**Resource:** [**http://extension.uga.edu/**](http://extension.uga.edu/)

**Native Azaleas**

Several species of azaleas are native to Georgia and the Southeast. Their flower color ranges from white to pink, yellow, orange, scarlet or crimson, with several shades in between. Plant size is also variable, ranging from 3 feet to more than 20 feet. Although native azaleas are considered more adaptable and more hardy than introduced species, it is important to approximate their native growing environment if they are to be grown successfully.

The following are some native azalea species found in Georgia: Alabama Azalea, *R. alabamense* [ah-luh-ba-MEN-see] bears white flowers with a yellow blotch. It has a lemony-spice fragrance. This low to medium size shrub grows in Alabama and western Georgia.

Piedmont Azalea, *R. canescens*[kuh-NES-enz] has white to pinkish tubular flowers with stamens two to three times longer than the petals. This tall-growing plant may attain a height of 15 feet. Some have flowers with a musky-sweet, honeysuckle-like fragrance. As the common name implies, the Pied-mont Azalea is native to the Piedmont region of Georgia and other states.

Flame Azalea, *R. calendulaceum* [kuh-len-dew-LAY-see-um] has flower colors ranging from brilliant shades of yellow to orange or red, with a large prominent yellow to orange blotch on the upper lobe (petal). Its flowers tend to be larger than the other native species. Flame azalea is native from the Appalachian Mountains to the Piedmont region.

Sweet or Smooth Azalea, *R. arborescens* [ar-bo-RES-enz] has white flowers, sometimes with a pink-ish tinge, and red stamens. It has glossy leaves and red fall foliage. Flowers have a strong, cinnamon-like fragrance. This species is native to west-central Georgia. It may attain a height of 8 feet.

Coastal or Dwarf Azalea, *R. atlanticum* [at-LAN-tih-kum] has white flowers that sometimes are flushed with pink. The plant grows 3 to 5 feet tall and is smaller than most of the other native species. It is native to the Coastal Plain from Pennsylvania to Georgia. Flowers have a rose-like fragrance.

Pinxterbloom Azalea*, R. periclymenoides* [pair-ih-kly-men-NOY-deez], previously classified as *R. nudiforum*, has narrow, wavy flowers that are either white, pale pink or deep pink. It is native from the Appalachian Mountains to the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

Swamp Azalea, *R. viscosum* [viss-KO-sum] has white to pink flowers that have a spicy, clover-like fragrance. The plant is variable in size and usually grows in low areas along stream banks from Maine to Georgia and west to Texas.

Florida Azalea, *R. austrinum* [aw-STRY-num] has yellow to orange flowers with a reddish tube. Some plants have a lemony fragrance. This tall-growing species can be found in Florida and the Georgia-Alabama Coastal Plain.

Cumberland Azalea, *R. cumberlandense* [kum-bur-lan-DEN-see], previously classified as *R. bakeri*, has bright orange-red flowers. Plant height varies from 1 foot up to 6 feet. It can be found from the Kentucky-Tennessee-Cumberland plateau to the mountains of north Georgia.