

The Bonsai Care Guide

Provided by Mid City Nursery

WATERING

Thorough watering is recommended every one to three days in the spring, summer & fall; less in the winter. Do not let the roots dry out completely. If it is very hot and/or windy, watering more than once a day may be necessary. It is best to water in the early morning or late afternoon. The method of watering should simulate natural rainfall - use an attachment on the watering can or hose which makes the spray soft enough so as not to disturb the soil. Water until excess water runs out of drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. In particularly hot, dry weather, or if you are not sure you are watering thoroughly enough, the pot can be placed in a shallow pan of cool standing water (to 1" deep) and soaked for up to 1/2 hour. Notice how heavy the plant is when it is thoroughly watered. The difference in weight between wet & dry will help you to know when the roots are dry, even if the top soil is moist.

FERTILIZING RECOMMENDATIONS

Use fertilizer in moderation. A liquid fertilizer like Master Nursery Liquid Gold or Fish Emulsion can be applied once a month in the main growing season. It is best to use the fertilizer at half the recommended amount to prevent burning. For flowering and fruiting trees, feed with an Master Bloom fertilizer in the fall to winter-harden and improve next year's display. Remember to water before applying liquid fertilizers. *If a tree has just been repotted, fertilize after it has had several weeks to adjust to its new soil.*



OUTDOOR BONSAI - Most Bonsai Plants fit into this category

These are mostly deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs from cool temperate climates, which have a definite dormant season. The ideal location is on a bench or table at a good viewing height, on a patio, deck or balcony where the plant will have morning sun, afternoon shade, & shelter from drying winds. Avoid heat-reflective walls, & keep off the ground. Generally, outdoor bonsai can tolerate full sun most of the late fall, winter & early spring. Pines and junipers can take full sun year round, but will tend to yellow; for best color, shade them from hottest (midday to late afternoon) sun. Maples, azaleas, rhododendrons, & other plants with delicate foliage should be placed in 50-70% shade. Turn the tree monthly for even lighting & growth, more frequently in the spring. Outdoor bonsai may be displayed indoors 2-3 days per month at the most, but keep them away from direct sunlight, fireplaces, & heat sources. Protect bonsai from winds and heavy winter storms by moving to a sheltered area.

INDOOR BONSAI

Indoor bonsai are largely evergreen tropical, sub-tropical & warm temperature climate plants which normally experience little if any dormant period. These are generally house plants & require the same lighting & care as your house plants.

TRIMMING, PRUNING, TRAINING

Remove vigorous new growth in the spring & periodically throughout the growing season. Never remove all the new growth at one time. Remove training wire (if any) after several months by snipping into short lengths. Do not allow wire to stay on the tree long enough to create scars. If the tree springs out of its wired shape, you can rewire it in the opposite direction, avoid applying the wire in exactly the same place as before.

REPOTTING

Deciduous trees should be re potted every 2-3 years. Slower growing evergreens need repotting every 4-5 years. Examine the root system in late fall to determine if the tree needs repotting. If repotting is required, plan to do it before the start of the next growing season. Always use a well-drained soil mix containing some sharp sand (1/8" - 1/16"); this makes the roots divide and keeps them vigorous.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Although miniatures, bonsai can experience the same problems as their larger relatives, & should also be treated with the appropriate insecticides or fungicides.