

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 OUTDOOR BONSAI

These are hardy varieties which are kept outdoors in their natural environment. They thrive in the seasonal changes from summer to winter and must never be kept indoors.

POSITION

A light position, out of direct midday sun and away from strong winds. They are best kept off the floor on a display bench or table. Give winter protection only for the severest weather, by placing in a frost free shed or greenhouse until the bad spell of weather has passed, and then return to normal cold conditions.

WATER

Never let the compost dry out, water regularly at least once a day in summer and in very hot weather maybe more. In winter by observation of the compost if it feels dry – water. The ideal time to water is in the early morning or late evening as at midday water on the leaves will scorch them. Water overhead with a fine rose watering can, until the compost is thoroughly soaked.

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 root system becomes 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. Protect in shade after repotting, water and wait for signs of activity before feeding approximately four to six weeks.