

Introduction- Kerri Bailey Instructor- Hello! I am a horticulturist with over 20 years' experience- part of this was working in a Bonsai Nursery for several years and attended both beginner and intermediate bonsai courses. When I teach Bonsai, I explain the traditional ways as well as the Americanized versions commonly available with the main focus on easiest of plant care techniques.

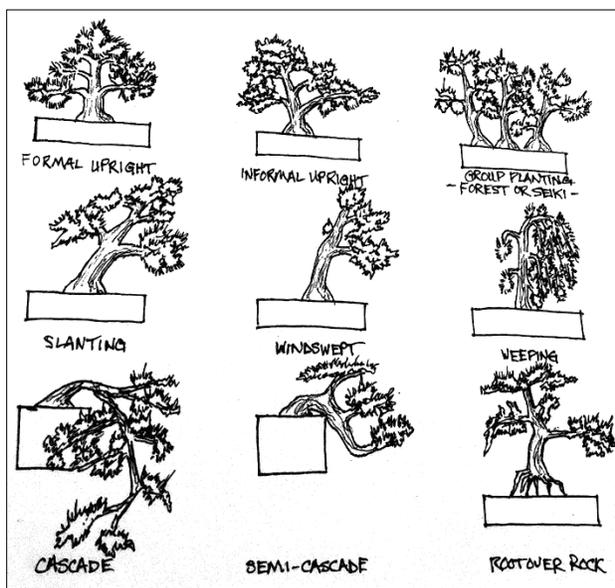
Bonsai Basics- Here are a few facts.

- **Bonsai is properly pronounced “Bone – Sigh”.** Bon=Pot Sai=Tree **Bonsai= tree in a pot.** Improperly pronounced “Bon – Zigh” which is used during battles, so it is like yelling “charge”.
- **Bonsai is ancient art** developed in China about 1000 years ago and then imported to Japan in the middle ages where it was refined and “perfected” for the different styles and classes of Bonsai. It is now practiced throughout the world. True “Traditional style” strict vs more relaxed Americanized version.
- **Bonsai is unique** as it combines technical form with horticulture knowledge. Most are Outdoor, hardy, full sized trees & shrubs that are trained to be miniaturized. Indoor need winter protection.

Bonsai 5 Main Elements- Criteria for choosing your tree and maintaining style.

1. **Dramatic character-** living art. Should have a **triangle-like shape**, usually off center. Front & Back.
2. **Rootage-** roots exposed and look gnarled with age.
3. **Trunk Apex & Taper** - Trunks should appear gnarled and scarred- may take time. Trunks have a large diameter, wider at the base-apex. Larger the apex (where trunk meets soil), the older the tree looks.
4. **Branching-** compliment the trunk lines and be in proportion to the tree’s size & scale.
5. **Small Foliage-** foliage should be small, tiny and in proportion to the tree’s size & scale.

Bonsai Styles- 5 Basic Styles with variations. Not all trees are able to do all styles.



1. **Formal Upright-** perfectly upright, trunk tapers evenly from base to apex.
2. **Informal Upright** (most popular) irregularly upright- has a bends and movement in the trunk.
3. **Slant** – trunk leans as an angle. **Windswept** - trunk leans at an angle, foliage primarily one sided. **Weeping-** branches weep downward.
4. **Cascade-** trunk has definite downward growth. **Semi-cascade** angle of trunk horizontal.
5. **Group Plantings-** Forests single or mixed species. **Saieki** or “tray or mini landscape” mixed plants & rocks, gravel.

Trees & Shrubs good for Bonsai

Conifers: Cedar, Cryptomeria, Cypress & False, Fir, Hemlock, Larch, Juniper, Pine, Spruce

Deciduous: Beech, Birch, Cherry, Crab Apple, Elm, Dogwood, Hornbeam, Maples, Styra, Zelkova

Broadleaf Evergreen: Azaleas, Boxwood, Camellia, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Pieris

Indoor: Aralia, Carissa, Ficus, Fukien Tea, Myrtle, Olive, Podocarpus, Pomegranate, Serissa

Choosing Your Pot. Bonsai Tools.

- **Generally-** Conifers are planted in unglazed pots. All other in either pot- glazed or unglazed.
- **Depth of Pot=Diameter of Trunk Apex** (flowering or fruiting plant deeper).
- **Unequal Sided Containers-** should be 1/3 the height of the tree.
- **Equal Sided Containers-** twice the diameter should equal the height of the tree.
- **Choose pot appropriate for the size of tree-** bigger, thicker pots are easier to care for.
- **Bonsai Tools-** there are many, Concave Branch Cutters, Pliers, Knob Cutters, Trimming & Leaf Cutting Scissors, Drainage Mesh, Brush, Rake, Chopsticks, Wire Cutters, Wire.
- **Bonsai Soil.** Is a chunky mixture of compost or potting soil, fine bark and pumas or lava rock.

Basic Care & Seasonal Potting

Planting: Spring- for most all Deciduous & Conifers. Summer- Indoor. Fall- Conifers. Younger trees may need to be root pruned every year or so. As the tree ages, this process is required less often. Check roots by lifting tree out of pot and examine roots. If roots are circling the soil mass then its time to root prune- cut back 25% of the outer roots, then repot using bonsai soil. Shelter for 4-5 weeks, do not over-water! Winterize in a well lite area, protect roots. Deciduous can go in garage or other cool place.

Placement: Best displayed so that the eye level is midway up the trunk. They need ample air and light. Rotate during growing season to balance growth. Know your plants requirements!

Watering & Feeding: Water when needed. The higher the tree is planted the harder it is to water. Dunking in a tub may be needed. Each tree needs may vary. Fertilize with liquid organic ½ strength weekly during growing season or add granular organic into the soil when planting.

Pests: Examine & Identify for pests regularly. Use least toxic pest control method when needed.

Basic Bonsai Procedure:

1. Examine for Rootage and Apex character. Decide height of tree- find main trunk & decide the front and back of the tree.
2. Wire the trunk then the main branches and lastly the fine branches (optional). Style the tree as desired, remove small branches and foliage near trunk.
3. Choose Pot about 1/3 – ½ the length of the tree- approximately .
4. Take tree out of the container, comb out roots, remove excess roots 1/3-1/2 or so- do not remove too much. Plant with proper soil -fill in by using chopsticks. Wire tree into the pot, mesh over holes in pot (optional). Cover with moss, gravel or plant a small leaved ground cover. Repot yearly or every other.

