

Schefflera (Arboricola) Hawaiian Umbrella tree

General information about the Hawaiian umbrella Bonsai tree

The Dwarf Umbrella tree is a tropical tree which is native to Australia, but it is also very common in Southeast Asia. In nature it is an evergreen shrub with thin trunks without much ramification. A characteristic feature is the shape of the compound, radially arranged leaves which sit on long petioles. Schefflera produce no hard wood and no rough bark. Wiring is not a promising technique for this species, but with constant pruning some taper and ramification can be achieved. Aerial roots can add to the character of the Dwarf Umbrella bonsai tree.

Placement

The Dwarf Umbrella Bonsai can be kept inside the house all the year round. Ideal temperatures are 18° C to 22° C / 65° F to 72° F. Schefflera Bonsai can tolerate low humidity and dim light but they grow much better and produce smaller leaves if they get much light. The temperature should not fall below 10° C / 50° F. If the windows are opened for ventilation in winter, take care that the tree is not exposed to cold draught.

Watering

The Hawaiian umbrella Bonsai likes a moist soil which can tolerate some drought. If outside in the spring summer and fall, especially the summer hot months the watering can be increased. Inside check the tree each day around the same time and if it is really wet wait a day and check again.

Fertilizing

Use liquid fertilizer from spring to autumn and once a month in winter, regarding the dosing instruction. During summer you can also use solid organic fertilizer.

Pruning and wiring

Dwarf Umbrella Bonsai trees can be developed well with thoughtful pruning. A new shoot will point in the same direction like the leaf that is located directly below the cut, growing from its axil. Very healthy trees can be defoliated and at the same time the tips of the twigs should be cut off. This results in lots of new shoots, increasing ramification and smaller leaves. The Dwarf Umbrella Tree produces no hard wood and their trunks and branches are likely to snap when you try to bend them too strongly. Younger shoots are more flexible and can be wired and shaped with less risk of breaking them.

Repotting

Repot every second year in spring or summer. Be careful with the fleshy roots which break easily. Use a standard bonsai soil mix.

Propagation

The Dwarf Umbrella Tree can be propagated from seeds and cuttings. Cuttings will root in soil or even in a glass of water.

Pests and diseases

This tree species is not often attacked by insects. Scale and mealy bug can occasionally occur. In that case use a specific to insect insecticide. I use a preventative IMF spray once a month or so. Moving air inside prevents most insects from setting in as well as a healthy tree will ward off most insects.