

What's a Bonsai?

A tree growing in a container, without a design or composition is...just a tree. A bonsai is a piece of art that expresses emotion or tells the story of that tree. Bonsai is a unique art form in which the tree expresses the image. That image evolves as it grows.

Creating a bonsai requires a vision and a plan, guided by knowledge of both artistic principles and understanding of a species unique growth habit.

There are two fundamental directions in bonsai design. One is the "classical" bonsai that has an overtly stylized image with obvious human involvement. The other is "naturalistic" design which strives to portrait the typical features of that species and to hide the evidence of human intervention. Neither approach is right or wrong, any more than impressionism is superior or inferior to classical still life. Both strive to portray the expression of a tree, not a miniaturized tree.

In this class our major focus will be the fundamentals necessary to establish and maintain the vigor of a tree in a container environment and to create your own bonsai. A tree must be vigorous to survive our styling techniques. At minimum, development of a bonsai may be delayed by failing

to first establish its health. If nothing else, the practice of bonsai will teach patience and observation.

Some students come to this class with a little bonsai that they were given. Their goal is simply to keep that tree alive. We are happy to help them with that, but our mission is to provide you with the knowledge and skills to create and maintain your own bonsai.

We want you to enjoy this hobby as much as we do.