

NOTES ON TALK BY MALCOLM HUGHES ON **PINES** at Wessex Bonsai Soc. 14th
Oct 2014

Incorporate pine needles in the compost. They contain mycelia, which benefits the tree.

Don't overwater pines. Water them less often than, for example Acers. Keep them on the dry side during winter. Their roots are tender, particularly White Pine, and can be vulnerable to frost damage. Scots pine more tolerant of moist conditions.

Wire every twig through to the end, terminating in a loose loop around the base of the furthest needles.

In late summer or early autumn, to aid back-budding, remove or cut back to 1/8 inch, last year's needles, one at a time, but never in winter when they could be frozen or brittle.

To reduce needle length:

- ❖ reduce watering and feeding.
- ❖ In wet weather, in early summer, for their first 4 -5 years, put under cover.
- ❖ Grow in a mix of larva, Kanuma and needles.
- ❖ Each needle grows for 3 years. Removing them as above, creates back-budding, leading to smaller needles.
- ❖ If candles appear, pinch or cut them to ½ inch, ensuring to leave 2 buds.
- ❖ Pinch ¾ of candles before needles elongate. Feed and water normally.
- ❖ Another way to reduce needle length is to remove all apical and side buds when 1 inch long. Smaller buds soon appear & will produce smaller needles.
- ❖ Leave shoots unchecked till autumn, then cut back, leaving 4 pairs of needles. Small buds develop over winter, producing short needles next year.

To improve roots and thicken trunk, feed with fish emulsion or seaweed during growing season and high potassium e.g. Blood, Fish & Bone in late autumn.

Old black pines have very distinctive plated bark – reason why White pines are grafted onto Black pine root stock; also Black pine roots stronger..

If cutting needles in preparation for a show, do it 2 - 3 days before the show. Applies more to Scots and Black pine. After about 2 weeks, the cut tips will brown and take a long time to recover.

When jinning, remove bark straight away; if left for a period of time, becomes more difficult to remove.

Before applying Lime Sulphur, spray branch with water. Applications needed once or twice a year.

One can repot Pines later than other species – e.g. around February through March period, sometimes even later; wait until buds are showing development. Older Pines can be left for 4 - 5 years between repots.