

October

This is an important month to continue fertilizing both deciduous and coniferous bonsai. The fertilizer that trees receive at this time of the year will help keep them strong through winter.

Deciduous trees: Reduce the amount of fertilizer deciduous trees receive when their leaves begin to change color. When most of the leaves have color, pull all of the leaves off to give the weaker, interior buds more light in winter. Increased sunlight and good air circulation will greatly increase the strength with which the buds will open the following spring. For maples, pull the leaves forward with your finger or tweezers. Beech care differs slightly: use tweezers to pull the leaves backward to avoid breaking new buds. Do not wait for the dead leaves to drop off by themselves. Remove any remaining fertilizer after you remove the leaves.

Light pruning and wiring can be done after the leaves are removed. It is much easier to wire deciduous trees without leaves. But because new buds break off easily, wire your trees carefully. Do not wire trees that have gone completely dormant. This can lead to bleeding if you make a minor crack in a branch during styling. Wired trees need to be protected from freezing weather. If it is difficult for you to keep them protected, the options are to wait till late winter - early spring or wire them in later spring - early summer.

For deciduous and broad leaf evergreen bonsai use aluminum wire. Aluminum wire is easier to apply and remove. Use copper for conifers

Because the Bay Area is sometimes subject to warm spells in winter, some deciduous trees may sprout before spring arrives. If this happens, just let the tree grow. New shoots can be cut off before repotting or before spring arrives.

Broadleaf evergreens: Old leaves will turn yellow and drop off. Pick off old leaves and clean the surface of the soil. Although late spring is the best time to work on broadleaf evergreens, it is okay to wire or lightly cut back broadleaf evergreens. Wait until spring to wire satsuki — the branches will be less brittle then.

Fall Wiring: Bonsai that is wired in fall need protection from wind and cold. Bending may cause cracks in which ice can form. The expansion of ice in a small crack or fissure can damage live tissue and kill branches. If the temperature falls below 50° F, put the tree under an eave of the house or in an unheated greenhouse.

It is still too early to work on **Japanese black pine** the new growth is still too tender. Wait until November to work on them. By November, new needle will be hardened off. Keep more needles on the tree that you plan to wire. We will break some needle during wiring process. More needles will keep our trees stronger.

For you who live further north- it is almost time to put your trees in storage. For hardy trees, wait until it get the first frost before you move it into storage area. They will go into dormant

stage and will grow better in spring. The trees that receive some light during winter will grow stronger in spring.

For tropicals, if you live in the southern part of the country, this may be the last time to defoliate before the next growing season. You will have to do it early enough so that the tree will send out new set of leaves. It should be harden off before the winter arrives. If you are not sure that it will be enough time for new leaves to harden off. It will be better to leave the tree alone and defoliate it next year.

For trees in training, it is better to let them grow and then cut back in spring.

Suitable trees to work on this month.

--all conifer (but Japanese black pine and red pine. Those can be worked on November - February)

-Broad leave ever green - for thinning only. It may be too late for heavy cut back.

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

If your deciduous trees have changed to fall color, we can start working on them.