

MONTHLY TIPS

We have watered our trees all summer - but don't stop now. When you place your bonsai in winter storage be sure they are moist. Outdoor trees are now in their winter rest (dormancy). They have stored their energies for the upcoming great new growth of spring. Because of the shortened hours of daylight your trees begin a period of rest. There is a gradual slowing of active growth. Deciduous trees lose their leaves. Buds develop a protective coating as lower temperatures herald the winter season.

Bonsai become dormant in winter the same as all the trees in your landscape. It is important to keep your bonsai dormant until late March. Warm temperatures encourage the start of spring growth regardless of the season. Once a tree breaks dormancy it is not possible to reverse the process. Keeping trees dormant can be difficult when temperatures fluctuate widely. Many bonsai have been killed when warm temperatures encourage new growth of buds and roots. Then when temperature drops the new growth is killed. Thus, it is necessary to keep the root system cold. Mulching after the soils is frozen will help. Also, make sure that the part of the tree that is above ground is protected from the sun, wind and hungry creatures. If you take these steps your bonsai will be in good condition in spring. Now, relax and take time to read a book on bonsai or horticulture.

-Jim Hagan