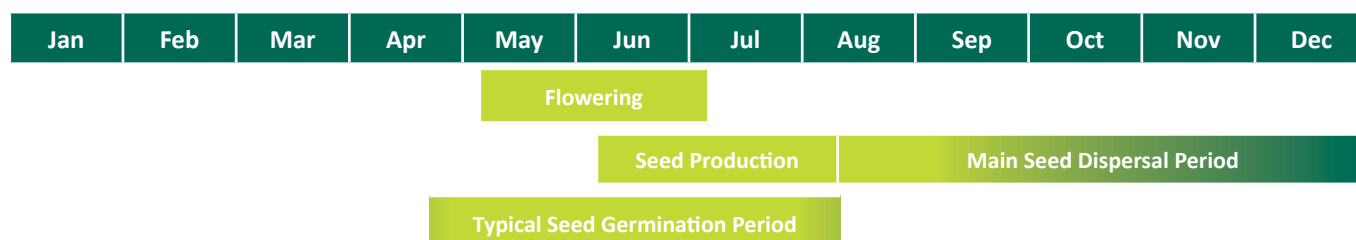


Rhododendron is an evergreen shrub that can grow in excess of 5 metres height in the wild. These shrubs comprise light brown solid woody stems which become trunk-like with maturity; often with brown to dark brown bark cover. Elliptic shaped, glossy, dark green leaves spiral at the end of stems where racemes of lilac pink to purple flowers emerge early summer, May-June. Woody pods then form which can contain several thousand seeds per flower head. Habitat includes moorland, woodland, rocky outcrops where the shrub prefers acidic soils.

Rhododendron primarily reproduces and spreads by seed (circa 3,000-5,000 per flower head), distributed by wind, water, animals and in top-soils. Flower generation and seed production will commence when the shrub is starting to mature at 10-12 years of age. Seeds can remain viable for up to 2 years.

Regeneration can also result from small rhizome (root) fragments, this is a less common method of spread.

Typical growth phases of species



Main Problems

This species typically demonstrates a rapid rate of spread within suitable environments.

The dense coverage damages the environment by reducing biodiversity (flora and fauna) by shading out.

Rhododendron is also host to the disease organisms *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Phytophthora kernoviae* which attack oak and beech and nursery stock.

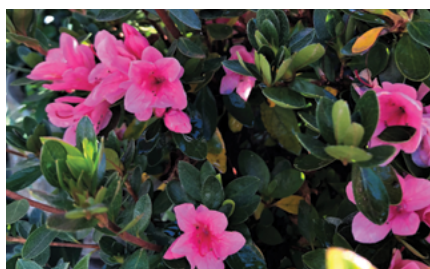
Rhododendron Images



Similar Species



Laurel



Azalea



Ornamental rhododendrons