

## Tree Profile: *Chaenomeles* - Flowering Quince

**General Information:** *Chaenomeles* is a genus of three species - *C. cathayensis*, *C. japonica* and *C. speciosa* of deciduous spiny shrubs, usually 1-3 m tall, in the Rosaceae family. They are native to eastern Asia in Japan, China and Korea and are much loved for bonsai because of their tiny, lovely flowers - in spite of their prickly thorns. The leaves are alternately arranged and have a serrated margin. The flowers are usually bright orange-red, but can be white or pink; flowering is in late winter or early spring. Styles can be single/multi trunks, cascade, semi-cascade, clumps and raft styles.

**Lighting & Temperature:** Full sun for full bloom and for the fruit to set, although partial shade in midsummer is desirable in very hot areas. Protect from severe cold and frost.

**Watering:** Likes moist but well drained soil. Daily throughout the growing season, and mist spray foliage except when the plant is in flower or carrying fruit. Water sparingly in winter but do not allow the soil to dry out. This is a drought tolerant shrub!

**Feeding:** Once every two weeks from early spring to flowering then every 30 days until autumn. Some varieties have spot blooms throughout the season. Use liquid bonsai fertilizer or half-strength plant food. Proper feeding is essential for good flowering. Calcium in the soil helps to form fruit and flowers.

**Pruning and wiring:** Fruiting and flowering can sap the plant's energy dramatically, so it is wise to limit the amount by picking off developing fruit and flower buds, especially in young bonsai. Flowering quince likes to sucker from the roots. Suckers should be removed if a single trunk is desired; however, thick trunks can be difficult to achieve, especially in some popular *C. japonica* cultivars such as 'Chojubai.' These plants are most often grown in clump style. Some species may need to be cut back hard to encourage branch formation. For flowers allow new growth to extend unpruned through the growing season! During autumn, new shoots should be cut back to 1-2 leaves after 5-7 leaves have formed, which may be as often as every two weeks in a vigorous plant. *Chaenomeles* can be wired from spring through the end of summer, leaving the wire on for up to four months, and can be repeated yearly.

**Propagation:** From seeds, which need to be cold-treated before sowing in spring, but will germinate rapidly. Softwood cuttings may be taken in summer, or hardwood cuttings in winter, but cuttings will root slowly. Clumps may be propagated through division. Named hybrids are often propagated through grafting.

**Repotting:** *Chaenomeles* is one of the few species which prefers to be repotted in autumn, but can also be transplanted in early spring, or even summer if the top is properly cut back. The books recommend repotting every 2-4 years, but they may need yearly repotting pending on demographic location and or variety. Roots can be cut back by about half if necessary.



### Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



**Q.** Mr Miyagi, can I do major pruning on roots and branches at the same time?

**A.** No, it is too much stress to the tree - branches feed roots; roots feed branches. Balance is important, but don't balance by removing all energy sources. Living bonsai are best - therefore, don't do major pruning on both roots and branches at the same time! If you need to do major pruning to roots to fit the tree in the selected pot, then also trim the overall branching without cutting a major branch! The important part is that major pruning is not to be mistaken with light trimming or foliage reduction! In the next season if you need to remove a major branch or second trunk, then do minor root pruning as well to encourage new root growth, which will help the tree to recover quicker. It will also get new branches growing. You need to alternate major pruning!"

*Members may submit questions to Mr. Miyagi c/o the YVBS web forum or per the club email: [info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au](mailto:info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au)*

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