

DERBYSHIRE BONSAI CARE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The word 'bonsai' means a tree grown in a container which is therefore from two words, 'Bon' meaning dish and 'Sai' meaning tree. A bonsai is a miniaturised tree, grown in a pot resembling that of its counterpart growing in its natural habitat.

Keeping bonsai is an exciting hobby, bringing tropical and subtropical trees into the comfort of your home and outdoor surroundings.

CARING FOR YOUR INDOOR BONSAI

These are bonsai trees which are mainly tropical and subtropical, suitable for growing indoors for most of the time, as they are not hardy and will not survive low temperatures. However like to have a period outside in the summer months when it is warm and sunny.

POSITION

A light position is vital but not in direct sunlight as this may cause leaf scorch. Keep away from draughts and direct heat, but maintain the recommended temperatures at all times. Provide humidity by regular spraying with tepid water.

WATER

Never let the compost dry out. Water regularly at least once a day in summer and two to three times a week in winter depending on house conditions. Water by either immersing the pot in water to just below the rim once a week and leave there until the compost is thoroughly soaked, or by watering overhead with a fine rose watering can until the water runs through the pot.

FEEDING

Feeding is required from March to September and will vary with the different types of fertilizer used, either liquid or slow release as recommended by the manufacturer.

PRUNING

The top of the tree will require pruning throughout the year to maintain its shape and form. Prune broad leaved trees with scissors and coniferous trees by pinching out the growing tips with fingers and thumb.

RE-POTTING

Re-potting is without doubt an important operation in the life of a bonsai to maintain its health and vigour. Bonsai need re-potting about every two years in early Spring just before the growing season. If the roots system become visible, it is well developed and it is time to be shortened. Prune back the outside of the root ball by approximately one third using a root rake. Prepare the pot by covering the drainage holes with plastic mesh, then place a piece of wire through the drainage holes to fix the root ball in position. Cover the bottom of the pot with a layer of fresh bonsai compost and anchor down the root ball with the wire, then top up the pot with fresh compost and water well.