



Bonsai



Definition

- The word “***Bon-sai***” is a Japanese term which literally means “**planted in a container**”
- It consists of two words
 - ✓ **Bon**: Shallow pan/pot
 - ✓ **Sai**: Plant
- The art of growing and training miniature form of plant in shallow pan/pot in their natural form is called bonsai
- Even though they're small, they have the **appearance of full-size trees growing in a forest**

- This art form is native of ancient **Chinese culture** which was later **redeveloped** and **refined** by the Japanese
- The ultimate **goal** of growing a Bonsai is to create a **miniaturized** but **realistic** representation of nature in the form of a tree
- Almost all trees can be trained and grown into bonsai through wiring, pruning (both roots and shoots), clipping etc
- There are many types and styles of bonsai (differs according to the school of thought)

The special methods (**Principle**) of bonsai cultivation includes

- Planting trees in small containers
- Starving the plants
- Limiting the space for root growth
- Training and pruning plants to make desirable shape

Category of bonsai depending upon height

- Large bonsai: > 60 cm
- Medium bonsai: 30-60 cm
- Small bonsai: 20-30 cm
- Mame bonsai: < 20 cm

- All sorts of trees and shrubs can be used for bonsai making

- In essence, any plant that can be grown in a small container can be cultivated as a bonsai

- The most popular sps are :
 - whose leaves change their color;

 - flowering trees; and

 - fruit-bearing trees, gives attractive appearance

To be a good bonsai plants should possess following characteristics

- Should be hardy
- Small leaves, short internodes
- Attractive barks and stem
- Tolerate and response severe pruning and training
- Can survive in shallow container
- Seasonal variations in growth pattern like flowering, fruiting, leaf fall etc

Styles of Bonsai

Upright or Chokkan style

- Trees in this style are grown as **single specimens** with a **straight** and **upright** trunk
- This style is the **easiest** to follow for bonsai growing beginners
- pleasing results may be obtained quite **quickly**, as some species grow naturally in this shape



Winding or Kyokkuk style:

- This style has single but **twisted trunk**
- represents the plant that has **fought for its existence** in the wild.
- The branches may also be twisted
- The twisting of the trunk, apart from being interesting to look at, has a **valuable dwarfing effect**
- can be useful if the material being trained has grown too tall and is still young and supple enough to be twisted



Oblique or Shakan style:

- Trees of this style have an oblique trunk as if they had been growing in a windswept situation;
- consequently they tend to be more heavily branched on one side than the other.



Cascade or Kengai style:

- the trunk in this style cascade over the edge of the container as if it were hanging over a rock on a mountain side
- It is important to choose a species with a relatively pliable stem



Clustered style

- several branches are allowed to grow from ground level in a clustered manner
- or several plants are grown to look like clustered
- Gives appearance of forest



Ikadi-buki style:

- trunk of a tree may be laid or trained horizontally and the branches of the upper side left to represent trees.



Clapsed to stone style:

- This method of planting gives the feeling of age and tenacity
- A single tree is usually used
- the roots are trained to cling and grow round a stone in a way similar to that often found on a windy, rocky mountain side
- The stone itself may be set in a pan of water which adds considerably to the ‘picture’



Gnarled or Hankan style

- This style is somewhat similar to the previous one (winding style)
- but the trunk grows closer to the soil and is knobbly and gnarled rather than merely twisted.
- This would represent a tree that has grown slowly in unfavorable conditions such as a poor and shallow soil in a windswept situation

Management Practices

Before establishment

– Plant selection

- Plants may be raised by seeds, cuttings, layering etc but should possess the characters that is suitable for bonsai making
- Also depends upon the choice owner

– Potting Media

- High organic matter, neutral soil, high water holding capacity but not water logged,
- 1 parts of soil: 1 parts of sand :1 parts of well decomposed FYM

– Container

- Depends upon personal choice of grower and styles of bonsai
- Cascade and Ikadi-buki style looks better in rectangular bonsai
- Shallow pot with drainage hole at the bottom



Bonsai containers

– **Planting**

- Straight bonsai should be planted at the center, Cascade, Ikadibuki in in one side
- Put small pebbles around the plant

– **Pruning**

- Light pruning should be done

– **Irrigation**

- Light irrigation immediately after planting and keep in shade

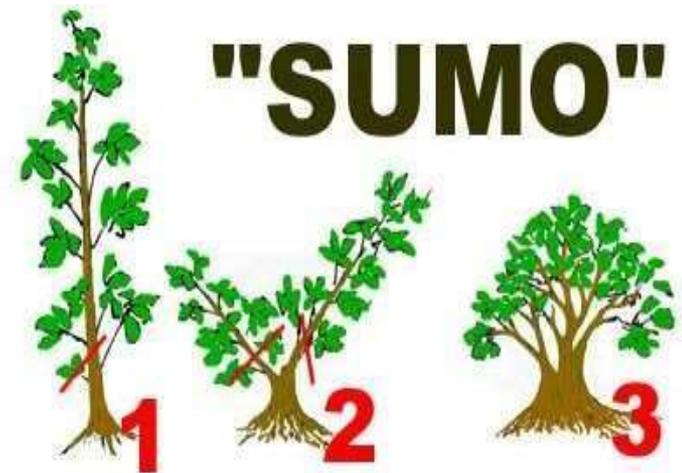
After establishment

– Training

- Done as early as possible but there should not be any damage to barks of trees
- Wiring is also done for training of plants to desirable shape

– Pruning (both root and shoot)

- one of the methods to keep the plant dwarf i.e. shoot pinching, leaf pinching and removal, root pruning etc
- Judicious pruning





Wiring in Bonsai

– **Irrigation**

- Plants grow with little media in shallow container
- Depends upon types of plants, season
- Irrigate regularly in winter once in week, in extreme summer multiple irrigation in a days also necessary
- Sponging, spraying of water is also done

– **Manuring and fertilization**

- Done twice a year
- First in spring and during rainy season

– **Repotting**

- Depends on pot size and type of plants grown
- After pot bound
- Fast growing sps: repotting every year
- Slow growing sps: two or three years



Repotting of bonsai



Common plants suitable for Bonsai

- Bougainvillea, Ipil ipil
- Pine, Maple
- Juniper, Champ
- Bar, Citrus
- Peepal, Sami
- Kabro, Gauva
- Camellia, Jamun
- Jacaranda, Camphor

Tools required for Bonsai Making

- A set of gloves
- Dusting brush
- Copper or aluminum wire
- Secateurs
- Wire cutter
- Watering can
- Saw
- Shallow pot

Source of materials for Bonsai

- Seeds
- Layering
- Grafting
- Wild plants
- Cuttings

Appreciation of Bonsai

- Roots
- Foliage
- Branches
- Symmetry
- Balance
- Container
- Colour

Starting a Bonsai

Make arrangement for:

- Container (all type of shapes, 4-5 cm depth)
- Media (4:1, loam soil and sand with small quantity of manure.
- Plants (Woody perennial)

Making Bonsai (Step by Step guide)

- Take a container wash it (pre soak if clay pot) and fill it with media; add media 1 cm below the brim.
- Cut the polythene bag and gently take out the plant.
- Retain only 1/3rd of the tap root and give a V cut.
- Make a hole in the pre-filled container and place the plant.

Making Bonsai....

- Place the plant as per the style.
- Slowly pour water, and do so until water drains away from the drainage hole.
- If the plant changes its position, readjust to its original shape.
- Place the plant in a shady location for 2-3 weeks.

Making Bonsai:

- Some plant may drop the older leaves, do not panic.
- Emergence of new vegetative buds signals shift to lighted area.

You can watch this amazing youtube video