

Letters to the Editor



Angel M. Ramos

Letter from Hawaii...

Dear Bob,

Aloha from Hawaii! I am very pleased to learn that you are about to go into “growing sansevierias small”. Here is some more encouragement, apart from what you had from the article in the journal (*Sansevieria* 8, page 10). I am also answering some questions you have posed: Soil – I keep my mix simple, 1 part cinder, medium grade (3/8 inch mesh), to 2 parts potting soil (from Garden Shop), no other additives. If the pot is very small I take out the large pieces of cinder by hand. I do not use a sieve of finer mesh. Although beach sand is plentiful here, I do not use it for my plants. You should use your own soil mix. *Sansevierias* will grow in any medium. Watering – I like to have my soil almost dry before watering. Dryness does not seem to affect my *sansevierias*. I have a piece of *sansevieria* which I hung on a tree, no root, no soil, and it is still alive after four years. At the Koko Crater Botanical Garden, the *sansevierias* are doing fine, without water or fertilizing. Fertilizing – I like to feed my plants the first week of the month. If I miss this schedule, there

is another month to go. I think I have missed three months already. I use soluble fertilizer applied with a knapsack sprayer (MiracleGro*). When I repot I apply a small amount of time-release fertilizer.

Starter plants – I start from seedlings, suckers and leaf propagations. Seedlings that I have not had the chance to pot on will grow stunted in a four inch pot. Some plants produce suckers above soil level. From these I select one or all with a piece of rhizome, and put into the final pot where it will be grown small. My plants with rhizomes exposed look good. Small suckers with many leaves can be separated and grown small. Leaf cuttings produce pups and I then decide if I will grow it small. I may leave the leaf on if it is the terminal part of the leaf, as it makes a good display and conversation piece.

Bob, you sent me three photos of *sansevieria* leaf propagations with suckers. The suckers are tall and growing vigorously. I would not use them for growing small. I happen to have one like



Sansevieria 'Koko', leaf propagated, in a five inch bowl.



Sansevieria trifasciata 'Bantel's Sensation' in a 6 inch pot.
The plant on the left can be grown small.



Sansevieria concinna 'Spoon Leaf' (the smaller type), a naturally small plant.

in one of your photos, *S. cylindrica* var. *patula*. My plant had a small sucker growing from almost under the rhizome. Is it a sucker or a seedling? I had to cut part of the parent plant and found it to be a seedling. Its fifth leaf is already cylindrical. I have it in a three-

inch bonsai pot. (Photo below)

Bob, I hope I've been of some help. It's time for you to get started. Confine that sansevieria in a small container, go easy with the water and fertiliser. Best wishes....Aloha! Angel

Sansevieria robusta × *pinguicula* – sucker can be started for bonsai. Then cover the stolon with soil and it will continue to grow, even producing more suckers.



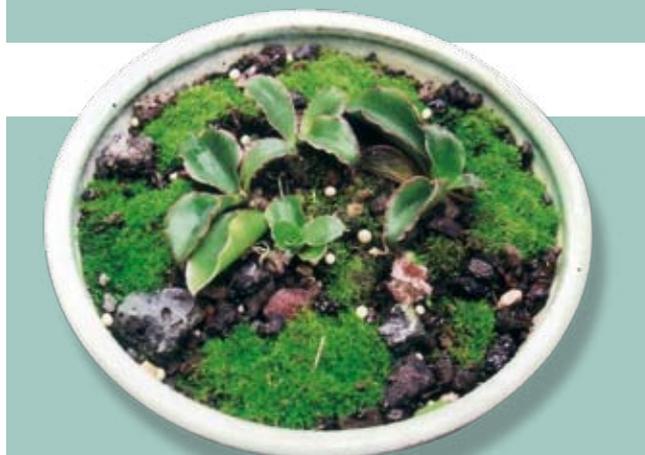
Sansevieria species with a sucker on the left that could be grown small. The one on the right is already too large.



Sansevieria francisii has two suckers on the left that can be grown small. However I already put the whole plant in a ceramic pot.



This *Sansevieria trifasciata* 'Nelsonii' was already mature but small when it was put in this pot.



This *Sansevieria* species naturally grows small. In this bonsai pot it is about one third normal size. Keep the moss damp to keep it alive. Bury or remove the fertilizer balls before showing.



Sansevieria trifasciata 'Bantel's Sensation' in a 6 inch dish. The plant in the centre could be started for growing small.



Sansevieria robusta × *pinguicula* in a 3 × 4 inch pot. The plant may have been from a leaf propagation. It has been two years in this pot. Will it ever grow its leaves two-ranked?