
BONSAI TREE SIZE CLASSIFICATION

Bonsai tree size classification is as much an art form as making the shape and style of the bonsai tree itself. None of these categories are set in stone, nor do many worry about the exact size.

Perhaps the only classification that has not changed over the ages is that of the Imperial bonsai, because of the origin of the name. By definition, any of the largest bonsai trees in the imperial gardens are Imperial bonsai trees. While different sources disagree with the individual smaller sizes, what's truly important to the cultivation of a bonsai tree is the shape and style used to create it.



MINIATURE BONSAI TREES



Kenshitsu subo

These are the smallest possible variety of bonsai tree. Little more than artfully-designed seedlings, they're also known as poppy seed sized trees. Rarely are they ever more than one to three inches in height. They can be lifted with two fingers easily.

Shito

These are the smallest common size of bonsai tree. Known as fingertip size, they grow generally between two and four inches in height. Often they can be found in pots no larger than a thimble, leading to their other name, the thimble bonsai.



Shohin

These bonsai trees are in a category that overlaps others, leading to the misuse of the name. They grow between two and six inches in height. Shohin and Shito are differentiated from other small bonsai trees by the techniques used to create them.



Mame

These bonsai trees grow between four and eight inches in height. They are the smallest of the bonsai trees known as one handed trees, because it takes a single hand to move them. Often they have larger pots than Shohin bonsai trees.



Komono

The Komono bonsai is also known as the generic small bonsai tree. On average, it grows between 6 and 10 inches (15 and 25 centimeters). The Komono is the largest tree that can be moved with one hand.



MEDIUM BONSAI TREES



Katade-Mochi

The largest bonsai classification that can be lifted in one hand, the Katade-Mochi bonsai grows between ten and eighteen inches in height. These are some of the more common tree sizes to work with, because they are neither too small to prune nor too large to handle.

Chumono, Chiu

These two bonsai tree sizes are virtually the same. They are both considered two handed bonsai trees, and they both grow between sixteen and thirty-six inches in height. The names are virtually interchangeable.



Medium and Big

English countries tend to forsake the Japanese names for size classifications. The Medium bonsai is between twelve and twenty-four inches in height, while the Big bonsai is twenty-four to thirty-six.

LARGE BONSAI TREES

Omono

These large bonsai trees are the first among the four-hand category. They grow anywhere from thirty to forty-eight inches in height. They are differentiated from the Dai category in very minor ways, such that both are classified as Very Large in English.



Hachi-Uye

These are among the largest bonsai trees. They are known as six hand trees because it takes as many as three people to move the tree in its pot. They grow between forty and sixty inches tall.

Imperial

The Imperial bonsai is the largest and most majestic of all Bonsai trees. They grow between sixty and eighty inches tall and are found most often in the Japanese imperial gardens. They are also known as eight-handed due to the number of people required to move them.

