

Background

Bonsai (pronounced “bone-sigh”) is a Japanese term meaning a “plant in a shallow tray”. Bonsai are thought to have originated several thousand years ago when travelers decided to artistically trim the medicinal herb plants they were carrying. The Japanese art form was adopted from the Chinese approximately a thousand years ago. Bonsai is the art of re-creating nature in an idealized, miniature form.



The Inland Empire Bonsai Society (IEBS) has been growing yearly since 1993 when it started as a study group. Bonsai enthusiasts of all ages, from throughout the Inland Empire, meet for monthly meetings and additional events to share their knowledge, questions, and enthusiasm for bonsai. Our programs strive to engage everyone from beginners to those who have studied the art for years.

Bonsai Care

Bonsai are not difficult to care for, but since they are living, growing plants, they require light, water, air, and styling.

Light – All plants require light to live and most require far brighter light than is found in our houses. The best light is outside, but a bright, south-facing window is adequate for some of the tropical and subtropical species that grow in the under canopy in nature.

Winter Care – Most trees grown as bonsai are temperate species such as junipers, maples, elms, and pines that require a period of cold weather and rest every year to thrive. There are several good ways to provide the cold exposure but protect from the coldest temperatures. The easiest for most temperate trees is with the pot buried in the ground with a layer of mulch on the surface in a spot sheltered from the wind.

Water – Because of their small pots, most bonsai need to be watered more frequently than other plants. Generally, they should be watered when the soil just starts to get dry. In hot weather they often require daily watering.

Air – Good air circulation helps keep bonsai healthy by making it harder for diseases and harmful insects to become established.

Soil – Bonsai are generally grown in well-draining soils to avoid root rot due to overly wet conditions in the small, shallow pots. Most practitioners use lava, pumice, and akadama particles that are 1/16” (1.6 mm) to 1/4” (6.4 mm) across and rarely include garden or potting soil.

Trimming – Bonsai must be trimmed to maintain their pleasing shape. However, if sheared like a hedge, they will lose their health. Instead, outer branches are selectively trimmed to allow the growth of branches from the interior.

Repotting – Bonsai are repotted every one to five years to renew the soil and their health. This requires removal of much of the soil – an amount that will depend upon the species and health of the tree as well as the growing conditions.

Wiring – Wire is often used to direct the growth of branches. It should be cut off the branch before it cuts in and creates scars that spoil the appearance of the tree.

The best source of further information on these and other bonsai care topics is your local club since the members are growing trees in the same climate. Please visit an IEBS event to learn more and to share your experiences.

IEBS Programs and Events

The IEBS meets regularly on the third Sunday of nearly every month except for August at the Manito Park Meeting Room next to the Conservatory at 4 W. 21st Ave. Spokane, WA. The meeting runs from noon until between 2:30 and 3:00 pm. In July we hold a Show and Sale instead of the meeting. Please consult the website for any schedule changes.

We hold a short informational meeting and then an educational program. The educational program is split into two parts – a discussion/demonstration of a fundamental bonsai topic and then a discussion of trees brought in for comment that often includes some hands-on work to develop and refine our trees. There is often a seasonal theme to each meeting, but you are free to bring any tree to show, discuss, solicit advice upon, or work on.

We display our bonsai as a club at community events throughout the year to expose the public to the art.

We have an extensive library of books and magazines that can be checked out by members.

Inland Empire Bonsai Society

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www.inlandbonsai.com
Facebook @ Inland Empire
Bonsai Society - Spokane



Recommended Websites

Bonsai Mirai
www.bonsaimirai.com

Crataegus Bonsai
www.crataegus.com

American Bonsai Society
www.absbonsai.org

National Bonsai Federation
www.bonsai-nbf.org

Bonsai Clubs International
www.bonsai-bci.com

Bonsai Tonight
<https://bonsaitonight.com>



Bonsai

Bonsai is the art and science of growing artistically-styled trees and woody plants in pots. The Inland Empire Bonsai Society invites you to learn more about this fascinating hobby.

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