

What is a bonsai?

Summing it up from all literatures and dictionaries, the term Bonsai can be defined as; a miniature representation of a Tree on a tray.

In representing a tree we wish to portray a tree not a seedling or a plant. The question now is, what makes a tree different from a plant or a seedling?

First, a tree is larger than a plant. Secondly a tree is older than a plant. To show size in Bonsai, one has to emphasize the largeness of the girth of the trunk. The age of Bonsai on the other hand can be seen on the bark of the trunk/branches and on the size of structural roots. To look like a tree rather than a young plant, the leaves have to be small compared to the tree, so there has to be some degree of miniaturization of the leaves.

Being on a tray means that it has to be light enough to be carried by a person or two; from Merriam-Webster dictionary a tray is an open receptacle with a flat bottom and a low rim for holding, carrying, or exhibiting articles. Therefore a bonsai should be light enough to be carried by a few persons. Being on a tray suggest a vague description of the weight and size of a bonsai. For now, it is anyone's guess as long as you can justify it.

Although Bonsai is generally expected to be anywhere from 3 inches to a meter in height a lot of new ideas push for no limit in height as long as it is on a pot. Some proponents who have no ready access for hunted material push for a thin trunk as representation of a far view of the tree and the large trunk as the near view of the tree. The ratio of the width of the base of the trunk to the height of tree could be anywhere from 1:4 to 1:42 where the latter is a typical ratio for a tree in nature.

The definition of what a Bonsai is has been debated for so long. It is a very sensitive matter wherein Bonsai clubs split apart, friends turn into foes, and respect turns into hatred. I have seen a lot of this happen in the past that I think twice to delve deeper into this matter.

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I will leave the definition of Bonsai at that for the moment as this is a sensitive matter that could explode into a lot of controversies.

The Basics of Bonsai are explained in the following chapters.

- [Rules of Bonsai](#)
- [Why follow Rules?](#)
- [Styles of Bonsai](#)
- [The Trunk](#)
- [The Roots](#)
- [Branching](#)
- [The Leaves](#)
- [Bonsai Anatomy](#)
- [Creating a Bonsai](#)
- [Bonsai Propagation](#)
- [Hunting vs. Seedling](#)