For the joy of gardening!
Estabrook's

LEATHERLEAF CARE

LIGHT

Leatherleaf (Chamaedaphne calyculata) is a low evergreen wetland shrub for a bright, open bog-style planting or lightly shaded moist site. Leave room for a spreading patch. Confirm the botanical name: several unrelated plants are also sold under the name leatherleaf.

WATER

Keep the root zone consistently moist to wet. Water thoroughly at planting and check the original root ball during establishment, even when nearby soil looks damp. Do not place this bog-associated shrub in a dry gravel bed or let a container dry repeatedly in summer.

SOIL & PLANTING

Use acidic, organic, moisture-retentive soil suited to a bog garden or wetland edge. Plant at nursery depth rather than burying the crown. Keep the root surface cool and leave stems uncovered by mulch. A conventional dry foundation bed is a poor substitute for its natural conditions.

FEEDING

Heavy feeding is inappropriate for this shrub of nutrient-poor habitats. Use a soil test before making amendments, and avoid routine lime applications. If a deficiency is confirmed, seek a modest treatment appropriate to acid-loving plants instead of applying a strong general fertilizer.

SEASONAL CARE

Little pruning is normally required. Remove dead or damaged twigs selectively and allow the natural branching to develop. If light shaping is needed, do it after flowering. Avoid routine severe shearing or disturbing the roots of an established colony.

HELPFUL TIPS

White, urn-shaped flowers appear along the stems in spring. Evergreen leaves may bronze seasonally; persistent drying or dying growth calls for checking moisture and site conditions. This guide covers Chamaedaphne calyculata, including Dew Drop, rather than true Daphne or culinary herbs.