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Banana Trees - Care Guide

Caring For Musa Basjoo

Commonly known as ‘Japanese Banana’

This is the only banana which can successfully be grown outside in milder UK gardens. In maturity in Cornwall, and along the south coast, there are plenty of clumps which produce flowers and, after a hot summer, clusters of small pretty inedible bananas.

This is a suckering, clump forming banana. The oldest clump we know grows at Lanarth on the Lizard Peninsula. It is over 100 years old and grows in a shady, damp but very well protected location. Some stems are up to 15 or 20ft tall. It can and has experienced extreme frost over the decades but the defoliated stems generally recover or reshooting will occur from the base of the clump after particularly severe cold. At Burncoose we have grown a M. basjoo to around 12-15ft over the last 30 years. The pictures attached to this article below show how we cut off the top leaves in early winter and then wrap the stem in shredded paper surrounded by bubble wrap to protect the plant. Actually we have hardly bothered in the recent mild winters with no ill effect although we have yet to see a flower.

Strangely ‘banana’ is one of the most researched sections of our website and M. basjoo has been one of our top sellers for many years. In warm cities it is as easy to grow it outside as it is in Cornwall.

Outside or in the greenhouse M. basjoo is really a foliage plant with leaf blades (under glass) up to 10ft long. Novel and statuesque really. It needs shading from full sun in the greenhouse and reasonable levels of humidity. Outside these bananas need rich well mulched soil in full sun. Annual mulching will help protect the base and the small offsets which develop at the base provide the easiest method of propagation.

In spring bananas need a good tidy up to remove old or wind battered leaves if you have not already done this in the autumn.

In municipal plantings you may well see other ornamental bananas being planted as summer foliage or bedding plants which can then be lifted and taken inside over winter. These are very different species of banana to M. basjoo. Far more tender and certainly not capable of flowering or fruiting outside in the UK.



Musa basjoo



Musa basjoo



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View this video on Youtube here https://www.youtube.com/Rbd0t6n-_OY

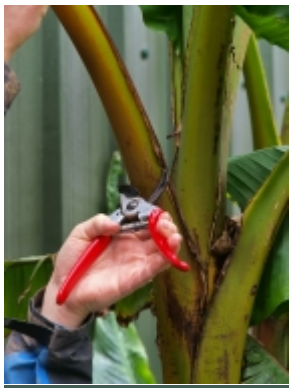
Winter Care



1. Check the plant for any pests or damaged material and remove.



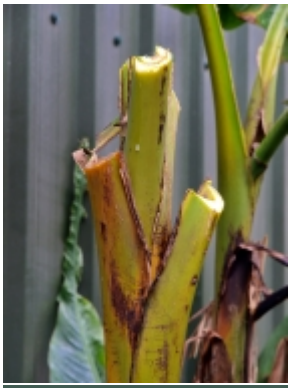
2. Cut off all brown and living leaves.



3. Cut back close to the stem using a sharp pair of secateurs.



4. Cut back close to the stem using a sharp pair of secateurs.



5. Once all leaves are removed youwill be left with a tidy stem ready for wrapping.



6. Use fleece to wrap stem filled with straw or shredded paper.



7. Start at base and work your way up the stem.



8. Tie in securely with string as you go.



9. Ensure you cover the stem evenly around the stem.



10. Keep tying in the filling material as you go.



11. The finished stem wrapped for winter.

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