

This is for San Francisco Bay area weather

December

Watering: Keep an eye on your trees' watering needs. A lack of water is as dangerous as too much water. After a light rain, check to see if your trees still need watering. Never let your bonsai go completely dry. Roots need an appropriate amount of moisture to stay alive and healthy.

During prolonged periods of rain, use a block to raise one end of the pot. This reduces the amount of water in the soil and prevents roots from drowning. This is especially important for trees like Japanese white pines that like to be a little drier. Your bonsai can also suffer from a lack of water during prolonged periods of rain. On broadleaf evergreens and conifers, foliage can prevent rain water from reaching the soil. Ignored bonsai can die from a lack of water during winter.

Dormant Spray: Once your trees are dormant, spray them with lime-sulfur dormant spray. Lime-sulfur will kill insect eggs, fungus, and scale. Check the label for directions. A generally recommended mixture is 1 part lime-sulfur to 20 parts water. For flowering apricot, a stronger solution of 1 part lime sulfur and 5 parts water is used in Japan. The flowering apricot or 'ume' may be attacked heavily by borers in the spring which can cause branches and the trunk to die back.

Lime sulfur can burn a tree's roots. There are 2 ways to protect the roots. The first method is to use wet newspaper to cover the surface of the soil before spraying lime sulfur. The second method is to water the soil well before spraying. When you spray lime sulfur, some of it will drop into the soil. Flush the soil with water afterwards. Wipe off the excess lime sulfur on the pot. Lime sulfur can leave white stains on pots.

Some trees cannot tolerate lime sulphur. Especially when it is not cold enough. It could burn shimpaku. It is recommended to spray lime-sulfur twice in winter –about 1-2 months apart. Cold sunny days are good days to use dormant spray on your healthy bonsai. Do not spray weak bonsai, bonsai that has recently been wired, bonsai that will be shown, or ezo spruce bonsai. Lime sulfur will burn the foliage and can kill ezo spruce.

Do not spray show trees. It will stain the trunk, leave and needle.

It is okay to spray it before you wire your tree.

Another option is to use copper spray.

Suitable trees to work on.

Winter is good time to work on conifers – thinning and wiring.

Deciduous trees (if it does not bleed)

Start repotting native conifers and evergreen

