



Caring for your bonsai

Introduction

The Japanese word for 'bonsai' literally means "*tree in a pot*".

For many hundreds of years bonsai have been grown uncultivated by the Chinese and Japanese and are considered to bring harmony nature to the home. More recently bonsai trees have become much more popular throughout the UK and Europe as we discover the delights and rewards of this fascinating hobby.

This guide sets out some of the basic requirements to help keep you care for your bonsai now and in the future.

Indoor or outdoor?

mikbonsai buys and imports trees from all over Europe and the Far East. Conditions for growing and keeping your bonsai vary considerably depending upon the species or origin of the tree.

Tropical or subtropical

These trees benefit from being kept warm throughout the year. The minimum recommended temperature for these trees is around 10°C

They can be kept indoors all year's round in a window position with natural lights. **Always avoid direct sunlight.** Also avoid placing your bonsai on window sills as these areas become colder in the depths of winter.

These trees can be placed outside during the summer months

Subtropical or temperate

Subtropical or temperate trees are recently hardy but still require protection from frost

They can be kept indoors or outdoors must be protected in winter. There will benefit from being placed outside in the summer and when kept indoors a light call position is best

Local trees

Hardy outdoor trees must be kept outside all year except during the worst winter freezes. In this time a best kept inside a cold frame, greenhouse or porch. They can be displayed indoors for short periods only

Humidity

When bonsai trees kept indoors the atmosphere is often too dry to maintain a healthy tree.

To create an ideal environment mist the foliage daily using a water spray and keep the tree standing on a humidity tray. The tray should be filled with gravel which is kept moist although the bonsai pot should not be standing in water. As the water evaporates it creates humid microclimate around the bonsai tree.

Keep your bonsai away from fires, televisions and other electrical items as these areas become hot and dry.

Watering

Check your bonsai daily. It should be watered when the soil is becoming dry.

Immersing your bonsai

This approach is the most effective way toward your indoor bonsai tree. Stand the bonsai in

tray of tepid water up to the rim of the pot so that water may be drawn through the drainage holes underneath.

Leave in the water until the compost is completely soaked. This may take up to 30 minutes. Drain off any excess water. The soil be allowed to become a little drier before being immersed again, but not to the point where the leaves begin to wilt. If the soil is dry and dusty to the touch, now is the time to water again. However, if the soil underneath the surface is damp do not water yet. Remember if the soil is always soggy, the roots of your tree will rot.

Feeding

Feed your bonsai every 7 to 10 days during the growing period usually April to October. Never feed bonsai tree in flower. If you have repotted your bonsai leave it for to 5 weeks before feeding again

Training

Caring for, maintaining and developing your tree can be done in several ways:

Leaf pruning

Using bonsai pruning scissors or leafcutter is, pruning new shoots regularly in the growing season to maintain the desired shape. Allow

shoots to develop 4 to 6 new leaf's then cut back tattoo. New growth on conifers should be pinched using a twisting movement with the thumb and forefinger

Wiring

Using specialist bonsai training wire, the style of your bonsai can be developed by shaping the branches into the desired position. The wire acts as a frame for the branching tree to grow against. Wire of appropriate thickness were around the branch, bending the two together in the wild holder branching position. After suitable period wire can be removed using wire cutters and the branch will remain in place. Always remember to remove the wire before it cuts into the bark of your tree.

Repotting your bonsai

Repotting is required to maintain the health of your bonsai tree. If the roots become visible around the root ball that it's time to repot. Spring is an ideal time just before the start of the growing season. Before commencing

- Carefully ease the tree from its pot
- loosen the soil from the edge of the root ball
- comb out the roots and trimming back by 20 to 25%

- cover the drainage holes of the new pot with mesh
- thread wire through the drainage holes in mesh & secure the tree firmly into the pot
- place the changes new pot using fresh compost or soil and secure with threaded wire or stop
- water well
- allow the roots to recover for one month before starting to feed the tree



Working with you to care for your bonsai

Call us on 07587 009 269 to arrange a visit, or to discuss your needs

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