

March

Watering : During later winter – early spring. Your trees should be watered once a day. The best time to water your trees is around 11-12 am. Watering too early, the trees may stay too dry in the afternoon. Watering in late evening, your trees will stay wet all night and it can cause fungus problem.

If you cannot water at proper time, it is better to water in the morning. And for small trees, use humidity tray to help your trees to stay moist during the day.

The best option is to set up an automatic watering system to water your collection.

Pinching: Whether or not a tree needs pinching is the most important question concerning your bonsai this time of the year. Before you start pinching your deciduous trees, ask yourself what stage of training the trees are in. Another question is what kind of deciduous tree do you have. Pinching techniques are often different from species to species.

Again, as a reminder, pinching should only be done on **refined bonsai** after branches and the overall structures have been developed.

If you pinch junipers too early, you will delay the development. You should let the junipers in training grow freely then wire new branches. Remove old leggy branches. branches that have become too thick should be made into jin. Do not cut thick branches too close to the trunk since the scar will not heal over.

If your deciduous bonsai is in an early stage of training, let new buds grow freely and wire them after they harden (mid summer around May-June) . Because these buds grow fast, you may have to rewire your trees several times in a single season. By wiring young branches, you can add interesting curves where they are needed. In fall or early spring, cut these long branches back to a desired length so they can begin to grow freely again the following season. This treatment will strengthen your bonsai and promote good root development. Cutting those long shoots leaving 2-3 sets of buds, you create new interior branches from the inside out. And doing it correctly you will double or triple the secondary branches.

Most bonsai publications offer good information for pinching well developed bonsai. Here are some general guidelines:

Japanese Maples Use tweezers to remove the center buds leaving a single pair of new leaves.

Trident Maples Cut off the elongated center of the bud beyond the cluster of newly opened leaves. If the new buds do not elongate, it may not be strong enough to be pinched. After the new leaves hardened off. You can remove large leaves from the cluster of leaves. Feed it until you get the long shoots. Then you can pinch. If there is not elongate center, just cut large leaves.

Beech Use tweezers to pinch back to two leaves after the buds open and the leaves start to unfold. Beeches are usually the last

deciduous bonsai to open. Other option is to let it grow and cut back to 2-3 leaves (normal size. Not smallest leave at the base) with scissors.

Scale Junipers Pinch only when strong pointed shoots (runners) grow about half an inch to one inch beyond the general outline of the branch, usually in April or May.

Needle Junipers More likely you do not have this specie (this apply to Juniper rigida only) Let new shoots elongate before using very sharp scissors to cut new growth back to a quarter inch or less. Do this in May.

Mixed foliage junipers (procumbent, San Jose, Formina) cut strong shoots (runner) with scissors to another growing branches.

Elm Let the branches grow to about 10 leaves then cut back to 2-4 leaves. (keep more leaves for Seiju elm or Hokkaido elm)

Zelkova Let the new branches grow to about 6-8 leaves. Then cut back to 2-3 leaves

Ficus let the new branches grow to 6-8 leaves and cut back to 2-3 leaves. (for you who live in the tropic only. If you live in the cooler area wait till April or May to pinch your tropical trees

Fertilizing: Organic fertilizer cakes made from rape seed or cotton seed meal (store-purchased or home-made) work well. Time-release fertilizers i.e. Osmocote can be used to supplement organic fertilizers. Wait at least four weeks after repotting bonsai before fertilizing them.

For mature deciduous trees, we need to wait until new leaves harden before fertilizing lightly. If you fertilize too early or too much, both leaves and internodes will grow large and long.

If you plan to defoliate your tree, you need to feed it early. So it will have enough energy to push the second growth.

For the tree in training, your goal is to make thick trunk. Fertilize your tree early. Big leaves and long needles help the trunk and branches to grow large.

Feed Japanese black pines fertilize heavily in spring to help the trees bud after decandling. For a twelve inch long pot, start with four to six fertilizer cakes and add a few more every few weeks. When the surface starts to get full, remove old cakes and replace them with new ones. By the end of May, the surface of the pot should be covered with fertilizer. Fish emulsion or any liquid organic fertilizer can also be used one a week at lighter dose..

Begin feeding white pines lightly when the new needles open, usually in May. Some mature tree, we may not feed in spring at all. Fertilize in late summer after the needle has hardened

off. Apply a light to moderate amount of fertilizer through fall, starting with 4 cakes for a large tree and adding 4 more a month later.

Note : Branches with short internodes and small foliage should be focused on after the structure of the bonsai and its branches has developed. Build the structure first.

Work that can be done this month in the bay area.

- Repotting is still okay for Conifers. And deciduous trees that is not budding yet.
- Pruning all bonsai
- Wire and style conifers.