



Satsuki Azalea Notes, July:

Usually by this time flowering is over and we are busy removing the spent blossoms and the seed ovary beneath them. Continue as the flowers fade and wilt. Do not leave them on too long, as this will conserve plant energy.

Once flowering is over, add these trees to your fertilizing schedule along with your first and second cycle trees. I use Osmocote with a 9-6-6 formulation, augmented with 9-7-5 Dyna Gro liquid and 2-4-1 fish fertilizers. Now and during the next two cycles the tree must regain its vigor for the next flowering display.

Water adequately during hot, dry weather. I water twice daily and my pots are moist, yet on these hot days my flowers tend to wilt. The reason for this is that the root system in my containers is not adequate to keep supplying water to the blossoms, as well as the leaves during the daytime. When the temperatures drop in the evening the flowers recover. Transpiration is so great during the hot portion of the day that when the roots cannot keep up with it, the tree limits the available water to the non-essential parts of the tree which in this case are the blossoms. Even though there is adequate moisture in the soil, the tree's system is up to capacity and still cannot keep up. Its defense, therefore, is to sacrifice the blossoms, rather than the foliage.

Satsuki Azaleas experience a big flush of growth after flowering and water demands are greater. Water adequately, especially during hot, dry weather.

Continue trimming and wiring your second cycle trees for shape and style. These will provide your flowering display for next year.

Check your wires constantly as branches thicken rapidly at this time of the year.

As always, keep checking for pests, keep out weeds and turn your plants for even growth.

During the summer your azaleas need to grow and regain their strength.