

Bonsai Tree

Trimming, Sculpting and Pruning





BONSAI TREES: GROWING, TRIMMING, SCULPTING AND PRUNING

PART 1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Bonsai History	5
Bonsai Styles	9
Formal Upright	10
Informal Upright	11
Slanting	12
Cascade	13
Semi-Cascade	15
Growing Indoors or Outdoors	15
Bonsai Tool Box	17
Grow From Seeds or Buy Trees?	19
Trees Best Suited For Bonsai	21
What to Look For In Your Tree	27
Planting the Bonsai	30
Pruning and Trimming	32
Wiring	35
When to Wire	39
Watering and Fertilizing	41
Repotting the Bonsai	42
Seasonal Care	45
Displaying Your Bonsai	49
General Tips	50
Conclusion	52

INTRODUCTION

"Bonsai art is the display of a landscape - without the landscape."

--Nobu Kajiwara

This quote couldn't be truer. Growing and sculpting bonsai trees can be quite a satisfying hobby. It is a hobby; however, that requires a tremendous amount of patience. When you take a simple sapling and mold it to your desire, you'll be rewarded with a beautiful piece of art you can truly be proud of!

The term bonsai literally means plant in a pot or tray planting. Bonsai however is much more than simply a plant in a pot. The goal of bonsai is to create the appearance of great size and age. This is accomplished by creating a bonsai with strong roots that extend in all directions, creating a sense of stability, a large trunk which tapers as it goes upward, a clear apex, and well formed and well placed branches. These features all combine to create a careful blend of symmetry, balance and proportion. It also must be displayed in a pot which harmonizes well with the plant material.

Bonsai is the art of growing trees in a confined space to simulate certain environmental conditions such as great age, extreme weathering, twisted or contorted form, landscape, or other factors. Bonsai trees are modeled on and take inspiration from nature. The idea of bonsai is to recreate some of nature's most stunning and beautiful effects on trees which are reduced in scale.

When undertaking bonsai, you are beginning an experience that will expand your horizons in countless ways. You may find a new sense of appreciation for nature; you may start looking at trees, bushes and shrubs differently. You will certainly find yourself looking around all the "worst parts" of your local nurseries where they keep the plants that most people wouldn't look twice at. How the art of bonsai will change you is as unpredictable as nature itself, but be assured of one thing: Bonsai will change the way that you look at things.

To the Japanese, there is a link to many of the ideals that their society is based on. Zen Buddhism - where the pastime originated, man, nature, elements and change all are intertwined into this unique method of meditation and expression. To our world now, bonsai is viewed as a hobby that allows a greater understanding and being with nature and also a way to enhance our gardens.

The tree and the pot involved with bonsai form a single harmonious unit where the shape, texture and color of one, compliments the other. Then the tree must be shaped. It is not enough just to plant a tree in a pot and allow nature to take its course - the result would look nothing like a tree and would look very short-lived. Every branch and twig of a bonsai is shaped or eliminated until the chosen image is achieved. From then on, the image is maintained and improved by a constant regime of pruning and trimming.

Bonsai is the art of dwarfing trees or plants and developing them into an aesthetically appealing shape by growing, pruning and training the trees into containers according to prescribed techniques.

Overall, bonsai is a great interest, hobby or even profession to undertake. Although famous theologians have claimed that it is actually 90% art to a meager 10% of

horticulture, it has to be said that a successful bonsai is most definitely a horticultural masterpiece.

Once arriving in the Western world, this enjoyable and rewarding pastime has never turned back, and has gained a magnificently diverse range of plant material and techniques.

Given proper care, bonsai can live for hundreds of years, with prized specimens being passed from generation to generation, admired for their age, and revered as a reminder of those who have cared for them over the centuries. Although these bonsai are extremely beautiful - meticulously cared for over the years and containing such a wealth of knowledge, age is not essential. It is more important that the tree produce the artistic effect desired, that it be in proper proportion to the appropriate container, and that it be in good health.

Bonsai is an artistic representation of a natural tree. It is an image, an illusion of nature. It is smoke and mirrors that defies the senses. The best bonsai are magicians' tricks that have fooled the eye into seeing a far off place in the distant past, or the side of a craggy cliff. We all have to strive to be the magician."

In this book, we will introduce you to bonsai techniques and how to grow your own bonsai masterpieces. The beauty of bonsai is that there is no definitive "right way" to do it. We can offer up tips and tricks to craft your own bonsai, but how. Enter into the world of bonsai and gain a new insight into life!