

O'Brien Nurserymen

Daphnes are a genus of plants that I was introduced to while at the University of Vermont. Most Daphnes have very fragrant flowers that bloom in spring. Unfortunately, Daphnes have a bad reputation, that they are hard to grow. The most important thing to know about growing daphnes is that they need good drainage. Here at O'Brien's our upper gardens have 12 inches of topsoil which is over a gravel-sand substrate, so Daphnes grow very well in our gardens.

Daphne 'Carol Mackie' is the most widely available Daphne. This shrub grows to two and a half feet tall with a four-foot spread. Blooming in May with extremely fragrant flowers Carol Mackie often fills the area with a sweet fragrance.



Daphne 'Carol Mackie'

Years ago while visiting a Connecticut wholesale nursery looking for Daphne 'Brigg's Moonlight' we found three plants that had sported to what we believe to be a tetraploid version of 'Brigg's Moonlight', we named this mutation Daphne 'Carol's Limelight'. These Daphnes are difficult to grow because of the high amount of white in the foliage. We find if grown in full sun they can be grown successfully. 'Carol's Limelight' having more green is easier to grow and will even flower for us, whereas 'Brigg's Moonlight' has never flowered for us. We propagate and offer these often requested Daphnes at the nursery.

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Daphne 'Brigg's Moonlight'



Daphne 'Carol's Limelight'

40 Wells Road

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Daphne cneorum is another species that at times can be found in nurseries. This low growing groundcover plant is covered with very fragrant flowers. We have three plants growing along the driveway and enjoy the fragrance just walking up the drive to get the mail.



***Daphne cneorum* 'Ruby Glow'**

At O'Brien's we also offer some hard to find Daphnes. We propagate these from cuttings of our own plants. We believe it is best to purchase young plants because Daphnes resent being grown in containers. Check the woody plant list on our website for the selections we will offer this year.

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Daphne alpine – A dwarf low growing deciduous species

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Daphne genkwa – Lilac Daphne, one of the few Daphnes without fragrance

As you can see Daphne's are a diverse group of shrubs. Lets finish with a rare species that is rarely offered for sale. Dr. Nick Nickou had Daphne jezoensis growing in his garden, although he didn't allow nurserymen to take cuttings from his plant. I was gifted a D. jezoensis from John Bieber from Long Island, New York. After growing nicely for three years it died to the ground, yet regrew the next fall. Now it has grown into a beautiful shrub. Daphne jezoensis is summer dormant, meaning it drops it's foliage in early summer, only to have the leaves reappear in the fall. The flowers will develop around the end of November, yet not open until early spring blooming in the months of March and April!

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Daphne jezoensis in late November

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