

Bonsai : Podocarpus (Buddhist pin)

DISCLAIMER:

The content provided in this article is not warranted or guaranteed. The content provided is intended for entertainment and/or educational purposes in order to introduce to the reader key ideas, concepts, and/or product reviews. We are not liable for any negative consequences that may result from implementing any information covered in our articles or tutorials. Happy bonsai gardening.

Podocarpus Bonsai Care guidelines

Placement

The podocarpus macrophyllus can be kept indoors all year round, but it benefits from being outside during the summer in a semi-shaded place. It must be protected from frost, so take it into the house when temperatures begin to drop in autumn. In spring make sure that there is no night frost anymore when you place the tree outside again. In winter it can be kept at around 20° C (68° F) if it gets enough light. If you can't provide very much light it is better to keep the tree in a cooler room with 10° - 15° C (50° – 59° F).

Watering

The podocarpus when the soil gets dry. Keep it slightly moist but don't overwater it. Don't use very calcareous water.

Fertilizing

Apply solid organic fertilizer every four weeks or use a liquid fertilizer every week during the growing season. If the podocarpus has a warm place in winter it will keep growing a bit. Then use liquid fertilizer every two weeks or every four weeks if the tree is placed in a cooler room.

Pruning and wiring

Podocarpus responds very well to pruning and trimming which stimulates ramification. Let new shoots grow until they have reached a length of approximately 4" (10cm) before shortening them. Just cut the stems carefully and don't cut through the leaves.

Wiring can be done at any time of the year. Let young shoots harden a bit before wiring them. Take care not to crush any leaves with the wire. Wire will have to be removed after a few months. Guywires are useful for shaping strong branches.

Repotting

Repot young podocarpus trees every 2 – 3 years and older ones every 4 – 5 years. Don't prune the roots too heavily. Use a well-draining soil mix and if the tree is still in the typical loamy grey soil in which many podocarpus are imported, try to remove it carefully during the first repotting session without damaging too many roots. The podocarpus likes slightly acidic or neutral soil with a pH value of 5 – 6 and not over 7.

Propagation

The buddhist pine can be propagated from seed or cuttings. Cuttings need warm soil for rooting.

Pests and diseases

Normally, vigorous podocarpus trees are hardly attacked by pests and diseases. Scale or spider mites can occur if a tree is weakened by improper position (like warm, dry and dark indoors) and care, then use a specific pesticide and improve the growing conditions for your tree. Leaf drop and root rot can occur when the tree is overwatered. For more detailed information on these techniques, check out our Bonsai tree care section.