

Research Notes

About the Satsuki Dictionary

The *Satsuki Dictionary* (*Satsuki Daijiten*) is a Japanese reference book of Satsuki cultivars. A full page is devoted to each cultivar and includes a color picture and basic descriptive information. All text is in Japanese except for a transliteration of the name in English.

The dictionary has been published in several editions at least over the last 18 years. Editions have been published in 1983, 1987, 1992, 1995, and 1997. Each edition in the series has included more Satsuki than the one before. The last two have been cumulative, with new Satsuki added to the back of the 1992 edition.

The most recent 1997 dictionary includes 1,012 Satsuki. Not all of the cultivars known in the US are included, and it is difficult to ascertain what criteria were applied in selecting those for inclusion. However, it appears that most of the important and popular cultivars have been included in recent editions.

The 1997 dictionary is a compact softbound book yet rather heavy, weighing nearly 2-1/2 pounds. Dimensions are 5 x 7-3/8 inches and 1-5/8 inches thick. It reads from back to front in the standard Japanese form.

The beginning of the book provides a brief introduction and explains the terms and conventions used to describe the cultivars. For example, leaves described as medium size are between 2 and 4 cm. in length. Those outside this range are described as either small or large. Table 1 "Notes" lists conventions for flower and leaf sizes as used in the dictionary (see page 33).

The introduction also presents graphic depictions of the common flower forms and color patterns used in the descriptions. Following the introduction is an index of cultivars and their page numbers in Japanese alphabetical order.

Unlike the editions of the 1980s that presented cultivars in Japanese alphabetical order, the last three editions have organized cultivars into 12 groups by flower color and pattern. The order in which these groups are arranged is: solid white, solid red, white throat on red base, red variegation on white base, *jiai* of red color, solid purple, white throat on purple base, purple variegation on white base, *jiai* of purple color, solid *toki* (persimmon-like color), variegation on *toki* base, and *fukurin* (jewel border, or white margin on the petals). The new cultivars since 1992 are added to the back and are not in any particular order. However, each has a color-patterned tab printed in the bottom outside corner of the page identifying the group to which it belongs. These will likely be rearranged to the appropriate groups in a future edition.

The information provided for each cultivar is structured into nine subject headings. These columns read horizontally across the page from right to left. Subjects are:

- Parentage (sometimes also includes information on period of origin)
- Flower form and size
- Flower color and pattern
- Leaf characteristics
- Plant characteristics
- Key points in culture
- Year of registration
- Creator
- Registrant

The first six subjects are addressed for nearly all of the cultivars. Information for the last three subjects is included for only about half of them.

The information provided under each of the subjects varies but is generally very brief. Leaves, for example,

may only be described as "medium size, glossy" or just "medium size."

"Plant characteristics" is limited to a brief comment, often in one of three areas—winter hardiness, branching density, and plant habit (creeping to upright). Examples: weak against winter cold, dense branching, vine-like habit.

"Key points in culture" includes brief comments on care, or special considerations for bonsai or flower display training. The following are five examples. "Stop fertilizing in July and expose to plenty of sun so as to increase resistance to cold weather and to prevent bark split." "White color tends to dominate so keep as many branches as possible which bear variegated flowers." "No problems, suitable for garden planting and for *shohin* bonsai." "Because of two-color bloom, styling should be done as you confirm the color of flowers." "Because it has large flower, style it for flower viewing."

Other Satsuki References

Besides the references cited in Jim Trumbly's article, note these articles have also been published by the Society. Extra copies are available for \$1.00 each by writing or calling:

Col. Murray Sheffield
334-567-4974
875 Canyon Road
Wetumpka, AL 36093

Clark, Malcolm. "Named Satsuki Sports." June 1990. *THE AZALEAN*. 12 (2): 28-29.

Evans, Charles H. and William C. Miller III. "Pattern of Sporting." March 1985. *THE AZALEAN*. 7 (1): 1-2.

Thakur, Ajit. "The Enchanting Satsuki, Part 2." March 1990. *THE AZALEAN*. 12 (1): 4-7, 15-16.