

How to Mulch Encore® Azaleas

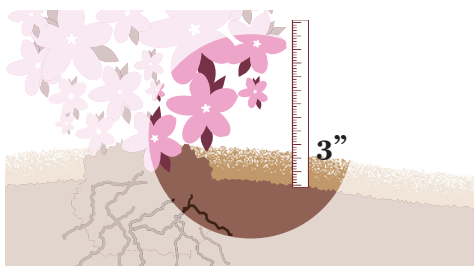


Encore® Azaleas During Fall:

Fall means a period of rest for Encore Azaleas – at least above ground. Below ground, the roots continue to grow, pulling moisture and nutrients from the soil.



Encore Azaleas have relatively shallow roots and need about 3-inches of organic material on top of the soil.



This will preserve moisture and protect tender roots from freezing.

(But by now, the organic mulch you put around the flowerbeds this past summer may have decayed into compost.)

Ideal Materials:

If possible, find locally sourced material, such as pine bark nuggets and pine needles.

These add acidity to the soil as they break down over the winter, which is optimal for azaleas.



Soil Considerations:

For sandy soil, add compost and shredded leaves from your own compost pile.

This will ensure your soil holds more moisture.

For clay soil in raised beds, the plants still need mulch on top of the soil.

Raised beds protect the roots from rotting in areas with clay soil that holds water.

Amount & Placement:

2 to 3 inches of mulch is the recommended amount.

In this case, more is not better. A thick stack of mulch can prevent the roots from breathing.

Location is also key.

Never allow the mulch to have contact with the lower branches and plant stems.

Procedure:

Pour the mulch out of the bag or wheelbarrow, and then rake it back approximately 5-inches away from the plant.

Over the winter, many insects and rodents search for places to nest. If they choose a mulch pile next to plant stems, they will chew into the plant for food and to lay eggs.