

Spring - Outdoor Bonsai Trees

March 2015

When ground has thawed and the trees can be dug up, remove the protective winter wrapping, check for winter damage, pests, clean all old foliage and twigs.

The frequency that a bonsai needs to be re-potted depends on species, age, size and how well the tree has been growing.

Deciduous trees require more frequent re-potting. If you are unsure whether your tree needs root pruning, gently remove the tree from the pot, check if it is root bound. If there is still space for the roots to grow freely, return tree to the pot for another year.

- you may want to update your tree photographs and records.
- best time for re-potting is just before or as soon as buds start to swell.
- have all the necessary tools and equipment, pot, wire, screening, soil, etc.
- first, if necessary, take the time to trim the tree, tidying up any long and unwanted growth. The soil should be reasonably dry before re-potting. It is much easier and more pleasant for you and the tree when soil is not soggy!
- when re-potting it's a good time to examine the surface roots and to remove any unwanted or ugly ones and to reposition some others.
- preparing roots for pruning, use a root hook or root comb to remove most of the old soil and to fan out the roots to prune. It's a good idea to leave some of the old soil on some of the coniferous tree, as there could be some beneficial fungus
- mycorrhizae.
- using very sharp scissors to remove about one third of the root ball. Cut several small wedges around the root base where possible, this enables fresh soil to be introduced into the heart of the root ball, helping to keep it healthy.

- clean old pot, if reusing, cover drainage holes with screening and prepare wire to secure the tree into the pot.
- add some soil into the bottom of the pot and place tree in. Secure tree with the wire and continue to add soil, use chopstick to fill all cavities under and around the tree, ensuring no air pockets are present. Tapping the pot gently also helps.
- note, if you want to add slow release fertilizer, it can be mixed in with the soil when placing into the pot.
- thoroughly water the tree, place in a shady location out of the wind and wait for the buds to open.
- soil mix - a good balance for your tree species
- you can control how your tree grows with a healthy feeding schedule
- when you want to fertilize your trees, it is a good practice to water before you fertilize
- if using a liquid fertilizer, use at $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ strength. Young trees need more, older trees much less, try not to fertilize on rainy days.
- mist the foliage using your fertilizer mixture.