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The
Satsuki Azalea
Society.



Newsletter

ISSUE 24

Editor's ramblings....

This issue is a bit on the thin side as I'm afraid I'm beginning to run out of things to say! I know I've said it before but if this Society is to survive I really am going to need input from you the members. I warned you in the last issue about the possibility of "inane drivel" turning up on these pages and I think it probably has. It's becoming more like writing in my diary than proper society articles but if it keeps you amused I guess its O.K.

Ray Beddow.
Editor.

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FLOWERING PASSION

I was asked recently how many varieties of Satsuki azaleas I grew and I had to admit that I didn't know exactly! As I've mentioned before, I grow most of my trees as patio plants rather than styled bonsai so I have acquired quite a collection now with virtually all of them grown from cuttings. Anyway, I decided the time had come to catalogue all the trees I have and was quite surprised by the number of varieties I do grow - ?? Whilst at it I also listed all my other trees and was also surprised to see a very distinct pattern emerge – nearly all my non-azalea bonsai are flowering trees as well! I have to admit that this was not a conscious decision but something that's just happened.

I guess that in the same way that some people specialize in pines and some in maples for instance, I have been drawn to flowering varieties. Azaleas are still top of the list but they are closely followed by hawthorn of which I have several. Some of the more common flowering varieties in my collection are Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Quince, Crab Apple, Potentilla etc but I also have a growing collection of fuchsias. (A species which come with a set of growing problems all of their own.) I must be crazy but last year I even decided to have a go at Chrysanthemums! Early days yet for this one but if it's good enough for the Japanese.....

My latest acquisition is a *Loropetalum Chinense*, common name, Fringe Flower. For those of you that haven't seen one it's a bit like dark purple privet with pink tassel flowers.

Of course there are also varieties that, although not known for there flowering, do, as do the vast majority of trees. Here I am referring to Maples, Pines, and Yews etc.

So, why have I unwittingly become a flowering species specialist? Maybe this penchant dates back to my first love

of gardening through which I drifted into bonsai, or is it just that I demand more from my trees. If I just wanted something that looks good year round but ostensibly unchanging then I would fill my collection with Pines. But I want more from my trees; I want them to earn their space on the bench. I want to be entertained with an ever-changing picture. Flowering trees give you this, a lot of them are deciduous so you start the year with a bare tree which allows you to see and appreciate the structure and form of the trunk line and branch placement. In the spring you get the unfurling of new leaves, a thing of beauty in their own right, slowly followed by the fattening flower buds to whet your appetite for what is to come. And then it arrives at last, that glorious, but albeit short period, when the flowers open and the trees are transformed in shape & colour into objects of beauty, often unrecognizable from the tree you saw just a few days earlier. And of course, if you choose wisely you can extend the season of interest and change by growing varieties that produce fruit or berries, which will last to the end of the season or beyond.

To sum up, I guess what I am trying to say in my rambling way is that to me a flowering tree is a constantly changing tree which means that whatever the time of year it will be of interest - value for money in my book..

Have any of you Satsuki lovers noticed a similar affection for flowering trees. If so let me know. I realize that this is getting away from the main tract of Satsuki growing but I believe experience gained from caring and tending to the needs of other flowering varieties of tree will only help us appreciate the Satsuki even more.

Now that I've made my list of Satsuki varieties it occurred to me that it might be interesting to find out just how many different varieties we grow between us? I'll start the ball

rolling with my list and if you have something different let me know.

I believe there is something like 3 to 4 thousand varieties of Satsuki and the list is growing all the time, but I imagine that the differences between new varieties and old are so small they would be unnoticeable to the amateur. I mention this because even in my own small collection some of the varieties are very similar.

Note.

S931 & 2 were unnamed varieties that Alexander Kennedy was selling a few years ago and I must say that the 932 (pictured below) variety is probably the best in my collection for giving the full range of flower colours and patterns; I wish I knew what its real name is.



SATSUKI VARIETIES.

AI NO –TSUKI	ASAHI-NO-HIKARI
BUNKA	CHIGOSUGATA
CHINSAI	CHIYO-NO-HOMARE
CHOJUHO	DAI-SEIKO
EIKAN	GYOKUREI
GYOTEN	HAKUREI
HI-KORIN	HI-NO-TSUKASA
HOSHI-NO-KAGAYAKI	IZAYOI
JUKO	KAHO
KAHO-NO-HIKARI	KANUMA-NO-HIKARI
KARENKO	KAZAN
KINSAI	KIZAKURA
KOBAI	KOBAI-NO-KAGAYAKI
KOGETSU	KOMEI
KORIN	KOTOBUKI
KOZAN	KOZAN-NO-HIKARI
KOZAN-NO-TSUKI	KUSUDAMA
NACHI-NO-TSUKI	NYOHO-NO-HIKARI
NYOHOZAN	OSAKAZUKI
POLO	S 931
S932	SACHI-NO-HANNA
SECCHU-NO-MATSU	SETSUGETSU-NO-HANA
SHIN-NIKKO	SHINNYO-NO-TSUKI
SHIRAITO-NO-TAKI	SHIRYU-NO-HOMARI
SHUHO-NO-HIKARI	TATSUNAMI
TERUHIME	UNGETSU-NO-HANA
YAEGOROMO	YATA-NO-KAGAMI

COMBINED HOBBIES.

I have been keen in D.I.Y. all my life and woodwork in particular. I have quite happily knocked up the odd wooden structure in the garden but as yet have not delved into the more intricate side of cabinet making. Although building a tree house or pergola requires accuracy it does not demand the level of finish a finely crafted article of furniture would. A few years ago I succumbed to my sons pleading to get satellite television, (all my friends have got it etc.) something I swore I would never do. However, since having it installed I have slowly become addicted to a channel called 'Discovery Home & leisure'. Those of you with access to this channel will know that it is devoted to D.I.Y. programmes 24/7 with quite a few devoted to woodworking.

These programmes seem to have awoken a latent desire in me to create something desirable in wood but what? I don't particularly want to build the usual household & garden furniture these programmes specialize in so it finally occurred to me to combine my new hobby with my old one and have a go at some bonsai display stands. These would incorporate all the cabinet making skills with a useful object at the end. (Hopefully)

To this end I announced to anyone that would listen that all I wanted for Christmas was power tools, hand tools etc., and spent several weekends creating space at the back of my garage that I rather grandly call my workshop. (Where does all that rubbish come from?)

Christmas came and I was lucky to receive amongst other things a mitre saw and router table, which will be ideal for what I have in mind. All I have to do now is save up for a router to fit in the table and I will be away!

In the meantime I have been engaged in a fair amount of research; looking through books and magazines at pictures of stands to copy, sorry I mean for inspiration. Anyway, having looked at all the photo's it dawned on me that I don't know if any rules relating to the type of stand to be used for displaying bonsai exist. Most of you will be aware that there are guidelines (although unofficial) as to what shape of pot goes with a particular style of tree and where you should use glazed or un-glazed pots but I have never seen or read any guidelines as to display stand choice.

The sort of things I'm talking about are: Should you only use rectangular stands with rectangular pots and oval with oval?

What size should the stand be in relation to the pot? – Size for size, 1 inch bigger all round, 2-inch etc.

How high should the stand be? Is there a relationship that states a stand should be a certain percentage of the height of the pot?

Is there a preferred colour of stand for a particular pot? i.e. do dark stands work better with coloured, glazed pots and light coloured stands with un-glazed, brown pots?

What is the ideal finish? Gloss, Matt, varnish, oil, shellac, wax, paint – the mind boggles!!!

You can see my dilemma. Perhaps I'm worrying unnecessarily. I know at the end of the day its personal choice that matters but if there are any guidelines out there it would be nice to know if I'm breaking them!

I've come up with a few designs that I feel might be within my capabilities so if and when I get around to having a go I'll marry them up to a few trees and let you see the results.

2003 ANNUAL SHOW.

As previously mentioned, this years Show & AGM will be held on 22nd June at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses to give it its full title. We will be the guests of the Midland Bonsai Society whose own annual show will be run on the same day. Most of you will be aware that the gardens are also home to the National Bonsai Collection so there will be plenty to see. It would be nice to see greater number of members attending and/or showing at this event. If you do want to show then please contact me at your earliest convenience so that I will have some idea of numbers. I know it's difficult to predict what will be in flower at the appropriate time but I have to advise the Midland how much table space we require. This doesn't mean you can't just turn up on the day with a tree though; we will always be able to find room for another one or two. I will give more details regarding times/costs/how to get there, closer to the day.

If you can't make the show but you have some comments as to how the Society is being run then please let me know and they can be raised at the AGM.

It was also previously suggested that we could arrange an informal get together at Dai-Ichi in Redditch on the Saturday. If you do intend visiting Dai-Ichi then please let me know so that I can inform Alex & Bob.

EL DORADO BONSAI

If you happen to be going to California, U.S.A. (I wish!) try to find time to visit El Dorado Bonsai. I say this not from personal experience but from what I have seen on there web site. Check it out and I think you will agree it would be worth a visit. Just imagine, a bonsai nursery set in 50 odd acres of stunning countryside that specializes in Satsuki!

Fred & Dolly Fassio, the proprietors, are old friends of the Satsuki Society having visited our Plymouth Show in 1998. The web site itself is interesting viewing with the usual Home, About us, News, Gallery, etc. sections. The gallery section took a bit of a while to download but that's probably because my computer is like me, getting old and decrepit. However for those of you with broadband it shouldn't be a problem. (Did that sound like I know what I'm talking about?)

You can see for yourselves at: www.edbonsai.com



And finally.....

It would be great if as many of you as possible could turn up for the show. I'm sure that there will be lots to see and do. If you could bring along a tree even better! It doesn't have to be a show stopper, as long as it is well presented and preferably in flower then it will be welcome. Once again, if you could let me know if you plan to attend the show or Dai-ichi I would be grateful.

This is the last of Penny's cartoons – any more in the offing Penny or would anyone else care to have a go?

Ed.



*Removing the flower buds can be very time consuming
And stressful!*