

Pot Culture of Wild Rice ('Kodai')[®]

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Generally speaking, *Oryza* 'Kodai', which means ancient times, is a colored rice that has been called red rice, black rice, green rice, purple rice, and so on. Colored rice was named for the characteristic color in the rice husk (ear of the rice) and in the unpolished rice. Kodai rice is rice that transmits the characteristic of the wild type of rice species.

Kodai rice has the following characteristics: strong vitality, potential of growing on uncultivated land without fertilizer and chemicals, resistance to dry and cold conditions, taller height, self-shattering, and lower yield.

Once the rice grain emerges from its ear it can give us the enjoyment of watching the characteristic color develop and provide us with a romantic feeling.

Therefore, we are researching the challenge of growing ancient rice types, especially red rice, in pot culture.

Red rice is rice that has a red color in the rice husk and needle; this red colored pigment results from tannins. When polished the color of the rice grains turns to pale red. It was introduced to Japan during the Jomon era and seems to be the beginning of Sekihan which is rice boiled with red beans. In Meiji era, red rice was expelled as a weed, however, several Shinto shrines, Kokushi-shrine in Okayama Pref., Takuzukai-shrine in Tsushima (Nagasaki Pref.), and Houmitsu-shrine in Tanegashima-Island (Kagoshima Pref.) have kept red rice till today.

Recently, a boom in growing Kodai rice has developed.

It is difficult to grow rice plants in pot culture because of the following reasons:

- It has a wide rooting zone and massive root system.
- It shows poor suckering in pot culture which results in a poor appearance for ornamental purposes.
- The plants need waterlogging at the time of seeding and drying at the time of ripening.
- In addition, it is difficult for us to make pot-cultured red rice a commodity for gardening due to its height (150 to 170 cm).

We are trying to overcome these difficulties.

We sowed red rice in plugs on 15 June and on 26 June we transplanted seedlings into the Tondemonai pots. We gave them a little fertilizer before flower bud initiation and then some at the time of drying up (Fig.1).

We managed to do with the following ingredients for the container soil. We mixed

potter's gray clay soil, unfertile sandy soil, and the Shozo-70 nursery soil, which could control the soil moisture of the container even in waterlogging and drying up. The pot-cultured red rice for ornamental purpose is shown in Fig.2. What do you think about this?



Figure 1. *Oryza* 'Kodai' at the time of drying up.



Figure 2. Pot-cultured red rice for ornamental purposes.