

Plant of The Month February 2024: *Daphne mezereum*/February daphne



An early spring bloom on the wood of lovely pink, scented flowers make the February daphne (*Daphne mezereum*) a welcome addition to a cool, sheltered spot in the garden. Spring bloom is followed by red berries and attractive leaves. Berries on this self-seeding shrub can range from prolific to sparse depending upon the individual plant. The seedlings are very appealing to rabbits, while the adult shrub branches are resistant. *D. mezereum* can be used as an informal arch, hedge or specimen shrub.



Close up of flower

Photo source: EMG LF

Growing Conditions:

Sun: part shade, direct sunlight only part of the day, avoid mid-day sun

Water: medium until well established, good drainage

Maintenance: may need to be staked as wood is soft and high winds will affect the plant shape

Tolerates: sand – high organic content

Zone: 4a-7b

Description / Characteristics:

Height x Spread: 90-150 cm., upright, can be rounded

Bloom time and description: March-April, pink alternating fragrant flowers

Fruit: bright red or yellow drupe may follow flowers.

Foliage: oblanceolate leaves (3-8cm long, 1-2cm broad), dark green, spirally arranged on stems

Pests & Disease:

- aphids, scale, fungus, slugs & snails may affect plant. Keep plant healthy with appropriate growing conditions (above), and watch for any pests

Propagation: seed or cuttings

Attracts: bees, butterflies, pollinators, birds

Toxicity: all parts of plant are toxic to humans and may be fatal if eaten; fruits and twigs most toxic; sap may cause skin irritation

Origin: Europe to northern Iran

Other common names: mezereon, spurge laurel, spurge olive (source iNaturalist Canada)