



## BONSAI PLANTS: BRING THE FOREST HOME

Abhilash Shukla\*, Gaurav Sharma, Vikas Ramteke, Sushil Kashyap and Vivek Kurrey

Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidhyalaya, Raipur-492012, India

\*Corresponding author's E-mail: [abhilash.shuklajdp@gmail.com](mailto:abhilash.shuklajdp@gmail.com)

### KEY WORDS

Bonsai, tree,  
nature, landscape

### ARTICLE INFO

**Received on:**

22.09.2016

**Revised on:**

15.11.2016

**Accepted on:**

16.11.2016

### ABSTRACT

Bonsai is the art of growing trees in a confined space to simulate certain environmental conditions such as great age, extreme weathering, twisted or contorted form, landscape, or other factors. Bonsai trees are modeled on and take inspiration from nature. In today's world with increasing population and reduction in size of home with no or very less area for garden, bonsai may creates aesthetically pleasing look with various miniature trees. The idea of bonsai is to recreate some of nature's most stunning and beautiful effects on trees which are reduced in scale.

### Introduction

The term bonsai literally means plant in a pot or tray planting. Bonsai however is much more than simply a plant in a pot. The goal of bonsai is to create the appearance of great size and age. This is accomplished by creating a bonsai with strong roots that extend in all directions, creating a sense of stability, a large trunk which tapers as it goes upward, a clear apex, and well formed and well placed branches. These features all combine to create a careful blend of symmetry, balance

and proportion. It also must be displayed in a pot which harmonizes well with the plant material. Many people think that in Bonsai, age is the most vital aspect, but that is not correct. A very old Bonsai will never be appreciated if its shape or look is not attractive, whereas a lesser old Bonsai will be appreciated more if its shape and branch arrangement are good. So, never run after the age of Bonsai but concentrate on its basic structure of trunk, branches, roots, etc.



Fig 1. Different styles of bonsai

## **Technique for Growing Bonsai**

### **Selection of Plant**

Among the various factors that determine the suitability of a plant as a “Bonsai” the foremost is its hardiness. It should be capable of being grown in shallow containers, withstand the operations of pruning of roots, branches and tough training. The plants which show seasonal variation in growth pattern and flowering are best suited for Bonsai. A plant for Bonsai may be raised from seeds, cutting, layering, or plants collected from the wild. There are a number of tropical trees that can be grown as “Bonsai”. Some of the most common ones are Bottlebrush, Bakain, Pine, Saptaparni and Bamboos. Some of the shrubs or woody climbers may also be grown as “Bonsai”.

### **Potting and Repotting**

An unglazed shallow and round, oval or rectangular container, having one or more drainage holes of desired colour, is used for planting very young trees. The container after covering drainage hole with crocks is filled with normal loam soil, which is not rich in fertilizers and contains a little amount of leaf mould and river sand. A straight plant is planted in the centre of the pot or little away from the centre as per style of “Bonsai” and the pot is kept in a shade for few days. Repotting of fast growing plants is done every year whereas slow growing ones may need repotting after 2 or 3 years. For repotting, the plant is taken out of the container gently with the earth ball and all the drainage materials is removed. Soil stuck up in between the roots is also removed with the help of sharp wooden or iron stick. Simultaneously, a portion of old sub-soil and surface soil is also removed.

### **Training**

For a Bonsai to assume the desired shape, it is often necessary to train it by means of external support, using a copper wire. This produces the desired effect more quickly than relying completely on pruning. The wire can guide the direction of shoot growth and can shape the trunk. Before bending, the support wire

should be anchored either to the soil, the trunk, the container, or to another tree. It should be attached in a regular spiral manner, going from bottom to top, normally starting from the far side of the tree. Bending of a branch will be easier if a slight twisting in the direction of the spiral is introduced.

### **Pruning and Pinching**

Pruning and pinching are the operations which help keep the Bonsai dwarf. Pruning or pinching of shoots is done to obtain the desired shape of the plant and also to reduce the leaf area. It is essential for vigorous growing trees. After pruning and pinching of leaves water supply to the plant is reduced substantially as these plants will be able to draw water only in a limited quantity. However, enough sunshine is needed for such plants.

### **Watering and Manuring**

Watering is done once a week in winters and at least once a day in summers. However, during and at least once a day is beneficial to these plants. Over watering is harmful. Manuring is also essential for Bonsai. It is generally done by applying 2-table spoonful of groundnut or mustard cake powder slowly. Generally, manuring is done twice a year, once during spring and again during rainy season.

### **Conclusion**

Though the art of bonsai can be very daunting to newcomers when they first start out, in reality it is as simple as you make it. The most important aspect as a beginner is to learn how to simply maintain the shape of your tree and keep it alive. Learn to look after your first tree successfully and your confidence grows enough to widen your horizons and successfully learn more advanced techniques such as reselling and creating bonsai. But don't run before you walk. The first fundamental rules to learn when embarking on this art is that you are dealing with something living and ever-changing; the basic rules of horticulture need be learned before you can successfully maintain your tree.



**Fig 2. A standard Bonsai plant**



**Fig 3. Slanting type Bonsai**



**Fig 4. Flowring type Bonsai**



**Fig 5. Windswept Bonsai**



**Fig 6. Forest Type Bonsai**

**How to cite this article?**

Abhilash Shukla, Gaurav Sharma, Vikas Ramteke, Sushil Kashyap and Vivek Kurrey. 2016. Bonsai plants: Bring the forest home. *Innovative Farming*, 1(4): 155-158.