

Dwarf Cherry Care from BonsaiOutlet.com

General Background:

The Dwarf Cherry, with cataloged Latin names of Eugenia Myrtifolia or Syzygium paniculaum, is a lovely and fast growing evergreen tree that is native to Australia's eastern coastal temperate and tropical rain forests in which it can grow to heights of 20 feet tall. This variety has very small leaves and slow growth habits making it ideally suited for bonsai. With a few simple guidelines your Dwarf Cherry bonsai can be grown without difficulty making it a great Bonsai for beginners.

Trees Features:

The Dwarf Cherry is a widely available and ever popular tree much loved as a Bonsai for its extremely small leaves. The flowers of the Dwarf Cherry are white, growing in clusters at the tips of its woody shoots in early summer. Its edible fruits are pink, red and sometimes purple and are particularly pretty when ripening. If it is given adequate light, the tiny leaves will develop striking red highlights as they emerge which will eventually turn to a bright green contrasting dramatically with its red flaking bark.

Temperature:

In the summertime, a Dwarf Cherry enjoys heat, while it prefers winter temperatures between 46-58 degrees, and though it is hardy under light frost conditions, it should never be subjected to temperatures below 30 degrees. This Bonsai should be kept indoors during the winter months in a sunny spot that doesn't drop below 55 degrees ensuring that it is not positioned near a heat source or in the way of drafts as it does not like a lot of variation in temperature. Your Dwarf Cherry will thrive best outdoors, enjoying high light and a warm, sunny location that provides partial shade in the hottest times of day.

Lighting:

The Dwarf Cherry will thrive in Full sun to part shade. Direct morning sunlight is great for this bonsai because of its low intensity and the effects of direct afternoon sun can burn delicate leaves, especially when shining through a household window.

Watering:

Water generously in summer, and a little less in winter, and do not allow to completely dry out between watering. Depending on the season, you may need to water every day, or only every few days to a week. That being said, it is also important to be attentive and avoid over watering as well. The best way to ensure proper water levels is to stick your finger into the soil. If it is wet, do not water, if it is dry, water immediately. This plant will thrive if watered when ALMOST dry, and may begin to drop its leaves if allowed to completely dry. Be sure to provide your bonsai with enough humidity through the use of a humidity tray filled with small stones allowing proper root moisture without the risk of root rot. It is also very important to use distilled/rain water if your water is hard, as the Dwarf Cherry does not tolerate salt.

Fertilizing:

Fertilize your Dwarf Cherry with a diluted liquid fish emulsion every 2 weeks during heavy growth until the fall when you will need to fertilize every 4-5 weeks through the winter. This bonsai needs a slightly acid soil, so the occasional use of an acid fertilizer is recommended.

Pruning / Training:

Your Dwarf Cherry can be pruned back hard, as it is a vigorous grower; it may need to be pruned often for it to maintain its desired shape. You will want to shorten new shoots with 6-8 pairs of leaves to 1-2 pairs. Leaf pruning on this plant is not advised as the leaves are already small and better leaf reduction can be achieved through pruning. It can be wired while in active growth, but better shaping results are achieved with pruning. Be sure to protect the branches, as they scar easily and use the thinnest training wire in the direction the branch is bent in order to keep the wire from loosening. The Dwarf Cherry Bonsai is suitable for all styles, and for all but the largest sizes. Be sure not to wrap the wire too tight or you will cause the tree to scar. After about 6 weeks, the branch should hold the desired shape on its own and the wire will need to be removed taking care to cut the wire rather than unwinding it or you will risk breaking the branches.

Insects / Pests:

The Dwarf Cherry is extremely hardy and as such, no diseases are of major concern. However, it may drop leaves if watering is inconsistent and it is very important to remember that it is not salt tolerant. Your Dwarf Cherry Bonsai can be attacked by

scale, mealy bug, Caribbean fruit fly, aphids, and red spider. These can be eliminated with the use of insecticides and fungicides in the form of sprays, soapy rinses, or systemic poisons. Spraying your Bonsai once every few months with a non-toxic insect spray or solution of 1 tsp dish soap to 1 quart warm water will be beneficial in combating pest attacks. Be sure to rinse soap solution off after application.

Propagation:

Propagation is achieved almost exclusively by seeds planted in the fall, or with ripe cuttings throughout the summer.

Repotting:

Repot your Dwarf Cherry every two years in early to mid-spring using a basic bonsai soil, or an acid mix like azalea soil. Sometimes Brush Cherries do not react well to extreme root pruning so use caution not to prune roots back too far when repotting. After repotting, water thoroughly and keep the plant in a shady location for several weeks so that new roots may grow. You will find that bottom heat helps to encourage root growth.

Additional Comments:

Keeping the leaves of your bonsai dust free will go a long way to encourage healthy cell growth which helps your plant to keep your environments air free from toxins. You can do your plant a favor if you keep it in a smoke free location, because plants, just like children and animals, thrive when protected from the effects second and third hand smoke. Being edible, the berries of the Dwarf Cherry are usually eaten fresh, although the flesh has little taste and are occasionally used to make preserves.

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