



## What Does Acid-Loving Mean?

Don't worry. The term "acid-loving plants" shouldn't strike terror in your heart. It simply identifies certain plants that need a more "sour" (or acidic) soil to thrive. "Sweet" and "sour" refer to the acidity/alkalinity of the soil, also called the pH level. Most plants like a slightly acidic soil, around 6.5 to 7, but acid-loving plants need a lower number closer to 5.5. The reason this matters is that acid-loving plants can't take the nutrients they need from the soil if it isn't in the proper acidity range. The good news is that you can adjust the acidity in your soil.

# For Sweet Results, Feed Acid Loving Plants

Imagine enormous pink rhododendrons, evergreens that are vigorous and deep green without any yellowing, and sweet blueberries fresh from your garden. These popular plants and many more seem to have nothing in common, but actually, they share an important characteristic – they're all acid-loving.

Take a look at this short list of just a few to see how many you know and love (and are in your garden):

- Amaryllis
- Andromeda
- Aster
- Azalea
- Bayberry
- Bleedingheart
- Blueberry
- Camellia
- Dogwood
- Evergreens
- Ferns
- Fir
- Gardenia
- Heath
- Heather
- Hemlock
- Holly
- Huckleberry
- Hydrangea
- Inkberry
- Juniper
- Leucothoe
- Lily-of-the-Valley
- Lupine
- Magnolia
- Marigold
- Mountain-ash
- Mountain-laurel
- Oak
- Pachysandra
- Phlox
- Pieris
- Pine
- Raspberry
- Rhododendron
- Spruce
- Strawberries
- Whitecedar
- Woodsorrel

## 5 Steps to Give Your Acid-Loving Plants a Boost

- First, test your soil. It's not a big deal and it will tell you a lot. Get an inexpensive kit from your local garden center or a meter with a probe that you can poke into the ground and take a reading. It will make you feel like a very important scientist. Or space alien. Either way, these tests will provide you with a pH number. 7.0 is neutral – a lower number is more acidic, a higher number more alkaline. Set a goal of 5.5. Simple, eh?
- Adjust the pH if necessary. If the test says soil is too alkaline, add a product that contains sulfur such as *Espoma Soil Acidifier*. It's safe, long lasting and better than aluminum sulfate. If the test says it's too acidic, add a safe, pelletized lime product like *Espoma Garden Lime*. Always follow application instructions.
- The Need for Feed. Feed all of these plants with a rich, organic plant food specially formulated for acid-loving plants; one that will spur deep evergreen color and dynamic blooms like *Espoma Organic Holly-tone®*.
- Hot and Sour? Watering requirements vary depending for each plant, but be certain to keep acid-loving plants well watered at the root zone during hot Summer months.
- Too mulch is never too much. Add mulch a couple of inches deep around shallow roots for protection against hot or cold weather.



**That covers the easy basics of what you need to know to help your acid-loving plants thrive. Hopefully this information alleviated any anxiety you may have had about caring for your acid-loving plants—or at least it neutralized the excess acid!**

For more information about our products and services please contact our customer support department at:

The Espoma Company • 6 Espoma Road, Millville, NJ 08332 • Telephone: 1-888-ESPOMA1 (888-377-6621) • Fax: 856-825-1385 • [www.espoma.com](http://www.espoma.com)