

DEVELOPING JAPANESE FLOWERING QUINCE MINIATURE BONSAI

ILLUSTRATED GUIDELINES FOR CREATING BONSAI No. 109

Japanese Edition:

Keizo Tachibana, Author

English Edition:

Craig W. Risser, Translator
Wm. N. Valavanis, Editor

Editor's Note: This article has been reprinted with the permission of Kiyoshi Orito, of Seibundo-Shinkosha Publishing Company. It first appeared in the *Illustrated Guidelines For Flowering And Fruiting Miniature Bonsai*, edited by *Garden Life Magazine* in Japanese in 1976. The article has been edited and

translated for our readers.

The original article described the techniques for creating miniature bonsai using Japanese flowering quince. However, the identical techniques can also be applied to other Flowering quince species as well as to bonsai of larger sizes.

The Japanese flowering quince, *Chaenomeles speciosa*, which provides much needed color on bonsai stands during the winter is a familiar, appealing plant which is also easy to grow. Though it does not have the elegance of the Japanese flowering apricot, there are many varieties and the colors of its flowers vary widely making it a popular species for bonsai and for miniature bonsai as well.

takes its name from the fact that it will begin to flower and bloom as early as the New Year through March if given just a little warmth. There is a red flower as well as white color cultivars. Those are the most common flower colors but in addition there is a cultivar which has flowers dappled with red and white as well as a variety which has flowers which begin white and gradually turn pink.

They may also be propagated by air layering as well as purchased as young seedlings and modified.

They are most commonly styled in the informal upright style. Seedlings which are sold are rather stocky with informal shapes. Next in popularity is the clump style which makes use of the growth habit of Japanese flowering quince. This is the form which is indeed the bonsai style most appropriate for Japanese flowering quince.

Japanese Flowering Quince Varieties

Winter Japanese flowering quince

How To Propagate

Japanese flowering quince is normally propagated from rooted cuttings.

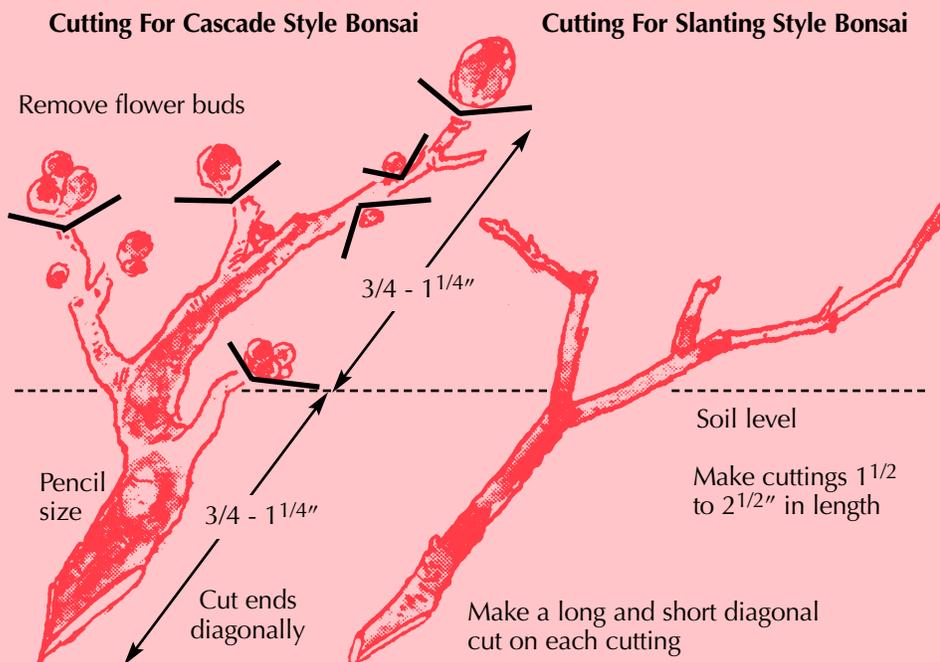


FIG. 1

Select Branches With Interesting Shapes For Stem Cuttings In Late February

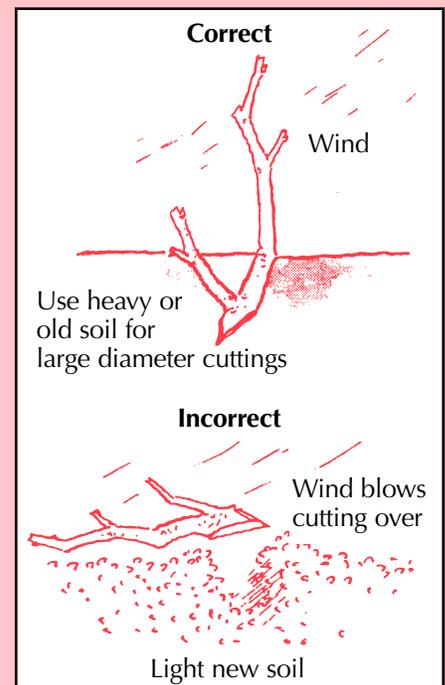


FIG. 2

Soil For Large Diameter Cuttings

First Year– Rooting Japanese Flowering Quince Cuttings

How To Prepare Cuttings

Wire the portions of the Japanese flowering quince that you wish to use for cuttings the year before taking cuttings and give them a general shaping. That is to say, have a general idea in your mind whether you want to create an informal upright, slanting, twin trunk or semi-cascade style bonsai in the distant future.

Wire the future cuttings accordingly before actually removing them from the parent tree to root. Be watchful not to let the wire cut into the bark.

Prepare Cutting Flat And Planting Cuttings

Use a styrofoam box normally used for sowing seed for a cutting flat which is thirty inches long, thirty

inches wide and three inches deep. Place one-half inch particles of red loam on the bottom of the flat and on top of that add one-quarter inch particles of red loam. Make holes in the soil with a bamboo chopstick which is narrower than the cuttings and insert the base of the cutting into the hole. Space the holes so the leaves of adjacent plants will not be touching when leaves come out.

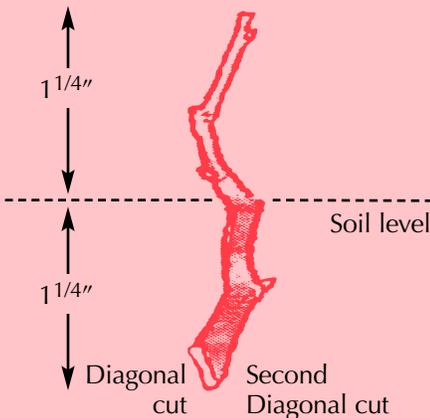


FIG. 3
Insert Cuttings Into Soil



FIG. 4
Plant Cuttings In Rooting Flats

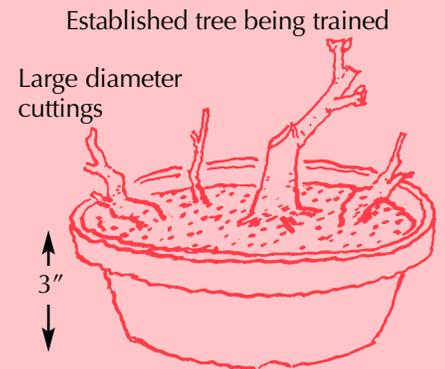


FIG. 5
Plant Cuttings In Pots With Trees

Provide water so the soil surface does not dry out

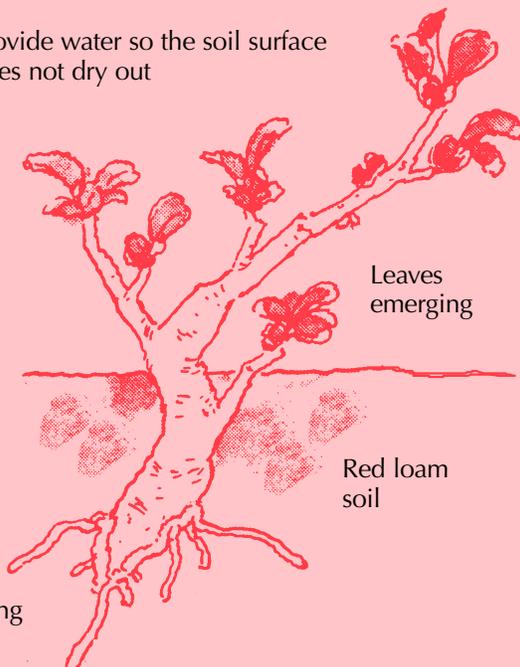


FIG. 6
Bud Break & Initial Root Activity In Late March

Provide good sunlight and fresh air and water so the soil surface does not dry out. Do not prune or fertilize.

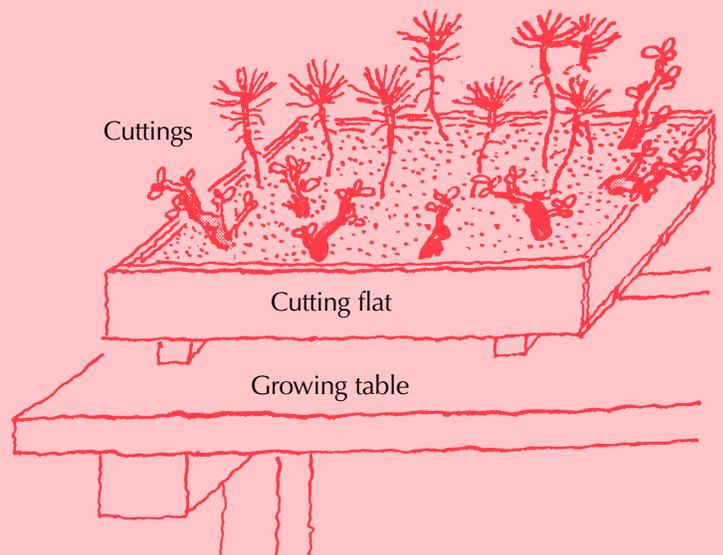


FIG. 7
Place Cuttings Outside In Early April

First Year– Rooting Japanese Flowering Quince Cuttings

Aftercare

If you continue watering the cuttings, leaves will appear in late March. Roots will also become active at this time so place the cuttings on a table where they will have good exposure to the sun and fresh air.

Fertilizer Applications

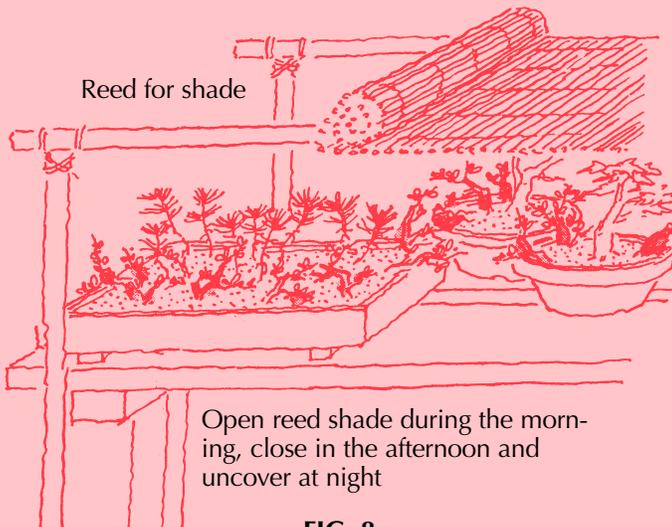
Fertilize the rooting cuttings in early September and the beginning of

October. Spread powdered organic fertilizer meal that you have crushed from solid organic cakes over the surface of the container. Use two caramel size organic cakes each time for a container that is about twelve square inches and don't forget to water it in.

Trim Leggy Growth Before Winter Protection

When I say leggy branches I mean branches which have grown extremely long. For example, prune branches that have grown longer than four internodes back to two internodes in November.

After trimming the leggy branches place the plants in a cold frame, protective shelter or under eaves where the exposure to the sun is good to protect them from the cold.



Open reed shade during the morning, close in the afternoon and uncover at night

FIG. 8

Summer Care– Morning Sun, Afternoon Shade

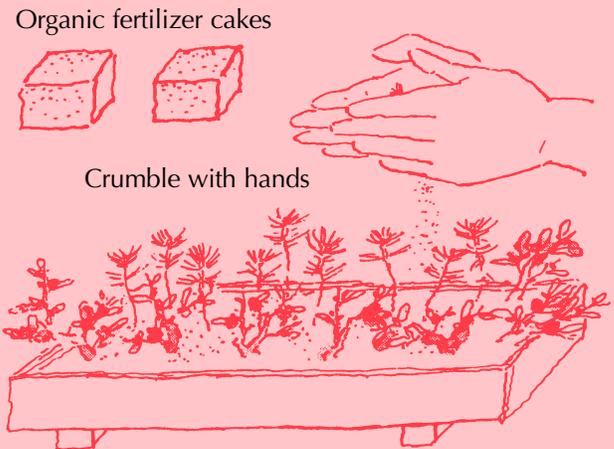


FIG. 9

Apply Crumbled Solid Organic Cake Fertilizer In September

Roots will grow and fill the pot by early autumn

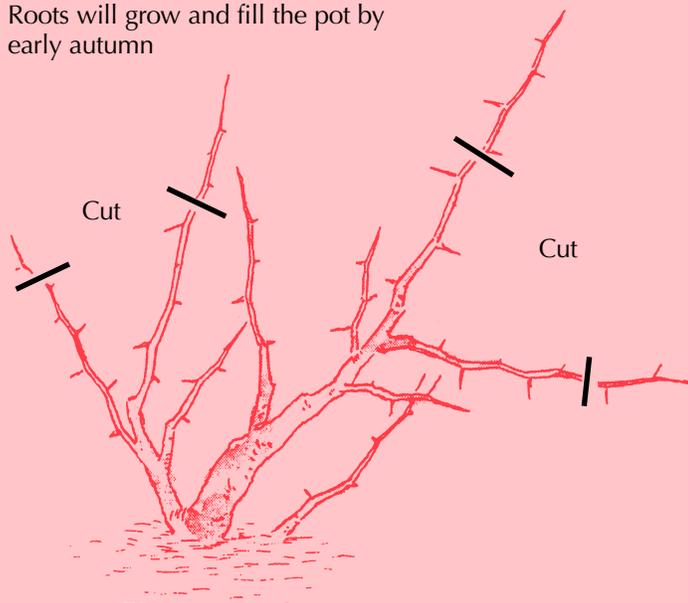


FIG. 10

Trim Leggy Branches Back To 2 Or 3 Nodes In November

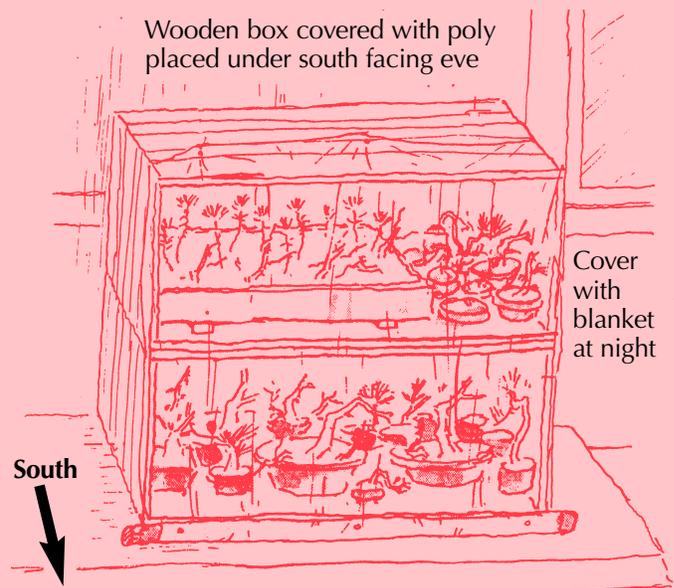


FIG. 11

Winter Cold Protection In Late November

Transplant Into Training Pots

In mid-February flower buds will appear on the rooted cuttings and they should be removed as soon as they are found. From the mid to the end of March take each rooted Japanese flowering quince cutting from the cutting flat and transplant them in individual training pots. Plant the cuttings which will be trained in the informal upright style in the center of the pots. Plants which will be trained in the semi-cascade style should be positioned close to the edge of the training pot leaning over.

Japanese flowering quince are normally transplanted in autumn because it is difficult for them to become infested with nematodes if they are transplanted at that time.

The reason we are suggesting planting in training pots in late March rather than in autumn is that if they are not transplanted at this time they will not develop fine new roots. If one-third of the roots are trimmed it will be difficult for them to become infested with nematodes. Also if you use fresh potting soil they will do well.

Place 2 organic fertilizer cakes on soil surface



FIG. 14
Fertilize In Late April

Branches trimmed back to about 1"



FIG. 15
After Trimming In Late May

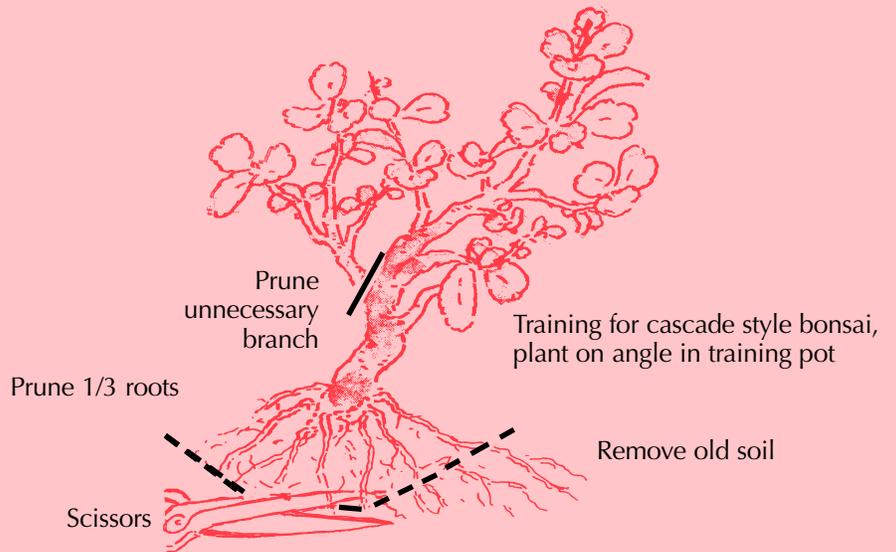


FIG. 12
Transplant Into Training Pot In Mid-March

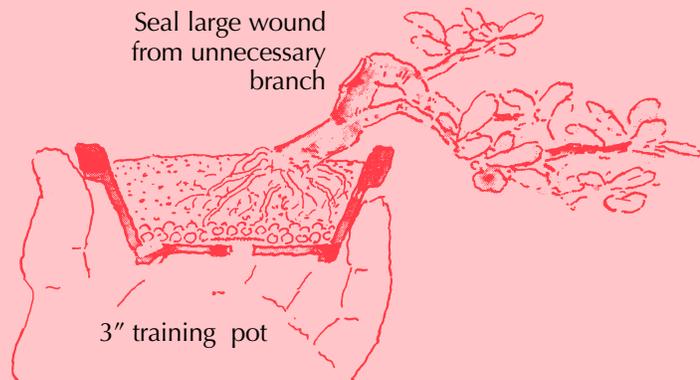


FIG. 13
After Planting On Angle

Trim long branches back to about 1" in length to direct new growth as per planned style

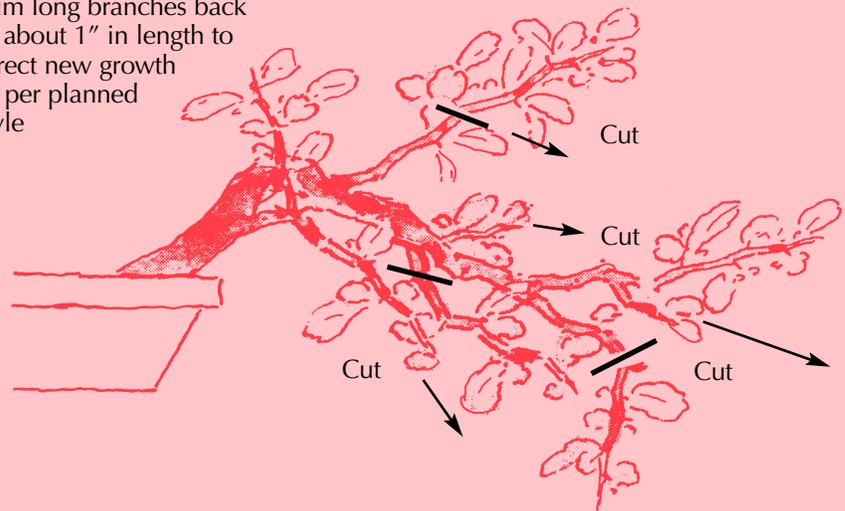
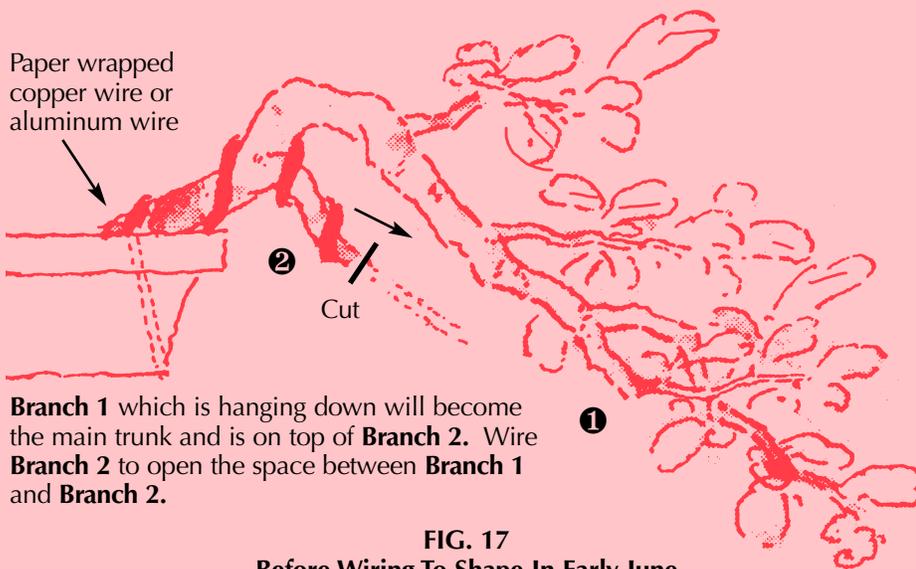


FIG. 16
Before Trimming Long Branches In Late May

Second -Third Year Training Japanese Flowering Quince



Branch 1 which is hanging down will become the main trunk and is on top of **Branch 2**. Wire **Branch 2** to open the space between **Branch 1** and **Branch 2**.

FIG. 17
Before Wiring To Shape In Early June

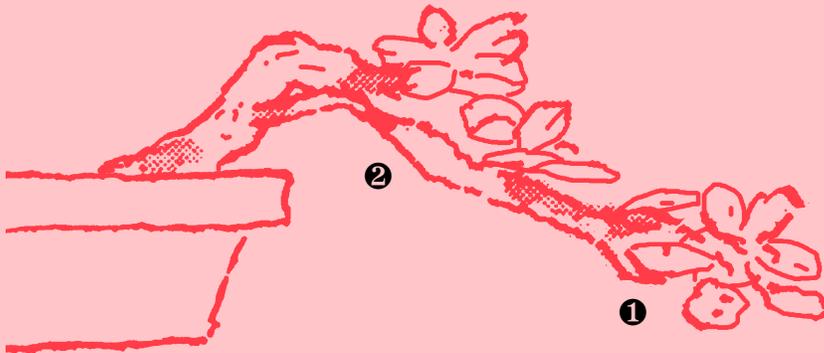
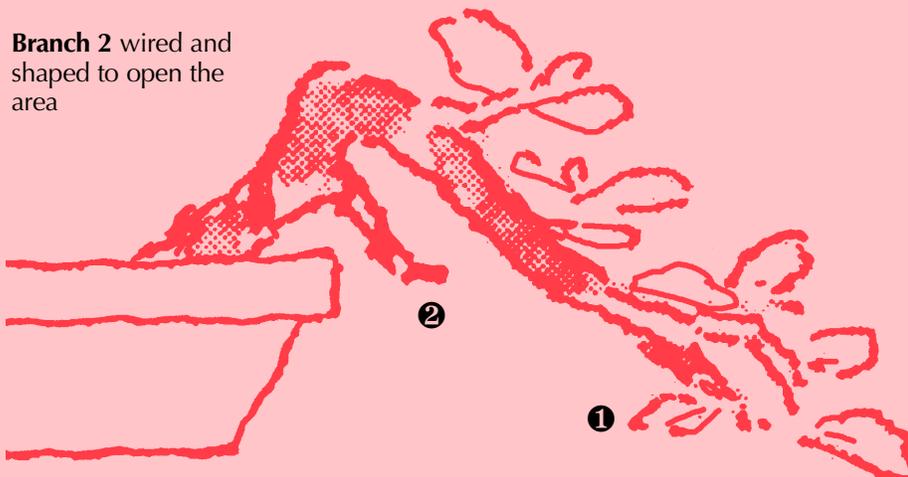


FIG. 18
After Trimming And Before Wiring In Early June



Branch 2 wired and shaped to open the area

FIG. 19
After Wiring And Shaping

Subsequent Care

Japanese flowering quince do not like to be water stressed so water them sufficiently. Fertilize in late April, by placing two organic fertilizer cakes at the rim of the pot. Fertilize the same way in late May, July, August, September and October.

If there are leggy branches on the plants in November they should be trimmed back to two internodes.

Pest And Disease Control

The Japanese flowering quince must be protected from pests and diseases from this year on. They are often infested with aphids so should be sprayed to eliminate these pests.

Lightly Prune Leggy Branches

If there are leggy branches on the plants in late November they should be pruned back to two internodes.

Third Year Styling And Pruning

Prune the Japanese flowering quince for overall styling in late March. Prune branches that are too long back to two internodes. If there is a bud on the branch you are pruning that you wish to allow to grow, trim the branch just below the next bud.

Wiring

In June wire the branches with paper wrapped copper wire and shape the Japanese flowering quince as you wish. Be sure to allow for spacing between the branches when styling.

Transplanting

Transplant in late September using the same size container as used in the second year using the same soil mix. After taking the tree out of the container remove all the old soil and trim one-third of the roots. Prune branches that have grown too long since May back to two internodes. Add a pinch of bone meal to the container.

Fourth Year Training Japanese Flowering Quince

Pruning

In late May of the fourth year reduce the branches of the Japanese flowering quince which have grown too long and which you do not want to flower next year back to one or two internodes. Do not prune the branches which you want to flower next year. Allow these branches to grow without restriction even if they tend to disrupt the overall styling of the tree. Flower buds will not form on the branches which were pruned.

Repeat the cultural operations performed during the third year. However, there is no need to prune

in late March and fertilizing should be discontinued at the end of September.

Transplanting Into Display Containers

Transplant the Japanese flowering quince into display containers in mid- October. Plant them in round or rectangular glazed containers of medium depth. If the plant has white flowers use a dark blue, red or green glazed container. A dark colored unglazed container can also be utilized. If the flowers are red try a white, celadon (light green), or deep

blue glazed container. Round shallow containers go well with clump style bonsai. The soil mix and planting techniques are the same as when you transplanted them into a training pot.

Drastic Pruning

Check to see how the flower buds are forming on the Japanese flowering quince in November and prune back branches which disrupt the overall styling to one or two internodes. This will ensure that the flower buds you left will bloom in February.

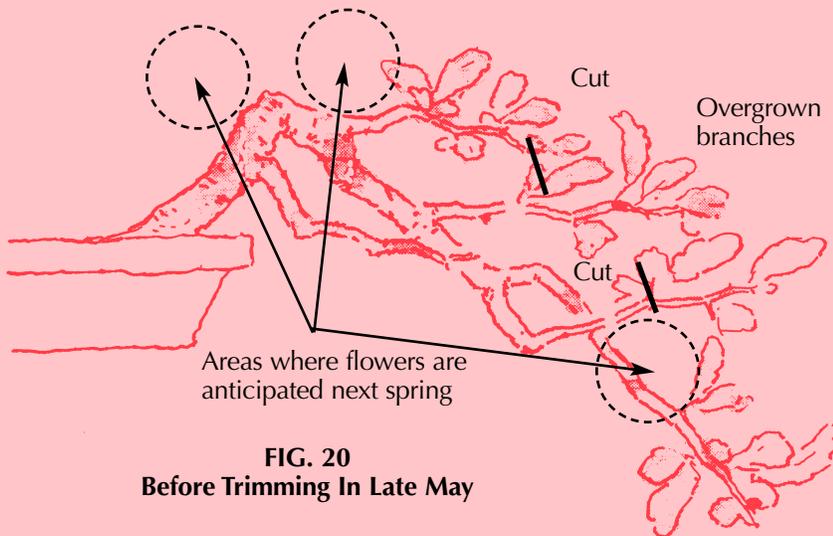


FIG. 20
Before Trimming In Late May

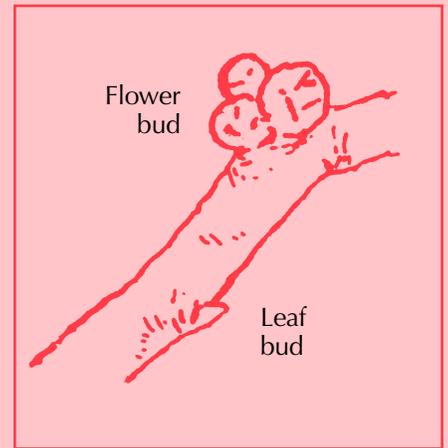
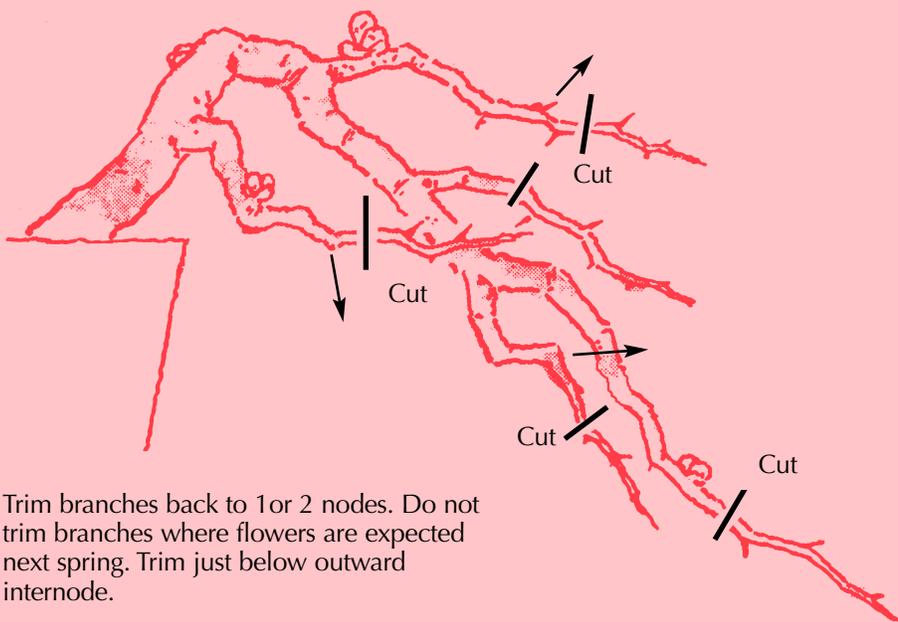


FIG. 22
Flower And Leaf Bud Differentiation



Trim branches back to 1 or 2 nodes. Do not trim branches where flowers are expected next spring. Trim just below outward internode.

FIG. 21
Before Trimming In November

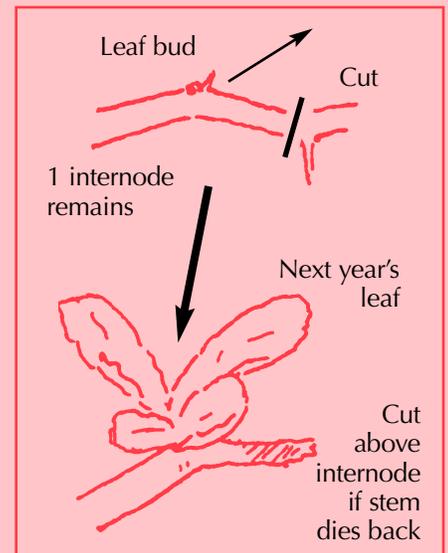


FIG. 23
How To Trim Branch Tips

Fifth Year Training Japanese Flowering Quince

Enjoy The Blossoms

In November of the fifth year the flower buds will gradually swell and in mid-February they will bloom in early spring of the fifth year. The red, white, pink or mixture of these flow-

ers will have five petals and will be one inch in diameter. Remove the spent flowers from time to time. Repeat the same care as during the fourth year.

Transplant the Japanese flowering

quince bonsai every other year into the same size container and be sure to enjoy the blossoms.

