

Rhododendron hybrids



Crop Cultivation Sheet

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ICL Specialty
Fertilizers



Rhododendron hybrids

General information for cultivation:

Rhododendron is a family of many different varieties. This crop cultivation sheet focuses on the Rhododendron hybrids. Rhododendron is mainly cultivated for sales during spring, when this species flowers. The focus points in the different culture phases are clear: specialized young plant production to achieve the best quality in rooting and branching, and specialized sellable plant production that focuses on maximal flowering. Total cultivation time from cuttings to sellable plants is 2-3 years.

STAGE 1: Cuttings and young plants	STAGE 2: Vegetation	STAGE 3: Finishing 4l pots* (autumn pottings)
<p>Cuttings should be made in June-July, preferably from outdoor mother plants (shaded). Varieties with big leaves: halve the leaves at the propagation moment.</p>	<p>Uniformity among the plants and the parties is important for quality. Uniformity can be achieved by pruning/cutting twice on the pot during stage 2.</p>	<p>Plants in larger pots need length. The plant design should be created by the time the plants reach this stage. *Other pot sizes are possible (depending on customer requirements).</p>

Cultivation cards:

Growing medium and water

- Required soil pH level 4.2-4.5.
- We recommend a maximum EC of 0.6 mS in the pot in greenhouse cultures. For outdoor cultures keep an EC of ~1.0 mS. Don't use a starter fertilizer, since plants are potted before winter.
- Important parameters are constant moisture and a growing medium with good buffering properties, mainly composed of peat types and optionally wood fiber/bark (maximum 20%).
- Mix Micromax into the growing medium for sufficient trace element supply.

Starting phase

- At propagation: the twigs to be used for cuttings must be "inflexible".
- Pruning young plants is key for good plant design.
- We recommend to prune each Rhododendron individually for the best development.

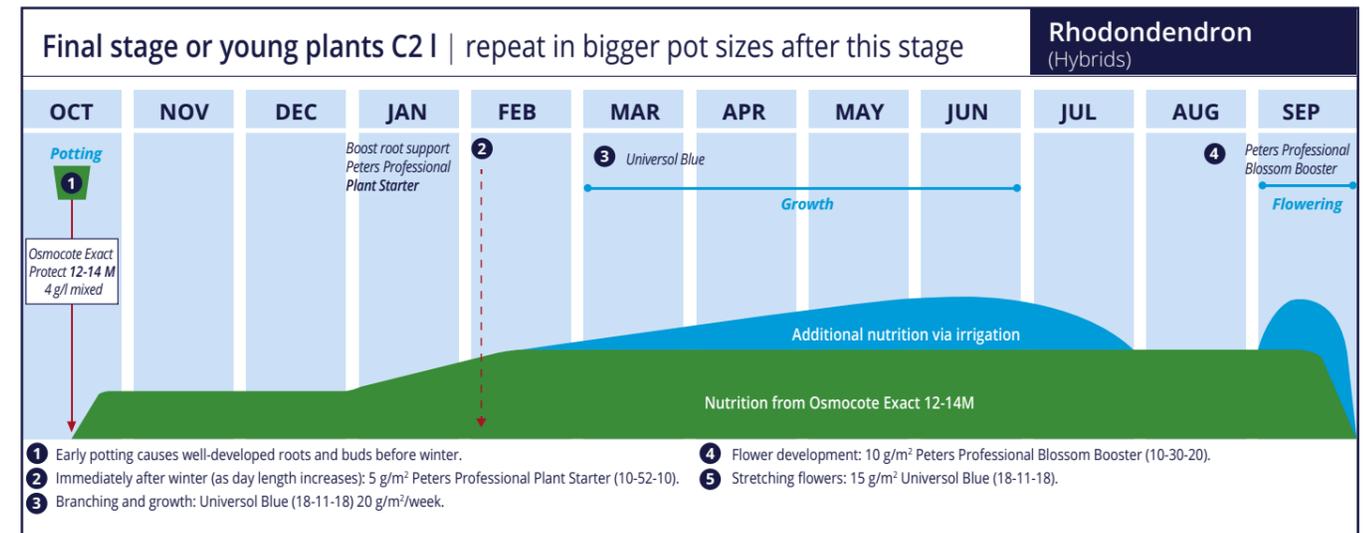
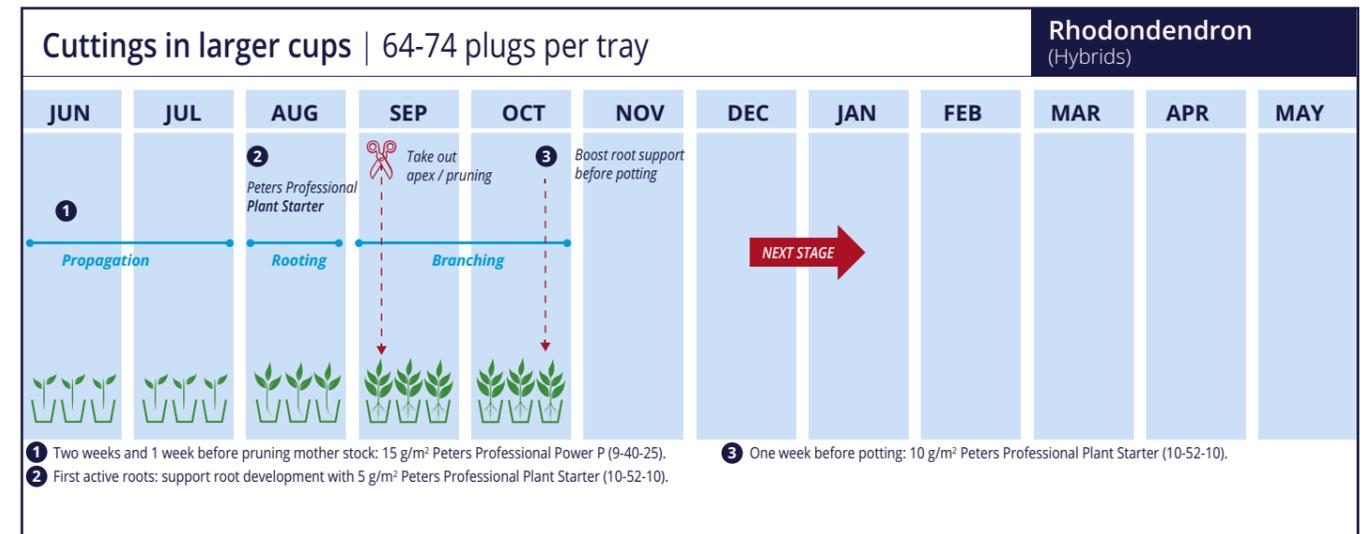
Growing phase

- Rhododendron has a few typical nutritional requirements and its roots are sensitive to salts.
- Potting before winter is crucial so the plants can use wintertime (in greenhouse) for root development.
- Stretching flowers (N-Eu) in July – August: delivering nitrogen nutrition at the right moments is crucial during this phase.
- It is better to apply crop protection preventively rather than curatively.

Finishing phase

- Prune the plants during the finishing stage by 20 June. Prune too late and the plants will not develop flowers in time.
- The August – September period is important for maximum flower bud development in Rhododendron. These buds will flower in spring the following year. The plants need a lot of energy during this phase, so intensify nutrition by irrigating during the late summer to build the necessary buffer. Use a mainly high K schedule (N:K 1:3), to avoid re-growth during the flowering phase.

Recommendations for Cultivation



For a tailored advice for your situation, please contact your ICL Specialty Fertilizers advisor. As circumstances can differ and as application of products is beyond our control, ICL Specialty Fertilizers cannot be held responsible for any negative results. Before a new rate, product or application method is used, a small-scale trail is recommended.

Cultivation notes from our specialists



Tips & Tricks

Rhododendron hybrids

- Finalize potting by the first half of December, so Rhododendron can use all of its energy to develop branches and flowers in the spring. Potting in October results in well-developed roots before wintertime.
- Propagation in January or February is possible, but not optimal, because plants will grow faster above the soil surface than below. The risk of leaf burn is high.
- After starting with high quality young plants, we recommend to:
 - Control the EC levels in the pots. Especially in high temperatures and during the flowering phase.
 - Maximum EC level in the pot, indoors 0.6 mS/cm.
 - Maximum EC level in the pot, outdoors 1.0 mS/cm.
- Rhododendron needs a lot of (diffused) sunlight for optimal photosynthesis and assimilation. Keep the plant leaves out of direct sunlight.
- In low temperatures during spring it is beneficial to apply Peters Professional Winter Grow Special twice in 14 days during April. The high trace element amounts support the plant when these elements are hardly absorbable (in low temperatures, wet circumstances).



Crop Protection

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Sciara

Rhododendron is very sensitive to Sciara, so quick rooting is important. Keep irradiation limited and control the temperature, especially because this crop roots in the summer.

Wine Weevil (*Othiorhynchus sulcates*):

Mainly older or over-aged plants. Take preventive actions against larvae in the growing medium. Curatively it is necessary to apply protection products against adults (beetles) during the summer months (evening applications).

Phytophthora spp.

Very sensitive to stem rot and root rot (*Phytophthora* spp.). Protect the plants by avoiding peaks in greenhouse climate, irrigation and nutrition.

Caterpillars and aphids

Apply a first round of protection products on the leaves during spring.



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