



Flowering Shrubs: Daphne

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Daphne mezereum is a small shrub naturalized in several eastern provinces. It is about 1 metre in height with rose/purple flowers clustered tightly along its stems.

Preferred Conditions

Daphnes need a location protected from strong winds in partial shade (out of hot midday sun). Daphnes do not transplant well so choose your location carefully. They are best planted in the spring and need moisture-retentive, humus-rich neutral to acidic, well-drained soil. Soggy, poorly-drained soils are often the death of daphnes.

Care and Pruning

Water daphnes well and regularly and mulch. Prune lightly or not at all. Pruning has a detrimental effect on healthy plants as do root disturbances which can cause yellowing and die back.

Problems you Might Encounter

Daphnes can suffer from a number of disorders and diseases which can lead to sudden die back. These include virus infections (avoid pruning and root disturbances), nutrient deficiency in alkaline soil and phytophthora root rot (from soggy, poorly drained soils). Important to note that all parts of daphnes are toxic if ingested and sap can cause skin irritations.

Learn more about Daphnes [here](#)>

Daphnes Have Intensely Fragrant Blooms

Daphnes are grown for their intensely fragrant and beautiful blooms in spring. Plant near pathways, doors or windows to best enjoy their heady fragrance.

Varieties to Plant

There are a multitude of species daphne but most are not hardy in our zone. Winter Daphne (*D. odora*) is supposed to be hardy in our zone and have a powerful fragrance. It grows about 4 feet tall with narrow, glossy leaves. One of the best proven varieties for our area is *Daphne burkwoodii*, a hybrid semi-evergreen or deciduous shrub that also grows 3 to 4 feet tall. 'Sommerset' and variegated 'Carol Mackie' are available from nurseries in our area and have been known to last for 15 years or more if happy.