

A Complement to Jim Trumbly's Chronological List of Satsuki Articles in *The Azalean*

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Introduction

The collective name Satsuki comprised of two species, *R. indicum* Sweet and *R. tamurae* Masamune (previously *R. eriocarpum* Nakai) and their various forms, varieties, cultivars, and hybrids is probably the largest group of "evergreen" azaleas (over 4,000 and still growing) in the world. Many of these plants are popular bonsai materials as well as favorites of gardeners. There has been extensive literature on the Satsuki describing their flower and leaf patterns, horticultural and agronomical aspects, their distribution in the wild, etc. The present work summarizes most available previous works on the Satsuki complementing what Jim Trumbly has previously published. Jim summarizes his findings on articles from *The Azalean* and some monographs/books on Satsuki azaleas in the following article:

Trumbly, J., "Chronological List of Satsuki Articles in *The Azalean*." *The Azalean*. Winter 2016. 38(4):85-86.

The purpose of this present article is to list works from other journals and books/monographs on Satsuki azaleas published in both English and Japanese with a few notes by this author.

Other Informative Sources

Let us begin by stating that any discussion of the Satsuki (*R. indicum* Sweet) and Maruba Satsuki (*R. tamurae* Masamune, previously *R. eriocarpum* Nakai) and their hybrids must start with References 1 and 2 below:

1. Ihei, Ito. *Kinshu Makura* (English translation—*A Brocade Pillow, Azaleas of Old Japan* by Kaname Kato with introduction and commentary by Dr. John L. Creech). Weatherhill, New York. 1984. (See Fig. 1.)

Ihei's *Kinshu Makura* was published in 1692 and included a collection of 154 woodblock prints of flowers and foliage. The collection contained many unusual azaleas (such as strap petals, petal-less, variegated, etc.) From Creech's notes in the English translation, Ihei's purpose was "...to provide an illustrated description of the azaleas in cultivation and to correct some of the confusion caused by name

duplication." One finds association of many of Ihei's plants with modern day Satsuki, *R. kaempferi* Planchon, and *R. stenopetalum* (Hogg) Mabb (previously *R. macrosepalum* Maxim.) Makino forms. This collection is the first such on Satsuki azaleas that bloom during the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar (approximately from the last week of May to the third week of June). There are a few *kaempferi* and some *stenopetalum* azaleas and hybrids that also bloom during this period. The term Satsuki was not coined at that time.

2. Ohwi, J. *Flora of Japan*. (English edition of the author's 1953 original Japanese work edited by Frederick G. Meyer and Egbert H. Walker). Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1984.

Dr. Ohwi's monumental work on Japan's flora is the most authentic of its kind. He describes the distribution of the Satsuki (*R. indicum* and *R. tamurae*), their variability, and their natural hybrids. The book also contains extensive coverage of all the Japanese species rhododendrons and azaleas and all other plants endemic to Japan.

3. Stevenson, J.B. Ed. *The Species of Rhododendron—Azalea Series*. Rhododendron Society (United Kingdom). University Press, Edinburgh, Scotland. 1947, 2nd Edition.

The section of this book that deals with azaleas (pp. 42-123) has a plant physiological description of the Satsuki along with the other series members. It is a valuable reading.

4. Creech, J.L. *Ornamental Plant Explorations Japan 1961*. Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with Longwood Gardens of the Longwood Foundation, Inc. Volumes 34-75. 1961.

Dr. Creech went through the entire Japanese archipelago, including the Northernmost island Hokkaido with his Japanese friends in search of various ornamental plants. They obtained cuttings and seeds from the plants and took meticulous notes including plant habits and location. Many aspects of *R. indicum* and *R. tamurae* are well covered in the monograph.

5. Radcliff, A.E. "Notes on Satsuki Azaleas and Their

▼ Figure 1—*A Brocade Pillow* by Kaname Kato and Introduction and commentary by John L. Creech. (Reference 1.)

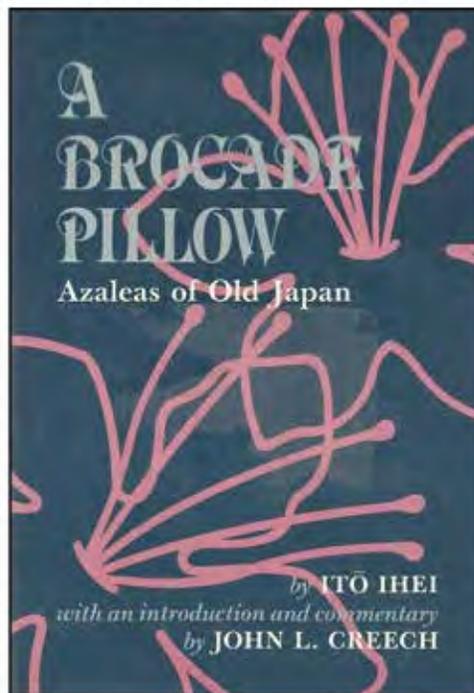


Photo A. Thakur

Allies." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. 1965. 19(4):211.

The author described his observations for several Satsuki hybrids based on his personal knowledge of these plants. Many of them are correct with some exceptions. For example, what the author called 'Gyrokushin' is actually 'Gyokushin'. The former is not a Japanese name. Some of the color descriptions are not correct either. For example, 'Amagasa' (also called 'Tengasa') is not pink as he described; it is solid reddish orange. In any case, this article contains one of the earliest American descriptions of the Satsuki outside of the USDA.

6. Suzuki, H. and Suzuki, M. *Satsuki Taikan*. Unspecified Publisher. Tokyo. 1972.

The Suzukis published several monographs and articles on Satsuki and bonsai. This book was a compendium of all of that work by these two famous authors.

7. Creech, J.L. "A Distribution Note on *Rhododendron tamurae*." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. 1978. 32(2):100.
8. Creech, J.L. "Small and Sheared Rhododendrons Can Enhance Gardens." *American Nurseryman*. 1985. 163: 48. (Reprinted in *The Azalean*. December 1987. 9(4):63-65.)
9. Creech, J.L. "Evergreen Azaleas of the Orient and Some Deciduous Species." *The Azalean*. September 1988. 10(3):43-45.

Creech discussed the origins of Satsuki (*R. indicum*) and Maruba Satsuki (Round Leaf Satsuki) (*R. tamurae*, previously *R. eriocarpum*), their distribution, natural hybrids, color forms, and other aspects. He described his visits and experience in Kyushu and other islands in search of these two species.

10. Greer, H. "The Satsuki Azaleas." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. 1984. 38(4): 174.

The author discusses many historical aspects regarding the two Satsuki species (*R. indicum* and *R. tamurae*), the confusion in their species designations, and many other relevant points. He also provides some beautiful color photographs in this article. This is an article that Satsuki enthusiasts would love to read.

11. Kurume Tsutsuji Magazine Group. *Kurume no Tsutsuji (Azaleas in Kurume)*. Ashishobo, Fukuoka, Japan, 1989. (See Fig. 2)

This monograph was published in conjunction with the 1989 First International Azalea Festival that took place in Kurume, Japan. Each chapter of this wonderful monograph is in both Japanese and English, the latter having been supervised by Dr. John L. Creech. There were speeches by various experts on both Japanese species and hybrid azaleas (evergreen and deciduous). The hybrids covered were the Kurume, Satsuki, Hirado, and some other minor groups. It contains many Satsuki, Kurume, and Kurume-Satsuki intergroup hybrids developed in the Kurume area. It discusses the origin, culture (such as soil condition, fertilizers, watering, fungicides and

pesticides) and developmental history of the Satsuki azaleas. It lists many of the modern Satsuki cultivars by various growers and hybridizers in the Kurume area. The Akashi Kourakuen Nursery, Kuwano Yousseien Nursery, Annou Kairakuen Nursery, Hisatomi Senkaen Nursery, and Hisatomi Koukaen Nursery are some of the prominent ones.

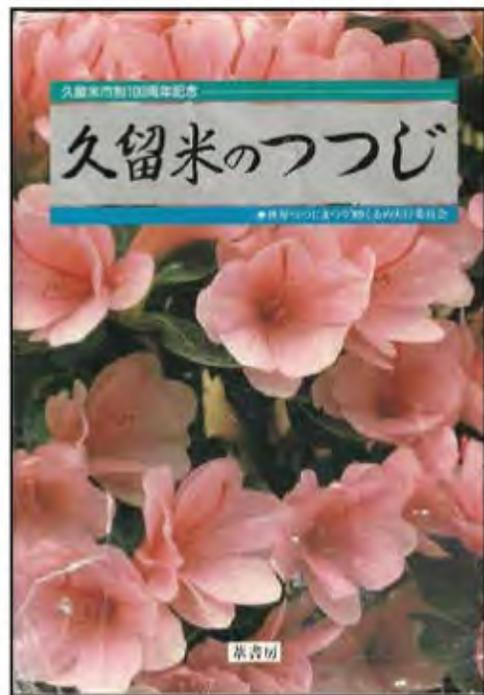
Some of their cultivars that many of us are familiar with are 'Adesugata' and 'Seidai' ('Akashi'), 'Sankatsu' and 'Banzai' (Kuwano), 'Isochidori' and 'Wakaebisu' (Annou), 'Otome' and 'Narihira' (Hisatomi). According to this monograph, the commercial production of Satsuki azaleas in the Kurume area started in 1905 by three local nurserymen—Messrs. Kumashiro, Egashiro, and Annou. They published an exclusive Satsuki azalea catalog, the first in Japan with a single plant group, in 1908.

Author's Note: From discussions with various Satsuki enthusiasts in Japan and John Creech, my understanding is that these nurserymen called these plants Satsuki Tsutsuji or the Fifth Chinese Lunar Calendar Month blooming azaleas. In other words, the word Satsuki was then used as an adjective. Shortly thereafter, the Tsutsuji part was dropped in the common usage and many collectors started calling them Satsuki by making the word a proper noun. Actually, it created a misunderstanding among the azalea experts in Japan whereby they started listing the Satsuki as a separate genre from the other evergreen azaleas.

12. Okita, I. *Zi Kan Satsuki (Satsuki Picture Dictionary)*. Bunken Shupan, Year of Publication Missing. Tokyo, Japan. (In Japanese with English plant names.)
13. Nakajima, S. *Satsuki Niumon (Introduction to Satsuki)*. Kin Ensha, Tokyo, Japan, 1985 (in Japanese).

The above two books complement John Creech's findings of the Satsuki.

14. Thakur, A.K. "The Enchanting Satsuki, Part 1." *The Azalean*. December 1989. 11(4):64-68.



▲ Figure 2—Azaleas in Kurume by Kurume Tsutsuji Magazine Group.

Photo A. Thakur

In the Fall of 1988, I gave a two-hour presentation on the Satsuki at the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Donald Voss presided over the meeting and took meticulous notes. Later, I gave another talk at the ASA annual meeting held in Northern Virginia attended by Don, Malcolm Clark, and Fred Galle. They all encouraged me to write it up and publish in *The Azalean*. Don gave me his notes from my lecture and I wrote a two-part article that was published by *The Azalean*. In Part 1, I described the origin, distribution, naming convention, and various other aspects of the Satsuki and Maruba Satsuki. My descriptions were based on my personal visits of various locations in Japan and conversations and contacts with my friends Hideo Suzuki, Yuji Kurashige, Dr. Tsuneshigo Rokujo, Dr. John Creech, and Dr. Masaaki Kunishige, all Japanese plant explorers and horticulturalists. I also gathered quite a lot of Japanese literature from both new and used book stores in Kyoto, Tokyo, and Osaka. My wife Dr. Yoko Hirohashi Thakur translated them when I needed help. I will not repeat what I wrote because one can read them in my article in reference number 14 above.

15. Creech, J.L. *The Bonsai Saga: How the Bicentennial Collection Came to America, U.S. National Arboretum*. National Bonsai Foundation. 2001.

Creech discusses how the bonsai collection which contains many Satsuki, a few Kurume, and a few conifers found their way to the National Arboretum. There are photographs of these plants along with his notes.

16. Kennedy, A. *Floral Treasures of Japan: Satsuki Azaleas*. Stone Lantern Publishing Company. Passumpsic, Vermont. 1997.
17. Ugajin, T. "Satsuki Azaleas as Dwarf Potted Shrubs," in Sam Gardener, Toyotao Aoshima, Kan Yashiroda et. al., Eds. *The Art of Japanese Bonsai Trees-How to Grow and Train Dwarf Trees Like a Bonsai Master*. Kindle Edition, August 9, 2001 (ASIN B005GR11GE).

18. Callaham, R.Z. *Satsuki Azaleas for Bonsai Enthusiasts and Azalea Lovers*. Stone Lantern Publishing Company. Passumpsic, Vermont. 2006.

The authors of these books discuss various aspects of Satsuki azaleas in general and their bonsai forms in particular, such as their cultural requirements. Dr. Callaham, being a plant geneticist, further discusses some scientific aspects of the Satsuki.

19. Rokkaku, K. *Satsuki Hanagara Hya Ka (One Hundred Satsuki Flowers)*. Gekkan Satsuki Kenkyusha. Tochigi-Ke, Japan. 1979.
20. Rokkaku, K. *Joku Satsuki Hanagara Hya Ka (Another Hundred Satsuki Flowers)*. Gekkan Satsuki Kenkyusha. Tochigi-Ke, Japan. 1980.

The Gekkan Satsuki Kenkyusha introduced two hundred Satsuki with photographs and descriptions in the above two books.

21. Kunishige, M. and Y. Kobayashi. "Chromatographic Identification of Japanese Azalea Species and their Hybrids" in *Contributions toward a Classification of Rhododendrons*. J.L. Luteyn and M.E. O'Brien, Eds. New York Botanical Garden. 1980.

As the title implies, this publication discusses many genetic and other scientific investigations of Japanese azalea species and hybrids including the Satsuki. They did chromatographic identification of these plants. Their investigation reveals the complex anthocyanin complement due to crossing of species containing cyanidin and malvidin. Though the article is rather technical, it helps in understanding the characteristics of different hybrid groups.

22. Tasaki, K., Nakatsuki, A., and N. Kobayashi. "Morphological Analysis of Narrow-petaled Cultivars of *Rhododendron macrosepalum* Maxim." *Journal of the Japanese Society of Horticultural Science*. 2012. 81(1):72.

Although the title of the article may seem to imply that it is on the *linearifolium* (strap-petal) forms of *R. macrosepalum* (now *R. stenopetalum*) (Mochi Tsutsuji or the Big Sepal Azalea), it covers similar forms of *R. kaempferi* (Yama Tsutsuji, Torch Azalea), and *R. indicum* (Satsuki). It provides a detailed morphological analysis to investigate the origin of *linearifolium* forms of many cultivars of these three species.

The Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association) is the most authentic and extensive organization for Satsuki azaleas. They publish monthly newsletters (available for members only) but unfortunately, all of them are in Japanese with Kanji characters for the plant names. Every 4-5 years, since 1979, they have been publishing a beautiful "encyclopedia" of available Satsuki and Maruba Satsuki (species, varieties, forms, and hybrids) with slightly variable titles. The 1983 edition had the title *Shin Satsuki Jiten (The New Satsuki Dictionary)* with Kenko Rokkaku as the editor. The books contain beautiful color photographs with the origins of the plants (when known) along with their cultivar names in English. Originally, they used to name the title as *Satsuki Jiten (Satsuki Dictionary)*. Then, with the 2001 edition, they changed the title to *Satsuki Dai Jiten (Satsuki Big Dictionary)*. Finally, for the 2014 edition, they changed the title again to *Satsuki Zukan (Satsuki Illustrated Encyclopedia)*. I have their 1983 edition *Shin Satsuki Jiten (the New Satsuki Dictionary)*, the 1987 edition (*Satsuki Jiten*, the Revised Edition), the 1992 and 1995 editions (*Satsuki Jiten*), the 2001 edition (*Satsuki Dai Jiten*) and finally the 2014 edition (*Satsuki Zi Kan*). Each edition excludes some plants that are not readily available and includes new introductions. The 2014 edition of the book is under a new title, *Satsuki Zi Kan*, includes an English index for the first time. Along with many other rare Japanese publications, this item can be had from the Kino Kunya book store chain in Seattle, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and several other places. All enquiries should be made online to: bookwebusa@kinokuniya.com.

The orders are shipped directly from their headquarters in Shijuoka, Tokyo. In the later issues, the work lists a newly introduced branch sport of 'Kinsai' an indicum selection, which also goes by the name 'Kin-no-sai', 'Kinzai', 'Kin-no-zai', 'Shide-satsuki' (Satsuki with Ragged Streamers, referring to strap or lacinated petals); and sold in America as 'Polypetalum'). This new sport, 'Yuki-no-hana' (Snow Brilliance) is a neat plant with red strap petal flowers like the ones on 'Kinsai' with white edged or variegated leaves that are narrow like the mother plant's. Its name is 'Yuki-no-hana' (Snow of Brilliance). The plant was introduced first in the 1992 edition. So far as I know, it has not been brought into the US. I will cite the editions I have:

23. Rokkaku, K. *Shin Satsuki Jiten, (New Satsuki Dictionary)*. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). Kanuma-Shi, Tochi-Ken, Japan. 1983.
24. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Jiten (Satsuki Dictionary)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan. (Revised Edition). 1987.
25. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Dai Jiten (Satsuki Large Dictionary)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 1992.
26. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Dai Jiten (Satsuki Large Dictionary)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 1995.
27. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Dai Jiten (Satsuki Large Dictionary)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 2001.
28. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Dai Zukan (Satsuki Illustrated Encyclopedia)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 2014.
29. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Satsuki Sen Sue Zukan (Pictorial Book of the 1000 Varieties of Satsuki)*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 2017.
30. Gekkan Satsuki Ken Kyusha (Satsuki Research Association). *Reiwa Version of Satsuki Illustrated Book of 1400 Species*. Tochino-Ha-Shobo, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 2020. (See Fig. 3.)

▼ Figure 3—Satsuki Zi Kan by Satsuki Research Group.



Photo A. Thakur

Author's Note: When I started collecting Satsuki in the 1980s, several azalea propagators were selling 'Kinsai' (Golden Plant) by all different names stating there were different plants. (See Photo 1.) One nurseryman who sold thousands of Satsuki to garden centers and naïve collectors like me, even called it a form of *R. linearifolium* (now considered to be *R. stenopetalum*), variety 'Red Spider'. So, after my first year my 'Kinsai', 'Kinzai', in the West also called 'Shide-satsuki' (Satsuki with Ragged Streamers), 'Red Spider' all bloomed. They all had identical narrow leaf form and narrow lacinated flowers! One interesting thing about the meaning of the name 'Kinsai'- in English it means golden plant. The flowers are red on this plant. I suspect the name derives from the autumn foliage which could be deep orange. In an earlier article in *The Azalean* (Reference No. 31 below), I mentioned another Satsuki that was incorrectly named in America and was being sold under three different names. The beautiful dwarf Satsuki is 'Kazan' (Deer Mountain), in Japan, also called 'Buncho'— (Java Sparrow), and in the West 'Kakuba-chinzan' which means Pointed Leaf Chinzan; a sport of the old garden variety of *R. indicum* selection called 'Osakazuki'. Because of a mix-up during the original introduction, it was listed as 'Rukizon' in American publications. The word 'Rukizon' does not exist in Japanese language! To make matters even worse, there is a second Satsuki 'Kazan' (meaning Flowery Mountain, with entirely different flower and plant forms), a Kurume hybrid, and a Hirado hybrid that are also pronounced as 'Kazan' but their Kanji characters are different from each other.

31. Thakur, A.K., "The Enchanting Satsuki, Part 2." *The Azalean*. March 1990. 12 (1):4-7, 15-16.

The Bonsai Clubs International (BCI), which has many international clubs under its umbrella, publishes a magazine (*Bonsai Magazine*) that contains many pieces of information regarding the Satsuki. It is not just for bonsai lovers; it is an important magazine for Satsuki lovers as well.

The following article by the Bonsaimaster Tatemori Gondo discusses some interesting issues about the use of Satsuki. According to records, Satsuki azaleas were prohibited for the commoners to use. They were only allowed to be used by temples, shrines, and noble people until during the early Edo period (1603-1864). During the Taisho period (1912-1926) Japanese people got interested in using the Satsuki for bonsai purposes.

32. Gondo, T. (Translated by K. Okimura with Sketches by C. Gratz). "Satsuki Bonsai", *Bonsai Magazine*. 2001. 40(3):20.

The following article provides some suggestions regarding pruning

of Satsuki azaleas:

33. Fassio, D. "After-Flower Pruning of Satsuki Azaleas in California." *Golden Statements*. 2005. 28(3):13.

The following books are for various aspects of Satsuki such as their cultural requirements, bonsai quality, etc. Most of them are how-to type. They have beautiful color photographs:

34. Token, K., Editor. *Satsuki Meika (The Book of Satsuki Azaleas)*. Ikeda Publishing Co., Kanagawa. 1971.
35. Okita, Y. *Satsuki Nyumon (Introduction to Satsuki)*. Hoikusha, Osaka. 1971.
36. Suzuki, M., Editor. *Satsuki Nyumon (Introduction to Satsuki)*. Goto Shoin, Osaka, 1971.
37. Ishikawa, M., Suzuki, N., and Kurihara, S. *Satsuki Kante Jiten (Satsuki Appraisal Dictionary)*. Gendai Kikaku Shitsu, Tokyo. 1975.
38. Naka, J.Y., Ota, R.K., and Rokkaku, K. *Bonsai Techniques for Satsuki*. Ota Bonsai Nursery Publication, Gekkan Satsuki Kenkyusha. Tokyo, Japan, 1979. (Very Expensive, \$200 on Amazon.)
39. Akabane, M. *Satsuki*, 2nd Edition. Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK, the only Japanese Public Broadcasting Corporation) (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). Shibuya-Ku, Tokyo. 1989.
40. Nakayama, S. *Satsuki Nyumon (Introduction to Satsuki)*. Kin-Ensha, Tokyo. 1985.
41. Tochinoha Shobou Co. Ltd. *Satsuki Jiten (Satsuki Dictionary)*. Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, 2004.
42. www.satsukimania.com/en/varieties. Shibue Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Garden, Kanuma-Shi, Tochigi, Japan, (A website maintained by the Bonsai Garden containing



▲ Photo 1—'Kinsai' also known as *R. polypetalum* or *R. indicum*.

A Final Naming Note

Regarding naming convention of three-word Japanese plant names, Japanese plant lovers use the following convention, for example:

'Nihon-no-hana' (Nihon = Japan, no = of, hana = Light; altogether Light of Japan).

The three-word plant names generally use the preposition 'of', which can also be used in the possessive sense as an apostrophe 's' (i.e., as in Japan's Light).

Finally, some of the Japanese plant names (Satsuki and Marubatsuki in our case) are often spelled slightly differently, as below:

-ba ≡ -ha (e.g. 'Maruba-satsuki' ≡ 'Maruha-satsuki', the Round Leaf Satsuki, *R. tamurae*)

-Dai- ≡ Tai- (e.g. 'Daisuhai' ≡ 'Taisuhai' ≡ 'Osakazuki', meaning Large Sake Cup; they are all the same plant just pronounced differently in Kanji)

-gi ≡ -ji (e.g. the *R. indicum* selection 'Waraigishi' ≡ 'Waraijishi')

-po ≡ -bo (e.g. 'Gunpo' ≡ 'Gunbo', 'Gumpo' in the West. The 'u' should be pronounced as 'oo' as in wood, not as 'u' in umbrella)

-sutoku ≡ -ttoku (e.g. 'Getsutoku' ≡ 'Gettoku')

-jo ≡ -yo (e.g. 'Komanjo-satsuki' ≡ 'Komanyo-satsuki', in the West *R. indicum* selection 'Balsaminiflorum' or 'Rosiflorum').

high resolution authentic photographs of many Satsuki azaleas along with their origins, when known). Remember to put the “en” in the link to get the English version.

43. www.tangorin.com (An online Japanese-to-English dictionary. Very helpful to understand the Japanese names of many plants.)

Dr. Ajit K. Thakur is a retired statistician whose love for azaleas (East Asian evergreen species, East Asian and North American deciduous species, and Satsuki and Kurume hybrids) spans about 45 years. At one time or another, he collected all the evergreen and deciduous species and most of the Satsuki hybrids introduced into the USA. Many of them are still thriving. (See examples in Photos 2-4.) He has given seminars on azaleas on many occasions at various locations and has written about these azaleas in *The Azalean*. He is a long standing member of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA.

Deadlines for *The Azalean*

Fall 2020—July 15, 2020
Winter 2020—October 1, 2020
Spring 2021—January 1, 2021
Summer 2021—March 1, 2021

Remember, you too can write
for the *The Azalean*.

Contact:
theazalean@gmail.com.

Photos 2-4: A Sampling of the Variety of Satsuki Azalea Forms



Photo A. Thakur

◀ (Top Left) Photo 2—'Okinanishiki' (*R. indicum*)

▼ (Bottom Left) Photo 3—*R.* 'Balsaminiflorum'

▼ (Bottom Right) Photo 4—*R.* 'Sumizome'



Photo A. Thakur



Photo A. Thakur