



Bonsai Tasks in September:

As the days grow shorter, your trees will begin to slow their growth. As temperatures drop, they begin to prepare for dormancy.

Now is also time to start watching the nighttime lows in regards to any tropical bonsai that you may have outside for the summer. While some of them may not be harmed by a short duration dip in temperature, others should not be subjected to temperatures below 50 degrees. This is the time of year that I am constantly moving trees inside my greenhouse when the predictions are for temperatures below 50, and moving them back out in the morning. We still can expect some good, warm fall days. You should also begin spraying those trees that will go into the house for the winter to eliminate any unwanted critters that would love to winter over inside also.



I do not advocate any wiring or repotting in the fall, however, pruning may continue except on flowering trees as the flower buds are now being set and you would remove them, reducing the display for the spring.

Start thinking fall.

It is not too soon to begin thinking about winter storage. If you have had success with your previous year's methods, by all means continue to do the same. If you have some misgivings, perhaps some of the following may be of help.

An unheated garage or porch is usually preferred by most of our members. Care should be exercised that the temperature does not drop below 25 degrees for any prolonged duration. Buckets of water will help to provide this protection. Since water can't go below 32 degrees when frozen, the buckets will act as heat exchangers, warming the colder air surrounding the frozen buckets of water that are in the garage.

Some members utilize a cellar window well, covered to retain heat from the basement.

An outside cellar stairway is also an excellent storage area.

Many bonsai enthusiasts bury their trees, pot and all, in their garden, in a protected spot and mulch them for the winter.

Cold frames are another good winter storage area.

Wherever you decide to keep your trees for the winter, guard against critters that would feast on them.

In preparing your trees for the cold months ahead, we should be altering our fertilizing program. If you are feeding a high nitrogen fertilizer, now is the time to switch to a 0-10-10 or some similar low or no nitrogen formula. If you are feeding 7-9-5 or 7-7-7 you may continue with the same formula until the temperatures dictate to stop fertilizing. This will not only enhance the fall colors, but will harden your trees and reduce winter die back. This is a must for your Maples, Elms, Hackberrys, Hornbeams and other such deciduous trees. This is not as critical on your conifers, however it is still a good idea for them too.

Start planning now. Don't get caught should the weather suddenly take a turn for the worse. Remember, this is Western New York.

Enjoy what warm days we have left.