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**REAL ESTATE**

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**RealEstate****GREEN HOUSE****BONSAI - III****Wiring to style****Maj Gen C.S. Bewli (retd)****Pruning and wiring are the most important techniques in the shaping of bonsai**

The Japanese were the first to shape the trunk and branches of a tree with metallic wires. With this technique a straight trunk or a branch can be given a more realistic shape and young branch can be wired into horizontal or downward position to create an illusion of maturity. Thus with wiring, the existing growth can be manipulated to give the desired shape to the bonsai. This is also the quickest way to style the tree as wire makes branches and twigs pliable and holds them firmly in the desired position for as long as is required for the trunk and branches to set. Care should be taken to prevent the wire from growing into the trunk or branches and it should be removed before any damage is done to the plant. Aluminium wire bends better and is easy to handle and wires of different thickness are used depending upon the size of the branch or trunk.



Wiring is used to give a more realistic shape to a straight trunk or a branch

## Wiring of the trunk

Anchor one end into the soil behind the trunk. Bend the wire around the base of the trunk and take the first coil around the trunk base and wind at an angle of  $45^\circ$  taking care that wire is wound firmly and not tightly or loosely

## Wiring the branches

Even if it is intended to wire a single branch, the branch opposite or the trunk should also be wired to give the wire additional support. Start at the branch or trunk that joins to the one to be wired.

## Pruning and Pinching

Leaf pruning during growth period is essential to encourage new growth and maintain right shape of the bonsai.

The terms pruning and pinching are used quite often and sometimes interchangeable, but there is a distinctive difference between the two.

Pruning - is basically the technique of removing large branches using specific tools and is carried out to style raw materials into a bonsai form. Basically deciduous and tropical plants are pruned in this fashion.

Pinching - is a technique of cutting back the current growth and is generally done with a finger and a thumb - that is why it is called pinching. Pinching is used to keep the bonsai within the boundaries of the style selected for the tree and is very useful for evergreen coniferous trees.

### PURPOSE OF PRUNING

- Removal of branches that detract the overall design of the bonsai.
- Maintain the right shape of a bonsai.
- To encourage growth in a particular area.

## **Watering**

As bonsai grows in a very restricted space, the compost used plays a very important part in the growth of the tree. Too little water may dehydrate the bonsai and excess of it will cause damage. Watering is one of the most important elements in bonsai care and depends upon different factors such as location, temperature, lighting conditions, the quantity of soil used, and change in season. During summer months bonsais should be watered twice (morning and evening). The plant structure can quickly collapse due to water deficiency at the roots. The compost of the pot can be covered with moss which helps in reducing excessive transpiration. During winters the requirement of water is reduced and watering can be carried out on alternate days depending upon the above mentioned conditions.

### **Dos and Don'ts while shaping the bonsai**

- Wire chosen must be thick enough to bend the trunk effectively and also to remain in position after bending it to the desired shape.
- The wire should be wound to any trunk, branch or twig in the direction of growth i.e. spirally from bottom to top in case of trunk and from base of the branch to the tip.
- Wiring should be carried out at 45° angle in the direction of stem or branch as far as possible.
- When wiring the trunk of the tree, one end of the coil is anchored into the soil and roots of the tree.
- No leaves or branches should be trapped under the wire.
- Wire should not be used on plants which are not growing well.
- Wiring on the trunk or branch should be sufficiently tight to be in contact with the bark and not cut into the bark. It is possible for the wire to embed within 4 to 6 weeks and so it should be loosened accordingly.
- The best time to carry out wiring operation is from spring to late summer when the plants are in growth.

### **The thumb rule of when and how often to water**

You should wait for the top one cm of compost of the pot to dry and then water the plant until excess water seeps out from the bottom of the pot. Bonsai tree eats, drinks, and breathes in the top soil only. This is the factor that makes the growing of bonsai trees possible in shallow pots. Also pour water on the foliage as it absorbs water and removes dust.

### **To be concluded**