Azalea

- *Rhododendron* hybrids
- Ericaceae family
- Japan, China, Korea
- One of the world’s most popular flowering plants, $63 million in the U.S.

Sold primarily in 6-in. pots, but also in a variety of pot sizes
- Sold primarily from Christmas to Mother’s Day

Azalea Vegetative Growth

- Annual growth cycle
- Growing methods
  - From cuttings to flowering
  - From liners to flowering
  - From dormant plants to flowering

Azalea Flower Initiation

- Facultative SD plant
- Flower initiation enhanced by 65F and plant growth retardants such as B-Nine, Cycocel, and Bonzi

Azalea Dormancy Breaking

- Cold treat dormant budded plants for 4-6 weeks at 35-40F (dark) or 40-50F (light) in a cooler
- Apply GA at 1000 ppm weekly for 4-6 weeks
- Combine cold plus GA, i.e. 3 weeks cold plus 3 weekly sprays of 250 – 400 ppm GA

Azalea Forcing

- Force at 60-65F night for 3-6 weeks
- Can tolerate low light during forcing
- May force very fast during late spring in warm weather
Azalea

- Full sun during vegetative and flower initiation
- 125 fc during cooling
- Full sun during forcing
- 100% peat moss
- Do not allow to dry out
- Low nutrition

Physiological Disorders

- Uneven flowering
  - Crowding
  - GA application
  - Inadequate dormancy breaking treatment
  - Immature flower buds

Physiological Disorders

- Chlorotic foliage
  - High medium pH
  - Low nutrition

Physiological Disorders

- Leaf defoliation
  - No light during ‘warm’ cold storage
  - Extreme temp changes after cold storage
  - Shipping of dormant plants during warm weather

Physiological Disorders

- Bypass shoots
  - Too mature of shoots during flower initiation
  - Late season forcing