November and the flowers are here at last.

Now we can enjoy the fruits of our endeavour and as the month progresses some of the early flowering varieties need the spent and odd remaining flowers removed. At the end of the month the later ones emerge and the work of pruning, selecting shoots, wiring and re-potting gets under way in earnest.

Remember that flower removal is very important for the strength and renewed growth/energy of the plant.

Flower removal is best done by hand as you should remove all flower parts including the calyxes, for the best results.

I take most of my cuttings at this time as they root easily, are very robust and shoots have to be thinned in any case, at this time, down to 2 from the usual 3 or 5.

Prior to flowering and as the buds swell, some shoots can be thinned out or shortened so that the flower can be presented well on the branch.

Inside there is a brief article on shoot selection to maintain the variation of style/pattern of the parent, so read carefully if you want to perpetuate the natural mutations of the variety you are working with.

Happy growing,

Arthur Robinson

Ne-agari, bare root style. See inside

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Ne-agari
or bare root style

As there is a lot of interest in this style we are providing you with the main method used by Japanese growers to start Ne-agari off.

The advantage of this style is that you achieve the appearance of an aged and interesting trunk within a few short years. Our main concern in a hotter and drier climate is as to whether the trunk may get scorched in the early stages of development.

There are some basics that should be remembered though.

1. The exposed roots should be of an odd number.

2. The roots are the trunk so the branching can start at the bottom of what would have been the trunk.

3. Watering must be daily and very, very thorough.

The following illustrations will give you the method but bear in mind that a solid piece of pipe can be substituted for the plastic sheath shown here.

The ingredients. Struck cutting, 1.5mm Anodised Aluminium wire, 20cm pot, plastic tube and cane

Remove cutting from pot which has been grown in Kanuma of mixed sizes, not layered. This achieves interesting twists in the roots. PLUS. A sharpened chopstick used for unravelling the roots with a jet of water.

The 1.5mm wire has been wrapped gently but firmly around the roots to compact them and make them columnar. The small section of wire above the roots is, for the moment, wrapped around the trunk but later on will be attached to the support stake. Do not trim any roots at all as you want as much root growth as possible in a downward direction.

See P3.
Kanuma in the 3 grades of Large, Medium and Fine are placed in the larger pot in 3 distinct layers and then watered thoroughly, flushing out all dust till the water runs clear.

Push the cane through the middle of the plastic tube, without damaging it as it is only quite thin plastic, and down into the Kanuma right to the bottom. so that it is fairly firmly in place and stable.

When the tube has been planted and filled another 10mm of Fine Kanuma will be added to make the whole even more stable.

After placing the young plant at the top of the tube the tube is filled with a mixture of Medium and Fine Kanuma, adding large pieces in a random fashion as you go. This encourages the roots to take on interesting shapes as they travel on down the tube toward the main pot at the bottom.

The Plant is attached to the stake using the excess at the top of the winding around the roots.

Back-fill the top of the pot with Fine Kanuma and around the tube/column to assist in stabilising it.

The next step is to water the whole very thoroughly from the top. Do not stand in water as you still have fine dust particles to get rid of from the mix. Make sure that all the particles in the column are wetted down thoroughly.

If you are concerned about stability, use wire or string to tie the entire arrangement into the pot.

Keep protected from wind and give dappled light. Certainly no afternoon sun. You do not want to COOK it.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR THE FINAL RESULT.
Introducing
Yata no Kagami and its sport Shinkyo

Yata no Kagami leaves colour up well in winter. It is not a rapid grower but is a very beautiful old variety of unknown origin. It has an array of blooms basically Tamafu (a white blush in the middle of a coloured petal) but with many variations through to an almost white flower according to soil, fertilising and/or weather conditions.

Shinkyo has a lighter orange base and produces some plain Selfs (white as well as orange) and also some big sectioned Shibori (literally tie and die), contrasting segments and stripes.

The growth is quite fine as are the medium to small blooms. The flower form is excellent.

It is no problem to grow, is prolific in flowering but cuttings should not be taken off the white flowered branches as that is all you will get.

When the cuttings have struck for both varieties they often show plain flowers for a couple of seasons till the typical Tamafu pattern shows. If you want good flower variations, don’t feed too much.

Ready to grow.
You can start to feed your ne-agari after about 3 weeks.
Any little punctures in the plastic can be fixed up quite easily with Sellotape.
Eikan, Matsu Kagami and Kogetsu should have cuttings taken from the white or white with slight variation to achieve a balanced set of variations in flower pattern.

Issho no Haru should have cuttings taken from the pale Pink/Mauve background (known as Jiai) flowers. If you take them from the Purple Red ones that is all you will get.

And sooooo on!

In the main this is a voyage of discovery but bear in mind that in general the plainer the flower, the more consistent will the cuttings be. The more the pattern, the trickier taking cuttings true to type becomes.

One can only be guided but remember that if you produce a white flowered Satsuki from Shinkyo, for instance, it should be labelled “White Shinkyo”, not given some name of your own invention. The pallet of varieties is very confused as it is.

Useful Tips

On

Selection of branches for cuttings

Confusion reigns when it comes to trying to produce plants from Satsuki cuttings to perpetuate the variations possible in a particular variety.

Plain flowered varieties such as Osakazuki, Wakaebisu, Yochio, Chinsan, Rukizon, Kinsai, Takasago etc are no problem for cuttings as you can take them off any branch and you will perpetuate the type.

It is written in some sources that Satsuki with plenty of variation should all have cuttings taken from the plain white branches. This is not a rule and does not necessarily produce the desired variations.

In the case of varieties such as Shinkyo, Yama no Hikari, Nikko, Gyoten, Issho no Haru use the branches with a base colour with variation to perpetuate the type. If you use white or white with colour variation from Shinkyo you will only get white flowers. Yama no Hikari reverts to its parent Kazan if you take the cuttings off the white based flowers instead of the pink based ones.

Goko: ne agari style.

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