

The spirea

Spiraea nipponica "snowmound".

Family: Rosaceae.

Origin: Native to Japan, now it is cultivated nearly everywhere on the world.

The Spirea is a compact deciduous shrub which typically grows to 2-4' tall with a similar width. In late spring it shows white flowers in small corymbs on the same side of the branch as the narrow dark blue-green foliage.

Temperature and exposure: They resist high temperatures and are not sensible at all against very cold winters, freeze or windy zones. The placement should be sunny or at least very luminous.

Pruning and cleaning: You should keep the branches short, with only two or three knots on each. The tree will get a very dense and straight ramification with lots of little dark green leaf groups. As the plant grows a lot of fine branches be sure to remove the dry ones and those which grow to the inner side of the tree. Near to the soil it will grow a lot of new sprouts which should be removed after letting them develop 2 or 3 months as they will help to form the nebari.

Wiring: Wire from spring to summer. You will only be able to wire the young branches because the trunk and big branches will break if you try to bend them. Use raffia to protect the exfoliating bark.

Repotting / Soil: As the growth of the tree and in consequence of the roots is very vigorous i repot the tree every year eliminating the third part of the fine roots. I prefer brown pots with circular forms. The mixture I use is composed of 1/4 of peat moss, 1/4 humus or leaf mold, 1/4 of sand and 1/4 of loam (in order to retain the water).

Watering: The spireas grow many fine roots so a good draining is essential. They need much water during the hot season, the soil should be never dry as the fine branches and leaves will dry out easily. Reduce the quantity of water in wintertime.

Fertilizer: Organic solid fertilizer should be applied during the growing and flowering period, that is from June to late September.

Diseases: I have had no serious insect or disease problems with this tree, even if it is susceptible to some of the diseases that attack other Rosaceae, as there are leaf spots, fire blight, powdery mildew, rots etc. It once had some plant louses which I removed with a shower of water and application of highly dissolved Folithion.

Light: Spireas love sun but in very hot countries, as i.e. Spain, in summer it should stay in half shadow as they need a lot of water.