

## Barbados Cherry Bonsai Care from BonsaiOutlet.com

### General Information:

The name, Malpighia, is used to honor Marcello Malpighia (1628 1693). He was a distinguished naturalist at Bologna, Italy. Barbados Cherry are related to Singapore Holly and Surinam cherry. It displays weeping branches of ovate pointed leaves. Open, pink flowers and red fruit. There are three varieties of malpighia which are used as bonsai subjects. Each has unique characteristics. In their native tropical American environment, they may be found in the under story of tropical forests or on rocky hill sides near streams where the soil is rich and moist. Plants may be obtained by collecting during the summer months, but can also be purchased from a nursery or started from seed, hard or soft wood cuttings or root cuttings taken in the summer.

### Lighting:

Five hours of sunlight in the morning during the winter is ideal and in the summer they can have filtered sun or shade. If growing them under fluorescent lights, they require 14-16 hours of light a day.

### Temperature:

Malpighias are sub-tropical, so temperature below 40 degrees may damage the leaves and freezing will kill the bonsai. To set flower buds, the night temperatures must be above 60 degrees.

### Watering:

Do not let a malpighia completely dry-out. However, over watering causes yellow leaves, and so does too much sun. And, water on the blooms ruins them.

### Fertilizing:

Fertilize once a month with a weak solution of fish emulsion or Joebonsai water soluble fertilizer. Just before a flower show or exhibition, it may be fertilized more frequently. Malpighias are not salt tolerant.

**Pruning:**

Limb structure may be difficult to develop on *Malpighia coccigera* as they continue to produce growth all along the trunk. The clip and grow method (allowing desirable twigs to grow overly long before pruning back) works well. Keep unwanted growth rubbed off or pinched back. *Malpighia pendiculata* does not bud back easily on old wood. Regular pinching is necessary.

**Propagation:**

Cuttings, layering. Repotting: They prefer a slightly acid (pH 5.5 to 6.5) rich, moist but porous, well drained soil, Peat moss, garden soil, leaf mold and sharp sand in equal amounts is a good soil mix. The soil should be pasteurized as malpighias are highly subject to nematodes.

**Insects and Diseases:**

Watch for aphids, spider mites, and scale.

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