

## MONTHLY TIPS

"If one loves the earth, he finds a liveliness in walking through the autumn woods: the color, the crackling, and the ripeness of the time appeal to his senses as he kicks his way through the dry leaves with his feet."

- Frederic Remington

Beautiful fall colors are beginning to clothe our deciduous trees in a marvelous display of color. We are fortunate to live in one of the great fall color areas of the world. Trees that can produce great fall color and respond well to bonsai culture, in our area, are the maples: the common red maple (*acer rubrum*), *acer ginnala*, Durands dwarf, and *ginnala Flame*. The tridents and *palmatum*s have beautiful coloration but are somewhat tender in our area. Sweet gum (*liquidambar*) has gorgeous color, but is short lived in pot culture.

Many club members bring their indoor bonsai inside in September - before the furnace in the house comes on. I prefer to leave my indoor trees outside as long as possible. But, I am also prepared to bring all my tender bonsai inside in the event of an unexpected cold spell (40 or lower).

Before bringing your trees indoors spray them with an insecticide. Make sure they are insect free. I also use a systemic insecticide several weeks before I plan on bringing them indoors.

### **FERTILIZING**

Some bonsai enthusiasts feel that no fertilizers are needed after later summer. The use of fertilizers with a high nitrogen content is detrimental to the health of the tree. You want to avoid developing new shoots that will not harden before winter. However, fertilizers that are high in potassium and phosphorous (such as 4-10-10) will strengthen the bonsai and discourage winter die back. On junipers add a small amount of agricultural lime to promote good color next year.

### **INSECTS**

Hardy bonsai also need attention. Insects are as busy now as ever and diseases are ever present. Spider mite population can be controlled with Kelthane.

### **WIRING**

You have always promised to do the fine wiring needed on your bonsai. Well now is the time to honor your promises. If you fine wire now you can leave the wire on until spring. Even wire on conifers (which continue to have some growth during winter) will cause no damage. But, make certain to remove all wires in early spring or your trees will be damaged.

What should you do if you see a starving endangered species of owl that is about to eat an endangered species of fish?

-*Jim Hagan*