

## MONTHLY TIPS

Most bonsai have had their strongest growth in the spring. By now the pines will have had their candles reduced. New growth on spruce should have been pruned at least once. Continue to prune when necessary. On your deciduous trees cut twigs back to two or three leaves.

All conifers enjoy full sun and thrive in the wind as long as they are secure on the bench and are watered regularly. Deciduous trees need some protection not only from the wind but especially from the full strength of the late afternoon sun. Give deciduous trees some protection, especially maples. Even, tridents, ginnallas and rubrum maples need protection from the late afternoon sun. Palmatum maples should be in the shade almost all day - not a dense shade, but in a strong light.

### **FINE WIRING**

Continue fine wiring on all needled trees. Find a cool spot this summer and fine wire all your junipers and pines.

### **WATERING**

We all have bonsai that are difficult to water and few of us have time to water several times a day.

Mame - partially fill a container with pea gravel and water. Place your mame on top of the gravel.

Bonsai on a rock (or bonsai in a container 3/4" or less in depth) use a piece of rope as a wick. Poke one end into the soil with a chopstick and the other end into a basin of water. The wicking action will keep a steady supply of moisture at the roots.

In general more frequent watering is needed when the weather is very warm since considerable water is lost through transpiration. Every bonsai has a preferred watering requirement - which depends on the species, local environment, size, soil type, and the size of the container. It is not possible to state one simple rule for how often to water your trees because of the varying requirements of each tree. However, try the following - water each tree daily. If the soil is continually damp then water that tree less frequently.

When a tree is dormant (in the winter or during the summer in periods of very high temperatures) less water is required so the frequency of watering should be reduced. Observe the soil, use common sense. Do not water newly repotted trees if the soil is wet. Wait until the soil starts to dry which indicates the root system is active and has recovered from root pruning.

The great bonus of using a very porous soil is that it is almost impossible to over water your bonsai since any excess water just filters through the soil.

### **FERTILIZING**

Continue to fertilize once a week with a soluble fertilizer at about half strength.

### **INSECTS**

Aphids love the tender new growth of your trees. Red spider mites can be devastating to junipers and Alberta Spruce. Malathion, a soap solution, or a strong blast of water, will rid the plants of these pests.

*Jim Hagan*