

## MARCH MONTHLY TIPS

Have you repotted your bald cypress, elms, and other deciduous trees? It might be too late, if there are signs of new growth. It's not recommended to repot any deciduous trees that the buds have leafed out. If you must repot any with due to problems with a tree that has leafed out, put it in a larger pot with fresh soil, do not prune the roots. These types of trees have very tender roots at this time of year. Yes, I've heard that people have root pruned deciduous trees during the growing season... and it is possible to do so and have the tree live, but the mortality rate is very high. We want the best chance to have the trees survive the shock of root pruning.

Junipers can be repotted any time during April -June down here. You can start repotting your broad leaf evergreens (holly, boxwood etc). Its too early in the season to root prune/repot your South Texas natives tropicals and semi tropicals. It's best to wait until the **lowest** temperature of the day/night stays consistently above 65-70 degrees for repotting South Texas natives and semi tropicals (Ficus, figs, Texas ebony and other natives). Tropicals should be repotted in mid-summer (Fukien tea, Bahama Black Olive, Buttonwood).

March and April are the windiest months of the year on the Texas Gulf Coast. Watch the soils every day so they don't dry out. When you repot, be sure to wire the tree securely in the pot to give it good stability against the winds. Putting rocks on top of the soil for a while can also help brace the tree. Inspect the bonsai from top to bottom, also inspect the drain holes. Inspect for ANY and all insects and treat accordingly. I try to spray with insecticide and apply fungicide at least once every 4 weeks (these can sometimes be mixed with liquid fertilizers). If you discover an infestation treat according to the label of the pesticide. Watch your training wires, so they will not cut into the branches.

Flowering trees are either setting buds or are already starting to bloom. Feed them regularly with a good blooming fertilizer, one that has a high phosphorus number. Feed others with a Peter's 20-20-20. The rule in fertilizing is, if its growing then you can fertilize. And there's always the need for more soil, all soils must be free draining, remember to screen your **dry** soil before using. It's time to replace all the soil that you used while repotting, so buy some from your local club supplies or start mixing and screening your favorite soil recipe. I've had the pleasure to use the club's new soil screener/sifter and it works really well. I screened for about 2 hours and produce enough soil that would've taken me 8 hours by hand.

Please note that the information is suggested safe guidelines for the Coastal Bend and South Texas area