

Mugo Pine (Pinus Mugo) Bonsai Care

About The Mugo Pine Bonsai Tree

The mugo pine tree is a popular specimen used in rock gardens and border plantings across the world. It has dark green needles on dense branches with numerous tawny candles arranged vertically.

Placement

Mugo pines should remain outdoors all year long.

It must stay cool or cold during the winter (about 3 months), but should be protected from harsh freezes. In the late fall, protect your tree by burying your tree in the pot or mulch over the pot in the ground. The tree should be protected from strong wind and sun (but not snow or rain) throughout the winter. Barring this, keeping it in an unheated shed or garage will suffice as long as it is watered.

Mugo pine can handle temperatures as low as -50* F if properly cared for.

For the rest of the year, place your specimen outside in a spot with full sun.

Watering

Whenever the soil seems dry, thoroughly water your tree until the water runs clear from the bottom. In the growing season, this may be daily.

Fertilizing

Mugos are a slow growing tree, so a slow release pellet type fertilizer is preferred. Add a couple of pellets every month during the growing season. Avoid fertilizing during winter months.

Pruning & Trimming

Always prune pines in the spring. Pines do not backbud to old wood if not in an active growing phase (spring time.) You can prune the “candles” (the tawny growing tips) back by 50% in the spring to maintain the compact habit of a bonsai mugo pine. Dead branches should be removed in the spring and major branch pruning should be done in the spring as well.

Repotting

Repotting should be performed every 4-5 years or when the plant becomes rootbound. Repot in the early spring when buds begin to swell and develop, removing no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the root ball.

When repotting pines of all varieties, leave some amount of original soil in the root ball which retains beneficial symbiotic fungi that help pines thrive.

Diseases, Insects & Other Pests

Mugo pine is susceptible to aphids, borers, weevils and mealybugs among others. Spray with insecticidal soap to kill any pests and repeat weekly if necessary.

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