

RealEstate

GREEN HOUSE

Bonsai - II

The magic of miniature

Maj Gen C.S. Bewli

While creating a bonsai the growth of the tree is not halted but guided to get a balanced, mature and an aesthetically looking dwarf tree. In a normal sized tree the pruning of leaves, branches and roots is not carried out, but all these activities are performed on the tree while creating a bonsai.

The key to having the perfect bonsai is to bring nature in miniature. The styles of bonsai as articulated by the Japanese are the guidelines and there appears to be no need to keep all of them looking the same. The artistic touch of an individual can give a unique look to a bonsai. So gardening enthusiasts should feel free to experiment and use their skills to create bonsais of different shapes and sizes beyond the established styles to bring a variety in their collection.



Bonsai is trained by keeping the most presentable portion as its front and while creating it, the placement of first three branches is very important.

Formal upright style

The tree grows straight upwards from a strong buttressing root base to a tapering tip forming a well-defined apex. The branches grow evenly in all directions; however, the lowest branch being the longest should be positioned sideways at approximately one third of the trunk's height. The second branch is smaller and originates slightly higher from the side opposite to the first branch. The third branch is a back branch tilted slightly towards one side and is responsible for giving depth to the tree. The length of branches and distance between branches should decrease as you get closer to the top of the tree thus, giving the bonsai an outline in the shape of a triangular canopy.



2. Informal upright Style: This is the most popular and a dynamic style both in nature and in the art of bonsai. The trunk arises from a strong buttress of roots, and grows upwards in a series of irregular curves to the top which is slightly curved forward keeping in mind that the trunk should bend to the right or left, but not towards the front.

The trunk-line should be tapering with the branches growing only on the outer curves and bend slightly downward and also become smaller as they go towards the top.

Slanting style

In this style the trunk is inclined to one side at approximately 45° angle. This inclination gives an impression of great instability. This is balanced by a buttress of roots which are spread with strong roots on the side away from incline as well as one or two straight roots in the angle of incline. The lowest branch is the strongest and spreads in the direction opposite to the incline of the trunk and is positioned about one third of the way up and then subsequent branches arranged in the formal upright position. However, the apex of the Bonsai will be located to the left or right of the root base.



Cascade

Such bonsais are modelled after trees which grow on steep cliffs where they tend to bend downwards. The trunk first grows upwards from the soil, and then curves down abruptly growing in a series of sinuous curves so that apex or tip of the tree extends below the base of its container. Such a bonsai appears to be struggling against gravity and is planted in tall, round or hexagonal pots normally placed on the edge of the stand.

Forest style

A forest is a style of bonsai where a miniature forest is made up of odd number of small trees grown in a pot. The forest should have trees of varying heights and thicknesses. The trees should not block one another when viewed from the front and should be staggered so that the forest looks natural. The crown and foliage of the bonsai forest can be rounded or tapered depending upon the species of the trees.



Other styles are windswept, semi cascade, literati, rock grown, driftwood, split trunk, twisted trunk, twin trunk, exposed root etc. but all these styles are derived from the basic top four styles.

Potting mixture

The single most important factor in growing a healthy bonsai is the correct potting mixture as it plays a very important role in the growth of the tree. As the tree grows in a very less amount of soil, the compost used should be very porous and rich in nutrients and should be able to support the tree. It is composed of;

Coarse sand — one part

Dung manure or leaf mould — one part

Farm soil — half part

Mix all the above ingredients and to a cubic foot of this compost add:

NPK — Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potash in equal ratio (50 gm each)

Bone Meal — a slow releasing nutrient (100 gm).

Thimet or Furadan (a fumigant) — 25 gm.

Trace elements — 10 gm

Sprinkle some water and mix thoroughly. Put this mixture in a bag or some container for a couple of weeks to make it ready for use.

To be concluded