

Bonsai Fukien Tea

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General Background:

The Fukien Tea is a tropical evergreen shrub originating from southern China. This plant works particularly well as a mini bonsai, but is also a great houseplant because it appreciates warm temps in the winter months making it a perfect choice for anyone in the city or who does not have the benefits of a yard.

Trees Features:

Delicate white blossom bloom almost year round and small dark green leaves are shiny with little white dots on the surfaces which are often mistaken for insect infestations. The trunk has wonderful brownish red bark which contrasts beautifully with the dark green of its leaves.

Temperature:

This Bonsai will need to be kept indoors year round maintaining temperatures around 50 to 75 degrees.

Lighting:

The Fukien Tea does not like direct midday sunlight as it is likely to dry out easily under those conditions, but will do well in a bright window. If you do take it outdoors in the summer, find a partially shaded spot where it will be protected from scorching.

Watering:

The Fukien Tea Bonsai must be kept moderately moist and will shrivel easily or simply stop growing if the root ball is permitted to dry out completely. Individuals that travel a lot, or who are prone to neglect watering will not do well with this plant as it prefers more attentiveness. Soaking is a fine way to deal with a dry root ball, but the best way to

water this tree is with a watering can from the top until there is run off at the bottom. This way, you prevent salt buildup which could burn the roots and kill your tree.

Fertilizing:

Fertilize this Bonsai every two weeks with a liquid bonsai fertilizer during the spring and summer. During the winter, if it is in a warmer location, feed every six weeks making absolutely sure it has been watered well before feeding to prevent burning the roots.

Pruning / Training:

Cut back new shoots to 2 to 3 leaves once they have developed 6 to 8 leaves. You can prune this bonsai throughout the year. This bonsai can be easily shaped without wiring if you start early in its life, however, to start a basic form more quickly, you can use the wiring method throughout the year but do not wire new shoots until they have become lignified. The Fukien tea is beautifully suited to an Informal upright style in which the trunk is curved and becomes narrower at the top. Branches are shaped outwards and to the back.

Insects / Pests:

Keep leaves free from dust and inspect regularly for pests or fungus. Taking good care of your bonsai's hygiene will go a long way in preventing insects and diseases. Yellow leaves, sticky leaves, off color leaves and/or spider webs indicate insect problems. Most types of insect infestations can be controlled with a harmless solution of 1 tsp dish soap to 1 quart lukewarm water; Spray the entire plant down with mixture to create run-off, repeat as needed.

Propagation:

Take cuttings with clean sharp scissors between spring and early summer. Place cuttings in a shady spot to encourage healthy root development.

Repotting:

Every two years in the spring. No more than 10% root cutting.