

September

Standard summer care is still in effect for the first half of this month in the Bay Area. Make sure your trees are well watered. Strong trees, especially conifer, they will consume a lot of water this time of year. Weak trees, on the other hand, will have more difficulty taking up water, even when well watered. If you have a weak tree, keep it under shade-cloth and mist it several times a day on hot days.

*****All Bonsai should be fertilized until the beginning of winter.**

Fall Care: In mid September, protected trees can usually be moved into more sun. Sphagnum moss placed on the surface of the soil can be removed when the daytime highs drop below 80°F. If you are not sure, it is safer to leave the moss on the trees.

Although you can leave sphagnum moss on satsuki year round, replace old moss with new moss at least once a year to maintain good drainage. Spring is a good time to replace it.

Deciduous trees. Start giving your deciduous trees more fertilizer to strengthen them for winter.

Fruiting and flowering trees. Main task at this time is to feed. Light thinning can be done.

Japanese Black Pine Be cautious about how much fertilizer you give black pines. Too much fertilizer will cause the needles to grow long — too little may weaken the tree. We can start it the same way as we do in spring but use about 2/3 the amount.

If the needles on your black pine seems to be too short last year, misting it a couple times a day in September. Misting will make the needles grow longer.

Note: It is too early to work on Japanese black pine and red pines. We should wait till November.

Scale Junipers Pinching new growth on junipers should be minimal or avoided this time of year. Long shoots can be cut with scissors. We can style and wire junipers until spring.

*******Japanese white pine and all high mountain pine (Lodge pole, Mugho pine, Ponderosa pine, Pinyon pine, Scots pine).** They can be wired from September to March. On healthy five needle pines, remove old needles, leaving only this year's growth. On weak pines, old pines or weak branches on strong pine, retain year-old needles to strengthen the tree. Three-year-old needles on white pine will likely start to lose color and turn brown at this time of year. Most well cared for white pine will have no third year needles because they would have already been removed.

To maintain the refine tree, white pines may be lightly thinned after the old needles are removed. The goal of pruning is to equalize the energy. Prune strong buds off in the strong area. And try to keep the same size buds throughout the tree.

*****Conifer with a single set of growth per year ie spruce, hemlock, fir, yew, they can be work on in September to March. They can be cut back and wire.

We can treat Ponderosa pine, mugho pine, jack pine, lodge pole pine and other high mountain pines the same way we work on five needle pines. For Ponderosa pine, it is safer to cut the old needle. DO NOT pull old needle on Ponderosa pine.

Note: white pines are worked very differently than Japanese black pines. Cut needles above the base or pull them straight out. Pull needles only if the “skin” at the base of the needle is not damaged when the needles are pulled and the tree does not “bleed.”

Japanese maple. Continue to feed it moderately until the leave turn color in fall. No heavy pruning and wiring at this time.

Trident maple. Continue to feed and prune lightly. Do not defoliate. It is too late in the season to defoliate again. Thin it lightly.

Board leave Tropical trees Ficus and buttonwood should not be defoliate at this time of the year. They need fertilizer to grow. We need to let the trees grow to gain strength. Light wiring and thinning can be done. For major pruning and styling, it is better to do in late spring and summer. But it also can be done at the beginning of this month. They need to be kept warm in witnere

Repotting: Fall repotting can begin in mid September. Suitable trees include junipers, white pines, and fruiting and flowering trees such as crab apple, pyracantha, and flowering quince (*Chaenomeles* sp.). It is especially important to repot quince in the fall. Quince repotted in the spring are susceptible to root gall, a disease that can weaken or kill a tree. Do not remove as much soil from the root ball now as you would in the spring.

Wait until spring to repot decandled Japanese black pines, recently wired white pines, or trees that are weak.

Bonsai repotted in fall need at least 6 weeks of warm weather to develop new roots. They also need extra protection in winter. If the winter in your area is very cold and you cannot protect your trees well, wait until spring to repot.

Suitable trees to work on this month.

- Japanese five needle pines
- Ponderosa pine – lodge pole pine and other high mountain pines
- Junipers
- Spruce and hemlock
- Cypress and false cypress
- Broad leave evergreen.