

MONTHLY TIPS

Conifers and deciduous bonsai are at the peak of their growing season. Continue to shorten candles on pines and to pluck needles on spruce and junipers. In June you should also shorten new growth on deciduous trees to develop the beautiful ramifications we all want. You must avoid long internodes. Prune your azaleas and remove all blossoms. Azaleas set next year's buds in the summer. Keep Japanese maples in good light but out of full sun (which can cause leaf burn).

WIRING

Fine wiring can help develop an outstanding bonsai but poor fine wiring will almost always result in a mediocre tree. You must develop the skill of fine wiring. Once mastered you will find that fine wiring is relaxing.

Summer is a wonderful time for fine wiring. Wiring can be done at any time on all conifers. If some branches are unusually heavy you might find it helpful to force the limbs downward by use of guy wires that are attached to the container or a lower part of the trunk. Or you can place the container on a piece of plywood and attach the guy wires to the plywood by use of screw eyes. The guy wires can then be gradually tightened until you have achieved the desired limb placement.

INSECTS

Continue to watch for bugs, aphids, scale (especially on elms), and the red spider mite that are fond of junipers and Alberta spruce. If you have a safe storage area you can store spray bottles with various insecticides and fungicides. Then you will have the required sprays already mixed and ready for use when needed.

FERTILIZERS

Continue your fertilizing program.

WATERING

Check each tree individually when watering. Trees that are in full leaf will need more water than those just coming out of dormancy. Check your trees daily and water each tree only as required.

REPOTTING

The time to repot is past except for emergencies.

FUTURE BONSAI

A great way to develop the root spread of a bonsai is to cut off the taproot. Then spread the remaining roots on a flat rock and plant the tree and rock in your garden. The rock will encourage root spread. Let everything grow for a least one season to develop a larger trunk. You will want to root prune with a spade in the fall. You can leave the tree in the ground until the desired trunk size has been obtained.