

January

Happy New Year 2016

- - - Winter Tree Care - - -

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Watering

For Conifer and broad leaf evergreen, when it is sunny check your trees, they may need to be watered more often than you think. Some sunny days, I water conifer that is in the sun, daily or every other day or every 3 days. It depends on your location and weather.

Even when it rains, check your tree. Sometimes the thick canopy can repel water. Soil may still be dry.

For deciduous trees, they might need water only once a week or less during cold period.

Check the surface of the soil; if akadama is light color, you will need to water.

You do not need to soak the tree every time you water.

The best time of the day to water in winter is during the day when it is sunny between 11 am and 1 pm. If you are not able to do it, water in the morning.

Evening or night watering should be avoided. If we have frosty or freezing night, ice can damage roots. There is also a chance that frozen water can break the pot.

Dormant spray

It is time to spray lime sulfur as a dormant spray. Follow the instruction on the label. If you cannot find lime sulfur, you can use copper spray instead. If you are not sure about dormant spray, you can skip it. You can use regular fungicide spray instead. Dormant spray is fungicide. It will also help to control insect. It kills insect eggs.

Daisaku Nomoto strongly recommended to spray Lime Sulphur on Japanese black pine twice in winter. Fungus can kill Japanese black pine during growing season.

Do not spray spruce, hemlock, azalea and tropical trees and also the tree that you have just wired or the tree that has just been repotted with lime sulfur. It can burn them.

Do not spray show trees

You can spray them after the show

Repotting

We, in the bay area, can start to repot our trees this month. Repot deciduous trees first. Do not wait until the bud swell on deciduous trees. After swelling, the buds will open and the leaves will unfold very fast. You will not have enough time to repot them.

I start to repot my bonsai in December. They grow better when they repot early unless you live in a very cold climate.

For you who live in colder climates, if you keep the tree in cold frame or greenhouse. Your bonsai will come out of dormancy before the tree outside. You will need to repot before the buds start to grow.

Wiring: Winter is a good time to catch up on wiring. Practice your wiring technique regularly. Good wiring is effective and beautiful to look at. Try to use the minimum amount of wire to do the maximum amount of work. Strength of wire need to be stronger than the branch that you need to bend. If a branch springs back after bending it, the wire is too small for the job. Remove this wire and apply a new piece of wire larger than the one you used before. If this does not work, redo it again.

Remember, 2 pieces of small wire do not do the same work of one larger wire.

When bending wired branches, ensure that the wire supports the back side of the bend. Bending at unsupported locations widens the gap between the wire and the branch and increases the chance of broken branches. I

f you do not correct your mistakes, your work will not progress. Learn to enjoy wiring and have a good time doing it.

Even spirals and even spacing between branch and wire make the job neat and beautiful.

45 degrees is the typical angle for applying wire, but this angle can be elongated to 30 degrees. In this range the wire has the most holding power and is most pleasing to look at. **Too tight spiral does not work.** Some said that if you put on tight spiral, you can make more bend. It is un true. If you want more bend use 2 pieces of wire and place the 2nd wire in the middle. You will create more support for more bend that way.

It has been said the best space between the wire and the branch is just enough to allow a piece of rice paper to slide through. Spin wire. Do not press it on the branches.

Loose wiring does not offer good holding power and it does not look good. Tight wiring will cause wire marks on branches in a short time. The skill required making proper determinations would come with experience.

Wire needs to be anchored well. It needs a good anchor at the point where you start either at the fork or at the base of the main branch. Common mistake that I see is that the wire is lose at the starting point. (but sometimes it is too tight there, it is not good either)

Do not criss-cross wires. Crossing wires causes more pressure when you bend the branch and it makes the branch look bigger than it really is. It is also difficult to dewire, so correct any mistakes right away. It will become a bad habit if you keep saying to yourself, "It's okay for now," or, "I'll correct it next time."

Be sure to protect bonsai that has recently been wired or repotted. Keep these trees around or above 40° F and away from excessive cold and wind.

The best time to wire deciduous trees is in mid to late spring / early summer and the other time is late fall before the leaves fall off. Winter wiring can cause serious bleeding. Light bending is okay after the leaves drop.

For January and February workshop, we will focus on repotting our trees. For the bay area, it is the right time to do. It is not too early to repot your bonsai. The latest we can repot is until the middle of March.

For tropical, it is not a good time to defoliate and do major cut back. The trees slow down as the weather is getting warmer.

You can repot tropical conifer.

Wait to repot the others tropical trees in late spring into summer.

Note: For show trees – please protect them from the cold nights by placing them in an unheated green house, garage (just at night and when it is cloudy and cold), under the eaves of the house and away from the wind in order to keep them green.

- - - Workshop Information - - -

First, please have your show tree ready. We will focus on repotting this month and next month. It is also a good time to wire and style conifers.

Growing Medium = Boon Mix

Our soil recipe contains:

1 part lava rock

1 part pumice

1 part Akadama

½ cup of horticultural charcoal (per 5 gallon mix)

½ cup of decompose granite (per 5 gallon mix)

For deciduous, use small size mix (1/16"-1/4 ") and add 1 extra part of Akadama.

All ingredients must be bone dry, screened and sized. The dust is discarded.

The use of pumice for bottom layer drainage (5/16 ") is recommended.

For conifers from the desert and high mountains use medium size mix (3/8" – 5/16").

For lower elevation conifer and water loving conifer, use small size mix (1/16" – 1 / 4 ")

Note : Proper repotting technique needs to be applied, otherwise this mix is not recommended. For best results, organic fertilizer is recommended at the correct times and season.

A thin layer of coarsely screened New Zealand sphagnum moss should be place on top of the new soil. The moss will keep the soil in place during watering. The thickness of the moss layer should vary according to climate and watering habits.

This soil mix has been used successfully throughout North America.

Or you can use Clay King

Clay King is the best akadama to use for your trees

I mix 30% pumice to clayking.

Happy New Year,

Boon