

Tips and Tricks from Kusamura Members

February 19, 2021

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Spreadsheet for Record Keeping | <p>Use Michael G's Spreadsheet and add a column for date of repot, and term for repotting. Columns of info include: Tree code (create a number/id that could include an A for azalea, J for juniper, etc.), tree common name, Latin name, cultivar, when acquired, when shown in show, date of last repot, date of next repot, notes, photos and notes. (Charlene)</p> |
| Pruning | <p>Tag your plants with id that coordinates with spreadsheet. (Michael G.)</p> <p>How to avoid cutting out useful limbs: look from underneath to see structure. Use a mirror if necessary. (Mark)</p> |
| Wiring | <p>To position limbs before wiring: use a piece of wire with a hook to pull them into potential position. (Mark)</p> <p>Pull tender branches down by using wire rack underneath, then pull down with fine copper or aluminum wire and attach to rack, maybe with just a simple hook. (Donna)</p> <p>Warm up for wiring: Practice on dead tree or ramified branch of tree. Or use pre-view wire, maybe a thin (cheap, 1mm aluminum) wire to figure out where you will wire, take photo of preview wire, remove wire, then follow with the final wire of appropriate thickness, following your scheme on your photo. (Richard P.)</p> <p>Don't wire around the trunk if you don't have to. You don't have to go back to the trunk when wiring secondary or tertiary branches. Begin across top of fork if you are going to bring branches up. Begin on underside of fork if you are going to bring branches down. (Rita via Ryan Neil)</p> <p>See Ryan Neil's (free) youTube videos on wiring, detailed information: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n2MIkkUISE</p> <p>Also refer to Bonsai Society of San Francisco's article on wiring: https://www.bssf.org/guides/wiring-for-bonsai/</p> |
| Heat Box | <p>Heat Box. Why do we need one in the first place: to protect species that can't go below a certain temperature. Also to protect newly potted plants and encourage roots to grow. Lynne made a heat box with many components, based on Idris's design, which borrows from Michael's and Ryan Nichol's designs. Can also use heat mat, instead of heat wire in box. (Lynne)</p> |
| Repotting | <p>When using pliers to secure tie downs, pull to take up slack, then release AS YOU twist. Repeat until you have no slack. Twisting as you release will prevent breaking of wire. (Idris via Boon.)</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <p>Repotting continued</p> | <p>On Valerie’s tip on how to tie down roots with use of chopsticks, especially as you decrease height of roots to put in shallower pot: Root mass is smaller as you clean out over time. Be sure to use the sturdy stout end of the chopstick. Insert chopstick diagonally and use a hammer to secure into root mass. This technique firms up the tie down and makes everything secure and allows NO movement. Any wiggle or play and the tree will suffer; new white root tips will tear off. (Christine)</p> <p>Make sure pot is not rocking when you move the tree. (Richard P.)</p> <p>Treat the shin (area just below the trunk) with respect as you clean out. Cleaning off underneath, then spread roots and tuck under any that go beyond width of pot. (Christine via Ryan Neil)</p> <p>Top dressing. Putting trees in smaller pots means you have to baby them more, water more carefully. I’m a convert to using top dressing as recommended by Ryan Neil. Cut white sphagnum moss with scissors and mix 10 to 1 (or 5 to 1, Lynne) with collected green moss, with dirt removed and cut in small pieces. Process through sifter to remove fines. Put thin layer on surface, pat in place. Creates an insulation so roots can occupy all the soil. (Christine)</p> <p>Use vinegar (straight from bottle, any kind) to remove moss. Use plastic sheet to protect roots and spray. Or use Q-tip to touch on moss. Can also use a pick or a soft tooth brush. (Christine)</p> <p>Use a potato (net) sack as a sifter when making bonsai soil. (Donna)</p> |
| <p>Air layering</p> | <p>Instead of wrapping with plastic wrap, use an appropriately sized plastic bottle. Instead of placing branch or trunk up through middle bottom and out of bottle mouth, cut full side of bottle open, saving the plastic cut out. Then cut a round or square opening into top right and bottom left sides of cut out. Insert branch in these notches, make the round slip for the air layer, cover top of slip with growth hormone, pack bottle pretty tightly with sphagnum moss, replace flap and secure with electrical tape. Cutting out full side of bottle prevents tear off of roots when bottle is removed. Keep bottle cap on to open for watering as necessary when sphagnum goes dry. (Idris)</p> |
| <p>General</p> | <p>Calendar for what to do throughout the year based on tree species (Rita): See Bonsai Society of San Francisco’s Care Guide at http://www.bssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/03/BSSFYearlyCareCalendar.pdf</p> <p>Use the Plant Snap app to identify your unknown tree. (Rita) Available for free on Google Play or Apple Store: https://www.plantsnap.com/</p> <p>Source for red lava. Mountain View Rockery. Sift on site. (Rita)</p> <p>Prevent roots from getting hot during heat wave. Place pot with tree inside a larger pot. Outside pot insulates inside pot from heat. (Rita)</p> |