

Fact Sheet

Daphnes

Daphne is the Greek word for 'Laurel' which were used for wreaths and garlands. The leaves are supposed to bear a resemblance, hence the name.

They originate from China but were introduced and are also common in Japan from which they were collected 200 years ago.

Daphnes are one of the most popular garden shrub with beautifully scented flowers that will also serve as cut flowers indoors, yet can cause heartache among many gardeners. If grown in the right conditions they are a very hardy shrub that should give 10 - 15 years of pleasure before starting to decline.

Daphnes prefer similar conditions to Azaleas, Ericas etc, with a cool easterly aspect and partial shade particularly during the hottest part of the day. They need a slightly acid soil (pH below 7), if your soil has a propensity to alkalinity an occasional dose of Sulphur or Aluminium Sulphate will help reduce the pH.

The soil must be well drained with added peat, compost, leaf mould dug into the top 50cm of soil. Good drainage is absolutely essential to grow a healthy plant, they will need a constant supply of water in summer to prevent their shallow roots from drying out, to this end mulching is extremely beneficial.

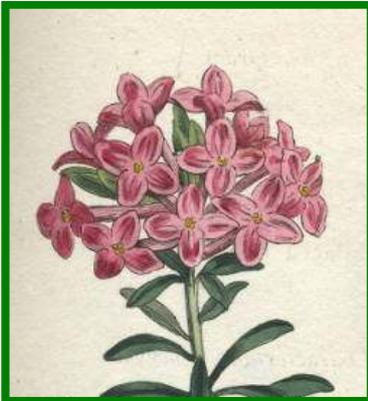
Once the growing conditions are in place, plants will need to be fertilised in spring, we recommend several light applications (e.g. Yates Gro Plus Camellia/Azalea Food) water before and after applying to prevent roots from getting burnt.

They do not need pruning however a prune after flowering will keep the plant compact and maintain vigorous new growth.

They also make excellent tub specimens, however plant them while young as well established daphnes invariably fail to transplant well, success rates for these are very low.

Generally propagation is done in December-January using soft or firm leafy tip cuttings or by layering in winter.





The main pest problem is scale (sap sucking shell like insects) which can be cleared by spraying with White Oil or Pest Oil. They can suffer from root or collar rot, signified by yellow leaves and wilting on hot days, this is caused by poor drainage and overwatering.

Often virus disease is spread by sap sucking insects or cuttings taken from infected plants, this can show up as yellow streaks or blotches on leaves and contorted shoots, there is no cure for this although plants may still do reasonably well.

Daphnes are a genus of about 50 species of which more are grown in Europe than Australia where *Daphne odora* and its cultivars are by far the most popular and widest grown.

- Daphne odora*** - shrub about 1m x 1.5m wide has low sprawling habit and very fragrant white to purple flowers.
- Daphne odora 'alba'*** - has white flowers and pale ivory cream base.
- Daphne odora 'Aureo Marginata'*** - has rosy purple flowers and margined creamy yellow leaves.
- Daphne cneorum*** - has pink scented flowers.

DAPHNE FACTS:

In medieval times daphnes were included on homeopathic lists as aiding to combat chronic rheumatism, skin disorders, 'inducing discharge in indolent ulcers', snake bites and syphilis. However, due to the fine line between what was an aid to combating the problem and what was enough to prove fatal, its historic applications are no longer made.

All parts of the plant and their fruits are highly poisonous which can cause vomiting, or even death, if the berries are ingested.