



## Serving the Colorado Springs, CO Area since 1987

*Bonsai* are artistically trained healthy and dwarfed trees or other woody perennials growing in relatively shallow containers. (Pronounced as “bone-sigh,” the term literally means “tray planted.”) Primarily living outdoors and requiring their caretakers to provide them with water, nutrients and protection when needed, these never-finished “slow sculptures” resemble full-grown specimens that have been shaped by the elements over the course of many years. They can remind us of our relationship to nature and help us appreciate the giants in our yards, neighborhoods, and forests.

Most likely originating in China two millennia ago with input from India, this gardening art was greatly developed along certain lines by the Japanese over several centuries before being introduced to the rest of the world within the past 150 years or so. Other unique lines were developed in Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. Our interest in this is shared by enthusiasts either on their own or associated with at least eight hundred clubs in over ninety countries and territories. Over a thousand books have been written about this art in twenty-six languages.

Confining the root ball of the tree in an aesthetically designed and complementary container which has bottom drainage holes limits to some extent how vigorously the plant will grow. (One teacher once described the right container as the equivalent of choosing the right frame for a painting.) The occasional pinching of buds, seasonal pruning and wiring of branches and trunk is done to shape and direct growth, keeping the top in balance with the roots. Enough water, fertilizer, sunlight, and fresh air are given to maintain good health but not promote excessive growth. A well-draining, coarse soil mix made up of *at least* 50% pea gravel/grit/Turface is the best medium here. The requirements and growth habits of each species are always kept in mind for the trees' health.

A number of recognized styles can be used, depending on the type of tree: formal upright, informal upright, cascade, windswept, broom-shape, root-over-rock, weeping, literati/abstract, etc. The composition can have one or more trees and, ideally, can lead one's imagination and memory to travel through a magical miniature landscape.

*Saikei* (“sigh-kay”) and *penjing* (“pen-jing”) involve creating miniature landscapes in varying sizes with emphasis on proportion and landscape features. Multiple or single trees are used with choices of rocks, mosses, grasses, or water to simulate a landscape view. Small porcelain figures of people, animals, buildings, or the like are less commonly added to provide visual scale and theme. The trees used in these plantings can be younger and less developed than those trees displayed individually.

Untrained or partly-trained nursery container stock, landscape-dug or mountain-collected (with permits) specimens are the principle sources of material which we use in the Colorado Springs area. Other important sources are branch or root cuttings, air-layering, or grafting. Starting from seeds can be done, but usually it is just for educational purposes – not to get a bonsai in a reasonable amount of time.

One final sub-art is the collecting of either *suiseki* (“sway-seh-key”) or Chinese scholar stones. The former are dense, dark stones sometimes with lighter-colored inclusions and they resemble distant mountains, islands, or animal shapes; the latter can be lighter-colored rocks, often with numerous holes and cavities. Sometimes both kinds are displayed on custom-made bases to better show these mineral landscapes.

With proper care, the right tree chosen for one's particular location, and a little constant work over a period of time, bonsai can be successfully grown and enjoyed long-term by almost anyone.

We share this hobby/art for the camaraderie, the knowledge, the challenge, the creativity and recreation.

## TREES AS OUTDOOR BONSAI HERE

### Evergreen:

Boxwood ( <i>Buxus</i> sp.)	Colorado blue spruce ( <i>Picea pungens</i> )
False cypress ( <i>Chamaecyparis</i> sp.)	Rocky Mountain bristlecone pine ( <i>Pinus aristata</i> )
San José juniper ( <i>Juniperus chinensis</i> 'San Jose')	Japanese five-needle or white pine ( <i>Pinus parviflora</i> )
Shimpaku/Sargent's Juniper – ( <i>J. chinensis sargentii</i> )	Ponderosa pine ( <i>Pinus ponderosa</i> )
One-seed juniper ( <i>Juniperus monosperma</i> )	Japanese black pine ( <i>Pinus thunbergii</i> )
Rocky Mountain juniper ( <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> )	Yew podocarpus ( <i>Podocarpus macrophyllus</i> )
Eastern juniper / Red cedar ( <i>Juniperus virginiana</i> )	Douglas-fir ( <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> )
Engleman spruce ( <i>Picea englemannii</i> )	Firethorn ( <i>Pyracantha</i> sp.)
Dwarf Alberta spruce ( <i>Picea glauca</i> 'Conica')	Yew ( <i>Taxus</i> sp.)

### Deciduous:

Trident maple ( <i>Acer buergerianum</i> )	Apple ( <i>Malus</i> sp.)
Amur maple ( <i>Acer ginnala</i> )	Mulberry ( <i>Morus alba</i> )
Japanese red maple ( <i>Acer palmatum</i> )	Aspen ( <i>Populus tremuloides</i> )
River birch ( <i>Betula nigra</i> )	Potentilla ( <i>Potentilla</i> sp.)
Boxwood ( <i>Buxus</i> sp.)	Live oak ( <i>Quercus</i> sp.)
Buttonwood ( <i>Conocarpus erectus</i> )	Lilac ( <i>Syringa</i> sp.)
American larch ( <i>Larix laricina</i> )	Siberian elm ( <i>Ulmus pumila</i> )

## TREES AS INDOOR BONSAI HERE

Particular varieties that can *tolerate* the temperature and humidity of indoor conditions, but which still *demand* LIGHT, good air circulation, and very good soil mix drainage in order to be healthy and to thrive. LIGHT is the key, LIGHT is the main course; fertilizer is only a supplement. Small-leaf or needle-leaf varieties indoors usually cannot get enough light for photosynthesis. Use either bigger-leaf varieties and/or more natural and artificial light: fluorescent bulbs (T-8's are energy-efficient also) can be put closer to the plants than heat-emitting incandescents can. South and west-facing windows are better than northern exposures; garden window boxes and skylights are very helpful. Occasional outdoors warm-weather, wind-protected, and partial sun-screened sessions for some indoor plants are appreciated by them -- just be sure to monitor their need then for additional water. Tropicals brought outside on occasion need to be kept inside when outdoor nightly temperatures are consistently below 60°F.

Norfolk Island pine ( <i>Araucaria heterophylla</i> )	Scented-leaf geranium ( <i>Pelargonium</i> sp.)
Bougainvillea ( <i>Bougainvillea</i> sp.)	Brazilian rain tree ( <i>Pithecellobium tortum</i> )
Jade tree ( <i>Crassula argentea</i> )	Ming aralia ( <i>Polyscias fruticosa</i> )
Texas ebony ( <i>Ebenopsis ebano</i> , formerly <i>Pithecolobium flexicuale</i> )	Dwarf jade / Elephant's food ( <i>Portulacaria afra</i> )
Fukien tea ( <i>Ehretia buxifolia</i> , aka <i>Carmona microphylla</i> )	Dwarf pomegranate ( <i>Punica granatum</i> 'Nana')
Jaboticaba ( <i>Eugenia cauliflora</i> )	Azalea ( <i>Rhododendron</i> sp.)
Weeping fig ( <i>Ficus benjamina</i> )	Rosemary ( <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> )
Narrow-leaf fig ( <i>Ficus neriifolia</i> , aka <i>F. salicifolia</i> )	Dwarf schefflera ( <i>Schefflera arboricola</i> )
<i>Ficus retusa</i> (aka <i>F. microcarpa nitida</i> )	Tree of a Thousand Stars ( <i>Serissa foetida</i> )
English ivy ( <i>Hedera helix</i> )	Catlin elm ( <i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> var. <i>Catlin</i> )
Orange jasmine ( <i>Murraya exotica</i> )	Zelkova / Japanese gray-bark elm ( <i>Zelkova serrata</i> )

See our web site for updates and additional information. GOOGLE "Pikes Peak Bonsai" and you are there (<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/PikesPeakBonsai.com>)

Non-members and those curious about this art/hobby are always welcome at no obligation! 10 a.m. on the Second Saturday of each month, usually at the Senior Center (Ceramics Room), 1514 N. Hancock Ave. (corner of Camarillo at the top of Hancock, 1/3 mile north of Uintah St.), just northeast of downtown Colorado Springs (719) 385-5933, or contact David T. Conlin, President, 685-1808,

[dave.jenna@msn.com](mailto:dave.jenna@msn.com) .

If interested, individual membership is \$25 per year; \$35 couple/family. Ongoing members renew in January of each year, receive our very informative yearbook, get help based on much local experience, can have trees on display in our shows, participate in collecting trees, and much more.