



Bonsai Tasks in August:

The dog days of summer are upon us. If we continue to have hot, scorching days, it would be wise to keep your trees in a position where they receive morning sun but where it is shaded in the afternoon. If the weather begins to cool off, give your trees progressively more sun. This will promote better autumn coloring. It is even more important to turn your trees regularly if they receive uneven light. This will ensure that buds develop with equal strength over the entire tree.

In late summer and early autumn, there is a short burst of growth before trees go into winter dormancy. This could mean that wire put on in the spring might begin to cut in. Check and act accordingly.

As the weather begins to cool down, fertilizing with a high potassium and phosphorus fertilizer will help build wood and discourage die-back in deciduous trees. Excess fertilizer, not utilized by the tree, will be stored and used for production of healthy growth next spring. Do not feed when the temperature is above 80 degrees.

Although growth is reduced during this hot weather, heat and wind will still dry out your soil. Keep a watch out and water as necessary. I water twice daily and some small pots are put on wet sand or humidity trays to provide a cooler atmosphere.

Some of your coniferous trees may produce cones. While they look attractive, an overabundance can draw energy from the tree and weaken lower parts of the tree. Also, cones in the apex causes supporting branches to thicken, spoiling fine detailed structure. Remove any or all if they are causing a problem. You may also want to remove fruit from over laden trees. The weight of many crabapples and cherries bend and sometimes break branches. Fruit also draws large amounts of energy from the tree. Perhaps a regimen like that of azaleas where the tree is allowed to bear fruit every 3 years would be worth looking into.

While the days are still hot and dry, now would be the ideal time to apply lime sulfur to deadwood on any jins or shari you may have on your trees. This not only bleaches the wood but also helps to prevent decay through the coming damp months. Make sure that it has dried thoroughly before misting or exposing to rain. Water the soil only for a few days, to avoid washing the mixture off.

Stay cool.

