

GOLD COAST TWEED BONSAI CLUB INC.



CLUB HANDBOOK

Fourth Edition 2026

GOLD COAST TWEED BONSAI CLUB HANDBOOK

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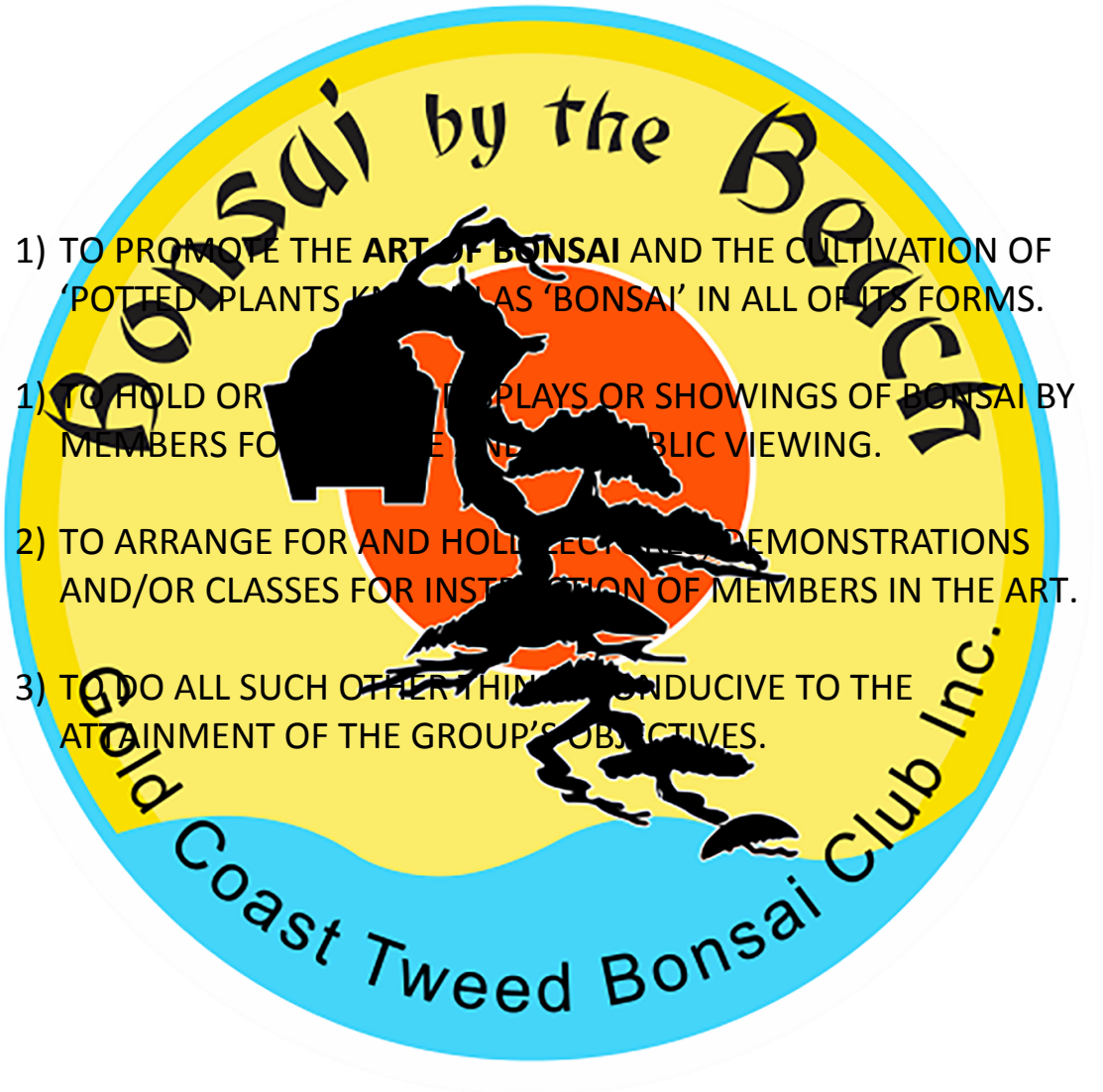
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GOLD COAST TWEED BONSAI CLUB INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

- 
- 1) TO PROMOTE THE ART OF BONSAI AND THE CULTIVATION OF 'POTTED PLANTS' KNOWN AS 'BONSAI' IN ALL OF ITS FORMS.
 - 1) TO HOLD OR ASSIST IN DISPLAYS OR SHOWINGS OF BONSAI BY MEMBERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC VIEWING.
 - 2) TO ARRANGE FOR AND HOLD TECHNICAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND/OR CLASSES FOR INSTRUCTION OF MEMBERS IN THE ART.
 - 3) TO DO ALL SUCH OTHER THINGS CONDUCTIVE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THE GROUP'S OBJECTIVES.

GOLD COAST TWEED BONSAI CLUB HISTORY. (GCTBC)

Historical Milestones

- 1983 - Inaugural meeting of “The Tweed Border Bonsai Group” – Mrs Rita Youngman President Membership 10.
- 1985 - Jeff Bray joined – still a member today – held multiple leadership roles- Life Member.
- 1986 - Membership reached 40.
- 1991 - Club Incorporation. Name change to “Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club Inc”.
- 2006 - GCTBC held Australian Annual Convention.
- 2019 - Impact of Covid.
- 2024 - Club Division due to ongoing Fire Ant issue

The Story of Our Club

The Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club began in **1983** with just **10 passionate bonsai enthusiasts** brought together by a shared love of trees and the desire to learn from one another. By **1986**, membership had already grown to **40 members**, reflecting the strong interest in bonsai across the border region of Northern New South Wales and South East Queensland. Originally known as the **Tweed Border Bonsai Group**, the Club formally became the **Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club Inc.** in **1991** when it was incorporated as a not-for-profit association. Over the next four decades, the Club built a proud reputation for friendship, education, workshops, demonstrations, and its much-loved **Annual Bonsai Show**, helping generations of members develop their skills and appreciation of bonsai. In **2024**, after changes brought about by border-related challenges and plant movement restrictions, the Club entered a new chapter. The NSW members established their own club, while the Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club relocated to the **Carrara Community Centre** and entered a period of exciting growth. Today, with **more than 100 members**, the GCTBC continues to thrive—stronger than ever, while proudly honouring the passion and vision of those original ten founding members.

Past Presidents:

Jeff Bray	Mac Skinner	Rod Brown	Nick Coombs
John Morris	Carole Waller	Peter Chapple	Leanne Esteb
Beau Pett	Coral James	Robyn Tarrant	

Some of these presidents served multiple terms like Jeff Bray who joined the club in 1985 and held multiple management roles. Beau Pett was the club’s youngest president at the age of 18.

Life Members

Life Membership is an honour awarded by the Club to recognise a member’s long-term, consistent, and valuable contribution and are granted lifetime financial membership in recognition of their service.

Recipients typically have served on the Committee, including in an office-bearing role, and have contributed regularly to Club activities over many years and generally been an asset to the club.

Any member may nominate, but Committee approval is required.

Current Life Members

Jeff Bray	Carole Waller	Geoff Cousins	Ziggy Mireis
Leanne Esteb			

Honorary Members

An Honorary Membership is a distinguished recognition awarded to individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to supporting, promoting, or generously assisting the Club.

Nominations may be made by any member, with final approval determined by the Committee. The honour is conferred for a one-year term.

Past & Current Honorary Members

Linsay Bebb	Glenys Bebb	Nick Coombs	Larry Tarrant
Takeshi Hamano 2026			

Annual Shows

Annual Shows are a very important part of any Bonsai Club's culture and is the club's main fundraiser. Over the years the club's annual show has been held at multiple venues including: The Albert Water Ways, The Robina Community Centre, Elanora Uniting Church Rooms, Tweed Heads Cultural & Civic Centre and the Broadbeach State School.

2006 GCTBC Holds AABC Annual National Convention

In 2004, the club applied to the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs (AABC) to hold a National Convention. In May of 2006 after a mountain of work by the committee and volunteers the 19th AABC National Convention was held at Legend's hotel in Surfers Paradise.

It was a very successful convention netting over \$24,000 profit. Half of which went to the AABC for the Visiting Tutor Program, and half was retained by the club. The Committee deposited \$10,000 into a term deposit giving the club a huge financial safety net.

Impact of COVID

The COVID pandemic resulted in the annual show being cancelled for 2019 for the first time in 40 years, and then again in 2020 and 2021. The NSW/QLD border was closed which locked out the NSW members from attending club meetings. NSW members represented approximately half the membership, and over half the management committee of the Club.

The President and Vice President, and the committee members who were living in Queensland, were left to run the club until the border reopened (6 December 2021).

Impact of Fire Ant Threat

The 2022 annual show was held in the Tweed Heads Cultural & Civic Centre. It proved to be a very successful event in a popular venue, and at half the price of most council venues on the Gold Coast. It was rebooked for 2023; however, the plant movement border restrictions caused its cancellation.

The problem was that Fire Ants were creeping closer to the NSW border. The NSW Government banned potted plants from being taken across the border from QLD unless they were sprayed and certified by a DPI inspector. Getting trees sprayed and certified was a complicated and expensive process and members would need to have it done every month to enable them to bring trees into Queensland for monthly meetings and return to NSW again. The DPI advised that it was unlikely this would change in the next five years.

The Club Division

Because of the plant movement border restrictions, the NSW members were getting frustrated. They couldn't bring trees into Qld for a meeting, unless they were prepared to have them sprayed to take them back home! For 6 months or more they attended meetings without their trees. Members started suggesting splitting the club.

The idea of splitting the club into two clubs was discussed both within the committee and with advisors from outside the club and was put to the membership who voted in favour of the split. Most of the assets were left with the GCTBC but the money was split according to percentages of membership. The last meeting of the club prior to the split was the AGM in March 2024.

After the split, the Qld side retained the name the Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club Inc and the NSW side started a new club and adopted a similar name to that of the club when it started 41 years earlier, the Tweed Border Bonsai Club Inc. The two Clubs are classed as “Sister Clubs”, and several people continued as members of both.

The Move to Carrara

After the split, the GCTBC moved to the Carrara Community Centre, Neilsens Rd, Carrara.

In 2024 and 2025 successful annual shows were held at the Broadbeach State School. As well as annual shows, the Club has been taking part in the Gold Coast Show at the Broadwater with a display and raffle since 2023 and in 2025 attended the Mudgeeraba Show giving a demonstration at one of their stages. The club intends to continue these public displays to share the Art of Bonsai and find more members.

In 2026 the club’s annual show will be held in the Carrara Community Centre at Carrara, where the monthly meetings are held.

HOW THE CLUB OPERATES

The Gold Coast Tweed Bonsai Club Inc. is a not-for-profit incorporated association dedicated to bringing bonsai enthusiasts together to learn, share knowledge, develop skills, and inspire others through fellowship, education, public displays, and our Annual Show.

Memberships:

Membership fees are \$25 per person per year and fall due on February 28th each year. Members must be renewed by the annual general meeting, which is the second Saturday in March to vote or be nominated for the committee.

New members are always welcome at any time during the year; however, the fee remains at \$25.00. If the month a new member joins is after the month of September, then their membership will be valid for the whole year following.

Membership entitles a member to take part in all free club workshops and events and have access to Visiting Tutors for paid workshops and 10% discount on presentation of club lanyard at Hidden Valley Bonsai, 3 Wheeler Cres, Gold Coast, Queensland, 4223.

The Club meets on the second Saturday of most months: The exception being January. The entrance fee is \$5 which covers tea & coffee as well as a 'Lucky Door Prize'.

A Regular Meeting:

- 10.00 am - Sign attendance book, pay entrance fee, buy raffle tickets, book-in for workshops.
- Members work on their own trees with Tutors available for assistance.
- 11am – 12pm - **Look n Learn** an in formal talk or demonstration usually held in the same area as the morning tree workshop
- 12pm – 1pm - Lunch – Please bring your own lunch
- 1.00 pm - Committee Updates and if time allows a critique on members' trees.
- 1:30pm - Demonstration or Talk
- Members can continue to work on their trees until 4pm
- 4 pm - Pack up work area and assist with putting away tables and chairs.

Morning and Afternoon Teas: Members are asked to please bring along a plate of food to share. Mugs are provided but it is asked that each member wash and dry their mugs after use.

Members Working Together at Meetings and Events:

The Club is guided by a dedicated Management Committee, nominated and elected annually by the Club membership. These volunteers meet regularly throughout the year to make important decisions, plan activities, manage Club affairs, and create opportunities that support the continued growth and success of the Club.

Serving on the Committee brings a strong sense of pride and fulfilment as members help shape the future of a Club that continues to grow into something truly special.

While the Committee provides leadership, the strength of the GCTBC comes from the willingness of all members to contribute. Whether it is helping set up tables and chairs before meetings, packing away and cleaning up at the end of the day, volunteering at public events, assisting at the Annual Show, or simply offering a helping hand when needed, every contribution helps build the welcoming and supportive community that defines our Club.

The GCTBC is at its best when members work together, share the load, and take pride in being part of something bigger than themselves.

We have many expenses:

- Monthly hall hire
- Morning and Afternoon Tea
- Running costs of the club
- Visiting Tutors
- Costs to run the annual show
- Printing, stationary, postage etc.
- Items for raffles and prizes
- Insurance
- Public Liability and Property Damage Insurances
- Advertising
- Purchasing Assets

We pay for the above with money raised from:

- Membership Fees
- Raffles
- \$5 charged to attend club days
- Entry fee to annual show
- Market day table hire
- Sales from club trade table

Library:

The library has been condensed to a core group of books that are especially significant to the club. Should you wish to peruse any of these, then contact a committee member.

Lanyards:

Members are given a Lanyard when they join, and we ask these are worn to every meeting. A blue one tells us someone is new to the Club, white signifies a member who has been in the Club for over 12 months and yellow will identify committee members. This system should make it easier for new people to seek assistance from appropriate people, as well as make it easy for us to know the names of everyone.

Tutors Badge:

Worn by experienced club members who have been approved by the committee to assist and give advice to other club members.

Newsletter:

The Club newsletter is one of the best ways to stay connected with everything happening at the GCTBC. Emailed each month, it keeps members informed about upcoming meetings, workshops, special events, demonstrations, and important Club news.

It is also a valuable source of bonsai knowledge, featuring articles from past meetings, seasonal growing advice, styling tips, horticultural information, member achievements, and inspiration for developing your own trees. Whether you are new to bonsai or have years of experience, the newsletter is an important resource for staying informed, learning, and making the most of your membership.

Annual Show:

The annual show is a major opportunity to showcase our work to the general public and attract new members to this wonderful hobby and club. All members are invited to show trees but as this is a professional show the committee has the right to kindly advise if a bonsai is not yet ready to exhibit. There are 7 categories that are judged, and 1st and 2nd places are awarded in each. In addition, there is an overall Best in Show & People's choice awarded by the visiting public.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)

Each year in March, the Club holds its Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is an important meeting where members review the past year, hear reports on how the Club is progressing, and elect the Management Committee for the year ahead.

At each AGM, all Committee positions become vacant as required under the Club's constitution. Existing Committee members are welcome to nominate again and may be re-elected by the membership.

Any financial member of the Club can nominate another financial member for a committee position. Each nomination must be:

- Proposed by a financial member
- Seconded by another financial member
- Accepted by the person being nominated

Nomination forms are distributed via email, and completed forms are submitted before the AGM so members can be advised of all nominees in advance. If only one person is nominated for a position, they are elected unopposed at the AGM. If more than one person is nominated members vote to decide the successful candidate. There are no set term limits for Committee positions, however members are encouraged to become involved and share the responsibility of helping lead the Club.

The key Office Bearer positions are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The committee has several subcommittees and roles that are important to the smooth running of the club these include the Fundraising and Communications sub-committee. There is the newsletter and social media jobs that need assistance also. Serving on the Committee is a rewarding way to contribute to the continued growth, direction, and success of the Club.

Suggestion Box:

The Committee is always looking to improve the bonsai experience, and all suggestions are taken seriously. There is a box with slips of paper on the members info table at each club meeting or speak with a committee member or email any ideas for improvement to GoldCoastBonsaiClub@gmail.com.

Minor complaints may be taken up verbally with the President or Vice President. However, for it to go through a committee meeting, where action can be authorised, the complaint must be put in writing.

MEETINGS WITH A VISITING TUTOR

Visiting Tutors:

Visiting Tutors are qualified bonsai artists registered with our Parent Body, the Australian Association of Bonsai Clubs Ltd. (AABC) and are paid a fee by the Club which is subsidised by the AABC.

Therefore, when we have Visiting Tutors or Demonstrators we must show them a certain level of courtesy. Please refer to Guidelines for these Workshops.

Guidelines for Successful Workshops:

- It is advised to arrive early and have your work area set up for the tutor to give advice.
- Be prepared for the Tutor to discuss and advise you on the design of the tree.
- The Tutor may suggest what branches to remove and what to wire. You will undertake the cutting and wiring but the Tutor may do the final twisting and bending with your permission.
- The Tutor may advise that it is appropriate for you to root prune and repot.
- Please, everyone has paid to be there, even the observers, and they want to hear the directions of the Tutor, keep conversation to a minimal.
- Please don't interrupt the Tutor when they are attending another participant.
- Turn off or silence mobile phones.
- Be at your spot, prepared and ready each time the Tutor returns to you.

If you are a 'beginner' you should arrange to have an experienced member to assist and help you, especially with wiring.

General Timetable

9.30 am - Paid workshops with a Tutor. Members must pay to take part in these workshops.

Members pay a reduced fee to observe the tutor conduct the workshop.

10.00 am - No coffee break, participants get a drink and return to their work area.

12.00 pm - Workshop concludes. Lunch break

1.00 pm - Update from Committee and welcome and introduction of Visiting Tutor

1.00 pm - Demonstration by Visiting Tutor free unless otherwise advertised in Newsletter.

3.00 pm - Coffee break

3.15 pm - Demonstration resumes and if time permits critique of member trees

4.00 pm - Meeting concludes.

Each person should bring at least two trees, and the Tutor will choose the most suitable one.

Bring a plant that is suitable to be worked on in your climate at this time of year. Remember it is better to buy one good plant for \$100 than five \$20 plants as you will get a better result and end up with a better bonsai much sooner. Don't bring a massive tree as it takes up too much of the tutor's time. It is also considerate to other members if you don't bring seven trees to put in a group, that is best left to workshops specifically designed for groups.

If you wish to do a group keep it small, just three trees. If this is your choice, think about the placement of your trees and bring a diagram showing same, then the Tutor can discuss the best option.

Prepare your tree before you arrive:

Clean the tree, remove foliage hanging downwards and growing in the fork of branches. Remove any dead foliage.

Don't remove dead branches if it is a conifer as the Tutor may suggest you use them for jins and sharis.

If you wish to do carving, bring your own manual carving tools and safety gear but nothing electric because WH&S regulations don't allow the use of electric carving tools in public areas, as this can negate the Club insurances. Small Dremels fitted with blue silicone discs are fairly safe so they could be bought along but would need to be approved by the Tutor.

Don't prewire trees because if you must cut off branches the wire would lose its holding ability.

You should bring your own:

- Tools, and they should be clean and sharp. (Basic tools would be wire cutters, sharp twig shears, tweezers, angle cutters and a rake) If you don't have them the club has three sets that can be borrowed at the beginning of club meetings, or borrow some from a friend prior to the workshop as it is not acceptable to borrow tools from other participants during the workshop.

Make sure your tools are marked for easy identification.

- Wire in several sizes
- 2 x chopsticks
- A Pot
- Potting Mix
- Muck if doing root over rock
- A turntable
- Fine, slim fitting gloves and an apron if you like to work in them.
- A filled water spray bottle
- A plastic bag and paper towel or sphagnum moss if you want to take cuttings
- A notebook and pen
- Moss and pebbles for dressing the pot
- Kitty litter tray or similar for your rubbish
- a plastic supermarket or garbage bag, to wrap roots to protect them from drying out if you need to remove the plant from its pot.

In Conclusion:

Make sure you clean up your own work area, and the floor around where you worked.

Please don't leave until the Tutor or the Spokesperson declares the workshop is finished and please remember to thank your Tutor.

BONSAI SOIL MEDIUM

There are many differing opinions among growers on potting mediums so one must be cautious about what to recommend. However, after many years study, it has been found that the particles listed below are the most commonly used among experienced growers around the world.

The Main Functions of Bonsai Medium are to:

1. support the tree in a stable upright position; 2. protect the roots; 3. retain and release water and nutrients as needed; 4. hold minute pockets of oxygen; 5. drain freely.

Therefore, we must look for a mix that can satisfy the above 5 points.

Some growers recommend a totally inorganic mix, which means only stone, no dirt particles or bark etc. while others recommend different percentages of each, and most growers will vary the mix depending on whether they are potting deciduous or coniferous trees.

In-organics: Pumice, Scoria, Acadama, Diatomite, Zealite, Turface, Decomposed Granite, Perlite,
Organics: Coir Peat, Pine Bark Nuggets, sphagnum moss.

It has been recommended that until you become more informed on varying percentages in mixes that you use 2-part Pumice, 2-part Scoria and 1 part Coir Peat or Pine Bark Nuggets. (This is commonly referred to as an Open Mix.)

Stone doesn't breakdown in mixes so it can be sieved and reused for many years, eventually making it cheaper than commercial potting mixes.

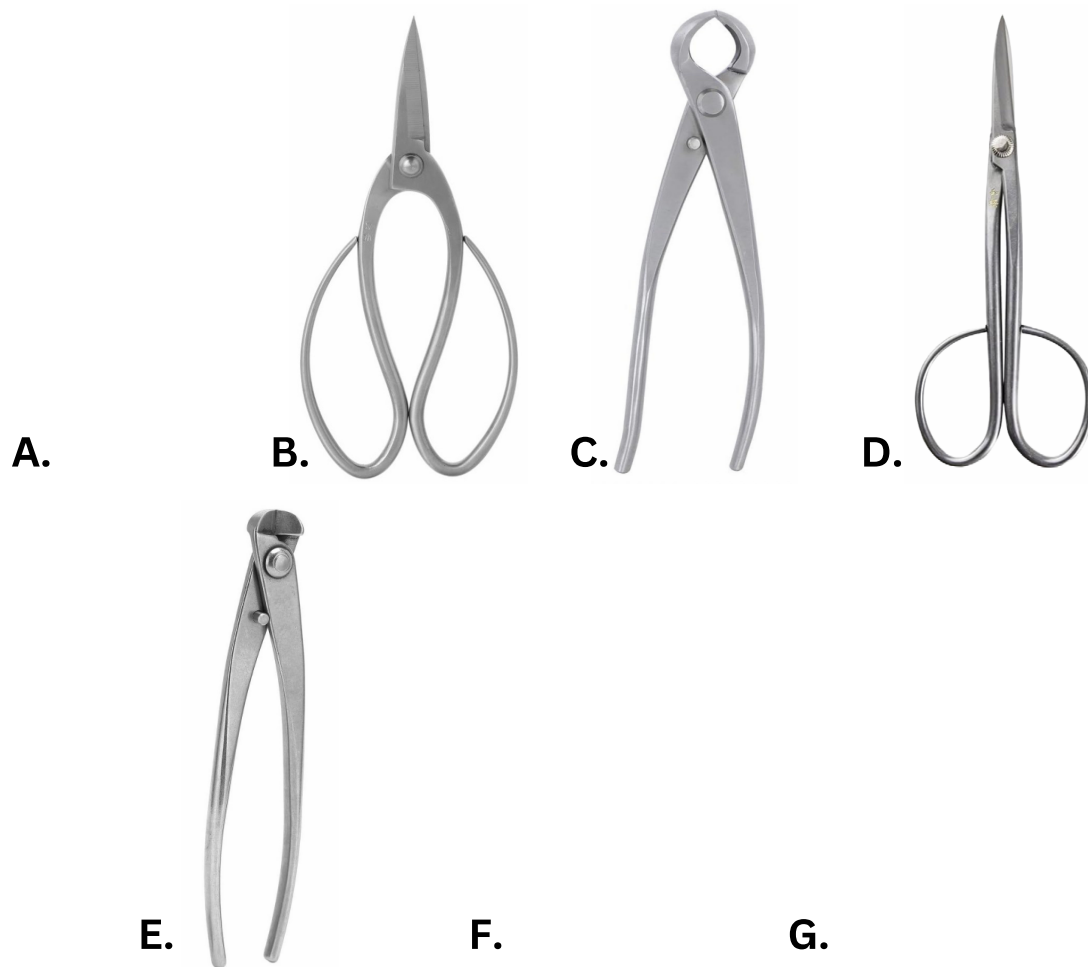
All these particles should be sieved at least twice and mostly use what falls through a 5mm sieve and is caught in a 2mm sieve. Dispose of the rubbish that drops through the 2mm sieve.

The reason some people don't like Commercial Mixes is that they aren't really made for bonsai and if you sieve them, you will find that a huge majority falls through the 2mm sieve and is wasted.

When you learn more about mixes you will find that larger particles allow for faster, lanky growth, and is great for a tree in development. Smaller particles slow down growth and are best for trees in refinement.

To test if a mix drains fast enough, fill a bonsai pot with the mix and water it, at the same time count to 10 or 15 seconds, if the water hasn't totally drained away by then it is not a good draining mix.

Warning: Some people use commercial cat litter instead of pumice or diatomite but be careful because some cat litters have deodorizers and other chemicals added to them which over extended use could kill a bonsai.



BASIC BONSAI TOOL SET

- A. **BRANCH CUTTERS** – used for removing branches. Its shape leaves a concave wound on the trunk.
- B. **ROOT SCISSORS** – used for removing roots from the tree. Made of a heavy steel to cope with the small stones in bonsai soil mix.
- C. **KNOB CUTTERS** – used to make deeper concave cuts on the trunk when removing branches. This allows the wound to heal without a protruding lump.
- D. **BONSAI SCISSORS** – used for cutting small branches and foliage from the tree.
- E. **WIRE CUTTERS** – surprisingly strong, these are used for cutting wire in lengths and for removing wire from trees.
- F. **ROOT RAKE** – used for teasing out the root-ball when root-pruning.
- G. **TWEEZERS** – used for removing insects and dead foliage from the tree and for removing weeds that grow through the moss on the soil.

THE 5 BASIC BONSAI STYLES

Why we use them, why they matter, and how they guide our trees

Bonsai is living art. The five basic styles are time-tested design frameworks that help us shape our trees into balanced, natural and beautiful compositions. They are not rigid rules, but guidelines that bring harmony between the tree, the pot and the space around them.

WHY WE USE BASIC STYLES

- **GUIDELINES** – They give us a clear starting point for design and styling.
- **HARMONY** – Each style follows natural forms found in nature, creating balance and visual appeal.
- **BEST POTENTIAL** – They help us choose the most suitable style for a tree's trunk, roots, branches and overall character.
- **CONSISTENCY** – Using these principles helps us create well-proportioned, timeless bonsai.

WHY THEY ARE AESTHETICALLY APPEALING

Our eyes are naturally drawn to balance, rhythm and proportion. The five basic styles reflect how trees grow in nature – whether reaching for the sun, clinging to a cliff, or surviving strong winds. They create:

- Balance between stillness and movement
- Visual flow and rhythm
- A sense of age, strength and resilience
- Harmony between the tree, pot and space

HOW THEY HELP DETERMINE A TREE'S BEST POTENTIAL

Every tree has unique features – trunk shape, taper, bends, branches and roots. By understanding the five basic styles, we can identify which style:

- Suits the tree's natural shape
- Highlights its strongest features
- Minimises or works with any weaknesses
- Creates a design with the greatest impact and longevity

THE 5 BASIC STYLES

1. FORMAL UPRIGHT (CHOKKAN)

A straight, strong trunk tapering towards the top. Symbolises strength, stability and dignity.



2. INFORMAL UPRIGHT (MOYOGI)

A gentle curve in the trunk creates a more relaxed, natural feel. Represents nature in its most common form.



3. SLANTING (SHAKAN)

The trunk grows at an angle, showing determination and adaptability. Conveys strength and movement.



4. SEMI CASCADE (HAN-KENGA)

The trunk flows down over the side of the pot, with the apex (rising tip) above the base. Suggests enduring strength and elegance.



5. FULL CASCADE (KENGA)

The trunk flows down far below the base of the pot. Symbolises survival, resilience and the power of nature.

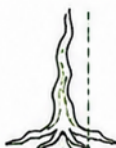


KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR ALL STYLES



Triangular Shape

The overall outline should form a triangle for stability.



Taper

Trunk should be thick at the base and get thinner towards the top.



Balance

Branches should be placed to create visual balance.



Proportion

The tree and pot should be in harmony.



Naturalism

Emulate trees in nature – no branches straight up or down.

REMEMBER

The five styles are not limitations – they are a foundation. With understanding and practice, you can create beautiful bonsai that express nature, character and your own creativity.



CREATING YOUR FIRST BONSAI

Creating a bonsai is a process of observation, planning, styling, and careful horticulture. Take your time. Good bonsai design begins with understanding the tree before making any cuts or bends.

Step 1: Study the Tree and Choose a Design

Before picking up any tools, carefully study your tree from all angles.

Look for:

- A healthy tree with strong roots and vigorous growth
- Good trunk movement and character
- Natural taper from a thick base to a finer apex
- Low branches that may form the main structure
- Surface roots (*nebari*) that add stability and visual strength

Rotate the tree and begin identifying its most attractive viewing angle—known as the **front**.

Consider:

- Trunk movement and taper
- Root spread
- Branch placement
- Natural features and character

This first decision will guide every step that follows.

Step 2: Clean and Prepare the Tree

Before styling, remove anything that does not contribute to the design.

Remove:

- Dead branches or foliage
- Weak or unwanted shoots
- Crossing branches
- Branches growing straight up or straight down
- Branches growing toward the viewer (“eye-pokers”)
- Bar branches (two branches directly opposite each other)

Cleaning the tree reveals its true structure and makes design decisions much easier.

Step 3: Select the Front and Plan the Structure

Now that the structure is visible, confirm the front of the tree and begin planning the branch layout.

General guidelines:

- Bonsai has a clear front, back, and sides
- The apex usually leans slightly toward the viewer
- The lowest branches are generally the thickest and longest
- Branches become finer and shorter toward the apex
- Branches should alternate around the trunk to create depth
- Empty space is just as important as foliage

Remember—these are design guidelines, not rigid rules.

Step 4: Wiring and Shaping

Wire the tree to position the trunk and branches.

Wiring guidelines:

- Apply wire at approximately 45 degrees
- Avoid crossing wires
- Where possible, wire two branches with one piece of wire
- Anchor the wire securely before bending
- Place wire on the outside of the intended bend
- Avoid excessive wire at any one point

Work in this order:

1. Trunk (if required)
2. Primary branches
3. Secondary branches
4. Fine branch placement

Bend branches slowly and deliberately into position.

Step 5: Root Work

If the tree is ready for repotting, carefully work on the root system.

- Remove the tree from its container
- Gently rake out old soil
- Remove dead, damaged, circling, or overly long roots
- Prune roots conservatively, usually up to one-third
- Preserve fine feeder roots wherever possible

Healthy roots are the foundation of healthy bonsai.

Step 6: Prepare the Pot

Before potting:

- Cover drainage holes with mesh
- Install tie-in wires
- Add a thin base layer of bonsai soil

Choose a pot that complements the tree in size, style, and colour.

Step 7: Potting the Tree

- Create a small mound of soil in the pot
- Position the tree slightly off-centre
- Spread the roots over the soil mound
- Secure the tree firmly using the tie-in wires
- Add soil gradually
- Use a chopstick to remove air pockets
- Fill soil to just below the rim of the pot

A firmly secured tree establishes roots faster.

Step 8: Watering and Aftercare

After potting:

- Water thoroughly until the water runs clear from the drainage holes
- Protect the tree from extreme sun, wind, or heat while it recovers
- Monitor moisture carefully over the following weeks
- Avoid heavy fertilising until new growth resumes

Remember: Styling creates the vision—aftercare keeps the tree alive to achieve it.

WIRING

- Preferred wire is aluminium with a copper coating. The copper colour dulls in the weather and doesn't look as obvious as silver coloured wire.
- It takes time to learn how to quickly determine the size of wire and the length it should be when wiring a branch.
- To determine the strength of wire gently flex the branch between the thumb and forefinger and then do the same with the wire until you find a gauge that has about the same resistance. (I have read where the wire should be about one third the thickness of the branch or trunk to be wired but that would only apply to very small trees).
- The wire should be about one third longer than the branch to be wired.
- Wire should be wound around the trunk at 45-degree angles.
- It should be wound around the branch, not the branch around the wire.
- It should not be pulled tight, as it will cut in as soon as the tree starts to grow.
- The first wire should be pushed into the soil at the base of the tree at a depth of about half an inch to anchor it and should then be placed around the trunk at 45-degree angles.
- If the wire is too heavy near the top of the tree cut it and continue with a smaller more appropriate size **BUT the second wire must start about two winds below where the previous wire terminated.**
- The second wire should also anchor into the ground and follow the angles of the first wire, but then leaves the trunk and wires the first branch. Take care not to cross wires.
- The second and third branches can be wired with the same wire by placing the middle of it around the back of the trunk and anchoring one length around a branch and then wiring the other branch totally and returning to the anchor wire and then complete wiring the branch with it.
- When wiring a branch downward, take the wire from the trunk across the top of the branch
- When wiring a branch upward, take the wire under the trunk first.
- When wiring a branch or trunk to make bends, try and place the wire directly over the middle of the outside of the desired bend, the branch will be less likely to break.
- Never wire two branches on the same level as they see-saw off each other
- When potting the tree it should be tied into the pot with anchor wire. The anchor wire should be twice the length of the pot and should be pulled up through the holes in the bottom of the bonsai pot ready to tie across the root-ball to stabilise the tree.
- It doesn't need to be thick wire, about 1.5mm is usually sufficient.

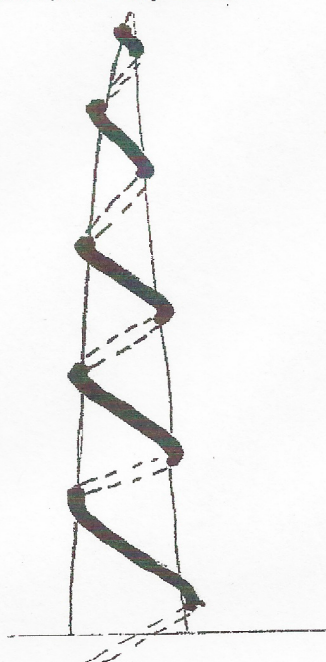
Wire comes in both anodized aluminium and copper. Copper is commonly used on trees from the conifer family such as pines and junipers. Aluminium is used on evergreens and deciduous. The latter is the easiest to use and is recommended for 'beginners'.

Wire comes in several gauges from 1mm, 1.5mm, 2mm, 2.5 and so on up to 6mm.

It is recommended for new people to purchase several gauges with the most frequently used being 1.5mm. Therefore, a good starter kit would contain 1mm, 1.5mm, 2mm, 2.5mm and 3mm.

GUIDELINES FOR WIRING

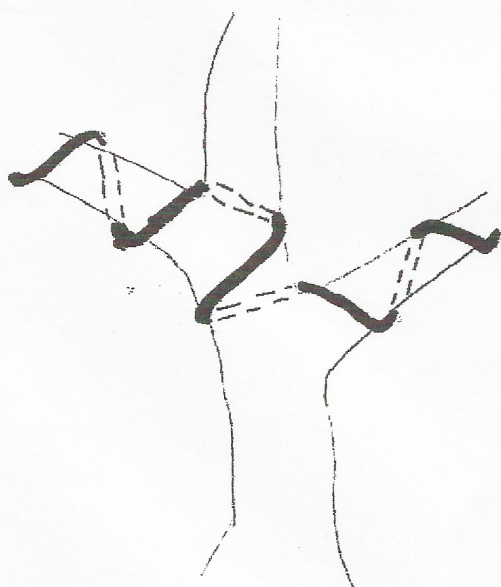
To wire the trunk, anchor wire into soil close to base of tree. Gently wrap wire around trunk in an upward direction, at 45 degree angles



The first branch should always be thicker than the branches above, so wire by anchoring in soil and following the previous trunk wire taking care not to cross them.



Where possible wire two branches with one piece of wire. It is essential that there is enough space between the branches to make at least one complete turn around the trunk, to act as an anchor.



Where possible use reverse wiring to support both branch and trunk and to avoid splitting.



The terminology often used is: Water till it runs from the holes in the pot and don't water again until the soil is nearly dry but NOT bone dry.

NOTES