



Daphne

Delightful Daphne

Named for nymph from Greek mythology, Daphne is a delightful addition to the garden. Michael A Dirr, the great plantsman and author of renown Manual of Woody Landscape Plants claims "I have come across many daphnes and can honestly say have not met one I do not like". The genus Daphne consists of about 50 small evergreen, semi-evergreen and deciduous flowering woody plants. Daphnes are usually chosen and planted for their lovely fragrant early spring flowers.

Maybe you have heard the rumor that daphnes can abruptly expire with no advanced warning. It is true, daphnes may sometimes suddenly die for unexplained reasons. Some horticulturists ascribe this sudden death to a viral or fungal disease. With proper care, however, you can help prevent this problem.

Soil

Soil drainage is the most critical factor in avoiding sudden daphne death. Plant daphnes in slightly acidic to neutral to slightly alkaline soil, a pH of 6.5-7.5 is best. Daphnes thrive in lean, sandy or gravelly soil fortified with organic matter. Again, excellent drainage is very important.

Light

Daphnes bloom best in full sun but will tolerate light shade.

Watering

Like most shrubs, daphnes benefit from extra water when they are newly planted and just before the ground freezes in winter. Supplement plants with extra water during dry periods or times of drought.

Fertilizing

Being chemical sensitive, daphne shrubs do not like to be fertilized. A thin layer of compost or manure spread under the shrub, in the spring, should provide adequate nutrition.

Mulching

Add a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch such as wood chips, shredded bark or chopped leaves under your daphne. Mulching will discourage weeds, assist in retaining soil moisture and protect the shrub from damage by lawn care equipment.

Pruning

Fragrant daphnes do not like to be pruned. Limit pruning to clipping broken and crossing branches. Older shrubs do not respond to pruning for rejuvenation.

TYPES OF DAPHNE

Daphne X burkwoodii 'Carol Mackie' – Beautiful, easy to grow daphne. Small, light green and cream variegated foliage features fragrant light pink flowers in mid spring. Grows to 3'. Semi-Evergreen. Zones 4-8.

Daphne genkwa – Upright and open growing shrub with green silky leaves up to 3" long. Produces beautiful long wands of lilac flowers in mid to late spring before leafing out. Thrives with ample summer sun and heat.

Daphne mantensiana 'Manten' – Lovely hybrid of *D. X burkwoodii* 'somerset' & *D. retusa*. Dense, compact rounded shrub

with fragrant, orchid-purple flowers throughout the year. Grows to 24". Evergreen. Zones 5-9.

Daphne X medfordensis 'Lawrence Crocker' – A fine garden plant! Glossy, dark green leaves on a dense mounded plant that is 12" high and wide. Very fragrant, lavender flowers; long bloomer from spring through fall. Hybrid of *D. arbuscula*