

# ***Rhododendron canescens* Pink Pinxter Azalea, Florida Honeysuckle<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen<sup>2</sup>

## **Introduction**

Pink pinxter azalea is well-noted for its vivid display of pink or white, fragrant, clustered blooms appearing in spring, before the new leaves emerge. Well-suited to mass plantings in natural woodland settings, pink pinxter azalea makes a traffic-stopping show whenever it is in full bloom.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Rhododendron canescens*: Pink Pinxter Azalea, Florida Honeysuckle

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Flower - *Rhododendron canescens*: Pink Pinxter Azalea, Florida Honeysuckle

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## **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Rhododendron canescens*

**Pronunciation:** roe-duh-DEN-drun kuh-NESS-senz

**Common name(s):** pink pinxter azalea, Florida honeysuckle, sweet mountain azalea

**Family:** *Ericaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture; and Gail Hansen, professor, sustainable landscape design; Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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**USDA hardiness zones:** 6B through 10A (Figure 3)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 10:** year-round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Uses:** mass planting; specimen; container or above-ground planter; trained as a standard; attracts hummingbirds; attracts butterflies

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 8 to 12 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 10 feet

**Plant habit:** oval; upright

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** pink; white

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** 0.5 to 1 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk

**Current year stem/twig color:** brown

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; clay; loam; sand

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

These azaleas are rather straggly and upright when very young but will spread out, the large, dark green leaves causing the branches to gently cascade down to the ground. A single specimen should be allowed at least 4 to 5 feet of spread to develop into its natural form.

Rich, moist, acidic soil in light shade, receiving some direct sun, protected from harsh winds, is an ideal location for pink pinxter azaleas. Azaleas grow best in filtered shade from tall trees. Plants are very sensitive to dry soil, and the soil should drain freely. A thick mulch (3 inches deep) is recommended to help ensure adequate root growth. Roots are located in the top several inches, even in sandy, well-drained soil.

Pruning is seldom necessary except to control shoots that extend above the normally mounded shape. Since plants bloom on the previous year's growth, any desired pruning should be done in spring after flowering. Pinching new shoots when they are several inches long increases branching and flower display.

Propagation is by seed sown in late fall on moist peat moss or by softwood cuttings taken in late spring.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests are of major concern other than mites.

Problems include iron deficiencies from too high a soil pH and mushroom root rot in poorly drained soil.