

# CHOOSING YOUR FIRST BONSAI

## Start by understanding Bonsai is the art and not the tree

We use many different tree species for the art! The art is dwarfing the tree to grow in a small container. Knowing this will help you keep your tree alive and healthy. The key in choosing your first "bonsai" is to understand the tree you like and its horticultural needs. All tree's basic needs are water, the correct light and growing conditions. For the best experience with your tree please consider the following conditions that you may have.

### Outdoor bonsai:

No tree actually grows inside, trees need sunlight and water to produce photosynthesis and survive. The most common tree species we use for bonsai are junipers, pines, maples, cedar, hornbeam, cypress and elm. Trees like these are hardy to our area and need to be grown outside all year and especially need the winter dormancy months to store sugar and starches for the next growing season. These trees WILL NOT SURVIVE INSIDE!! As a bonsai these outdoor trees may need some winter protection because the pot they grow in doesn't shield the roots like the ground would. For winter protection of these trees I recommend a cold framed area, unheated attic or garage, or possibly mulching them in near the base of the home and put up a small wind screen. When a tree is dormant it doesn't need light but it is good to keep the soil moist, especially in early spring when the weather starts to warm and the tree starts growing, even if we don't want to go outside. If you have a nice porch or outside area to house these trees and keep an eye on watering than you have a large amount of trees to choose from. If not then read onto the next group of bonsai.

### Indoor bonsai

So now that you understand trees really don't grow inside, let's talk about tropical species or trees that aren't hardy to our area. Trees like the Ficus, serissa, jade, bouganvilla, brush cherry, tropical mimosa, escambron and podacarpus are species that grow in southern regions of the county and world. Their normal climates are hot and humid and very rarely see freezing temperatures so the roots can't take our cold winters. These trees love to be outside in the spring, summer and fall but need protection under 50 degrees. This being said, these tree species can also be grown successfully indoors all year long, but they love to get some real sun!!! For temperatures under 50 and the winter months, you need to bring them inside and give them the biggest window possible with the most amount of natural light. If you don't have great light like many homes then you should consider supplementing with grow lights for 14-16 hours a day. These lights can range from \$20-\$80 for a simple system. With a timer they can come on and off as needed so you don't forget. These tropical trees will need a watering most likely everyday depending on how hot or dry your home is. Maybe these species are for you?

***When you take some time to get to know your tree then care will be simple. Don't stress about owning a bonsai, just remember to water it and give it the right light source and you will be successful. Trimming and styling comes after the care of the tree is done well.***

**Always buy bonsai from a reputable source with specific knowledge of the art and your tree species!!**

### Zenchaser Bonsai after care policy

If you purchase a tree from Zenchaser Bonsai you should bring it back at some point for future growing instructions and advice. I will inspect the growth and foliage and check any wire and give you tips on the future of the tree. If deemed necessary work will be done at a charge of \$35/hour plus material, i.e. Repotting soil, wire, pots etc. You will be shown all options before starting work. My studio is at Keller's Garden Center, 7 Kern St. Exeter Pa. 18643

I can be hired for demonstrations, private instruction or group lessons.

**Carl Achhammer Jr. Zenchaser Bonsai      zenchaserbonsai@gmail.com      570-709-3848 (call or text)**