

The bulk of pruning work for Satsuki Azaleas is usually done after flowering, which is about the middle of Summer in the South of England.

Traditionally in Japan, Satsuki Azaleas are re-potted at the same time of the year, after flowering. However some enthusiasts in this country prefer to do this in the Spring, to give the plant a longer season to recover from the intrusive process of re-potting.

As these plants flower profusely, the flowers should not be left on the plant too long. Flowering drains a lot of the Satsuki's resources, and the amount of flower can be so dense as to block out light from the inner branches and cause die-back.

Satsuki Azalea flowers often appear in groups. In this plant they were mostly in pairs:



When removing the flowers, care should be taken to remove all the reproductive parts (stigma, ovary, filaments, etc) and not just the petals; this is to prevent the plant inadvertently setting seed.



The flower has been fully removed in the first photo, while the pistil and filaments are still attached to the plant in the second photo.



Some sepals and wilted petals are still attached in this third photo.

Now that the flowers have been removed, the strong new shoots are fully visible, growing around what was the base of the flower.

If there is no need to extend the branch, then these strong shoots are removed completely, as shown in these photos.



If further branch extension is desired, then 2 shoots (generally the weakest ones) are left.

This is also a good time to take cuttings, particularly if there are water shoots (or water sprouts). These are very vigorous—growing long and straight, which do not make good ‘bonsai lines’. However they do take easily as cuttings...



We hope you will find this short paper of benefit when taking care of your Satsuki Azaleas!