

Care guide – Serissa

The serissa phoetida bonsai originates from China and owes its name to the nauseating smell that emerges when we touch and rub the leaves or during pruning. The serissa family is huge and comprises four to five thousand species. In addition to the japonica serissa and the Shanghai serissa, the most frequently used bonsai is the serissa phoetida, all of which have a variegated variant with white leaves and white or pink flowers, single or double.

Location

It is an indoor bonsai, however it is not easy to maintain and is very sensitive to changes in temperature, watering or location. It is therefore imperative to avoid sudden changes in both location and temperature, the more stable the environmental conditions, the better for the serissa phoetida bonsai. A serissa phoetida bonsai, when in good health, can bloom practically all year round, in greater abundance from spring to late autumn. The flower is born at the end of the branch, remains for about twenty-four hours and then falls, but new flowers are always appearing. The serissa phoetida bonsai, being of tropical or subtropical origin, needs a lot of light and humidity, whether indoors or outdoors, but in any case it is advisable to avoid air currents, a fatal factor for serissa. Indoor bonsai need a lot of light (near a window), but they don't like direct sun. Turn the serissa phoetida bonsai periodically to ensure regular growth of the branch and to keep it away from strong heat points, avoiding excess temperatures and drafts.

Soil

The soil must drain water well; that is, it has to absorb and filter it, keeping the roots properly oxygenated. When that doesn't happen, it's easy to get into trouble. Therefore, it is highly recommended to mix 80% Akadama with 20% kiryuzuna, or with kanuma.

Watering

Keep the soil slightly damp, especially in summer, but avoid waterlogging as it is sensitive to excess water. Water with rainwater or with low pH (between 4 and 6).

Pruning

Pinching can be done throughout the year as it is mostly done to maintain style. To do this, it will be enough to let 4 to 8 pairs of leaves grow and then cut 2 to 4 pairs. However, root formation and pruning should be done at the end of winter, when the minimum temperature is above 15°. We will also have to remove the shoots that come out of the base of the trunk, unless we want to include them in the drawing.

Wiring

Branches and shoots can be wired at any time. As with all species of bonsai, it is important to permanently monitor the wire so as not to let it injure the bark.

Repotting

Its growth is slow in general, so it will have to be repotted every 3 years. This is done in spring, when the minimum temperature is at least 18 degrees Celsius.