

Care guide – Azalea Satsuki

The word Satsuki corresponds to the fifth month of the ancient eastern lunar calendar and coincides with our month of June, it is the flowering month of the Azalea Satsuki. This azalea blooms very late in Japan, but in tropical countries it blooms earlier, starting in March.

Location

You usually buy azaleas in pots when they are in beautiful bloom. In fact, not everyone knows that once azalea is potted in domestic environments, the environmental conditions of the house, especially during the winter period, can compromise its survival. The azalea is actually an acidophilic plant that cannot be grown anywhere indoors. During the day it should be placed in a bright and dry place, away from cold drafts. During the night it is advisable to protect it from thermal shocks. Therefore, it is advisable to move the plant to a cool place, such as a balcony. During spring, however, it is advisable to expose to the morning sun to promote the development of a compact and uniform flowering and vegetation. Finally, in summer it must be protected from the sun all day, as it is a plant that does not tolerate high temperatures.

Soil

Repotting the satsuki azalea can be done initially with a mixture of hard quality akadama with kanuma (50/50) and gradually start to pack only with selected kanuma. Kanuma Selected is used for acidophilus plants like Azaleas, Rhododendrons etc. Kanuma is a volcanic clay modified by mineralized water that filters chemical particles, baked in an oven at +/- 300°C for almost an hour, thus killing any microorganism, bacteria or weed seeds. Kanuma is cream colored when dry and yellowish when wet, it absorbs water very well without causing excess, so it has excellent drainage qualities maintaining an optimal environment for root development. It is especially suitable for satsuki that have a very thin root system.

Watering

The bonsai azalea prefers cool, moist soil. During the summer, it is necessary to avoid dry soil which can cause the death of the azalea. Therefore, the soil must be abundantly irrigated as soon as it starts to dry. In addition, the azalea being an acidophilic plant must be watered with water without You can then use distilled or rainwater, or treated with a descaling product.

Pruning

The formation pruning of the azalea bonsai occurs in the first 2 or 3 years, during sprouting, it consists of pinching (squeezing) the shoots with the nails, just above a leaf to provide a strong and intense branching that will give rise to a profusion of flowers. Pinching must be repeated throughout the spring to achieve a satisfactory result, it has the advantage of strengthening the bonsai, which will be more compact, more robust and above all, it will produce many more flowers. Azalea bonsai can be pruned practically throughout the year, as a rule, it is advisable to prune immediately after flowering to maintain balance and a natural shape. All year round, just cut the largest shoots to keep the defined shape.

Wiring

Wiring is a technique that must be done carefully. Wiring the ulmus parvifolia bonsai consists of wrapping an anodized aluminum wire around the trunk or branch to change its direction, in order to define the desired shape.

Repotting

The ideal period to repot the bonsai azalea is after flowering, between the months of April and May. The operation should generally be performed every 2 years. For older samples every 3-4 years. Once the bonsai is removed from the pot, it will be necessary to clean the roots with a rake that comes out gradually. After removing about 1/3 of the soil, with ad hoc scissors, cut the excess roots, curing the larger ones with a little curing mastic.