

Bonsai care instructions

Northern Kentucky | 859 525 8729

Reminiscent's general guidance for tropical and hardy bonsai in Northern Kentucky. Ask us how these instructions apply to your particular species, pot and growing conditions.

General nursery instructions, not a species specific care plan. Ask us before changing winter storage or repotting conditions.

General watering guidance

The nursery sheet recommends daily watering while trees are outdoors during spring, summer and fall, March 20 through December 21. Outdoor placement also depends on temperature and the tree's hardiness.

For tropical bonsai indoors during winter, the sheet recommends watering 2 to 3 times a week, depending on the dryness of indoor heat. For hardy bonsai in winter cold storage, it recommends watering every 10 to 14 days.

Pick up the bonsai and feel its weight. The sheet uses weight as the indicator of moisture and saturation.

Tropical bonsai: light and winter placement

For tropical bonsai described in the sheet as growing zones 8 through 11, use a sunny window indoors and keep temperatures at least 60°F during winter.

Bring tropical bonsai indoors when nighttime temperatures drop below 50°F. Do not put them outdoors in late spring until nighttime temperatures remain above 50°F.

To supplement indoor light, the sheet recommends LED full spectrum daylight bulbs rated 5,000 Kelvin or higher.

The sheet recommends morning sun and afternoon shade outdoors from March through mid October, depending on temperature. For tropical trees, the nighttime temperature requirement above takes priority.

Hardy bonsai: winter storage

For hardy bonsai described in the sheet as growing zones 2 through 7, including deciduous trees and conifers, the sheet says they should freeze during winter and remain frozen in storage.

The nursery's usual storage timing is late November or early December, after freezing conditions. During a warm fall, the sheet advises waiting until the third week of December.

The sheet describes heeling trees into the ground, using cold frames, or using a garage area that freezes. It recommends protection from extreme nighttime temperatures below 10°F.

After winter repotting, different protection is required. See the repotting section below.

Watering, repotting and nursery services

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Watering and humidity trays

Use the plant's original weight on the day of purchase as a reference. At home, check the weight with a kitchen or bathroom scale, depending on the tree's size.

The sheet advises against watering from the bottom or leaving bonsai standing in water in a deep humidity tray, with a few exceptions. Standing water can rot roots.

Indoors, a shallow humidity tray can protect the surface beneath the plant and create a slightly moist condition around it.

Restoring the tree's true weight

If the tree dries until it feels light, place it in an empty sink and insert the stopper.

Fill the sink until water reaches no more than three quarters of the outside of the bonsai pot. Never cover the top of the pot.

Turn off the water, wait 5 minutes, then remove the stopper and drain the sink.

Leave the bonsai in the empty sink for 20 minutes to drain. Weigh it again to establish its true weight.

Repotting

For tropical bonsai, the sheet recommends repotting every 5 to 7 years, during summer, with temperatures of at least 80°F for 6 weeks afterward.

For hardy bonsai, it recommends repotting every 3 to 5 years during winter, once the tree is completely dormant.

After repotting a hardy bonsai, the sheet says it must no longer freeze. Keep it in the mid 30s°F.

Ask the nursery about timing and protection for your species before repotting.

Fertilizing

The nursery recommends Jack's Classicote Granular Fertilizer and Japanese Biogold Organic Fertilizer for bonsai.

Tree sitting and sales policy

Ask about the nursery's tree sitting services if you are leaving town.

Due to the sensitive nature of bonsai, all bonsai sales are final.