

# Babīte, University of Latvia Rhododendron Breeding and Experimental Nursery

"Rododendri" Spilve, Babītes pagasts, Mārupes novads, LV-2101, Riga, Latvia

The University of Latvia Babīte Experimental Rhododendron Breeding Nursery is the only specialised rhododendron nursery in the Baltic States and prides itself on their unique open-air collection of rhododendrons.

The nursery was founded in 1980 under the supervision of habilitated doctor of biology Professor Rihards Kondratovičs. It's located close to Riga, in Babīte parish, in a beautiful pine forest – a place very well suited to growing rhododendrons. The soil in pine forests, if enhanced with sphagnum peat moss, is an ideal substratum for rhododendrons, while the pines provide the necessary partial shade.

## Description

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The 11.8ha-large nursery has a significant open-air collection of rhododendrons with 107 wild species and 371 created by breeders from the USA, Europe, China and Japan. The nursery's main task is to introduce and select rhododendrons to create ornamental and perennial rhododendron varieties suitable to the Baltic climate. The new cultivars are then registered with the Royal Horticultural Society in the UK who are the international cultivar registration authority for the genus Rhododendron. In total, the University of Latvia has internationally registered 146 outdoor rhododendron varieties.

Along with the introduction and selection of rhododendrons, the nursery popularises rhododendrons by publishing books and brochures, organising tours and seminars, as well as teaching rhododendron care, propagation techniques and their practical use in laying out parks to gardeners and anyone with an interest. Students use the nursery to study, or undergo their placements.

The best way to explore this unique collection of outdoor rhododendrons is to walk along the 1.5km-long paved road through the nursery. A typical visit might last 1–1.5 hours. Most rhododendrons bloom in late May and early June, but some species and varieties bloom as early as April. Many plants have reached a height of 4–5m in the last 40 years. Every year the plants are sold in spring and autumn when you can buy rhododendrons cultivated in the nursery.

## Features

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- Plants for purchase
- Accessibility for disabled
- Restrooms for customers
- Picnic or resting places
- Coffee
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Shelter in case of rain or sun

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Playground for children

## Styles

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Collection garden

## Themes

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Woodland garden

## Opening Hours

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May-June open daily from 9:00 to 19:00.

April and July-October open daily from 9:00 to 18:00.

November-March open daily from 9:00 to 16:00.

## Parking

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Plenty of parking space.

## Tickets

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In May and June - 5 EUR (for adults), 4 EUR (for students, retirees), 3 EUR (for schoolchildren).

From July to April - 2 EUR.

Preschool children and people with disabilities of groups 1 and 2 - free entry.

Guide services (by prior arrangement) - 30 EUR (in Latvian), 40 EUR (in a foreign language).

## Contact Information

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Phone: +37167913127

Email: [rodod@lu.lv](mailto:rodod@lu.lv)

Website: <https://www.rododendri.lu.lv/>

## Garden Plan

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