Bonsai Premna

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Placement

Premna species are subtropical or tropical trees and most of them need temperatures above 50°F (10°C). They like an airy place in full sun, but very small specimen should be protected from hot midday sun to keep them from drying out. When placed indoors, the Premna needs a warm place with relatively high humidity and lots of light. Grow lights can help.

Watering

Premnas grow very strongly and produce a lot of roots. Therefore they need much water and must not dry out completely. Keep them slightly moist in winter. Avoid using very calcareous water.

Fertilizing

During the growing season apply solid organic fertilizer every month or use a liquid fertilizer every week. Evergreen trees which do not show much activity in winter can be fertilized one a month with a liquid product.

Pruning and wiring

New long shoots should be shortened to one or two leaf pairs when five or six have grown. Larger branches are best pruned in summer because cut wounds heal faster when the tree grows strongly. Use cut paste to promote callus formation. Premna trees can be wired at any time of the year, but deciduous species are best wired when their leaves have fallen. The younger branches are quite flexible. Take care to remove the wire in time when the tree grows strongly and thickens fast.

Repotting

Premnas are repotted every two or three years in spring when the buds swell. About one third of the root mass can be removed. Use a standard soil mix.

Propagation

The Premna tree can be propagated from seeds and cuttings. Air-layering is also possible.

Pests and diseases

The Premna is quite resistant, but in rare cases aphids, scale, red spider mites or powdery mildew can occur. Then use a specific pesticide and try to improve the trees growing conditions, especially try to provide enough light.