

# Chocolate Drop Native Azalea



This native beauty is hard to find and heat tolerant!



## *Rhododendron canescens* 'Chocolate Drop'

- **Use:** An unusual foliage selection of *Rhododendron canescens* found in a block of seedlings by Ernest Koone III, owner of Lazy K Nursery in Pine Mountain, Georgia. The chocolate-red foliage gradually turns dark green but secondary flushes of growth later in the season are also red, giving the plant the added attraction of having two colors of leaves simultaneously.
- **Exposure/Soil:** Part sun to shade. As with other azaleas, the partial shade of tall trees overhead is the ideal. It will adapt to full-sun sites, though. You just need to water it during times when it isn't raining enough. Grows best in moist, well-drained, organic soils with a pH range from 4.5 to 6.0. "Well-drained" is the key. Planting it in places that don't drain well is a sure death sentence.
- **Growth:** Compact form grows 6-8ft, but much variation can occur between plants in this species. Mature size can range anywhere from 3 to 12 feet.
- **Hardiness: Zone** 6-9 Shrub
- **Foliage:** Deciduous. Chosen from thousands of seedlings due to new growth emerging a very unusual bright chocolate red, similar to a red Japanese maple, which persists until mid-summer when the foliage turns olive green.
- **Flower:** Fragrant flowers are blush pink-white.

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