

# *Winter projects For Bonsai Enthusiasts*

For many Bonsai enthusiasts winter is a rather dull time, unless of course you have some tropicals among your collection. These of course require watering and fertilizer as well as likely some rewiring. They also need constant pinching back especially if they are being grown under light. In addition you also need to keep a wary eye on insect control as white fly and scale can quickly get out of control.

However, even if you do have tropicals there are some winter projects that can be attended to.

In the rush to quarantine and bring in your indoor plants before frost, then followed by getting your exterior Bonsai into their winter storage, we often just put away wherever we can find space i.e. those extra empty pots that we have used but not properly cleaned up.

Winter is an excellent time to pull those pots out of storage and properly clean them so they will be ready for the rush of spring. Your pots will last longer and any Bonsai next planted in them will look better if they have been prepared. Bonsai pots usually collect an ugly ring of calcium deposit around the edge which can build up and appear very ugly. After brushing thoroughly with a whisk or scrub brush and rinsing out their dirt residue, soak overnight in a laundry tub or bucket those pots with a calcium deposit with water and an addition of "CLR", then rinse them well. It is also recommended to soak them again for 24 hours in a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts of water. Too much bleach can damage them, so don't overdo it. Scrub them out well and then soak them again in fresh water for a few hours to get rid of any bleach traces.

If any are cracked and are salvageable, now is a good time to repair them. I like to use "Gorilla Glue".

When pots thoroughly dry, stack them - but be sure to stack with pieces of newspaper in between as temperature and humidity changes can make the pots swell and either crack under pressure or become stuck together.

Another project for winter is to make some of your own Bonsai stands. These can be made from simple pine or exotic hardwoods - bamboo and other materials also work. If made from pine they can be painted black or finished with a clear acrylic in satin or gloss. Making your own stands will add hours of enjoyment in the winter to your Bonsai hobby.

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