

## **BONSAI CARE FOR AUGUST**

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.

August is another hot month. It may, therefore, be necessary to move some of your bonsai to an area in your garden that is more protected from sun and wind. Maples and some other broad leaf trees whose leaves tend to burn, will benefit from more shade.

### **WATERING**

Although the rains have started in our area, the amount that falls can be deceiving. Make sure that your bonsai receive a sufficient amount of water each day. This may mean that some may need water twice a day. It is normal for some plants to wilt in the late afternoon on a hot, windy day. Therefore, you should check the soil for moisture.

### **FERTILIZER**

Continue fertilizing, especially those plants you are trying to develop. Frequent applications of a weak mix is better than few applications of a strong mix.

### **INSECTS AND DISEASE**

Insects can always be a problem in our area. Inspect your plants daily for evidence of their presence. Chewing insects can ruin a bonsai in a few days, but can be controlled by spraying with Sevin. Spider mites suck the sap from the leaves and stems of needle leaf and broad leaf plants, causing the foliage to look pale. Mites are controlled by spraying with a miticide, (Kelthane). Make three applications at five day intervals. Always follow the label directions when using any pesticide.

### **PINCHING**

August is one of our growing months. As you know, bonsai can only be developed while they are growing. Pinching must be done weekly, to achieve the ramification you desire. The more you pinch, the more twigs you will produce. You should also remove any diseased or oversize leaves.

### **POTTING**

Only emergency potting should be done this month, except for plants that you know can be potted now.

### **CUTTINGS AND AIRLAYERS**

Cuttings and airdlayers of most tropical plants will root this month. Root cuttings in a well drained soil mix, under mist in full sun, or under a plastic cover in shade. Air layers can be made with sphagnum moss covered with aluminum foil. It is not necessary to tie the aluminum foil.