

Growth Calendar –

Obviously the information per month is a general guide and needs to be off set against just how our English climate is behaving.

January

Clean up time. Be thorough – any rubbish not cleaned up may allow for unknown and unwanted things to thrive such as the larvae of pests. Spiders are your friends they will control bugs later in the season. If you intend to heat any of your greenhouses or storage areas now is the time to check they work, not when it's bitterly cold. Start to think about re-potting, prepare and try to establish how much soil medium you'll need. If you are off on a yamadori adventure it is best to have your soil medium and containers ready and waiting receive your new trees. You could go on the hunt for new ceramics as well I'm sure you will have stuff that's ready to make the leap from training pot to a proper ceramic pot.

February

For those of you with frost proof or heated areas some sort of the repotting can start at this time of year providing the trees can be kept frost-free until new growth begins later in the spring. If you are going to have a good go at the roots then wait until March/April so that new growth and the recovery that it brings is not as far away. Any deciduous trees that still need wiring should be done now whilst the structure of the branches can be clearly seen.

March

Begin feeding evergreen species around the middle of the month. Feed with a balanced fertilizer weekly at $\frac{1}{4}$ strength. Resist the temptation to feed deciduous species and do not feed spring flowering-species until after they have finished flowering. **Now is the ideal time for your 'Yamadori adventure' to collect trees from the wild.** Digging up plants from the wild without permission is ***ILLEGAL***. Always get permission from the land-owners. Re-potting should continue. Buds should start swelling about now. This is a good time to redirect the energy of trees such as Beech, Alder, Birch, Oak and Horse Chestnut that tend to favour the large buds at the extremities of the branches. Removing these buds now will encourage more even swelling of the buds lower down the branch and also induce back-budding. **Events:-** We have Club workshops over the next few months dedicated to repotting and styling over seen by Chris Peters. A good opportunity to get some sound advice.

April

Increase feed to $\frac{1}{2}$ strength on a weekly basis for evergreen trees. When deciduous leaves start opening out, wait until the first set have hardened off before feeding. Again, start gently with $\frac{1}{4}$ strength, balanced fertilizer for the first month before increasing to half-strength as for the evergreens. Re-potting should be all but complete by now. Protect from late frosts that may damage the cut ends of roots. Watch out for wire digging in during the first spurts of growth. Tissues will

swell rapidly at this time of year and damage can occur literally overnight. Remove wire that shows any signs of digging in. Leave a few days to recover before re-wiring if necessary.

May

Pinching of most evergreens is needed about now to keep the pads nice and compact and Pines will require attention depending on what kind of growth you want. Deciduous species will need to be kept in check and some may need defoliating towards the end of the month. Be on the guard for rapid growth on species such as Beech where lengthening of new growth to the point where leaf nodes are too far apart can occur literally overnight. See species guides for more information.

June

Keep an eye on the watering as the weather warms up. At this time of year hot weather can sometimes appear from a gloomy start to the day. Don't be caught unawares. Some delicate clipping may need to take place, remember it's the Botanical Gdns show soon [July]. Maybe take some photos for your records. It can also reveal any flaws in your designs that are not immediately obvious in real life. Plus, you can always bring it to the Club for an unbiased critique if you run short of ideas.

July

Growth is starting to slow down now during the heat of the summer and general maintenance is all that is usually necessary. Keep trees well-watered in hot weather and mist foliage in the evenings.

August

Stop feeding during August. Most trees enter a semi-dormant state at this time of year and they have no use for the food. Towards the end of the month they may put on a spurt of growth. Resist the temptation to resume feeding as normal because this will only result in leggy growth that will be hard pushed to harden off before winter. Also avoid excessive pinching and trimming about now. The back-buds induced will not have time to open and harden off and any new growth will more than likely die back.

September

Hardening off the seasons new growth is the main objective from now until winter and this is best achieved by feeding with fertilizer high in potash ['K' potassium] and low in nitrogen. Tomato food is ideal. Feed weekly at ½ strength until the end of October.

October

Prepare your trees for winter. Remove excessive growths of moss especially if it has grown thickly on the surface where it will provide a breeding ground for unwanted pests. Move trees to a more sheltered position if possible but if placing under cover do not expose to artificial heat other than frost protection.

November

Time to think about the Club Christmas auction. In the meantime keep an eye on your trees. Cut back on the water but don't allow the soil to dry out.

December

It's the infamous Club quiz where we will have to run the gauntlet of the mind bending questions set by Quiz Master Graham. Also time to reflect on last year and what's coming next year. **'Don't forget to keep one eye on those trees'.**