



FITZROY NURSERY

BONSAI

Bonsai began in China as the collecting of naturally stunted trees from the wild to grow in shallow dishes. The hobby was quickly adopted by the Japanese who are now the masters of this ancient art. The general idea is to recreate, in miniature form, a mature tree as it might be found in nature. Taking care of bonsai is relatively easy and a lot of fun. A well cared-for Bonsai can last a lifetime.

Position

Bonsai are essentially outdoor plants, requiring a position open to all aspects of the weather - fresh air, sun and rain. In summer, Bonsai should be shaded from hot afternoon sun. Bonsai can be brought inside for display in a spot with filtered sun and fresh air for up to a week in summer and a few days in winter. Ficus are an exception and may be kept inside permanently in a bright position.

Watering

The most common reason for Bonsai plants dying is lack of water. Bonsai must be kept moist *at all times*. Bonsai dishes can dry out extremely quickly and so must be checked regularly. In summer and on windy days, daily watering is essential. The hottest days may require watering twice.

Pruning and Wiring

This is where the real pleasure of bonsai can be found. In pruning your bonsai, you are shaping it into your own creation. To maintain the current shape of your bonsai, simply pinch out the tips of new growth. Wire can be used to bend branches to shape, but should be removed before it cuts into the branch.

Re-potting and Fertilising

Re-pot your Bonsai in winter after 1-3 years for fast-growing plants, 2-5 for conifers. Re-potting is carried out to provide fresh soil and to prune the roots. Pruning the roots will stimulate the growth of fresh new roots, provide room for fresh soil and help stunt the bonsai. Remove the plant from the pot and wash most of the soil away from the roots. Cut off 1/3 of the roots and replace in pot with fresh soil. If you want your bonsai to grow bigger, replace into a larger pot. Use Bonsai potting mix. Fertilise in spring and autumn using slow release fertiliser or fish emulsion at half strength.