Utah State University
DigitalCommons@USU

All Archived Publications | Archived USU Extension Publications

1999

Dogs Love Trucks, Azaleas Hate Utah

Dennis Hinkamp
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall

Part of the Horticulture Commons

Warning: The information in this series may be obsolete. It is presented here for historical purposes only. For the most up to date information please visit The Utah State University Cooperative Extension Office

Recommended Citation
Hinkamp, Dennis, "Dogs Love Trucks, Azaleas Hate Utah" (1999). *All Archived Publications.* Paper 771.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/771

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Archived USU Extension Publications at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Archived Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact becky.thoms@usu.edu.

Utah State University Extension
electronic publishing

GARDEN NOTES

DOGS LOVE TRUCKS, AZALEAS HATE UTAH

By Dennis Hinkamp

January 1999 Winter-01

Many Utahns take potted azaleas they receive as a "get well" or holiday gift and plant them outdoors in hopes they will acclimate to our climate, thrive and bloom once again.

"I have it on good authority that most azaleas do not like Utah," says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University horticulturist and azalea spokesperson. "I'm sure it is nothing personal. Our great state has very alkaline soils, harsh winters, and dry summers—three things most azaleas simply detest."

Most potted azaleas are not meant to be planted outdoors, he explains. They are grown from the start with one goal in mind, to bloom once and then slowly die. Although this seems to be cruel and unusual punishment for a plant, it is often worse to plant them in the yard and subject them to Utah's challenging environment.

Some greenhouse plants, such as azaleas, spend up to two years in a greenhouse before reaching the market, Goodspeed says. Many potted or greenhouse-grown azaleas are produced and sold throughout the year as flowering plants to cheer up a hospital patient or bring color to an otherwise lifeless winter room. Their colorful blooms are a delight during the cold winter months when not much else is in bloom.

It is a true art form to get azaleas to bloom and keep them producing year round, he says. Azalea propagators spend years researching different varieties, temperatures, propagation techniques, and resting periods in order to offer blooming plants anytime of the year. There are both evergreen and deciduous azaleas, with colors ranging from deep red and purple to a light yellow and orange. Most greenhouse azaleas are evergreen types.

Potted azaleas are bred and hybridized to be propagated, grown and budded in a greenhouse and then sold as they begin to bloom, he says. They are grown for a one time splash of color and then to be discarded.

"Once a potted azalea is purchased and brought indoors, it should be placed in a sunny, well-lit room with indirect lighting," Goodspeed says. "Remember, it has spent its whole life in a greenhouse and is used to that lighting. Once a desirable location is found, try to keep it there until it is through blooming."

Do not over-water a potted azalea, he adds. The blossoms will remain longer if the plant stays healthy, which means only watering after the top two to four inches of soil dries out. Too much water causes rot and an unhappy plant.

"There is usually no need to fertilize a potted azalea," Goodspeed says. "The nutrients in the pot should last until the flowers fade and the plant is ready to be sent to that great compost pile in the back yard."

For more information, contact your local **USU County Extension office.**

Utah State University Extension is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity employer and educational organization. We offer our program to persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 9 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert L. Gilliland, Vice-President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University, Logan, Utah. (EP/01/1999/DF)