

Spring care for your coniferous bonsai trees

The main reference is the book by Colin Lewis - Growing and Displaying Bonsai, page 112

1. Lift outdoor bonsai from winter storage when the weather is O.K., soil is not frozen, and ground is dry. Remove protective winter covering. Check for damage and pests. Spray if necessary with mild insecticide like Malathion and water if necessary.
2. Re-potting - generally less than 5 years old annually, 5-10 years old re-pot every other year, over 20 years old every 3rd year or more. Re-pot deciduous trees as soon as new buds appear; re-pot pines, spruce and juniper later. Always place re-potted trees in a shady location.
3. Fertilizing- "Do not fertilize re-potted trees" until buds are open and tree is healthy. Fertilize all other trees with weak high nitrogen (30-10-10) content every 2 weeks.
4. Wiring - Do not wire re-potted trees. Each tree has a best time for wiring, see information sheets for coniferous species.
5. Pruning - remove any dead branches and twigs. Any tree can be pruned now except pine and spruce; these should be done later, as they bleed resin which will disfigure the bark.
6. Watering - Water re-potted tree sparingly until the tree seems healthy. All other trees water thoroughly until runs out the drain holes, then allow the tree to become fairly dry between watering. Once the weather is warmer, water regularly once a day before the weather becomes too hot, preferably first thing in the morning.