

## BONSAI CARE FOR SEPTEMBER

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.

Fall is almost here. Our temperatures are getting cooler, especially at night. We may not feel the change but many plants respond to this by putting on their last flush of growth for the year.

### WATERING

This is the month that we have most of our hurricanes and it is also our wettest month. Make sure that all of your bonsai have good drainage. If not, be prepared to move them to a drier location when necessary.

### FERTILIZER

Since most plants will put on a substantial amount of growth this fall, make sure that the plants you are developing are properly fertilized. Heavy rains leach the soil quickly and you will, therefore, need to apply fertilizer more often.

### INSECTS AND DISEASES

Plants that put out lush tender growth during this warm wet season attract insects. Continue to inspect your plants for insects and fungus.

*Aphids* are tiny insects that suck the sap from the leaves and stems of new growth causing the leaves to curl. They can be controlled by spraying with malathion.

*Scale* insects also suck sap, but from the older leaves and woody parts of the tree. They can cause a plant to drop its leaves and, if untreated can kill it. Scale can be treated and controlled by spraying with an oil or systemic pesticide that is labeled for scale. When using oil spray on your plants, protect them from extreme heat or cold.

*Fungus* can be identified on some plants by dark spots on the leaves or by a white powdery substance on others, (Crepe Myrtle). Fungus can be prevented by regularly spraying with fungicide.

Always read and follow the instructions on the label when using a pesticide.

### PINCHING

Since most plants will be growing now, pinch the new growth as it develops. This must be done each week if you want to refine your bonsai in the shortest possible time. Continue to remove all large and diseased leaves.

### POTTING

Pot only plants that you know will survive when potted this month. Many plants can be potted now, although spring is the best time to repot most. Make sure that newly potted bonsai are protected from heavy rains.

### CUTTINGS AND LAYERS

We are approaching the end of the season for rooting cuttings of tropicals. Take cuttings or layers of easy to root plants immediately. Junipers and other hardwood cuttings can be taken now. Use a rooting hormone on hard to root

cuttings. Propagating information is available from your County Extension Agent, or ask experienced club members if you have questions.