



An Introduction to Bonsai

Where do Bonsai come from?

Bonsai originated in China where it was an activity exclusively for the elite. In the middle ages, Chinese monks took them to Japan, along with the Buddhist religion. The Japanese adopted the art form and developed their own methods and styles.

Bonsai can be grown from seed, seedlings and cuttings or collected from the wild. The aim is to cultivate a tree, which

though small in size, has the appearance of being an aged tree. This is made easier by following a set of guidelines developed by the Japanese over hundreds of years.

The following are a few simple guidelines about branch placement, style and shape, you can create a beautiful Bonsai and add a touch of Japan to your garden. Your Bonsai will be your very own, every changing, living art form.

Classical Bonsai Styles



Informal Upright – An ancient looking tree whose trunk has many stories to tell. The trunk has many curves, which have developed over its lifetime.



Formal Upright – A tree that has experienced no competition for other trees and is not subject to prevailing winds or hardship that has grown straight upwards to its full potential.



Slanting – A prevailing wind or natural landslide may cause the trunk to lean to one side. The roots grip the soil maintaining stability.



Root Over Rock – In rugged conditions, a seed may sprout on a rocky outcrop. The tree sends its roots over the rock in search of water.



Cascade – A tree that has grown naturally on a mountain cliff may be subject to the harsh conditions of wind, snow and fallen boulders.



Windswept – Grown on a coastal headland and subject to extreme sea breezes.

How do I look after my Bonsai?

- Pot them in a good free-draining soil mix and feed them regularly with fertiliser.
- Bonsai need to be kept outdoors, after all they are trees! Keep them in a place that is protected from the wind. The pots are quite small and will dry out quickly in windy weather. Bonsai love the morning sun, so choose a position where they get lots of sun in the morning. Water them regularly. Most Bonsai should be watered daily.
- Trim the tree regularly.
- Repot them just before spring, removing the old soil approx. one third and trimming the roots. Trimming some of the thicker roots will help the tree to grow more fine hair roots for feeding and also reduce the size of the root ball so it will fit back into the same pot.
- Reading books, taking lessons or joining a club are great sources of information and will give you the skills to grow your Bonsai.

Would you like to know more about Bonsai?

The Bonsai Society of Queensland Inc meet at the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds on the 3rd Saturday of each month (except December) at 1:30pm. Downstairs at The Community Hall, Mt Gravatt Showgrounds, Logan Road Mt Gravatt

We always welcome visitors and hope that you will join the club. Annual membership is \$25.00 per year for singles, or just \$35.00 for the whole family.

As a member you will receive a monthly newsletter, you can use our extensive library and participate in demonstrations and workshops run by some of Australia's leading Bonsai artists.

For more information, visit our website:

www.bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au

Or email us at:

mail@bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au