

Preparing bonsai for shows and friendly competition. We should be doing this earlier in the year to prepare everyone correctly but here are the tips for this close to a show

1. Clean Pot, remove calcium and apply light coat of oil if desired
2. Give a healthy dose of fertilizer 2 weeks out, especially now we are coming out of the hot, dormant weeks of August. Nitrogen will boost the green and even a coat of chelated iron.
3. Remove any weeds from soil and top dress with clean soil or mosses. The goal is to keep the eye moving. Moss is standard in shows like the Kokofu 10, Artisans Cup and professional shows. Ours is friendly and at least attempt to keep the soil fresh or covered with moss. Moss should be thinner and composed of a couple different types.
4. Remove any heavy, visible wire that detracts from the tree. Rewire with finer wire or leave off if possible. Wire fine branches for final shape.
5. Prune wherever possible but remember not to take off too much because 2 weeks out you will not get a flush of growth. Remove dead needles from junipers and pines, trim dead twigs from tropical and deciduous and remove the discolored leaves.
6. Ask yourself if the tree is healthy enough to be displayed. Ideally we would like the best of your collection but we encourage all trees to be shown with care. However if the tree is week in foliage color of fullness, maybe you should set that as a goal for next year's open house or Fair. The goal would be to keep it healthier throughout the year.
7. Accent plants would be great if we had the space and should represent the time of year especially if it is a flowering plant. We should keep the accent plant to the right proportion and make it have a conversation with the main tree. Approx 15 to 25% of the main tree.
8. Deciduous trees really should be displayed in the winter or early spring with no foliage or small buds starting to show, if displayed at this time of year then prune to keep the shape neat as the can get ragged around this time of year before the fall pruning.
9. Stands and pots. Stands should be slightly bigger than the pot of your bonsai, too small or too large will take away from the bonsai. Pots and stands from bonsai to accent should not be similar.
10. Label all your pots stands etc

Check out this guide to preparing thinking to next year.