

Bonsai Care



OUTDOOR BONSAI

LIGHT

Non-tropical bonsai trees must spend most of their time outside, even in winter. they all want sun for at least four hours a day, preferably more. They may visit inside for one or two days but must go back back out for at least two weeks afterward to recover. Don't place under eaves or against a wall. Turn every week if light comes from one direction only.

WATER

Water each plant until it drains out the bottom of the pot. Never let a plant sit in water, try to water before noon.

Warm Weather

Water every day in the spring, summer and fall unless the plant is not dry (rained?) Pay attention to a plant not using water as this may indicate a problem.

Cold Weather

Don't neglect watering in winter. Dry plants are more often damaged by cold. Check them weekly and water if dry.

FEEDING

In summer feed monthly with organic plant food. The use of tea bags will reduce the fertilizer residue build up in the soil.

PRUNING AND WIRING

Finished bonsai must be pruned once or twice a year to keep their shape. If you buy a wired tree, check it periodically and remove the wire when it bites into the bark. When trees become root bound, remove the tree from the pot and trim the roots. Repot the tree and add new soil. Trees must be tied down tightly in their pots. This prevents tree movement which can break off fine roots.

INSECTS AND DISEASE

Use the weakest available insecticide and fungicide for the species of your tree.

WINTER

Traditional bonsai winter outdoors. If you bring a tree into "protect" if, it will DIE. Choose a sheltered spot for your trees. Bury the tree's container and roots up to the base of the trunk. A recommended mulch material is cedar pet bedding which is widely available, holds moisture and repels insects.

NOTES

When you bonsai tree, the most important thing to know is the species of the tree. Find this out and write it down. Good records for each tree make life easier.



INDOOR BONSAI

LIGHT

No bonsai is a “low light” plant. Some tropical trees can be maintained in good indoor light, three feet or less from a window or with a grow light (use as directed). Any healthy tree may be moved to another spot as a decorating accent for one or two days, but it will need two weeks of good light to recover. They enjoy an outdoor “vacation” when the temperature is 60F or above, never below 40F. If your tree receives light only on one side, remember to turn it once a week.

WATER

The amount of light a plant receives is a primary factor in how much water a plant needs. When you water a tree, place it in a sink or tray and water gently from the top until the pot begins to drain from the base. This helps to cleanse the soil and assures complete penetration. Water should be at room temperature. The first two weeks you have a bonsai, check every day for moisture until you have determined how often it will need to be watered. In the summer it will need more often than in winter.

FEEDING

In summer feed monthly with organic plant food. The use of tea bags will reduce the fertilizer residue build up in the soil. Normally one does not feed at all from December through February.

If you think you see signs of underfeeding, ask ask an expert as this is rare.

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