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Front Lines

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Year Of … Azaleas

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In this space, we'll highlight each of the National Garden Bureau's (NGB) Year Of … plants. These plants are chosen because they're easy to grow, popular, genetically diverse, widely adaptable and versatile. Visit NGB.org for free downloadable promotional materials, growing tips and more.

This beloved landscape staple is a member of the rhododendron genus and, according to NGB, has been hybridized to create a wide variety of sizes, bloom colors and growth habits, as well as hardiness. Some of the newer hybrids can bloom up to three times a year! And the Azalea Society of America has officially designated April as Azalea Month, so be sure to take advantage of that for promotions.

Did you know?

- Azaleas have different meanings in different cultures, sometimes symbolizing purity, restraint and civility, or even temperance.
- Azaleas are also associated with the zodiac sign of Sagittarius.
- The word "azalea" comes from the Greek word meaning "dry."
- Azaleas are native to North America, Asia and Europe with over 26 native varieties of azalea in North America alone. **GP**

Autumn Embers from the Encore Azalea series is an example of one of those three-time bloomers. It's also dwarf, topping out at 3-ft. tall and offering up gorgeous semi-double orange-red flowers.