



Satsuki Azalea Notes, August:

Hot weather and drying winds can wreak havoc on your azaleas. Continue to feed and water in order to build up the plants strength for the next year.

Major work such as repotting, pruning or heavy wiring should be avoided after the beginning of August.

Be alert for outbreaks of Leaf and Flower Gall. Leaf and flower buds infected by the fungus *Exobasidium vaccinii* result in galls. Under very humid conditions, the galls may become so abundant as to cause considerable damage to your azaleas. The disease causes the leaves to become swollen, curled and galled. The fleshy galls are pale green to white or pink in color during the early stages of the disease but turn brown and hard as the season progresses. The galls are covered with a whitish mold like growth during periods of high humidity. The spores produced in the whitish mold on the surface of the galls is blown and washed to other leaves and flower buds causing infection. The disease is kept in check by picking and destroying the galls. I also spray with a fungicide. Locating your azaleas where there is good air circulation is also helpful.

The plant should be allowed to build its reserves for the winter. Removal of unwanted shoots may be carried out as necessary and plants need some trimming and even a little detail wiring to keep them in shape.

Satsuki will be forming their flower buds in late summer and early autumn. Be aware of this when pruning during this time as it may effect flower production on those trees that will be allowed to bloom next season (third cycle trees). On first and second cycle trees it doesn't really matter as the flower buds will be removed in the spring on those.

Next month we will begin fall activities care, pruning and feeding, of azaleas.