

# BONSAI

## ANCIENT PLANT ART FORM AND POPULAR HOBBY

A considerable range of plants can be grown as Bonsai including many flowering trees, shrubs and climbers amongst which are [Wisteria](#), [Serissa](#), [Azaleas](#), [Camellias](#), [Gardenia](#) and [Crab Apples](#).



Important ingredients in the creation of your Bonsai are *patience and time*. It is not really difficult once you grasp the fundamentals and provided particular care is taken with regular watering.

Whether you commence from seed, cutting or a chance find of a gnarled old container grown plant in the nursery, once you are "hooked" on Bonsai, your life will never be quite the same again.

We recommend this fascinating plant art form to you and trust the beauty of your very own creation will be a profound and lingering personal experience.

The ancient art of Bonsai originated in China and Japan several centuries ago and today has become a *popular hobby throughout the world*. Creating and maintaining a Bonsai plant takes time, patience and loving care. The following are some simple instructions to help give you years of pleasure from your Bonsai plant.

### POSITION

Because this is a tree in miniature, it should **not** be kept indoors for any great length of time. It may be used for display indoors on special occasions, but for the health of the tree it must be returned outdoors to a sheltered position with some sun and protected from strong winds. Early morning sun and afternoon shade are the best for most Bonsai; however pines and evergreens can tolerate more sun than deciduous plants. During the winter they need to be protected from the frost. Ideally Bonsai should be kept on benches or shelves off the ground to avoid contact with insects and plant pests.

### WATERING

Your Bonsai should never be allowed to completely dry out. It should be kept evenly moist but not soggy. During the hot summer days they may need watering as often as 3-4 times a day.



### FERTILISING

**OSMOCOTE SLOW RELEASE** fertilizer which lasts for 6 months can be used to feed Bonsai. Be careful to follow the directions. You can also use a liquid fertilizer at half the recommended strength if necessary. However be careful not to over fertilize and only feed during the growing period.

## REPOTTING

Bonsai are best repotted in spring with **PLANTCARE "SEED RAISING MIX"** mixed with a small amount of **PEAT MOSS**. Older trees may only need repotting every second year...

Before starting to repot, make sure you have scissors, a washed pot, wire cutters, a small piece of aluminium insect screen, copper wire, knife pencil, etc.

1. First prepare the new pot by covering the drainage holes with a piece of the insect wire. Anchor this in place with wire and place a small layer of the soil mix over it.

2 Now gently lift or scrape away the old moss from the surface of the root ball for re-use. Then clean away any soil and moss from the tree trunk and nebari (exposed roots).



3. Cut away any wires that have been used to anchor the tree in the pot and gently tap the rim. The tree should then lift out easily. Be careful not to let the tree dry out at this stage. Spray the roots with water to keep them damp.



4. Now turn the tree on its side and with a sharp knife cut away (like slicing bread) 12mm to 25mm of the root ball from the bottom of the tree and remove the old gauze.

Using a pencil gently free the roots from around the edges of the root ball so they can be spread into the new soil.

5. Hollow out a cone directly under the tree and remove any old or dead roots.

Make a mound of soil in the new pot and position the tree on it to fill the cavity. Fill the edges of the roots with new soil and if the tree is loose, anchor it with a piece of copper wire passed up through the drainage holes and tied to the tree. Use the pencil to work the soil in around the roots.

6. Water the tree well with a **SEASOL** Solution The next day the moss can be replaced or gravel can be put on the soil surface. For the next 2 weeks it is important to keep the tree moist. On hot days spray it with water. Start by keeping the tree in a shady position protected from wind and gradually move it over 2 weeks to where it gets morning sun.

## POTTING A NEW BONSAI

The best time to do this is again in spring, just before or as the new growth starts. Make sure you water the plant well before starting.

1. The same as (1) in repotting.
2. Remove the plant from the container and sit it on an upturned pot. Remove the soil from the rootball in downward strokes. The amount depends on the size of the container the tree is going into. Keep a sensible size of rootball in the centre of the tree and do not remove all the soil.
3. Cut away half to one third of the long roots that have been exposed to enable the plant to fit the pot. The roots may be spread to enable this.
4. Same as (5) in repotting.
5. Same as (6) in repotting.



Formal Upright



Twisted



Semi Cascade



Cascade



Slanting (windswept)



Broom



Root Over Rock



Literati

## WIRING

If your tree is wired please remove it approximately 16 weeks after purchase with wire cutters. If not removed it may cut into the bark and scar the tree. Trees can be re-wired to shape but never allow the wires to cut into the bark. Copper or aluminium wires are mostly used. This is done to shape the tree, change its style or correct defects. This can be done by trimming with sharp scissors or pinching out the new growth buds.

## PRUNING

This is done to shape the tree, change its style or correct defects. This can be done by trimming with sharp scissors or pinching out the new growth buds.

## STYLES AND SHAPING

Wires and pruning may be used to help shape the tree to a particular style.

The major styles are shown below.

*Sherringham's - "Where your 'Bonsai' world begins"*

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