



# Manor Nursery

## Garden Centre

Tel 01243 781734

PAGHAM ROAD | RUNCTON | CHICHESTER WEST SUSSEX | PO20 1LJ

## Caring for your Bonsai

If you follow basic care guidelines, you will find that Bonsai care is less complicated than it sounds. The most important steps in nurturing your bonsai include placement, watering, fertilizing, trimming and pruning and repotting. If you learn how to do each of these correctly you'll be delighted with the outcome. Generally speaking outdoor Bonsai are easier to keep and maintain than the indoor species.

**PLACEMENT** Deciding on the right place to put your tree is crucial for its well-being. First make sure that indoor trees are placed in a warm environment, but not directly on or near a radiator or in direct sunlight on a window sill. Outdoor trees are generally hardier and survive under much lower temperatures and should be kept outside throughout the year. Most Bonsai do best with morning sun and afternoon shade, although some species such as junipers, pines and other conifers (cone-bearing trees) can take all day sunshine. Even indoor Bonsai trees should be positioned so they get as much morning sun as possible. If your Bonsai is placed against a wall you will need to turn it every two weeks or so, or one side will automatically grow toward the sun.



**WATERING** How often Bonsai need to be watered depends on a wide range of factors, including species of tree, size and climate. Do not just water your tree every day, instead, monitor it carefully and water it once the soil gets slightly (but never completely) dry, it should be damp. When watering, do it thoroughly though. Don't water your bonsai with a regular garden hose or watering can as this can wash away the soil from the pot. Water your Bonsai with a plant mister, hose or watering can with a soft spray head or place the tree in a container of water so that the soil is covered and approximately one inch of the trunk is submerged. Leave the pot in the water for two-to-three minutes (until the air bubbles stop rising) and then let drain. Different varieties need more or less water, but a good rule of thumb is that the soil should always be moist, never completely dry. Bonsai need more water during the spring and summer months, you may even have to water daily during hot weather. But be careful not to overwater as this can rot the roots of your Bonsai. Yellow leaves often indicate overwatering.

**FERTILIZING** To keep your Bonsai healthy and producing new leaves you need to fertilize it during its growth season. As Bonsai trees are generally placed in small pots regular fertilization is required in order to replenish nutrients that are essential to the tree. Using a special 'Bonsai Fertilizer' can be convenient, not any fertilizer will do (careful not to use too much though). Follow the instructions as stated on the fertilizer's packaging regarding quantity and timing.

**TRIMMING AND PRUNING** Regular trimming and pruning of branches and leaves is essential to maintain the desired shape of your Bonsai. Branches need to be cut back several times a year, especially if there are extra or crossed branches, or branches growing in the wrong direction. Regular trimming and pruning of roots, branches and leaves is essential to maintain the desired shape of your Bonsai.

**REPOTTING** All Bonsai need to be repotted and roots trimmed at some point. In general, the faster the tree grows, the sooner it will need repotting, usually young trees annually and older trees 2/5 years. If your Bonsai has an extremely aggressive root structure and you see roots start to circle around the root system, you need to repot the tree or the roots will overtake the pot. The soil you use to repot your Bonsai is important, don't use regular potting soil, ask for special Bonsai soil mix at your local Nursery or Garden Centre.

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