

## Hunting or Growing From Seeds

Growing from seed is the best way to create a Bonsai. You have practically all the control in its development. However it will take a lot of time to develop Bonsai from seeds. Depending on the type of tree and the final Bonsai size, this could range from 2-6 years for mamae (3 to 6 inches height) size to 40-120 years for a large (1 meter height) size Bonsai. These are very rough estimates. The longest period in developing a Bonsai is during trunk and nebari (root formation) development. You must consider the average human life span when you create bonsai or you may not see the fruits of your labor. To give you an idea, I enumerated several steps in creating a Bonsai from seed below.

Growing bonsai from seed to form a shohin or small (11-12 inches) Bonsai:

1. Germinate the seed (1 week to a couple of months)
2. Plant in nursery pot and let it flourish (1-3 years)
3. Do Preliminary wiring for trunk movement then replant on the ground or in a bigger grow-out pot and let grow (2-4 years). Do not forget to remove the wires when the wires start to bite the trunk.
4. If the trunk is about or more than an inch, transfer to a training pot. Do a trunk chop 4 inches above the roots or base to achieve taper, then let it grow (1-2 year)
5. Chose the first primary branch, and wire the leader (the branch that would continue to form the apex), then let grow (1-2 year)

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6. Do another trunk chop about 2.5 inches from the previous cut, then let grow (6 months to 1 year)

7. Wire second, third (back branch) primary branches and wire leader let grow (3-6 months)

8. Finish the top branches. apex and complete secondary and tertiary branches (1-2 years)

It takes a lot of time to finish a small or *shohin* Bonsai from seed. Imagine how much it would take to make a large Bonsai.

If you hunt wild bonsai or material from the wild, you can immediately jump to step 5 or 7. You could save 70% to 95% of your time by hunting. If you choose what you hunt carefully enough you can get true prized materials. It is like hunting for Gold. [Bonsai hunters](#) as they are called do a living from hunting alone. Although Bonsai artists also do their own hunting, it is often times more economical to buy from bonsai hunters. In most cases, you can't get your ideal material from hunting, however if you know what to do, a bad looking material may turn out to be a champion.

Bonsai Hunting doesn't mean that you have to pack your gear and go to the wilderness. You can hunt in your neighbor's backyard but you must negotiate and pay of course. You can hunt in private farms, or even on sidewalks. Another good place to hunt is in a nursery or a commercial garden.

Buying from a professional hunter is the best because there are a lot to choose from and the price is cheap, that is if you are in a third world country. I do not know if there are professional hunters in first world countries, but if there are, it would be expensive due to high wages, and other costs. In this case you have to hunt yourself. Even though it costs a lot to finance a hunting expedition, the joy and satisfaction that you get from it is priceless.

I do not discourage people to grow bonsai from seeds. Sometimes it is a necessity. Some trees do not grow in your native land, and you have to import seeds from another country. Some people even think of creating a bonsai farm from seeds and then strike it rich in several years.

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There are also advance techniques that I will show later on how to start from seeds or cuttings but still complete a nice close to perfect bonsai in just a short while. Most important of all, hunted material may be very hard to find in some places, so you have to do well with seed.

Even with a [thin trunk](#) , if you do it right, you can make a nice bonsai. I won some shows with a thin trunk but with a large dead wood (sabamiki).