DALLAS BONSAI GARDEN
proudly presents

BONSAI CARE GUIDE
BONSAI CULTURE

A fine bonsai is regarded by the Japanese as much more than merely a tiny
tree grown in a handful of earth. It is a landscape in miniature with a dwarf
tree as its focal point; its trunk, branches and foliage expertly trained and
pruned to create a composition of natural harmony. In Japan today there are
many of these bonsai known to be several hundred years old. Here is a
simple easy to read outline of bonsai culture that will help you cultivate your
bonsai and enjoy this miniature art form that has been practiced in Japan for
centuries.

PLANT SELECTION

Individual taste dictates the variety of plant you will use as your bonsai. For a
plant that changes from season to season, with flowers or fruit, there are
many types of deciduous plants from which to choose. It is important,
however, to choose a plant with relatively small leaves and small fruit if it is
a flowering and fruiting variety. Plants with coarse leaves and large fruit are
seldom in correct proportion to the size of the plant itself or the chosen
container. Since the effect desired is one of a mature plant or landscape in
miniature, it is essential that the proportions between the bonsai, its
container and its environment be harmonious and correct.

The evergreens with their year round leaves are easiest to manage and the
selection can be made from an almost unlimited list of varieties and types.
All of the short needled pines along with the fine textured junipers make
wonderful bonsai. There are an extremely large number of tropical bonsai
now available that have small leaves and small fruit that you should consider
if you are planning to keep your bonsai indoors permanently.

CONTAINER SELECTION

Your bonsai will not be pleasant to the eye if the container is not carefully
chosen for size, shape and color. Pots of high color are not often appropriate
since the effort is to suggest a landscape. The most frequently chosen colors
are dark brown, gray, black, dark red and dark blue. These colors are
symbolic of the earth and rocks in nature. Above all, harmony between the
bonsai and the container should be sought. Please see our huge selection or
call for details.
SOIL

The bonsai growing mixes in use at the Dallas Bonsai Garden consist of peat, sand, pine bark and calcined clay. These various potting mediums prove ideal for bonsai culture. These mixes provide the ideal waterholding/aeration relationship for plants grown in containers of limited size. Our Fujiyama™ and Akadama Potting Soil is available through our online catalog at www.dallasbonsai.com.

TRANSPLANTING AND POTTING

Most bonsai need transplanting regularly. Deciduous (plants that lose their leaves) bonsai vary in their transplanting interval depending on the type of plant. Once every two to five years is average. Evergreens on the other hand are transplanted once every three to five years. Younger bonsai are transplanted more often than older, more mature specimens. This transplanting is done to provide the bonsai with a fresh supply of soil and to rearrange the roots. If they are left in the pot indefinitely, they will become root bound and the roots will eventually develop into a mass which reduces the intake of water and fertilizer. Transplant your bonsai on a cool, moist day in the shade and as quickly as possible to avoid prolonged root exposure.

After part of the soil is removed from the bonsai roots, trim all the old roots no longer capable of activity and replant into new Fujiyama™ potting mix or Akadama to stimulate the growth of new roots. Young bonsai are root pruned freely and the older ones only slightly.

Bonsai are placed in either a new container or in the same container to the original depth and in the same position. Fill the container, firming the soil as you go and being careful not to injure any of the remaining roots. Your bonsai should be kept in the shade and gradually exposed to the elements as new roots are being formed.
HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR BONSAI

The best way to water is to simulate a gentle rain by using a sprinkling can with many holes. If you use a hose, attach a fine spray to it and keep the pressure low. These items are available through our online catalog at www.dallasbonsai.com. People who have many bonsai find the hose a timesaver. By watering both the tree and the soil, dust is kept off all the leaves and the tree is enabled to absorb much of its needed moisture through the needles and leaves. The best time to water is in the early morning or late afternoon. Your bonsai will adjust to the climate environment in your location. It will need less water in winter than in summer. If your summer days are very hot, you may need to water your plant twice a day. Check the soil dampness. Learn to use your own judgement about when to water. Your tree will not suffer from an indoor visit of two or three days. Some gardeners use their miniature trees as a centerpiece on the dinner table instead of a flower arrangement. While your trees are in the house, guard them against excessive dryness.

WINTERIZING

When storing your bonsai outdoors during the winter your container may crack, but you can avoid this by placing straw, hay or similar mulching material over and around your containers. If you leave town for a few days, it is wise to place your tree in a shady spot, on the ground, and water very thoroughly using a tray underneath with a small amount of water in it. The tree will then remain safe for several days.

WIRING AND SHAPING

Wiring and shaping of the bonsai is done with copper colored aluminum wire when the branches are most supple. Normally this is in the Spring after the buds have opened and the leaves are fully developed. Be careful in your wiring technique to avoid the breaking of the bark or branches that could damage your creation. This wire should stay on for a period of three to twelve months. Winding the wire firmly and at the right intervals is the secret of this art. The wire should never become loose. Remove the wire after a period no longer than a year. This copper colored aluminum wire is available through our online catalog at www.dallasbonsai.com in 10 sizes for different thickness of branches.
FERTILIZING

Your bonsai requires fertilizer to keep it healthy and green. You fertilize your bonsai, not to necessarily make it grow, but to keep it in good health. It is better to under fertilize than to over fertilize. It is much better to use The Bonsai Fertilizer™ (5:10:5) and The Bonsai Vitamin™ which are in liquid form and have been accurately formulated just for your bonsai. The Bonsai Fertilizer and The Bonsai Vitamin are available through our online catalog at www.dallasbonsai.com. Instructions are included. A Japanese organic, Fujiyama™ Organo-GRO(5:5:2) is also available as is Bio-Gold and Green King. A Japanese product, Menadael (root stimulator) and Rainbow Solution (an invigorator) are available.

PRUNING

Bonsais need to be pruned to remain in pleasing form. The amount of pruning and type of pruning will depend on the plant species. We have over 100 different tools for the various tasks required in correctly pruning your bonsai. These tools are for specific jobs and will help you perform your task much easier. These tools are available through our online catalog at www.dallasbonsai.com. The leaf buds of the flowering and fruit bearing bonsai are nipped after the plant is through blooming, leaving only buds that are advantageous for the form of the plant and pruning off any twigs that are unnecessary. Cone-bearing bonsai, like the pines are nipped in bud, leaving a little behind at the base. These buds are recognized during the Spring as spears or so-called candles. This is really the only time these plants should be pruned for best results. This type of pruning will check over-growth and stimulate branching, which is desirable. The juniper type bonsai continues to grow throughout the Spring and Summer, so one must not neglect pinching off those shoots whenever they appear. It is better to twist off this new growth with your thumb and index finger than to cut with scissors, thereby avoiding any large brown, black spots on the tips that are remaining.
INSECTS

Frequent close inspection of your bonsai for possible insect infestation will insure detecting harmful pests before significant damage is done. Many of the insect sprays can be purchased as a ready to use spray, making your spray program easy to execute. Be sure to read the directions carefully and this problem should be a small part of your bonsai culture. You can find the "ready to use" type insect sprays and fungus sprays at most nurseries. Spider mites can be a problem so watch out for them.

Remember your bonsai is really happier outside. However, there are times when you can't leave your bonsai out, for instance when there are extreme temperatures in the Fall and Winter. If at all possible place your bonsai outside when the temperatures are above 35°F. Remember, they are an outside tree and they only tolerate our indoor environment. For tropical Bonsai you need to keep the temperatures above 60°

1. LIGHT (Very Bright)
Outside: Give your bonsai approximately 70% sun, meaning morning sun or shaded areas. Inside: A. Place your bonsai on a windowsill where the bonsai will receive at least 4 hours of direct sun per day. B. If that is not possible then use a plant light approximately 12" from the bonsai for about 18 hours per day.

2. WATER (Lots) Never let your bonsai dry out. With our potting mix and the drainage holes in the pot it is impossible to overwater. Give your bonsai even moisture. Keep the potting mix evenly moist but not soggy. Check your bonsai daily and water daily if necessary. Water until the water drains out of the pot. If you have a saucer to catch the runoff be sure to discard this excess water. To avoid root rot, do not let the bonsai sit in water. You should use our The Bonsai Fertilizer™ & The Bonsai Vitamin™ or Fujiyama Organo-Gro™ on your bonsai. There is no better fertilizer or vitamin in the world for your bonsai.

Dallas Bonsai Garden • Your Bonsai Supply Superstore!
Fred & Elizabeth Meyer, Owners • Serving the bonsai hobbyist since 1965.
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