“Fukusuke” is a method of dwarfing chrysanthemums while allowing them to fully bloom. The term Fukusuke means a large-headed dwarf (or doll) believed to bring good luck. The full Japanese name for this type of culture is Fukusuke Sukuri. During the Japanese Edo period Fukusukes were called Hotei meaning one of seven deities of fortune which often is depicted with a pot belly.

According to our NCS rules, Fukusuke plants must not be more than sixteen inches as measured from the bottom of the container to the top of the stem. If the exhibit exceeds sixteen inches, it can be shown in another class such as Section L, P-1.

Fukusukes are a pleasure to grow. I try to grow 200 or more each year. The plants and their containers are small and light in weight. Fukusukes are welcomed by friends, office workers, patients, and others. They can be grown on tables that are of sufficient height to avoid constant back bending during staking, debranching, disbudding, and during usual inspections. The only drawback is Fukusukes for October shows require late cuttings.

I will share with you my approach to growing and showing Fukusukes. My tables are constructed with PVC, the legs are anchored in the ground with 15” pieces of rebar and supported by wire braces and counterbraces. The tables are made to accommodate a 4’ x 8’ ½” sheet of plywood. Ninety-eight pots will fit nicely on a 4’ x 8’ sheet.

A framework above the table is constructed to support black plastic for shading and clear plastic for protection. Plants are grown in 6” azalea pots.

My preferred media is either PRO-MIX HP or Sunshine Mix # 4. Both provide excellent drainage for small containers. I fortify the medium is each pot with one teaspoon each of granular 10-10-10, Osmocote 14-14-14 and calcium sulfate. Media and fertilizer should be well mixed.

Cuttings are collected around the first of July and dipped in Hormodin # 1 and stuck in thoroughly wetted PRO-MIX HP contained in 4: deep flats. The flats and contents are placed on a potting bench and kept in the dark for two days. After that they are exposed to light for twelve hours each day until well rooted. The cuttings are misted two or three times during the day. After the second week a mist of one tablespoon of 20-20-20 soluble fertilizer per two gallons of
water is applied twice a week to the foliage. Near the first of August the rooted cuttings are planted in azalea pots and placed on the table. The following morning, they are thoroughly sprayed with a .25 % solution of B-9. One week later they are sprayed again and sprayed again one week after that. Usually, three applications are sufficient. Plants are shaded to produce blooms for a desired show.

After the plants are well established in the pots a bamboo stake is placed beside each plant. The stake should be at least 15” in height. When buds are well formed stakes can be shortened so as not to distort the bloom. Finish tying the plant to the stake.

Insect control is accomplished by applying ½ of a teaspoon of Marathon 15 granular to each container. Twelve ounces of soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer, at one tablespoon per gallon, is applied to the media once a week until October 1.

I have experimented with at least 100 mum cultivars and have found that nearly all have responded favorably to the B-9 treatment for Fukusuke culture.