



GROWING *Camellias* IN PERTH

How to Grow Camellias in Perth

Camellias are renowned for their beautiful glossy green foliage and the spectacular show of blooms that brighten up any garden from autumn to spring. Established with well-prepared soil and in the right location, Camellias are hardy and easy to look after.

Camellia sasanqua and Camellia japonica are the two varieties best suited to the Perth climate. They can have single, double and even variegated blooms and can be a 1m tall shrub or a 6m tree. Some have highly fragrant flowers and different specimens will bloom from autumn through to spring. Decide how you would like to use the plant and select a variety best suited to your use and garden.

Position

Sasanqua will take more sun than japonica varieties, however all camellias benefit from some shade plus protection from the harsh afternoon summer sun. Protection from hot, drying winds will also help them perform at their best.

Soil

Camellias thrive in well-drained soil, rich in organic matter with a slightly acidic ph of 5 – 6.5. Test your soil before planting and adjust the acidity if necessary. If your soil is going to be too alkaline, plant them into a pot with camellia and azalea potting mix. Add compost and cow manure to improve the soil, and make sure it drains freely.

Watering

Encourage the development of a deep root system with regular watering two or three times a week. Camellias can take a couple of years to establish so you may need to watch them in summer and supplement reticulation with extra watering in hot weather. Once established, they are hardy and drought tolerant.

Fertilising

Don't over use fertiliser on Camellias. Apply a specially formulated fertiliser, such as Flourish Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Plant Food as recommended for your variety. Or, you can use a slow release fertiliser recommended for these acidic loving flowering plants, such as Troforte.

Pruning

Sasanqua varieties can be used as a hedge and will give a spectacular show of autumn/winter flowers. Smaller shrubs can be used as a feature plant in a pot to brighten up a dark are of the garden in winter. They can be shaped as a standard, espaliered along a fence, or pleached as a feature 'hedge on legs'. Larger varieties can be shaped into small feature trees, and used to decorate a view from the house into the garden.

Pruning is used to shape the plants as necessary. Be aware of the flowering season for your plant. You don't want to prune when it is setting its flower and miss out on their autumn or winter show.

A little bit of TLC when planting and establishing a well-chosen Camellia will be richly rewarded with a great display of flowers. The rest of the year, you can enjoy the rich green foliage of this versatile plant.

General advice only. Please ask one of our Horticulturists if you require specific advice for your situation.