

Derbyshire Bonsai Outdoor Care Guide

Introduction

The word 'bonsai' directly translates to 'tray planting'. A bonsai is a miniaturised tree, grown in a pot, resembling its counterpart growing in nature. Keeping bonsai is a relaxing hobby, bringing non-native trees into the comfort of your home and garden.

Caring For Your Outdoor Bonsai

These are hardy varieties which are kept outdoors in their natural environment. They thrive in the seasonal changes from summer to winter and must never be kept indoors.

Positioning

A light position, out of direct midday sun and away from strong winds. They are best kept off the floor on a display bench or table. Give winter protection only for the severest weather by placing in a frost free shed or greenhouse. Once the period bad of weather has passed return to normal cold conditions.

Watering

Never let the compost dry out, water regularly at least once a day in summer and in very hot weather maybe more. The ideal time to water is in the early morning or late evening as at midday water on the leaves will scorch them. In winter observe the compost, water if it gets dry. Water overhead with a fine rose watering can, until the compost is thoroughly soaked.

Feeding

Feeding is required from March to September and will vary with the different types of fertilizer used, either liquid or slow release as recommended by the manufacturer. Both are available from <https://derbyshirebonsai.co.uk/collections/soils-fertiliser>

Pruning

The top of the tree will require pruning throughout the year to maintain its shape and form. Prune broad leaved trees with scissors and coniferous trees by pinching out the growing tips with fingers or tweezers. <https://derbyshirebonsai.co.uk/collections/tools-accessories>

Re-potting

Re-potting is a very important operation in the life of a bonsai to maintain its health and vigour. Bonsai need re-potting around every two years, in early Spring just before the growing season. If the roots system becomes visible it is well developed and it is time to be shortened. Use chopsticks and a root rake to separate the roots and prune back the outside of the root ball by approximately one third.

Prepare the pot by covering the drainage holes with potting mesh, then place a piece of wire through the drainage holes and mesh to fix the root ball in position. Cover the bottom of the pot with a layer of fresh bonsai compost and anchor down the root ball with the wire, then top up the pot with fresh compost and water as per instructions above. Protect your tree in shade after re-potting, wait for signs of activity before feeding (approximately four to six weeks).