

# SERISSA JAPONICA CARE

## General Information:

Serissa Japonica is an evergreen or semi-evergreen flowering shrub native to Southeast Asia. It is found commonly in India, China and Japan. It tends to grow in wet meadows and open subtropical woodlands. It may also be labeled as “Snow Rose” or “Tree of a Thousand Stars” because of the tiny white flowers that it produces 2-3 times per year. Its naturally miniature leaves and gnarled trunk makes it a popular Bonsai, and with the right conditions it can flower continuously, though it flowers more heavily from spring to autumn.

## Location:

Serissa are primarily outdoor trees but must be protected during the winter. They grow best in high light and thrive in sunny, warm locations. Better lighting conditions will result in more frequent flowering. The best location for your Snow Rose is in full sun but be careful not to place it where it gets direct afternoon sun in the summer. Use a humidity tray to keep moisture levels up, especially in indoor environments.

## Watering:

Serissa is not drought tolerant. Water when topsoil is dry and be sure to water thoroughly. These species are more tolerant of wet feet than most, but can still suffer

from root rot if overwatered. Yellowing leaves can be a symptom of overwatering in Serissa.

## **Fertilizing:**

Fertilize every other week during the summer using an organic liquid fertilizer or a chemical fertilizer diluted to one half strength. Cut fertilizing frequency to monthly during the winter months.

## **Pruning:**

When in bloom, remove fading flowers to encourage further flower production. Prune as needed; Serissa is a fast grower and may need to be pruned often to maintain its shape. This species is particularly suited for clip-and-grow and directional pruning techniques. Serissa are difficult specimens to wire as their bark is generally delicate and the fast rate of growth can result in wire bite.

## **Repotting:**

Repot Serissa species on average of every 1-2 years, depending on growth habit. Older trees will require repotting less frequently than younger specimens. Use a fast draining inorganic soil that will provide plenty of air spaces for the roots to grow into and breathe.

## **Insects and Diseases:**

Serissa are generally not as susceptible to pests and diseases as they are to sudden changes in conditions such as light, temperature, but, keep an eye out for the usual suspects such as aphids, spider mites and scale that are common Bonsai pests. If you find any of these pests, scrape/rinse them off with water and apply insecticidal soap thoroughly. Repeat the process every 5-7 days until no evidence of pests remains.

## **Additional Comments:**

Generally, any changes in light, temperature and watering will cause a Snow Rose to drop its leaves. Don't panic, it's okay...the tree will soon re-grow its leaves.

Serissa will grow air roots and is often used in exposed root over rock styles due to their rapid growth habit.

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