



BONSAI VILLAGE™

Grow your own Authentic Bonsai Garden

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Growing and Care Instructions



Introduction

Trees have been highly valued by humans since the beginning of time. In fact, the word “paradise” is derived from the Persian word “pardes,” which translates to “a park planted with trees.” Some research has even shown that patients heal more quickly when they have a view of trees.

Now a little piece of paradise can be yours when you grow your own Bonsai Village with a variety of trees and undergrowth shrubs. This complete kit comes with everything you need including complete care and plant information.

The best bonsai are grown from seed because there is no trace left on the plant of the cultivation methods used to train it into its final shape. Often, tree and shrub seeds need to undergo some sort of cooling period or stratification process in order to sprout, but the seeds contained in your Bonsai Village do not. They are quick to sprout with only water and sunlight!

This deluxe mix of bonsai contains Elm, Lilac, Pea Shrub, Beauty Bush, and Butterfly Bush. Complete your serene scene with thoughtfully-placed boulders, Buddha statue, and gravel paths.

Contents

- Five color seed packets—Siberian Elm, Beauty Bush, Butterfly Bush, Peking Lilac, and Siberian Pea Shrub
- Bonsai planting mixture
- Three bonsai decals
- Five bonsai plant stakes
- Natural path gravel
- Meditation stones
- Buddha figurine
- Sprouting and growing terrarium
- Perlite drainage pellets
- Growing and care instructions

Plant Information

Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*)

These trees are perfect for the bonsai garden as they grow quickly and display interesting shape, bark, and foliage including dark green, oval, toothed leaves. They can have a shrubby or treelike shape and can spread up to 50 feet in their natural environment. These trees are prized for growing in a variety of conditions and soils, though they prefer full sun and well drained soil. Many Siberian Elms were able to survive the Dutch Elm disease.



Peking Lilac (*Syringa pekinensis*)

This is a shrub that typically blooms in the summer with fragrant, tubular flowers. Be sure to remove flowers after they have bloomed. Also, remove any weak branches in the fall to maintain its shape. If you cut back the whole shrub in the fall, you may not have as many blooms the following year.



Siberian Pea Shrub (*Caragana arborescens*)



In nature, these plants grow into tall shrubs or small trees with spine-tipped leaves made up of 8 to 12 oval leaflets. In the spring, yellow, showy flowers shaped like peas will bloom, giving this shrub its name. These plants are native to the wastelands of Siberia and, consequently, can tolerate almost any condition. However, they will do best in full sun with well drained soil. The plant grows easily and quickly and will respond well to pruning. Siberian Pea Shrubs are not readily available in most garden centers, but can be found at some specialty nurseries.

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*)

This abundantly-blooming shrub is also known as a summer lilac. This fast-growing plant will flower lilac- and purple-colored, honey-scented flowers in its first year, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies. It is a favorite and can be seen growing in many neighborhoods. The very fine seeds should be scattered directly on the surface of the soil as they require light to germinate. They will germinate in one to two weeks. Butterfly Bushes respond well to pruning, which will enhance the flowering of this shrub; they should be pruned in the spring before flowering. They can grow in almost any soil, but prefer well drained soil and full sun.



Beauty Bush (*Kolwitzia amabilis*)



This arching shrub, similar to Weigela, has dark oval leaves and interesting, peeling bark. It derives its name from the profuse showing of bell-shaped flowers. The Beauty Bush prefers full sun and well drained soil and responds well to pruning. It is easy to grow and blooms in late spring and early summer.

Planting Instructions

Growing your garden is easy and rewarding if you follow the simple steps outlined below.

- For best results, plan your garden on paper before actually planting it. Here are some ideas to help add interest:
 - Form mounds with the soil and plant seeds on top.
 - Make paths by pressing indentations into the soil and filling with decorative gravel.
 - Place the plants in groupings or mix them all together. You can make several large groupings or many small ones.
- Apply decals to the base of the dome.
- Pour about an inch of perlite in the bottom of the planting container for drainage.
- Massage the bag of soil, open, and pour to fill the bottom of the planting base.
- Mix in one to two cups of water and mix with soil until it is thoroughly moist.
- Form paths, mounds, and place stones before planting seeds.
- Place your seeds on top of the soil and press them in. Here are some planting tips:
 - When planting seeds, place them a third to a half inch apart; planting them too close together will cause them to crowd each other out.
 - Don't plant all the seeds at once. Plant what you need, and save the rest in case you must replant; enough seeds are included to replant at least one time.
 - Be sure to review the content on the seed packet for additional information
- Sprinkle about a half cup of water on top of the seeds.
- Add decorative components and stakes.
- Place in a windowsill or near a window with an eastern or southern exposure and in a place where it cannot be easily knocked over.
- Your seeds will germinate in one to two weeks.
- Feel free to find your own miniature treasures to add.
- Retain these instructions for further use.

Care Instructions

Plants will naturally conform to their environments. In a terrarium, your plants will bonsai naturally with little direction from you.

Watering

- Your terrarium will only need water every one to three months when the top is on. You can tell the relative moisture by the weight of the container. Even if you see moisture forming inside the lid of the container, the terrarium may still need water.
- If you over-water the terrarium, tip it gently to pour out the extra water, leave the top off, and place it in an area with a southern exposure until desired moisture level is reached.
- Your growing mixture is inert and contains no fertilizer. You may fertilize your terrarium in the spring and summer with a water-soluble houseplant food or time-release pellets. Your plants prefer to be fertilized during the spring and summer.

- When you water your plants, sprinkle the water over the foliage to rinse the leaves.

Location

- Your plants like bright light. Be sure to rotate your dome a quarter turn to encourage even growth. The best location for your terrarium is on a windowsill with an eastern exposure. Be sure the window is not drafty.
- Your plants prefer to be in a cooler room. Many plants will wilt in direct, hot afternoon sun.
- Your plants will naturally reach toward the light, so rotate your greenhouse every week. If they are stretching too much, they may need more light.
- Do not place your terrarium close to a heating or cooling vent.
- Do not place your terrarium outside in the hot sun. The temperature inside the terrarium will rise to levels that are not safe for the plants. You may place it outdoors in the shade and when it is below 80 degrees (26° Celsius).
- Your terrarium is sensitive to temperature and should be in a room that is between 60 degrees (15° Celsius) and 85 degrees (29° Celsius).
- A common problem with terrariums is that they are easily knocked over. Keep this in mind as you choose the location for your windowsill greenhouse.

Other Notes

- If mold forms, remove it with a twig or water the greenhouse with a 1:50 mix of hydrogen peroxide to water (one capful of hydrogen peroxide to seven ounces of water). This will kill the mold but not the plants.
- If you remove the top to allow the plants to grow larger, be sure to check the moisture level every few days.
- If a particular plant is overgrowing the rest, feel free to trim it back.
- You can trim your plants back if they are growing too wide or tall, or you would just prefer them bushier. It is important to cut them above a set of leaves and to water afterward, as pruning can be a shock to some plants. This will help keep them small and bushy.
- It is okay to let the plants bloom, but keep the plants from going dormant by trimming off any seed pods before seeds form.
- You can transplant your plants into other containers. Be sure to water first, and remove as big of a ball of soil around the roots as you can. To replant, make sure the soil in the new container is moist, place the soil ball into a pre-dug hole, and water thoroughly.
- Your plants like fresh air. Be sure to remove the top after they sprout or frequently if left on. This will reduce the chance of mold growing.

What is Bonsai

The word bonsai (pronounced "bone-sigh") means "a potted tree." Bonsai began in China, but the Japanese turned it into an art form by pruning and wiring the miniature trees to control their shape and size. The art of bonsai is the creation of a living and growing work of art in miniature.

Your Bonsai Village is designed to grow a forest of trees. It is, essentially, a group of trees planted together to give the illusion of a forest. In the art of bonsai, this style is called a "group style," or "family style," with each tree growing to a different height, its branches forming a triangle shape.

Care and Feeding

Water, fertilizer, and sunlight are the **three biggest keys to your success**.

Placement of your Bonsai Village

The morning sun is the most beneficial for the bonsai tree. Remember that your bonsai village is a work of art and should be displayed just as you would a clay or bronze sculpture.

Watering your Bonsai

Depending on the climate, the trees will require water at least once a day in the summer months if you leave them outside uncovered. If you leave the top on, your garden will only need water once every six to eight weeks. **Push your finger into the soil about 3/4 to 1 inch deep.** If the soil sticks to your finger and is damp to the touch, your garden does not need watering; if your finger is dry and soil is not stuck to it, it does need water. The best time to water is early morning and late evening. **DO NOT** water in the heat of afternoon, unless absolutely necessary. If you have to water in the afternoon, be extra careful not to get the needles or leaves wet. If you have city water that is treated, let this water sit overnight to allow chlorine and other chemicals to evaporate.

Fertilizing your Bonsai

The best fertilizer for beginners is a **slow-released fertilizer** that can be sprinkled into or placed on top of the soil.

When to Repot Your Bonsai

Repotting should be done in late fall or early spring every two to three years as needed.

Bonsai Soil

- A good bonsai soil mix is:
- 1/4 sand
 - 1/4 peat moss
 - 1/4 dirt

- 1/4 small stones or pebbles

Pruning and Shaping

One goal of bonsai art is to make a tree look old, even if it is not. One way to accomplish this is to change the angle of the tree's branches. The branches on old trees hang down toward the ground; only young trees have branches that point toward the sky. The front of a bonsai tree should look like it's bowing its head or top toward you.

- The process of pruning is one of the main keys in restricting the keeping the bonsai's growth.
- You should have 2/3 leaves to 1/3 trunk.
- The branches should form a triangle shape, with the lower branches long and thick and the top ones shorter and thinner.
- The space between the branches should get closer together as you go up the tree towards the top.
- Bar branches are two opposite branches that are straight across from each other
- When cutting the smaller branches, always cut so that a bud is still remaining on the branch.
- When removing a large branch, make sure it is cut off close to the trunk. The ideal cut is slightly concave. As the wound heals, the trunk will have a smoother look without any bumps.

Wiring Techniques

Wiring enables you to shape and move the branches into their new positions, just as an orthodontist wires teeth with braces. You must leave the wire on the bonsai for one growing season. Keep a close watch on the small branches while your tree is wired, as they will increase in thickness much faster than the larger branches. If a wire cuts into the branch, remove the wire; rewire the branch if necessary. Imagine there is a piece of paper between the wire and your branch as you apply your wire. Always run your wires in the **same direction** (parallel), and **DO NOT CROSS** your wires. How a bonsai looks is very important.

You can use copper (annealed) wire, aluminum (anodized) wire, or any other wire you have available. In Japan they use copper or aluminum wire because of its dark color, which blends in with the color of the tree's trunk.

Over-Wintering Bonsai

These trees need to go to sleep (or dormant) in the winter for at least 3 to 4 months. And they need to get below 40 degrees F in the winter to survive. Bonsai trees should survive most winters, but it is best to give them some protection from heavy snow and dry winter winds. Heavy snow could build up and break the branches, and wind tends to dry out the trees. If you have many outdoor bonsai, you may want to winter them in an unheated room or garage in as much light as possible.

Bonsai Decorating Secrets



- You can dress up one of your finished bonsai trees with the use of some small accent plants.
- You can also use rocks and pebbles to accent your bonsai.
- Adding moss around the base of your bonsai tree will give the illusion of a very old tree. It also dresses up the appearance of your tree. Gently place moss around the exposed roots and the base.

Special thanks to 2nd Generation Bonsai Master, Frank J. Mihalic, for contributing to the instructions for the Bonsai Village. He is also the author of the book *Bonsai for Kids*. (available in many different languages) Please visit his web site at www.bonsaionlinemagazine.com or www.bonsaiforkids.com

Customer Service

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This garden is dedicated to Laura Todd, for her constant inspiration, intelligent insight, undying dedication, and making DuneCraft possible.

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