

Selection of Bonsai by Pauline F. Muth copyright 2002

Defining bonsai

- **Bonsai** is a tree in a tray BUT it is also an art form and there fore should show evidence of art.
- Bonsai can be created from any woody plant material that has leaves of a suitable size or leaves that can be reduced to an appropriate size.
- There are many **styles of bonsai** from single-tree styles to large forest.
- Bonsai is created in many **sizes** from extremely tiny to four feet in height that are measured by the number of men needed to carry it.

Types of bonsai effecting growing conditions:

- Hardy bonsai needing winter dormancy. These trees are kept outside all during the growing season: late March until Thanksgiving or Christmas time depending on the weather. Storage for hard winter can be formed by a cold frame, planting the tree in the garden, or on shelves or in coolers in the garage.
- Semi hardy bonsai which is left outside until the leaves fall or buds set and then is brought inside to be placed under lights, in a suitable well lit window, or in a greenhouse.
- Tropical Bonsai which can only be left outside during the frost-free period from Memorial Day to Labor Day. During frost months the bonsai is kept indoors in the same conditions as semi hardy bonsai.

Conditions to be considered when purchasing a bonsai

- Style that you like
- Health of the tree (damage, insects, fungi)
- **Pot** must have a hole or holes for drainage or be extremely flat for good drainage.

- **Bonsai soil** must be used for proper aeration and drainage and root growth.
- The surface must have large sections of loose soil....do not purchase if the surface has been treated with glue or the soil is hard packed.
- **Wire** on the tree is for shaping and will be removed.
- Purchase bonsai in the proper season. Hardy bonsai should not be purchased during its storage season.
- Ask the artist for particular instructions that apply to the bonsai you are buying. Be sure to ask for the date of the tree's last transplant.

Growing and caring for the bonsai

- Provide for
 - Proper light !!!!!!! The smaller the leaves, the more light you need.
 - Humidity
 - Air circulation
 - Watering daily from the top with a **rose**
 - **Fertilizer and other nutrients**
 - Prevention of insects by use of soap
- Bonsai must be turned at regular intervals to give all sizes of the tree equal light
- To keep the shape and improve the design, trimming must be done
- Transplanting and root trimming with new soil must be done each year at the end of dormancy on young trees or every few years on older trees.
- Check wires so that they can be removed before damage is done to the bark.
- Give the bonsai the proper seasonal conditions it requires.

Above all, enjoy your bonsai and share its beauty with others.

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