

## **Japanese Yew (Taxus Taxaceae) Bonsai Care**

### **About The Japanese Yew**

The yew is an evergreen dioecious (male and female flowers grow on separate trees ) shrub or tree with dark green needle-shaped foliage. The genus Taxus occurs in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere. Although the yew is considered to be a conifer, it does not bear woody cones but produces seed cones with a single seed surrounded by a berry-like red aril which is open at the end.

### **Placement**

The yew prefers a place with sufficient light, but can also tolerate shade, although it will grow less dense in deep shade. In hot dry climates protect the yew from strong afternoon sun in summer. In winter the yew should be sheltered from hard frost combined with strong sunlight and icy winds. The soft roots as well as the foliage can suffer badly from such harsh winter conditions. As the yew is an evergreen it needs sufficient light in winter.

### **Watering**

Water the yew tree as soon as the soil gets dry, but don't keep the roots wet all the time. Spraying the foliage with lime-free water may also be beneficial. Yew tolerates a water pH value between 5 and 8.

### **Fertilizing**

Apply solid organic fertilizer every four weeks or use a liquid fertilizer every week during the growing season.

## **Pruning & Trimming**

Yew trees can be pruned back into the old wood and will bud easily. New shoots are trimmed and old needles can be plucked in summer in order to let sufficient sunlight reach the inner parts of the tree and promote back budding and ramification. Deadwood is an important feature of mature yew bonsai. Make sure to identify the important live veins before removing bark for new shari (deadwood) parts.

## **Repotting**

Repot yew every two to four years, although very old specimens can wait even longer. The roots can be pruned considerably, up to 50% of the root mass. Use a standard soil mix, but in hot climates add a bit more humus for water retention

## **Diseases, Insects & Other Pests**

Scale and mealy bugs can sometimes infest yew, so use a specific pesticide for each insect. Weevils can also cause serious problems, as the adult beetles eat the foliage and bark and the larvae hide in the rootball and eat the roots. Root rot can occur when the tree is overwatered.

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