WHY DO WE REPOT ? By Steve C.

water sits on surface… it’s not soaking in
soil is compacted… it is hard to the touch
roots coming out of bottom hole(s)
you want to improve or change the soil
a weak tree - nothing has helped to improve it so far
you want to move a tree from a nursery pot to a bonsai pot
you want a new bonsai pot
you want to reposition the tree in the same pot
you want to uncover or expose more nebari
you are entering a refinement phase and want to encourage more refined growth

Repotting will:

will stress the tree and slow it down a bit
stimulate root growth
stimulate the tree growing fine roots and fine branches because branches mirror roots(soil dependent)

improve $O_2$ in the soil (soil dependent)
improve drainage (soil dependent)
help encourage a solid root ball (soil dependent)

WHEN DO WE REPOT ?
TOO OFTEN IN GENERAL !!

so… I love to repot - its mediative for me

Ask yourself - what are we trying to accomplish?

are we trying to GROW the trunk or a branch?

are we trying to refine the branches or canopy?

If repotting from a nursery pot, trunk and branch size is ok
root work is less important to do now
get it in an ideal sized pot NOW

If repotting from a nursery pot & trunk size is NOT OK
root work is most important to do now
over-pot the tree to allow growth NOW

STEP BY STEP REPOTTING PROCESS !!!

SAME POT… Start Here               NEW POT… Start Here
- tip pot - choose front of pot
- cut tie in wire - cut screen
- cut screen wires - wire in screen
- remove soil 3 sides - tie in wires in place
- tip trunk - extra wire in place
- remove tree - aeration layer
- protect tree - set the pot aside

- wash pot - set the pot aside

- choose the front of the pot - tip the tree and pot
- cut screen - cut tie in wires
- wire in screen - cut screen wires
- tie in wires in place - remove soil 3 sides
- extra wire in place - tip the trunk
- aeration layer - remove the tree

- set the pot aside

1) tip tree and rake out bottom roots
cut roots flush
check for flat bottom
rake to flatten
    flat is IMPORTANT this is bonsai - we like shallow pots
cut roots again if necessary

2) set tree flat
use an bent tipped forceps to rake out the top soil
expose more nebari
rake out top to the edges and SLOPE DOWN to edge
cut top roots

3) using the forceps, rake out side roots carefully
cut side roots
check for size in the new pot
rake again if necessary
cut more roots if necessary
allow room for fine roots to grow 360
protect roots - soak roots

Revisit front of pot… check if ok
Check position of tree in pot and angle of tree
Position extra wire correctly
A little soil
Mound soil
Set in tree
Settle tree into soil
Check for nebari above rim of pot
Check for correct position of tree from front
Check from side to see it is centered front to back
Light side chopstick - use special chopstick
Light chopstick
Check position all over again

Ok to wire in?… wire in:

    wire 1 - wire 2
    wire 2 - wire 3
    wire 3 - wire 4
    wire 4 - extra wire 5
Fill in soil
Light chopstick
Finer soil on top?
Vibrate pot from 4 sides
Tamp down

WATER THE HECK OUT OF IT:
  wash out all the sediment dust
  NOT AN EXCUSE FOR NOT SIFTING SOIL
  until the water coming out is clear
  super wetting all the soil particles

INOCULATE SOIL with microbes
Sphagnum moss/ground moss as a top dressing
Spray down top dressing
Water again
Tip pot to drain well
Mark pot for 4 weeks from date of repot to fertilize

After care:
  set pot in sun… YES… THE SUN
  set on warm moisture bed
  protect pot from too cold
Done.... Cleanup

Start the next one… etc… etc… etc…