**Bonsai Tips for July**

As the weather continues to warm with each day, we can be sure that summer is here. For bonsai, that means that many of our trees are slowing the production of new foliage and are settling down to mature the foliage that it made during the spring. As the foliage matures, the major activity of the trees will be to take in energy from the sun and use that energy to fuel the activities of each tree’s annual cycle. This includes beginning to make buds for next year, and strengthening the structure of the tree by adding new wood and expanding the bark.

**Watering**--Because of the typical heat of July, we need to be particularly vigilant in making sure that our trees receive enough water. Many trees will need to be watered twice a day since considerable water is lost through transpiration. It’s best to water in the morning before 10 am and in the late afternoon. Avoid watering too late in the evening as the trees need a period of a few hours to lose a little moisture before nightfall. Leaving the trees too wet overnight increases the chance of fungal infections which can damage leaves and needles quickly. Take care not to water the leaves and needles themselves as this also increases the possibility of a fungal infection.

**Light**—All conifers enjoy full sun. Wind is OK as long as you take care to secure your trees to their benches and are watered regularly. Deciduous trees, especially maples, need some protection from the full strength of the afternoon sun. Palmatum maples should be in a light shade almost all day.

**Pesticides**—Inspect your trees daily for pests such as ants, bugs, caterpillars, and other multilegged interlopers. Aphids love the tender new growth of your trees. Red spider mites can be quite harmful to junipers and Alberta spruce. Spray with Malathion at the rate of 2 tablespoons per gallon of water. Be sure to wear protective gear whenever you spray any kind of pesticide or fungicide.

**Fungicides**—None needed this month unless a problem develops as you should have applied fungicides in June.

**To Do List** (a partial list, of course, because it never ends)—There is still time to decandle your Japanese Black Pines **as long as you do it before July 4.** This month you can fine wire all needled trees. Be on the constant lookout for wire that is biting into the bark of your trees and remove that wire before it creates unsightly marks on the trunk and branches. Continue to prune. On deciduous trees cut twigs back to two leaves to develop the desired ramifications. And…it’s never too soon to anticipate next spring’s repotting season and to begin to assess and be on the lookout for your future pot purchases.