

Chinese Yew Bonsai Care from BonsaiOutlet.com

General Information:

Chinese Yews are great Bonsai trees for beginners and pros alike. They are adaptable and grow well in any environment. Chinese Yews have dark green foliage with a compact branching habit that makes a very dense Bonsai tree when placed in full sun. Placed in shadier spots, your Bonsai will be more open yet attractively dense. Old Podocarpus Bonsai are impressive with their stately elegance. Although trunk and bark formation takes a few years, Podocarpus growth varies with climate - slow-growing indoors and in cooler temperature, fast-growing in sunny areas.

Location:

Chinese Yew can be kept in shade or partial sun, preferring direct sunlight. Too little light will result in large, elongated needles. In sun-intense areas, Podocarpus may suffer leaf-burn if not given shade during the hottest part of the day. Though the Podocarpus is quite hardy and will survive a light frost, it should be kept at temperatures above 55° F. In winter, your Chinese Yew can be grown indoors in a well-lit position where temperatures range between 61° and 68° F.

Watering:

The more sunlight and warmth your Bonsai receives, the more often it will need water. More Bonsai die due to improper watering than any other cause. Podocarpus likes slightly moist soil with adequate drainage. Gray needles are a sign of over-watering. Check your Bonsai daily by sticking your finger into the soil. Do not water the tree if the soil is damp or cool. Bonsai generally need to be watered every couple of days, but there is no set schedule. When the topsoil feels dry, water thoroughly and deeply. An old Bonsai watering trick is to place the entire pot in a sink of water an inch or two deep. Let the water absorb from the holes in the bottom of the pot. An inexpensive moisture meter takes the guesswork out of watering. We sell them.

Misting:

Leaves want humidity to keep them green and healthy. Any time your tree is inside, the air is very dry. Mist often during the day. Avoid putting your Bonsai near a draft or vent, which dries out the foliage. A humidity tray is a great way to increase humidity. These

shallow trays filled with small stones have water in the bottom of the tray. Make sure the water does not reach the bottom of the Bonsai pot. As the water evaporates, it creates a moister environment.

Fertilizing:

Fertilizing a Bonsai is essential to its health because nutrients in the soil are washed away with each watering. Fertilizer is like vitamins and minerals for a plant. Peters 20-20-20, fish emulsion and fertilizer cakes are recommended. For indoor growers who can't take the fishy smell, liquid bonsai fertilizer can be used applied every two weeks in warm weather, every six in winter. Podocarpus likes slightly acid soil, so a dose of Miracid several times a year is helpful. These plants need additional iron and magnesium; iron is partially supplied by the Miracid. In addition, apply a dose of chelated iron twice yearly. To prevent magnesium deficiency, use 2-3 applications of Epsom Salts (1 Tbsp. per gallon of water) a year. Water your tree BEFORE fertilizing. DO NOT FERTILIZE A WEAK OR FRESHLY REPOTTED TREE! This will cause stress to the tree by burning the roots.

Pruning:

To keep a Bonsai miniature, it needs to be trimmed and pruned as new growth appears. Never remove all the new growth at one time. Shape is determined by the overall look that you want to achieve. Sit at eye level with your Bonsai tree and use Bonsai trimming shears. Young Podocarpus plants have a tendency to grow straight up, with no side branching. This is easily remedied by cutting them back hard, which will result in aggressive back budding. Pinch back new growth as necessary, and remove oversized needles. If half of the bud is pinched away, back budding is stimulated, and leaf reduction will occur. Cutting the leaves will result only in brown edges; smaller replacement leaves will not necessarily form. Your cuts should be smooth or slightly concave so the wound will heal quickly. If the cut surface is brown, add pruning paint to the surface.

Wiring:

Good wiring techniques are used to train Bonsai trees into different shapes and styles. Wire young wood to shape for 2-3 months, being careful to watch for any signs the wire is beginning to cut into the bark. Green wood may be wired loosely. Old Podocarpus wood becomes very rigid and is difficult to bend. Use the thinnest training wire that will hold the branch in the desired position. DO NOT WIRE A BONSAI JUST AFTER

REPOTTING. Wind the training wire in the direction the branch is bent in order to keep the wire from loosening. Wrapping the wire too tightly will cause scarring. Wrap just tight enough to get the job done. Begin at the base of the Bonsai tree and slowly wrap the wire around the trunk to anchor. Continue along the branch you wish to train. Repeat the process as needed. After about 6 weeks, the branch should be able to maintain the shape on it's own, and the wire can be removed. Cut the wire carefully from the branch. **DO NOT UNWIND WIRES.** This could cause the branch to break.

Repotting:

A Bonsai should be repotted periodically to supply the plant with fresh soil. When the roots can be seen growing out the sides of the Bonsai container...it's time. Because the Podocarpus grows very slowly, this occurs every 3-4 years. Roots should only be pruned by 10-15% during the reporting procedure. Repot in early spring, watering thoroughly afterwards. **DO NOT FERTILIZE FOR 3-4 WEEKS.**

Insects and Diseases:

Pests such as scale, mealy bugs and sooty mold are common Podocarpus pests. They are also susceptible to root rot on soils with poor drainage. These can be attacked with the use of insecticides and fungicides in the form of sprays, soapy rinses, or systemic poisons. Spraying your Bonsai once every month or two with a non-toxic insect spray is recommended. Soaps should be rinsed of the next day. **DO NOT SPRAY WHEN SOIL IS DRY.**

Scale is the most common insect that attacks a Bonsai. Scale is usually identified by brown or black bumps on the branches. These bumps contain insects under a protective waxy shell. A very sticky secretion that discolors the branches may also be present.

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