

# Bonsai Tree

*Trimming, Sculpting and Pruning*





# **BONSAI TREES: GROWING, TRIMMING, SCULPTING AND PRUNING**

## **PART 5**

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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

# TOOL BOX FOR BONSAI

Bonsai requires very few tools. Tools, however, make certain jobs or tasks easier and quicker. Tools can range from a few dollars to a few hundred dollars. As with most things, you get what you pay for. The range of quality (and price) in tools is immense and it is suggested that you buy the best *basic* set of tools that you can afford. You will come to appreciate them with time, and, if you care for them, they will last you a long, long time.

There are three tools that are essential to even beginning the process of shaping a tree for bonsai.

You need a pair of scissors which will allow you to do the fine work of trimming in a small space. These scissors should be *sharp* and you should only use them for bonsai work. You may want to try a small set of pruning shears to start with. Eventually, you will want a pair of shears made especially for bonsai work.

Possibly the most important tool you can have in bonsai growing is a pair of concave cutters. Concave cutters allow you to cut branches off of the tree and leave behind a concave wound. The wound will heal much faster than a straight cut, and will callous over in such a way as to make it very difficult to tell a cut has been made at all. These cutters are an essential part of your collection.

You will eventually need a pair of wire cutters, although these won't need to be purchased immediately. If you put wire on, you will eventually have to take it off. These wire cutters allow you to cut the wire right up to the tree's bark, without harming the tree. These too are essential.

You will also want to get several different thicknesses of wire. In general, anodized copper wire is recommended.

It is very flexible until it is bent, then it sets and holds its position. You will use it to position and train branches. We have more on wire in the wiring section of this book.

Once you become more proficient at bonsai art, there will be some more tools you will want to add to your tool chest. These tools make certain tasks easier and allow you to do more things with your trees.

Knob cutters are very similar to the concave cutters, except that they have a spherical head, which allows you to cut branches and leave a small hollowed out scar.

A folding saw is a useful tool for cutting through branches larger than the diameter of either concave or knob cutters. These are particularly important for working with bigger trees.

Small scissors are great for working with really small trees or really twiggy growth where it is hard to get larger shears in close. These are a must have if you want to do detail work on smaller trees.

A root rake is used to clear away dirt from the root ball before repotting. It is used to gently comb out the roots and to remove dirt.

Finally, a simple pair of tweezers can be extremely useful in bonsai grooming. Tweezers have all sorts of purposes in bonsai, from pinching back new growth and pruning to removing unwanted objects from your bonsai. Most bonsai tweezers will have a small trowel on the end, useful for patting down moss, sowing seeds, and many other odds and ends.

Now that you have the tools, what about the tree? Should you start from seed or buy a sapling? You can do either.