

Any communications relating to the Newsletter, or on any other aspect of the society, can be addressed to either:-

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Special Prize

The best letter received for inclusion in the next issue of Satsuki Newsletter, will win an exclusive Satsuki Workshop Apron!

This is an attractive and practical apron produced by the Japanese "Satsuki Research" Magazine.

So get writing!

The *Satsuki* Newsletter



Issue One

Dear Members,

Welcome to the first edition of the Satsuki Newsletter.

We hope that from this modest beginning we will develop this publication to ever higher levels. Quite what this newsletter becomes, indeed, what the new Society becomes depends directly on you, the members.

What is required from you right now is some sort of feedback.
We need:-

Your response on any of the items mentioned in this issue.
Ideas about the aims and organisation of the Society.
Thoughts on the future development of the Satsuki hobby in Britain.
Ideas for future articles.
Letters giving your own experiences with Satsuki.
Queries regarding Satsuki culture.
Above all, we need to hear from anyone with ideas for an exhibition venue for a show next May or June. (This is fairly urgent. Could you persuade your local Bonsai Society to help?)

Apart from your feedback, we also need you to tell others about the Society. A society such as this with a very thinly-spread membership has problems raising funds in the ways used by local clubs. Only by increasing the membership can we raise the money needed to improve and develop the newsletter and other society activities.

All of you have shown enough interest in Satsuki to join this new society. Please make the effort now to participate in its activities. Only if you are prepared to take an active part can this new society of ours prosper.

Alexander Kennedy
Chairman



The First Society Meeting

The founding meeting of the Satsuki Society was held on Saturday May 25th during the Satsuki Show held at Martins Garden Centre near Plymouth.

The basic business of the meeting was to get the Society off the ground by adopting a constitution and electing officers and a committee to run it.

At the beginning of the meeting, a total of 35 persons had paid subscriptions "up front". These 35 will form an exclusive band entitled to call themselves "Founder Members".

CONSTITUTION

After discussion and minor amendments, the following Constitution was adopted for the Society. This Constitution is open to amendment at the next AGM in any ways the members feel appropriate.

1. The name of the Society shall be "THE SATSUKI SOCIETY".
2. a) The object of the Society shall be to further interest in, and knowledge of, Satsuki azaleas within Britain.
b) It is the aim of the Society to organise an annual National Exhibition or Convention.
c) The Society shall produce a newsletter for the membership.
3. a) Membership of the Society shall be open to all persons with an interest in Satsuki.
b) Subscriptions shall become due on the first of May each year.
c) Reductions may be made to the membership fee for persons joining

late in the year at the discretion of the committee.

d) The membership fees will be determined by the members at the Annual General Meeting.

4. a) The officers of the Society shall be a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

b) The committee shall consist of the Officers and at least two other members.

c) In addition to committee members being elected at the AGM, the committee shall have the power to co-opt new members when required.

d) The committee shall be responsible for the day to day running of the Society. The full committee shall meet at least two times per year.

5. a) The finances of the Society shall be under the control of the committee, which shall be responsible through the Treasurer for the collection of moneys due and for the payment of Society debts.

b) Accounts of the Society's financial transactions shall be presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

6. a) The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held at the time of the National Satsuki Exhibition each year. At this meeting the members shall receive reports of the Society's accounts and activities.

b) Items for inclusion on the agenda for the AGM should be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting.

Comments, and suggestions for refinement of this constitution are invited from the members.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

The following persons were elected to serve the Society for the next year:-

Chairman Alexander Kennedy (Plymouth Bonsai Society)

Secretary Ray Jacobs (Plymouth Bonsai Society)

Treasurer Geoff Blowers (Plymouth Bonsai Society)

Committee Members:-

Brian Evans (Wessex Bonsai Society)

Brian Johnson (not a Bonsai Society member)

The Society is very clearly being run from the South West at present. This reflects the fact that those present at the meeting were almost exclusively from that region. It is hoped that in future the committee can be drawn from a much wider geographical spread.

In addition to a general discussion of the Society's aims, and the matter of venues for future Satsuki shows, which is discussed in more detail later in this Newsletter, a number of other matters were discussed briefly at the meeting.

1. Subscriptions

The meeting voted to continue with the £5.00 membership fee for the current year. They also agreed a fee of £3.00 for under 16 year olds and a joint membership fee of £7.50 for two members living at the same postal address and receiving only one Newsletter. The two couples who have already paid and may wish a refund are invited to contact our Treasurer, Geoff Blowers.

Also on the subject of membership. It was voted to give Martins Garden Centre a 12 months complimentary membership for all the help they have given and the interest they have shown in the new Society.

2. Affiliation to FOBBS

Affiliation of the Society to the Federation of British Bonsai Societies was discussed and was felt to be desirable by all present. The fact that the Satsuki Society may attract members who do not have a great interest in Bonsai as such was not felt to be a barrier to our membership. At present Society funds are not sufficient to make affiliation to FOBBS possible, but it is our intention to do so as soon as practical.

3. Newsletter Contributions

Producing a Newsletter on a regular basis will become a heavy burden if it falls exclusively on just two or three individuals. Any thoughts, words of wisdom, gossip, cartoons or any other possible contributions will be very welcome, as will your ideas on what you want the Newsletter to contain.

Looking far into the future, if the Society should flourish and our Newsletter begin to approach the level of a magazine, The publishers of the Japanese "Satsuki Research" magazine have said they would be happy to consider making articles available to us.....????



FUTURE SATSUKI EXHIBITIONS

This year, there was a problem with the venue for our Satsuki show which had to be changed very late in the day. It was very fortunate that Martins Garden Centre in Plymouth were willing to provide a venue at short notice. In future we hope to establish venues for Satsuki events well in advance. For 1998 it planned to hold the Satsuki show in Plymouth again as part of the Plymouth B. S./ FOBBS National Exhibition. For other years we are looking for suitable venues in other parts of the country where a Satsuki show could be put on. Venues would not have to be very big or prestigious. The main requirements are good location and a local Bonsai Society whose members would be prepared to take on the donkey work in setting-up, stewarding, etc. We would also want the local Society to take on the work of local promotion. The Satsuki Society would organise the supply of trees for the show and would be responsible for all agreed expenses.

If you think you could persuade your local Bonsai Society to join in the fun of hosting a Satsuki show then please let us hear from you. Very few people in this country have had the chance to see Satsuki shown in all their glory. We are sure that many more would be converted to the Satsuki cause if they had the opportunity. Putting on a show in your area would help generate more fellow Satsuki enthusiasts. Please air this idea with your local Bonsai Society and let us know. We are looking for venues for Mid-May to Mid-June in 1997 and 1999.

Any ideas from any member will be very welcome.

Impressions of Japanese Satsuki Exhibitions

by your Chairman

I visited Japan at the end of May this year. The main purpose of the visit was to meet Japanese Satsuki Publishers to discuss forthcoming book projects. The timing of the visit, however, was determined by the fact that I wanted to see the big Satsuki Exhibitions.

During my visit I had the chance to see two of the biggest Satsuki shows. These were the National Satsuki Exhibition held in Tokyo and the Kanuma Satsuki Matsuri (Festival), held in Kanuma, the home of Satsuki. These shows feature both Bonsai-styled trees and "Meika" type Satsuki, which are displayed and judged purely on the quality of their flowers. For the visitor from Britain it is the size of the plants which makes the biggest impact, particularly the Meika trees, which can be up to 4 feet tall and 2.5 feet across! With the Bonsai it is the large and beautiful trunks that stand out as being very different from anything we see over here.

My first visit was to the Kanuma Festival. On the main road outside the Satsuki Centre we were stopped by uniformed stewards and directed to one of the overflowing temporary car parks. The car park inside the Centre was partly taken up by displays and trade stands, and the remainder is reserved for coaches, which were coming in and out in a steady flow. These included free courtesy coaches taking visitors to and from the local railway stations, and on visits to the big nurseries nearby. No description is adequate to give an impression of the fabulous old bonsai on display, but the standard of presentation of the trees and the event as a whole was equally striking. Everything was immaculate. Each of the

top prizewinning big bonsai was presented in its own tokonoma space around eight feet wide, on an antique display table and with its own exquisite accent planting. There appears to be little thought of equal treatment for all exhibitors there, for at the other end of the scale, some trees in what was translated to me as the "amateur classes" (?) were crowded tightly together on benches.



One bench was devoted to the display of this year's 12 new approved varieties. These were all very attractive, though I think only one or two really stood out from what is currently available. Most notable was a semi-double variety with very dark, intense purple flowers. Considering that the current Japanese catalogues list nearly 1,000 varieties, it is amazing to think that they still find a market for new ones. I was assured, however, that enthusiasts are still queuing up to get the latest plants in fashion.

Apart from the Satsuki themselves, I was most impressed by the standard and variety of the accent plantings. This is something that the Japanese have now raised to an independent art form in its own right. There is now a monthly magazine there devoted to accent plantings.

This is certainly an area where displays in this country could be greatly enhanced.

Another notable "attraction" which we probably won't see at British Bonsai exhibitions, are the beautiful "Miss Satsuki" girls who act as hostesses in their colourful uniforms

By contrast with the Kanuma Festival, the National Exhibition in Tokyo was bigger and had many better quality trees. Yet it was in some ways a little less impressive. The stand quality was not as good and too many of the trees were overcrowded. Even the spacious "seat exhibits" (tokonoma-type displays) were rather let down by the shiny, painted backdrop and the cheap-looking plastic mat covering the bench-tops.

Whereas most visitors to the Kanuma show were obviously dedicated enthusiasts, the viewers at the Tokyo show are largely the general public. Entry was free and unobstructed, with many of the milling crowds being just passers-by taking an attractive short-cut. The organisers seemed quite comfortable with the idea of having hundreds of trees in easy reach of the public, with no security controls or obvious stewarding. A different world!

For a Satsuki enthusiast, visiting Japan at the end of May, or early June, is the experience of a lifetime. Not only can you see the fabulous trees in the exhibitions; you can also see the "Magaki" or hedge Satsuki, flowering in all the Japanese Gardens. A trip by train or car up the mountain valleys of central Honshu will also reward the visitor with the sight of the wild "river Satsuki" (*Rhododendron indicum*) flowering in their precarious rocky perches alongside the rushing mountain streams.

I received a warm welcome from all the Japanese Satsuki people I met, particularly from the growers in Kanuma. Everyone was very interested to hear about our new Satsuki Society and wished us well. I was assured that if a group from Britain ever wished to travel to see the Japanese shows and nurseries, an excellent tour could be organised for them. Anyone interested, please start saving your pennies!

May 30th and 31st 1998

The biggest weekend in the history of Western Satsuki

As most of you will already know, Plymouth Bonsai Society is staging the 1998 FOBBS National Bonsai Exhibition. The event will incorporate a Satsuki Convention and special display of Satsuki as its centrepiece. Although it is Plymouth B. S. that is running the event, it is likely that the Satsuki Society will have a major role to play in the success of the Convention.

The most exciting news concerns the demonstrators for the Convention. Over the past few months, contacts have been made with the Nippon Satsuki Association on the subject of a Japanese Satsuki Master coming over to demonstrate at the event. There is now a distinct possibility that not just one Japanese Master may attend, but possibly three or four!

Things are still at the early planning stage, but we will keep you posted. If the Japanese do attend, it is hoped to extend the Convention to include the Monday. This would allow more time for high quality workshops, which would take up too much of the delegates' time if crammed into the two days of the exhibition.

A Satsuki Society leaflet and application form are enclosed.

Please pass this on to a friend - We need more members!