Purple Gem Rhododendron

Rhododendron 'Purple Gem'

Purple Gem Rhododendron flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5a

Description:

Beautiful large purple blooms with violet streaks and edging adorn this majestic shrub in mid to late spring; an accent shrub that will definitely make an impact; absolutely must have well-drained, highly acidic and organic soil

Ornamental Features

Purple Gem Rhododendron is covered in stunning clusters of lightly-scented purple trumpet-shaped flowers with violet streaks at the ends of the branches in mid spring. It has olive green evergreen foliage which emerges bluish-green in spring. The glossy narrow leaves turn an outstanding coppery-bronze in the fall, which persists throughout the winter.

Purple Gem Rhododendron flowers
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Landscape Attributes

Purple Gem Rhododendron is an open multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Purple Gem Rhododendron is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Purple Gem Rhododendron will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. You may want to keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.