Beginners Guide to Growing Bonsai:

Learn about these enchanting trees. Discover their history. Become familiar with the basic tools you will need.



Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Table of Contents

Description

Format

Chapter 1: Bonsai History

Chapter 2: Getting Started

Chapter 3: Container & Style

Chapter 4: Formal & Informal Growing Styles

Chapter 5: Cultivating Your Bonsai

Chapter 6: Regular Maintenance

Conclusion

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Support Agrilearner App On Social Sites















- Agriculture Schemes=>Click to Read
- Agri Exam Important 10000 Agriculture Mcq=>Click to Read
- Agriculture Current Affairs =>Click to Read
- PDF Available To Download =>Click to Download
- IBPS SO Agricultural Officer previous year solved papers (6 years)=>Click to Download
- IBPS AFO 2019-2020 Question paper with solution=>Click to Read
- IBPS AFO exam pattern Pdf Download=>Click to Download

Book Description

This book provides detailed direction on how to grow and care for bonsai.

Know that growing bonsai can be intimidating to even the most experienced of practitioners. Here the process is broken down to its most critical elements, in an attempt to allay any confusion you might have. We recommend useing this book as a true beginner's guide, as you begin your foray wonderful world of bonsai.

Format

We begin with a quick discussion of the history of the Bonsai, while also reviewing some general points of interest in Chapter 1. The following chapters include high level information on topics such as: choosing a bonsai, various styles of bonsai, starting a bonsai, caring for your bonsai, shaping and pruning, and helpful advice for how you can make the best choices.

Quick Fact:

Bonsai is not a particular species of tree. Translated literally from Japanese, it means "tray planting". Bonsai are not genetically modified, nor are they a special type of dwarf tree. They are regular trees that have been kept small through regular pruning and training. If left to their own devices, they would become full-grown examples of their species.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 1. Bonsai History

History of Bonsai

Even though the art of bonsai originated in China over 2000 years ago, it is still largely connected to Japanese culture today. These small trees were called "pun-tsai" by the Chinese, which translates to "a plant in a tray". Around 600 C.E. the practice of pun-tsai found its way to Japan, where it became known as "bonsai". The word "bon" in Japanese refers to a clay container used to grow plants, and the word "sai" refers to any tree that can be planted.

Not long after the Chinese began practicing this ancient art form, it was quickly adopted by Chan Zen Buddhist monks. The monks used bonsai both to cultivate inner peace, and as framework to ponder life's great mysteries.



For many, the act of caring for a bonsai was a way to instill serenity. It allowed those who practiced the chance to take an active role in creation, by caring, growing, and pruning their tree into a beautiful living work of art.

Below is a passage from "The Tale of the Hollow Tree"; it serves to illustrate the desire to improve on nature's beauty:

"*A tree left growing in its natural state is a crude thing. It is only when it is kept close to human beings who fashion it with loving care that its shape and style acquire beauty and be able to stir the emotions.*"

By the year 700 AD, the Chinese empire was practicing the art of 'pun-tsai' using special techniques to grow dwarf trees in containers. This practice was originally only cultivated by the upper echelon of Chinese society. Native specimens were used, which were then given as luxurious gifts within the elite community.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

It was during the Kamakura period when Japan began to adopt many of China's cultural hallmarks, which included the practice of bonsai. Within the influencing sphere of Zen Buddhism, Bonsai thrived in Japanese culture.

Over the centuries, different regional styles were developed throughout China as a reflection of its many varied landscapes. Porcelain containers that were once displayed on wooden stands, would be replaced by ceramic and earthenware containers. Bamboo frameworks, lead strips, and brass wire were used to shape and train the bonsai trees.

The earliest trees that were collected and containerized tended to be peculiarly-shaped specimens from the wild. These specimens were viewed as 'sacred', as they could not be used for practical purposes such as lumber. The forms of these specimens were often thought to be reminiscent of yoga-type postures; bending-back upon themselves, promoting the re-circulation of vital fluids thought to be the catalyst for long-life.

It is believed that the first tray landscapes were brought from China to Japan at least twelve-hundred years ago as religious souvenirs. Bonsai cultivators ranged from military shoguns to peasants, growing trees or azalea in a pot or abalone shell.

During the eighteenth-century, a show began that was for traditional pine-dwarf potted trees. It was held annually in the capital city of Kyoto. People would flock from the five provinces and neighboring areas, bringing with them one or two plants to be submitted, so that the visitors could rank and judge them. The town of Takamatsu (home of Kinashi Bonsai village) was already earning a major source of income by growing fields of partly-shaped dwarf pines.

After World War Two, the bonsai was introduced into the West. During the martial arts craze of the 1980's, the bonsai gained in popularity. Many of us can remember the "Karate Kid" films (wax on, wax off), where Mr. Miyagi imparted ancient wisdom while tending to his prized collection.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 2. Getting Started

Choosing a Bonsai

There are several things to keep in mind when choosing a bonsai tree. The first is whether you are going to keep the tree indoors, outdoors or both. There is no right or wrong choice, however where you place it is going to dictate how you will care for it.

Types of trees that do well indoors are the Ficus, Kingsville Boxwood, Serissa and Gardenia. Trees that prefer the outdoors are the Elm, Gingko, Beech, Cedar and Maple.



If you plan to move your bonsai between the indoors and outdoors, then it would be best to choose a hardy type of tree. Trees in the Evergreen family are considered an excellent choice for indoor/outdoor growing. The most crucial factor to consider when choosing where you will grow your bonsai is your local environment.

When choosing a spot, make sure that it has access to sunlight. If you plan to grow your bonsai indoors, placing it in front of a sunny window should provide it with the light it will need. If grown outdoors, then sun to partial shade is best.

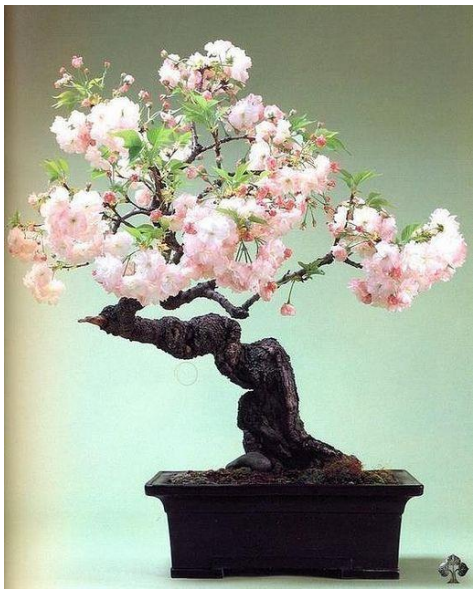
Before starting, decide what size of bonsai tree you wish to cultivate. The size of bonsai varies drastically. Some are barely half-a foot high, while others extend to three feet. Of course, the larger the tree you choose, the more space it will need to grow. Bigger trees typically mean a bigger commitment. It will also require more of everything like sunlight, a larger pot, and more watering.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 3. Container & Style

Choosing a Container for Your Bonsai

When choosing a pot for your bonsai, keep in mind that the decision will influence the overall effect of your bonsai tree. If you are growing from a seed, you can postpone choosing a pot until it has reached a point where it is large enough to stabilize (1-3 months depending on the species). The purpose of your growing pot is to offer support to your bonsai root system, while adding visual appeal to the overall look of the tree. Aim for something medium sized and relatively plain. The pot's purpose is not to take away from the tree, but to accentuate to its overall visual appeal.



Traditionally, bonsai trees are kept in ceramic pots; glazed or unglazed. Proper bonsai pots will come with drainage holes at the bottom so that oversaturation is avoided, and excess water can be easily filtered out of the soil. Bonsai pots are typically designed so that the grower can easily remove the tree and re-plant elsewhere if required.

Although the practice of bonsai has had many rigid guidelines in the past, today many growers have chosen to go in a completely new direction. More recently, enthusiasts have done things like include additional plants, use elaborate pots, or cultivate miniature landscapes.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 4. Formal & Informal Growing Styles

There are many styles to consider when choosing how to shape a bonsai. Classifying bonsai according to their trunk shape is one of the most common ways of identifying each style. Traditionally there are five separate classifications for bonsai trees, each according to its trunk attributes:

Formal Upright (chokkan style)



Typically, the trunk is straight or almost straight. The idea is to train the tree so that it will grow as vertically possible. The top of the tree is typically directly aligned with the base. The branches are structured so that the thickest are close to the bottom, becoming thinner and thinner the closer they get to the top.

Informal Upright (moyogi style)

Similar to the formal style, with one key difference: the trunk is slightly curved. However, it is a slight enough curve so that the top of the tree is still in alignment with the base of the tree. A subtle difference, but enough to differentiate it from the more formal style

Cascade Style (kengai style)

The bonsai is trained to imitate a tree that would be growing over a body of water or on the side of a mountain. The trunk of the Bonsai tree is bent (often at close to a forty-five-degree angle), giving the illusion that the tree is "spilling". When displayed, the tree often appears as though suspended from a bent trunk.

Semi-Cascade (han kengai style)

Semi-cascade is similar to the full cascade style; the main difference is that the tree itself does not dip past the top of its container.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Slant Style (shakan style)

Slant consists of a straight trunk, like the one found in a more formal style. The primary difference is that the tree does not grow straight up and down like the formal style, rather it juts out of the soil on a slight slant or angle. The top of the tree in the slant style is either set off to the right or left of the base of the tree.

Trunk Condition & Additional Styles

Other ways to divide bonsai include trunk condition, and whether they have more than one plant growing in the container. Additional styles include:

Forest Style (yose ue style)

Referred to as "Group Style". This method involves growing more than one bonsai tree in the same container.

Root Over Rock (sekijoju)

Just how it sounds; with a bonsai roots wrapped around a rock before entering the soil.

Growing in a Rock (ishizuke style)

Similar to root over the rock, however it involves the tree growing out of soil that is in between the crevice of a bed of rocks.

Multi-Trunk (ikadabuki style)

The tree has several trunks.

Raft Style (netsuranari style)

Grown to resemble a tree that has fallen over. Its branches are grown upright, so that they resemble a group of fallen trees close together.

Deadwood Style

Also known as Shari, Jin, Uro and many others. This sub-style makes use of the dead wood that is located on a tree. Some will refer to this style as "driftwood" style.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Broom (hokidachi style)

Works well with elm trees and other species that have wide, broom-like branches. Here, growers are trying to make the tree look like a broom. The bonsai will have a straight trunk with the branches jutting or spreading out at the top of the tree.

Windswept Style (fukinagashi style)

Gives the appearance of trees subjected to high winds. Top of the trunk is typically bent, giving it a windswept appearance.

Shari (sharimiki style)

The tree takes on the appearance that it is struggling to survive. Most of the tree's bark is stripped off to stress the difficulties that are being endured.

Literati (bunjin-gi style)

Straight trunk and very few branches. None or just a few leaves at the very top of the tree.

Thoughts on Style:

These style descriptions are not absolute. Rather, many bonsai trees incorporate different elements from a range of styles.

Look upon these descriptions more as guidelines, not hard and fast rules that must be adhered to. Classifications come in handy more for bonsai competition, where participants use them to express their intentions to other competitors.

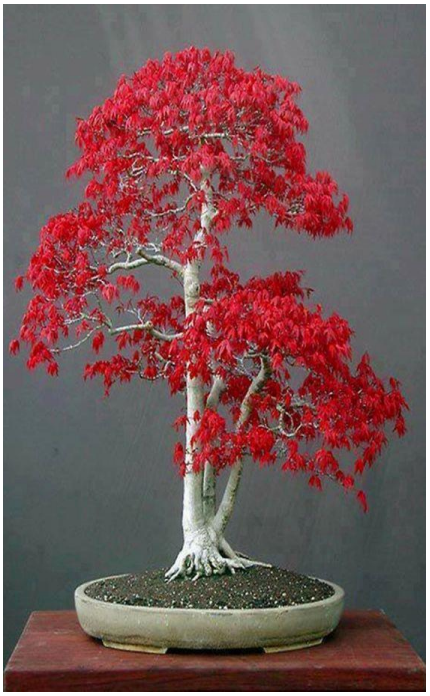
Aside from using shape and condition to divide bonsai trees into groups and subgroups, size is also another way to use to differentiate.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 5. Cultivating your Bonsai

Repotting

Once a stable bonsai is established, eventually there will be a need to re-pot. It is a relatively straightforward process to transplant a bonsai from one pot to another. However, for the tree it is a stressful ordeal. It will take a bonsai a few weeks to adjust to its new home. During this time, make sure to give it special attention. Place it in a spot where it will not be disturbed, and give it extra water.



Spring is an appropriate time of year to transplant the tree from one place to another. The Spring season is often when many species come out of their dormant winter stage, and begin growing again.

Follow the steps below when you decide to transfer your bonsai from one pot to another:

1. Cut back on watering for a few days before you plan to transplant it. Dry soil will be easier to remove from its roots.

2. Prepare the new pot beforehand, so you can cut back on the amount of time the tree will not be in soil.

Place a base layer of soil at the bottom of the pot. Add additional soil on top of the base layer of soil while forming a hollowed-out space for the transplant.

3. Remove the tree from the pot it is in. Gently clear away the dirt (you want to be able to see the roots), and be careful not to damage the roots.

4. Prune the roots. Cut the larger and thicker roots, and rid your tree of any upturned roots. For bonsai, you want the roots to be long and thin, and stay near the top of the soil.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

5. Gently place the tree into the hollowed-out space, and make sure the roots are completely covered in soil. Some growers like to add moss or tiny rocks on top of the soil. This adds to the overall visual appeal while also helping the roots stay secure.

6. If the Bonsai seems a bit unstable, consider using copper wire to secure the tree. A common method is to run a bit of copper wire through the drainage holes, and then gently wrap it around the trunk of your tree to help stabilize it.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Chapter 6. Regular Maintenance

To promote growth, the Bonsai needs regular watering. When watering your Bonsai, take into consideration the species, climate, weather, size of your tree, type of soil, and the size of the growing pot. These factors will help establish a guideline for determining how much to water and how often. Careful and frequent observation are key for Bonsai maintenance.



Water When Slightly Dry

Don't wait until the soil is bone dry before you water, and don't be afraid to put your finger in the soil to check. If the soil feels slightly dry, then it is time to water. If the soil feels wet, do not water.

Do Not Follow a Watering Routine

It is best to water your Bonsai based on a needs basis, rather than a watering schedule. The rate that the tree consumes water will vary. If you follow a watering routine, it could result in overwatering or underwatering. Check regularly.

How to Water

Pour water into the pot until it begins to flow out of the drainage holes. Wait a few minutes, and repeat this process. Use a watering can with a fine nozzle so that it gently waters the soil, and does not wash it away.

Fertilizer

It is important to fertilize your bonsai during the tree's growing season, which is early spring until autumn. Fertilizing is important, as typically bonsai roots have a limited area to expand and search for food.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

When searching for a fertilizer, it's best to look for mixes with a high phosphorous content (like NPK 6:10:6). For more mature bonsai, a slightly lower nitrogen content is appropriate.

Types of Bonsai Soil Mix

Generally, there are two types of Bonsai soil mix, the soil mixes you will use for your mature bonsai will depend on the species of tree you are growing. There are soil mixes for coniferous tree species and for deciduous tree species. Both types of mixes contain 3 main soil mix components, namely, grit, organic potting compost and akadama.

Below are general guidelines for mixing the soil.

Deciduous Soil Mix

- 25% organic potting compost
- 25% grit
- 50% akadama

Coniferous Soil Mix

- 10% organic potting compost
- 30% grit
- 60% akadama

Pruning the Roots

Pruning the plant's roots is a critical task for maintaining a mature bonsai.

The primary objective for bonsai is to keep the trees in a dwarfed state as they mature. To accomplish this, the roots must be pruned, and the plant repotted periodically (even if repotting to the same pot).

To prune the roots, first unpot the plant, and comb out the excess soil. Then trim off the thicker roots. The smaller, finer roots are more effective at absorbing water.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Pruning Buds, Branches, Leaves

You only need to prune the tree once it has established shape and form. The best time to prune deciduous bonsai is after their leaves have fallen. For conifer, it's as they are coming out of their dormancy period (spring). Pruning largely depends on the species. Some species also benefit from winter pruning.

Branch Pruning

The three main elements to controlling branch growth are:

- Pruning branches that are protruding from the rest of the crown (e.g. branches that are too long).
- Removing any unsightly looking branches.
- Pruning the tips of branches to prevent more from developing in areas that would distort the desired shape.

The upper part of a tree generally has more active growth than the lower part. This is phenomenon is referred to as "apical dominance". For a tree, it is the mechanism that allows it to grow taller, and avoid being out-shaded by competitors. What eventually ends up happening, is that the lower branches die, while the upper reaches grow out of proportion to the rest of the plant. Unfortunately, this pattern is not necessarily desirable for bonsai. Pruning counteracts this.

When pruning, the apical bud (end of the shoot) is the most actively growing part of a branch. It rapidly absorbs nutrients and water, which will inhibit the growth of the lateral branches and lateral buds. This activity will promote the upper growth of the tree, and limit its lateral growth.

You can achieve the aesthetic you desire by regularly pruning. Prune the lateral buds and lateral branches as well as the inner portion of your tree.

Keisho-sodai means smaller size, but great in similarity in Japanese. Aside from reducing the size of the tree, *keisho-sodai* also requires the full development of smaller branches and leaves. When you prune part of a branch, it will promote the development of lateral buds, which will initiate the growth of new branches. Pruning is not just about

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

removing parts, but also helping to promote new growth, which contributes to the overall aesthetic of the tree.

If a branch has no lateral buds, cut right at the end. The Japanese call this technique *oi komi* or shortening the branch close to the trunk. It is also referred to as *kiri modoshi,* or simply cutting back.

Bud Pruning

The process of pruning buds is also referred to as pinching. This process, along with leaf pruning, helps to promote the growth and development of the smaller leaves and branches. Pruning the leaves and buds can help to suppress the growth of overlong branches without having to prune.

For lateral branches that are not growing well, bud pruning can also be utilized. Conifer trees specifically can benefit from bud pruning, because pruning the leaves themselves can damage future plant growth.

Leaf Pruning

Leaf pruning helps promote the growth of smaller leaves and branches. Pruned leaves improve overall ventilation, as well as allow access to sunlight. Removal of some of the leaves will also help to bring out the desired shape of the tree, as well as make the inner portion of the tree more noticeable. With regular leaf pruning, branch and bud removal becomes easier.

When to Prune Bonsai Leaves

The best time for leaf pruning is between the late days of spring into the early days of summer. If you are only pruning a portion of leaves, then prune between late spring and early autumn. This is a time when your tree will be in a period of dormancy.

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Conclusion:

Our hope is that after reading this guide, you have become better versed in how to grow, shape, and maintain your bonsai. Know that going from seedling to full grown tree is no easy task. Even the masters struggle. However, with enough time, patience, and determination, we hope that you will come to know the true joy of bonsai, and maintain it as lifelong hobby.

Thanks again for purchasing from Ashbrook Outdoors!

If you have any questions or issues related to the growing kit please reach out to us directly at: welcome@ashbrookoutdoors.com

Additional Growing Kits from Ashbrook Outdoors available at www.AshbrookOutdoors.com and on Amazon:

Vibrant Vegetable: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B072K39HJB

Gourmet Herb Garden: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B072MP2Q23

Bonsai Kit: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B072DTXSZL

GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY GROWING!

Agrilearner App / Whatsapp Group:- 6201733962

Support Agrilearner App On Social Sites















- Agriculture Schemes=>Click to Read
- Agri Exam Important 10000 Agriculture Mcq=>Click to Read
- Agriculture Current Affairs =>Click to Read
- PDF Available To Download =>Click to Download
- IBPS SO Agricultural Officer previous year solved papers (6 years)=>Click to Download
- IBPS AFO 2019-2020 Question paper with solution=>Click to Read
- IBPS AFO exam pattern Pdf Download=>Click to Download