

## Classical Bonsai Styles



FORMAL UPRIGHT  
*CHOKKAN*



INFORMAL UPRIGHT  
*MOYOJI*



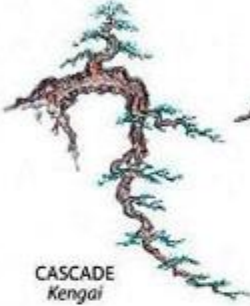
SLANTING  
*SHAKAN*



WINDSWEPT  
*FUKINAGASHI*



BROOM  
*Hokidachi*



CASCADE  
*Kengai*



SIMI-CASCADE  
*Han kengai*



CANOPY



LITERATI  
*Bunjin*



TWIN TREE  
WINDSWEPT



WEEPING



TWIN TRUNK



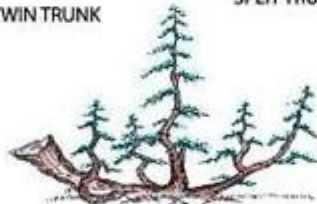
SPLIT TRUNK



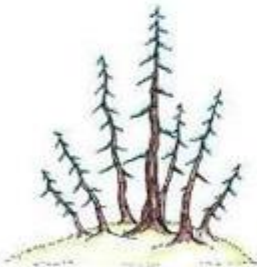
EXPOSED ROOT  
*Neagari*



CLUMP  
*Kabudachi*



FALLEN BRANCH



GROUP  
*Yose-ue*



RAFT  
*Ikada Buki*



ARCH



CLINGING ON A ROCK  
*Ishituki*



PLANTING ON A SLAB



DRIFTWOOD  
*Sharimiki*



ROOT OVER ROCK  
*Sekijo*



CLASPING A ROCK



PLANTING IN A ROCK

安く無心盆栽園



## Bonsai

**A** bonsai is any woody plant cultivated in a shallow container in such a way as to evoke an image of an ideal tree in nature, memory, or imagination. Bonsai (bone-sigh) in Japanese means approximately “tray-growing,” hence implying shallow roots. In western usage, it means practicing the horticultural and artistic skills, as well as—in some measure—the philosophical reflection associated with creating and maintaining such a tree. Although these practices began in China, the Japanese refined them for nearly 600 years before they became popular throughout the world in the mid-twentieth century. Today, cultivating and appreciating bonsai is an international phenomenon, with enthusiasts, artists and masters found in nearly every country of the world.

## Fertilizing

**B**ecause bonsai grow in a limited amount of soil, they need fertilizing regularly to provide nutrients and trace elements. Yasukunai sells several kinds of fertilizers, without endorsing any because each plant has its own needs. We do, however, recommend that you use a combination of time-released fertilizer and half-strength water soluble solutions. In the late fall you should decrease the amount of nitrogen you provide to your plant to encourage dormancy. Sometime around mid-April, you should again raise the nitrogen level for the growing season. If your tree is showing weakness or you have just repotted it, let it recover for at least two weeks before fertilizing.

## Repotting and Root-Pruning

**A**ll bonsai need to be repotted and root-pruned regularly because they become potbound and the soil in which they grow needs to be refreshed. Most established deciduous trees need to be repotted every two years; most conifers require it every three or four years. Despite these rules of thumb, every tree's root system should be examined each spring to determine if it needs to be repotted. Any good bonsai source book will include instructions on root-pruning. The general practice is to remove 1/4 to 1/3 of the old root mass before repotting the tree in new bonsai soil. For soil, Yasukunai recommends pure, sifted Terra-Green® (with some augmentation of oakleaf mold for plants that require more moisture).

## Pruning and Trimming

**T**he most difficult artistic skill for enthusiasts to learn is pruning. Nearly every beginner has a natural reluctance to cut major limbs from a tree to give it a fundamental shape. For coaching, we recommend that beginners consult with one of our experts or see any of the more skilled members of

their local bonsai society. When you start, be confident that, if you learn the horticultural skills to keep your plant alive, it will recover from the pruning you must do to establish it as a bonsai. When you have pruned your tree and wired it to shape, you'll need to maintain its shape by trimming or pinching-out or needle pruning. You will have to determine the particular needs of your tree and then attend to them regularly according to the schedule dictated by the “culture card” and the records you maintain.

## Wiring and Training

**S**ome trees come with wire on them; other plants are less refined at the outset. Regardless of their prior training, to cultivate a good bonsai you will have to wire your plant to move limbs, branches and foliage masses to achieve the ideal tree you envision. Any time your tree has wire on it, be sure you check frequently to see that the bark is not swelling around it and producing scars. Wire is a temporary training aid, not a permanent one. When you wire your tree to move a limb or branch, let it get a little drier than normal (but not completely dry) before attempting to bend the wire to place the limb where you want it. Plant cells full of water break easily.

## Pests

**B**ecause a bonsai is a miniature tree, it should be treated periodically with insecticides and fungicides specific to its needs. For example, junipers are susceptible to red spider mites, while maples are susceptible to aphids. Bonsai growers watch their trees carefully for evidence of such pests and then treat them topically. If you are not certain what might be troubling your tree, bring it to us or take it to your local garden center for diagnosis. The same pattern holds for anti-fungus treatments, although mycorrhizae fungi should be replaced after fungicides are applied.

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## In General

A principal requirement in cultivating any bonsai is knowing its special characteristics and needs. This pamphlet discusses general principles that apply to all bonsai, but new owners should also do their own research to obtain horticultural information that applies specifically to their plant(s). We include a few recommendations for Further Study, and our staff is always available, but one of the pleasures of bonsai is making "culture cards" and maintaining records.

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## The Outdoor/Indoor Question

All bonsai benefit from living outdoors from late spring through summer and into early fall. Beginning enthusiasts sometimes need to remind themselves that they are cultivating a tree, not a houseplant. Displaying and maintaining bonsai during the warmer seasons on an easily accessible table or bench on a patio or balcony is most practical. If your site permits, sun in the morning and filtered shade in the late afternoon is the best pattern. Yasukunai provides a light code for most plants we sell: Full Sun, Partial Sun, and Partial Shade. "Partial" means that the condition indicated prevails more than half the day; even though some of the other occurs. Among the many rewards of cultivating your tree(s) outdoors is increased health and vigor, which is revealed in growth, color, and blossoms in those species having showy flowers. If you have no outside area and must grow your trees indoors year round, you should place them in a south-facing window on a humidity tray—the best of alternative sites. An eastern window is second best; western window, third best. Few trees can tolerate the indirect light from northern windows without a boost from artificial lights. If you use artificial light, you should do so for fourteen to sixteen hours daily, with the bulb no more than eighteen inches from the plant. It might also be a good idea for you to contact our staff or to consult your local bonsai society.

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## Watering

Probably the most difficult horticultural skill that enthusiasts must learn is how to water their plant(s). At Yasukunai, we include a watering code with most plant material we sell. In general, the words "Wet," "Moist," "Damp," and "Semi-dry" are sufficiently descriptive, but we're glad to answer questions. We recommend that you water most

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plant(s) once a day during the warmer months, generally at the same time of day. Mornings are best, but evenings are also acceptable. Unless it is very hot or windy and you feel you need to water twice a day, we don't encourage midday watering. Water less as temperatures decline and trees begin dormancy. But you should still check your plant(s) every day or two, even if you're not watering, so you can be sure that no dry-out occurs. Water with a hose or watering can that has a rosette on it that will distribute the flow of water in a gentle shower over your plant, foliage and soil surface alike. If you have a really small tree (shohin or mame) you'll probably need to water several times a day. You'll know you've watered each of your plants sufficiently when water comes out the hole in the bottom of your tree's pot. Because plants dry out quickly in most houses, watering is especially tricky if you keep your plant indoors for any amount of time. Two techniques that might help you water indoors: Dip your tree to the depth of its pot in a dishpan (or sink) every other day or so and let it drain before returning it to the place you normally keep it. Or you might lightly spray the soil surface to break dry-surface tension before watering thoroughly with your watering can.



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## Winter Care

Hardy and semi-hardy trees require a dormant period, and even tropicals slow their activity during the shorter days of winter. Winter protection requirements are determined by the nature of your tree. At Yasukunai, we try to indicate the lowest winter-hardy Zone on the material we sell. In the Chicagoland area (Zone 5 -6), most trees need to be sheltered from winter's winds and some of our more bitter cold spells. You should consider any of these arrangements: 1) Storing in a cold frame or cold green house; 2) Storing in a storage shed or unheated garage; 3) Storing in a window well or on an unheated, enclosed porch 4) Heeling into a protected flower bed; 5) Storing in an accessible, unheated crawl space. Remember that you will periodically check your plants and water them as necessary.

Tropical trees (and some sub-tropical varieties) come into the house for winter care. Winter placement should be the same as that discussed in the Outdoor/Indoor Question section.