

Species Dataform and Scoresheet for Evergreen azaleas

<b>Species Dataform and Scoresheet</b>		
<b>Evergreen azaleas</b>		
Native range: Asia		
Date evaluated: March 9, 2009		
	<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Introductory Questions</b>		
<b>1. Current federal and state regulations</b>	Y/N	N
Comments:		
<b>2. Occurrence in the horticultural trade</b>	Y/N	Y
Comments: Popular ornamental plant. The estimated annual wholesale value attributed to evergreen azaleas in North Carolina is approximately \$29,058,200.		
<b>3. North Carolina nativity</b>	Y/N	N
Comments: Most evergreen azaleas originated in Japan (Reily 2001).		
<b>4. Presence in natural areas</b>	Y/N	N
Comments: Not known to invade natural areas.		
<b>5. Non-invasive cultivars</b>	Y/N	Y
Comments: Assessment indicates that evergreen azaleas are noninvasive in North Carolina.		
	Maximum Point Value	Number of Points Assigned
<b>Section 1. Ecological Impact</b>		
<b>1a. Impact on abiotic ecosystem processes</b>	10	0
Comments: No known impact on abiotic ecosystem processes.		
<b>1b. Impact on plant community structure</b>	20	0
Comments: No known impact on plant community structure.		
<b>1c. Impact on species of special concern</b>	5	0
Comments: No known impact on species of special concern or threatened or endangered plants.		
<b>1d. Impact on higher trophic levels</b>	5	0
Comments: No known impact on higher trophic levels.		
<b>Section 1. Subrank</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Section 2. Current Distribution and Potential for Expansion</b>		
<b>2a. Local range expansion</b>	7	0
Comments:		
<b>2b. Long-distance dispersal potential</b>	13	0
Comments: Not known to naturally disperse long distances.		
<b>2c. Reproductive characteristics</b>	8	4
Comments: Evergreen azalea cuttings root well from wood taken throughout the year (timing is not critical) (Reiley 2001). Azaleas set many tiny seeds in elongated pods. Fresh seed has a 90% germination rate at a temperature of 65° to 70° F (Reiley 2001).		
<b>2d. Range of communities</b>	6	0
Comments: Evergreen azaleas grow well along most of the East Coast (Reiley, 2001), but		

are not generally found in natural areas		
<b>2e. Similar habitats invaded elsewhere</b>	6	0
Comments: There are hundreds of Evergreen azalea cultivars that vary in hardiness (tolerance to low winter temperatures). Depending on the cultivar, evergreen azaleas can survive in USDA Zones 5b to 9 (Niemiera, 2009).		
<b>Section 2. Subrank</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 3. Management Difficulty</b>		
<b>3a. Herbicidal control</b>	5	0
Comments: Herbicides will damage azaleas (Reiley 2001).		
<b>3b. Nonchemical control methods</b>	2	0
Comments: Digging around azaleas will damage shallow root systems (Reiley 2001).		
<b>3c. Necessity of individual treatments</b>	2	2
Comments: Shrubs (Reiley 2001) would require individual treatments.		
<b>3d. Average distribution</b>	2	0
Comments:		
<b>3e. Likelihood for reestablishment</b>	2	0
Comments:		
<b>3f. Accessibility of invaded areas</b>	2	0
Comments:		
<b>3g. Impact on native species and environment</b>	5	0
Comments:		
<b>Section 3. Subrank</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Section 4. Benefits and Value</b>		
<b>4a. Estimated wholesale value</b>	-7	-5
Comments: The estimated annual wholesale value attributed to evergreen azaleas is approximately \$29,058,200 (Trueblood 2009).		
<b>4b. Percentage of total sales</b>	-5	-3
Comments: The highest percentage of total sales attributed to this species from any one grower in North Carolina is estimated to be 11-25% (Trueblood 2009).		
<b>4d. Ecosystem services</b>	-1	0
Comments:		
<b>4e. Wildlife habitat</b>	-1	0
Comments:		
<b>4f. Cultural and social benefits</b>	-1	0
Comments:		
<b>Section 4. Subrank</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-8</b>
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-2</b>
<b>Overall Recommendation:</b> Noninvasive and recommended for use – These species have limited ecological impact, distribution and invasive potential, and management difficulty in relation to economic value. They may be locally problematic but their reproductive biology and other traits limit their rate of invasion to natural areas. (Overall Score: 0 – 33)		

**Summary:** Evergreen azaleas are noninvasive in North Carolina and may be recommended for horticultural use by the North Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association. These species are not known to invade natural areas in North Carolina. These species have little to no negative ecosystem impacts, low potential for long-distance dispersal, and may be easily removed from the landscape. They have extremely high economic value to the North Carolina nursery industry.

**References:**

Niemiera, A.X. (2009) Evergreen Azalea (Rhododendron species) Virginia Cooperative Extension. (<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/np/2901-1035.pdf>) Accessed: March 9, 2009.

Reiley, H. E. (2001) Azaleas, Camellias, and Rhododendrons. Des Moines, IA: The Scotts Company.

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