

BONSAI CARE FOR FEBRUARY

This is a continuation of the bonsai care guidance authored by Jim Smith and originally printed in Florida Bonsai Magazine in 1986. It has been updated by Jim and is reprinted with both his permission and that of Florida Bonsai Magazine.

The weather for February is usually the same as January but the days are longer.

February is the beginning of spring for our area and some of our plants will start to put out buds this month. Continue to monitor the weather forecast for the frost and freeze warnings. If the birds didn't invade your yard in January they probably will this month or next.

WATERING

Your plants should require about the same care this month as they did in January.

If you are getting ready to repot a tree, allow the soil to dry for an easy reporting. Wet soil is difficult to remove from roots.

INSECTS

Continue to check your plants for mites. Since new growth will begin on many of your plants shortly you should be on the lookout for aphids or plant lice.

Aphids are small insects most of which are wingless. Winged forms appear when their food supply is impaired by crowding or by maturing of the infested plant tissue.

There are three aphids usually seen here, the green aphid is bright green in color. The black aphid is reddish brown to almost black. The melon aphid is variable in color. Nymphs are usually yellowish green and adults are dark green, gray or black.

They damage the plant by sucking the juice from the new growth, causing it to twist and curl. Control is easy with any pesticide labeled for aphids. Spray as soon as you see the first signs of them. Follow label directions.

FERTILIZER

Fertilize all your plants that you do not plan to repot this spring, as soon as they start to put out new growth.

POTTING

This is the time to repot your bonsai if you haven't done so already. Deciduous trees should be root pruned before their new buds break and new growth starts. Plants that have been root pruned should be protected from the sun and wind until they become established.

PINCHING AND WIRING

If you wire any of your trees at this time, check the wires regularly to make sure that they **Do Not** cut into the bark. Remove them if they become too tight and replace them if necessary. Plant growth can be extremely fast at this time of year.