Now that Winter’s here……..

Australia is suddenly plunged into cold weather but it is different in each state. I have written a brief article inside about the various climates and micro-climates that we find all over this vast land and about timing of plant growth which I hope will help. I also am also calling on members to give feedback.

It is now the quiet time in the Satsuki calendar but we are all getting soils, equipment and fertilisers ready for the new Satsuki year. The grower keeps busy.

Some experimental work regarding re-potting and potting-on is continuing and the results may extend our schedule of major activity. Please see inside for that small item.

This newsletter is a little later than I intended but what with business commitments and the preparations for the demonstrations that I conducted at the AABC Convention in Fremantle during May here, it just had to wait.

In any case I hope that you will get some benefit from this newsletter.

By the way I pot on cuttings all the way through May to January without too much trouble. But more of that later.

Arthur Robinson
Chairman and Editor

Copyright © Satsuki Society of Australasia Inc. 2011
Potting on and Re-potting

As mentioned previously major re-styling and complete bare root potting is carried on in Japan from February (July in Oz) through to flowering time. They just shelter the newly potted plant from frost, either with a cold green house or by just covering the roots with straw over the sphagnum moss layer. Since there is snow on the frozen ground at that time of the year there, I wondered if we could be re-potting all through our winter except in mountain areas.

To this end I am conducting some experiments and have potted this Komei up, remodelling and bare-rooting it during May when the weather was getting noticeably colder in my back yard. The pictures will explain some of it.

Above: untrained cutting

Most of the soil washed off but more to go until it is truly bare rooted. Then the roots must be pruned as will the top growth.

One important factor must be taken into consideration though. The length of daylight hours. Plants wind down and no movement seems to take place—particularly with Satsuki—until we pass the shortest day. This may have more bearing on the subject than the actual temperature. Fred Galle recons that Azalea roots begin to move a lot earlier and at noticeably colder temperatures than other plants.

Washed but many of the roots growing upward will be removed as will the long straight growth to the right leaving an interesting small curved trunk to be developed later on.

Roots trimmed back on another example so that they slope downwards. This makes a better Nehari (surface roots) as the tree develops.

Komei potted up with a heavy base and some interesting curves to play with later.

Photo taken 12/06/2011.
Notice

As proposed and agreed to at our last AGM in November 2010, Arthur Robinson is going to Melbourne mid-November to conduct demonstrations and workshops with Satsuki Society members there. Victoria was decided on as there are more interstate members there than anywhere else apart from WA.
The programme so far is to conduct these activities at the Yarra Valley and Mount Waverley Clubs from the 12th-15th November.
There may be some provision made for other Satsuki Members not in these clubs to participate in some part.
If you are interested please let us know.
Any other clubs in the Melbourne area that want to get involved should please email Arthur:
arthurob@iinet.net.au

State Climate Considerations

It is very easy for us in the West to base our cultivation techniques on our experiences locally and even then there are some wide differences of needs according to locality.
I live in the Hills, 50km due east of Perth. The elevation is 350m and during the winter I get frost and in summer am usually 3 or 4 degrees hotter than those living on the “flat”.
Apart from that I have many micro climates within my growing area, as do most growers. It is therefore very easy to forget that Melbourne is probably about 3 weeks later for growth and blooming and Canberra about 4 weeks for the same.
Brisbane may be as early as us or even a little earlier whilst Sydney is very similar to us but much more humid. All of this needs to be factored into our individual growing operations.

Any cultural information given to the members needs to be tempered by their local climate.
We have one member living north of Brisbane who’s summers are not excessively hot and winters are quite cold with frosts to boot. A perfect climate by the sounds of it.
This is where the dissemination of information gets complex and you will need to make very precise observations on what happens to particular varieties regarding growth spurts and flowering times within your local area.

I constantly try to remember what the Japanese seasons are like and try to relate them to my conditions. They have cold winters (December -April), warm and somewhat humid springs ( from April to June) leading to more of the same at flowering time (June) then rising temperatures (30-38) and very high humidity as they go into summer (late June-August). Autumn is very beautiful and for the most part gentle.

This is a markedly different pattern to Australia and each state and many areas within that state are widely different.

Some points to remember though:
1. From mid winter on the days are getting longer and you can re-pot and style with adequate protection against frost.
2. Satsuki do not enjoy hot nights so colour and depth of pot and some misting must be considered.
3. Motobadome can be performed as the plant comes into flower as well as at the end of the flowering period but avoiding sudden excesses of heat.
4. Study your micro-climates and shift pots around periodically to find what works.
For my part I shall try to be inclusive with my articles but would welcome feedback from members as to their own local conditions. This way we can all help each other and improve the cultivation of Satsuki in Australia. Above all don’t be backward in coming forward with and for info.

Arthur Robinson: Editor

Here are some pictures of Natural Style Satsuki which I used in my lecture at the AABC Convention in Fremantle in May this year…………………..

Before………………………………………………and ……………  after. Tree by Hiromi Tsukada

Some acute observation of nature and clever work with what the material has to offer provides plenty of food for thought. An approach that might be made with our Native species as well!

Arthur Robinson
Copyright© Satsuki Society of Australasia Inc. 2011.