



5 Easy Tips To Master Advanced **BONSAI** Tree Care





DOES ADVANCED BONSAI TREE CARE SEEM LIKE A CHALLENGE?

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE TIPS TO TAKE YOUR CARE ROUTINE TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

Caring for your bonsai tree can seem difficult. But bonsai tree care is easy when you have the right information, tools, and resources.

Like all plants, bonsai trees need a few simple things to thrive: clean air, water, the right [fertilizer](#), and sunshine.

Once you have the basics down, you're no longer a beginner. Now you're ready to take your bonsai tree care routine to the next level.

With these five advanced bonsai tree care tips, you'll be a true bonsai master in no time. And, even more importantly, you'll be so proud of your miniature tree as you watch it grow into a miniature masterpiece.

Of course, bonsai care best practices will vary from tree to tree depending on the preferences of each plant species, but following these easy tips will help you master advanced bonsai tree care like a pro.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #1: **Thicken your bonsai's trunk.**

If you're looking to master an advanced bonsai technique, start by focusing on your bonsai's trunk. The trunk of your bonsai is a key feature and one of the most eye-catching elements of your miniature tree.

Generally, bonsai look older and more mature when they have trunks that are tapered, or thicker toward their roots and thinner toward their leaves.

One of the best ways to thicken your bonsai's trunk is to let the tree grow in a large container without pruning it for a few years. Once you're happy with the thickness of your bonsai's trunk, you can trim its branches, prune its leaves, and put it in a smaller pot.

You can encourage changes in your tree's trunk, but be sure to purchase a bonsai tree with a trunk that lends itself to tapering.

Bonsai master wisdom: Thickening your bonsai's trunk can take several years. But your hard work and patience will pay off when your tree's trunk has the perfect taper. This helps your bonsai look like a true mini-tree.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #2: **Experiment with bonsai wiring techniques.**

Wiring your bonsai tree has two purposes: to encourage growth and create a unique tree shape. Both are essential to leveling-up your bonsai tree care routine.

Using copper or aluminum wire is best, since both are easy to handle and relatively inexpensive.

When wiring to encourage growth, be sure to wire branches and foliage to expose deep inner buds and leaves. This will let light and air nourish parts of your tree that otherwise would be shaded or blocked from sunlight, and your tree will be inclined to sprout leaves quicker.

When wiring to create a unique bonsai shape, you can choose to follow a traditional bonsai style or opt to create your own. Traditional styles include broom style (Hokidachi), formal upright style (Chokkan), cascade bonsai style (Kengai), and windswept bonsai style (Fukinagashi), among others. For best results, wrap the tree in wire and gently press the branches into place.

Bonsai master wisdom: When shaping your wired bonsai, be careful not to press the branches too far too quickly as they may break. Instead, bend the tree into shape bit by bit. This will create a more forgiving branch for shaping.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #3: Create bonsai root flare.

One of the most impressive parts of a well-cared-for bonsai is its surface roots, also called *root flare*. In Japanese, root flare is referred to as *nebari*.

The two main ways to add this advanced feature to your bonsai are to prune your bonsai's root system and use the tourniquet method to encourage new root growth.

Root Pruning

The most common way to create root flare is to prune the downward-growing roots when you repot your bonsai. This encourages the root system to grow outward along the surface of the soil instead of downward and buried out of view.

When repotting, focus on pruning the longest roots and fan out the root system in its new soil.

Tourniquet Method

The second way to create impressive surface roots is to wrap a wire ring around the base of your bonsai's trunk.

If the wire is wrapped tightly, it'll slow the amount of nutrients taken up from the root system. This will encourage new root growth just above the wire.

Bonsai master wisdom: Like all things bonsai, consistency and patience is key here. Creating a perfect root flare can take many years. But over time, your bonsai's roots will grow thicker and create a *nebari*.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #4: Create bonsai deadwood.

Deadwood is an intricate bonsai feature. Creating a deadwood feature can lend tremendous character to your bonsai tree.

Deadwood is created over several months or years. Both common techniques, Jin and Shari, require patience and dedication.

Deadwood features require some advanced tools. Invest in a pair of Jin pliers, sandpaper, concave cutters, and lime sulfur before you begin.

To create deadwood, remove the bark from the branch using your pliers. Then round off any sharp edges with sandpaper. If you'd like to create a crook or notch in your deadwood feature, use concave cutters to cut into the trunk and create a hollow space. This should take place in small stages over several months so you don't damage the tree. Finally, bleach the deadwood by painting it with lime sulfur. This will protect the tree from pests, disease, and infections.

Bonsai master wisdom: Deadwood features should only be applied to evergreen trees, since deadwood on deciduous trees might rot over time.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #5: Defoliate your bonsai.

Defoliation is the process of removing all the leaves from your bonsai to encourage new, smaller leaves to grow. This is a different and more advanced technique than pruning, which removes branches to influence overall tree shape.

You can defoliate crowded areas of your bonsai to redistribute leaf growth to other areas of the tree. Cut the primary leaf, but leave the leaf stem intact. Be sure to use a leaf cutter or twig shear for best results.

Not all bonsai trees will respond well to defoliating, so be sure to check if your plant species can handle the process. Deciduous tree species do best with defoliation. Weak, neglected, or young trees still in training should not typically be defoliated.

Bonsai master wisdom: Defoliate your bonsai tree in the early summer months. This will give your tree enough time to grow new leaves before the dormant winter period.





Advanced bonsai tree care tip #6: **Feed and fertilize your bonsai regularly.**

A successful bonsai tree care routine should include fertilizing. Regularly fertilizing will make sure your advanced bonsai tree care techniques lead to a healthy, beautiful, and thriving tree year-round.

Since your miniature tree lives in a small pot, the soil can lose its nutrients fairly easily. The right fertilizer will help ensure your bonsai has a proper nutrient supply and rich soil health. This will promote growth and keep your plant hearty even during slight drought or cold spells.

For outdoor plants, fertilize your bonsai once a month during spring, summer, and fall months. During winter months, you can take a break from fertilizing. Your tree will go through a natural and necessary dormant period.

For indoor plants, fertilizing year-round is perfectly safe and a good idea.

Keep in mind, though, that your bonsai tree is small and delicate. So it's best to under-fertilize rather than over-fertilize. Too much fertilizer may burn your plant.

If your bonsai tree starts to develop yellow, wilting, or browning leaf tips, pause your fertilizer routine. Or if you notice a crust of fertilizer on the soil, you're likely using too much; go ahead and cut back.

Bonsai master wisdom: For best results, use a bonsai tree food product that's tailored to your bonsai's needs. The right food product will help ensure your bonsai lives a long, healthy miniature-tree life.

Click here to shop our store and get the best products to master your advanced bonsai tree care routine so you can start growing your miniature tree into a miniature masterpiece today.





Join The **BONSAI** World

At The Bonsai Resource Center, our goal is to equip you with everything you need to grow and maintain a truly beautiful bonsai tree. This is our passion, and we want it to be yours as well! Whether you are a bonsai beginner or are looking to hone your skills, **check out our other articles** and **visit our shop** for all your bonsai needs!