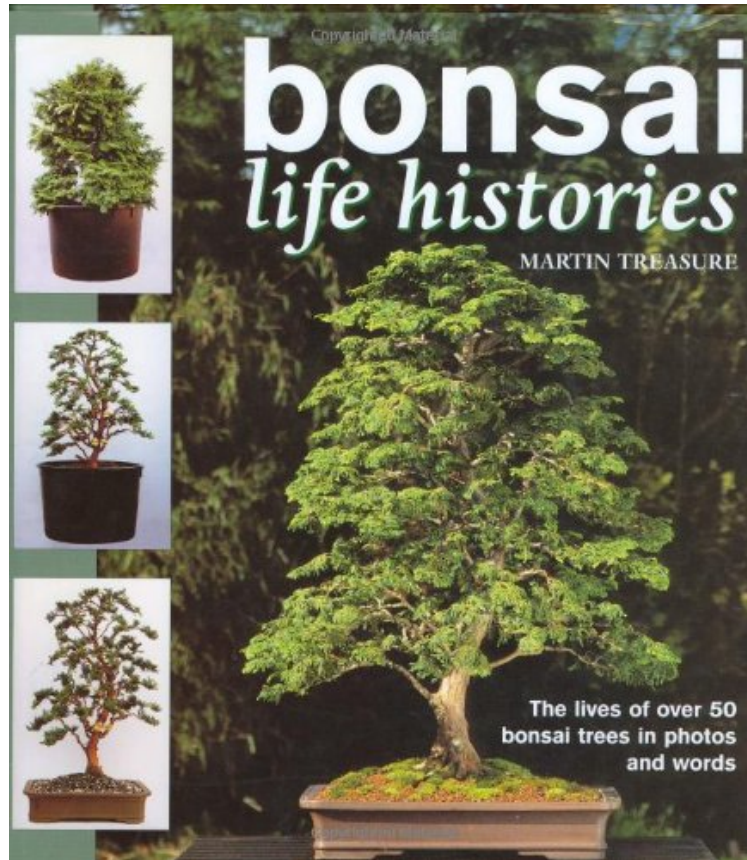


Bonsai: Life Histories

Martin Treasure

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Martin Treasure : Bonsai: Life Histories before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bonsai: Life Histories:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. FILLING the VOIDBy W.T.HoffmanWhen it comes to books on Bonsai Cultivation, there's a void of information, which this manual fills superbly. Some books will show you how to care for various species of bonsai, others show you how to wire, fertilize, and repot, and some books show you how to make bonsais out of nursery stock. However, as far as I know, this is THE BOOK, if you want to learn how to VISUALIZE how bonsais GROW. If you were to ask a bonsai master, when they work on a tree whats REALLY going on inside their heads, they would explain that they are visualizing not how the tree they are working on will look when they are done pruning, but rather, what that tree will look like in 3 years, 5 years, and 10 years AFTER it's been pruned. Thats hard to do. So, if you want to learn how to visualize your bonsai plants, and learn how to prune for the plants FUTURE APPEARANCE AND GROWTH, and not just for the present moment, this is the book for you!I wouldn't recommend this book for new students. New students will want to learn how to care for bonsai trees which are purchased already pruned and potted, and ready to go for the next few years. If you need detailed care instructions for various species, its best to buy "SIMON AND SCHUSTER'S GUIDE TO BONSAI". If you need to learn bonsai

care, get Lewis's "BONSAI SURVIVAL MANUAL". However, if you want to learn how your trees will develop over the years, I doubt you'll find a better book. The author, Martin Treasure, isn't a bonsai master trained in Japan. He's a young Brit, who just loves the art, and wants to share his 15 years of wisdom. Typically, the book presents a photo of a new tree dug up from a field, bought from a garden center, or acquired from some elderly man's collection. Maybe it's a False Cypress group planting, a downy Birch, a Styrax, or a thick trunked Trident Maple. (Some of the tree species are obviously Western European, and cultivation practices are for the UK's climate.) Let's look at how the author grew the young Hedgerow Maple. He assumes you might know what a young plant looks like. So first, there's a photo of the tree after 2 years in the ground, then the 3rd year first potted, but with the leaves and branches removed. (and 3rd year with the leaves grown.) Then, a photo of year 5 in summer, and finally the tree in year 9, right before budding. This progression shows how BRANCHES and TWIGS are grown, on a trunk, plus explains how the large trunk is grown in the ground, before putting it in the pot. Since some bonsai nurseries just sell you the trunk, they obviously expect you to understand the 9 year process of growing the branches and twigs. That's just one example, but it rings true for all the various trees in the book. The book also has information about soils, bonsai tools, bonsai styles, pruning tips, etc. I found the two page photo spread that reveals which traits produce a good bonsai, a cool idea. So, once you figure out how to keep your 3 or 4 tiny bonsais alive over the winter, and you want to learn how to grow your OWN BONSAI trees, I'd recommend this book. Once you decide to grow your own bonsai trees, the real bonsai adventure begins.

It focuses on about 40 case histories of individual trees complete with meticulously recorded photographs of how each tree developed usually from very doubtful beginnings to their present-day glory. The author Martin Treasure is superbly talented technically but also has a unique skill in bringing out the personality of the plants so that even non-enthusiasts cannot help but be drawn into the case histories. In the book the case histories are supported by chapters on basic training techniques, advice on sourcing viable plant material and maintenance tips so that everyone can have a go at creating trees similar to those in the book.

Do not make the mistake of regarding Bonsai growers as 'anorak' cases. Bonsai is a centuries old art originating in China but adopted, a few centuries later, by the Japanese and turned into a skill that requires the most dedication and devotion of all gardening disciplines. This book, written by a relatively young Bonsai grower, Martin Treasure, is a photographic history of his collection taken over a timespan of 15 years. The clear, elegant photographs of his plants will inspire readers to take a closer look at this passion of his. The tree's beauty and perfection reflects nature in a miniature form, each styled to conform to the Bonsai ideals of naturalistic planting. More than 50 trees, both hardy and tender, are featured accompanied by detailed cultivation notes from the day the plants were first acquired, providing an insight into the commitment required to create such works of art. Full growing details are covered from seed sowing and growing to cuttings, air layering, grafting and adapting garden centre finds to 'instant' Bonsai. Flying in the face of their 'tortured tree' image, the care and maintenance spent on these tiny jewels is unparalleled. Ideas for display inside and outside the home are shown together with complementary planting schemes. Contact addresses for UK Bonsai societies are found at the end together with a comprehensive glossary of terms. So overcome that 'anorak' image and look more closely at these wondrous creations - you'll soon see the fascination with them that enthusiasts fall for. About the Author Martin Treasure's trees have been widely exhibited at National and International exhibitions. In 1995 and 1996 he had a total of 12 trees on the Federation of British Bonsai Societies' stand at the Chelsea Flower Show which won a Silver Gilt Medal. He is a member of the Bristol Bonsai Society (and organized a large exhibition of trees for their 20th Anniversary in 1995), the Warminster Bonsai Society and the exclusive Classical Bonsai Circle run by ace bonsai artist Dan Barton. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction History Bonsai trees are often thought to have originated from Japan, but records over 2,000 years old show trees being grown in China as part of landscapes planted in shallow containers. Around 1,500 years ago, trees were first grown as individual specimens, many of which would have been collected from mountainous regions, and these can be seen in ancient Chinese line drawings. Several centuries later, the Japanese began growing and training trees in pots and have developed the hobby to its current level of sophistication. Chinese and Japanese bonsai are very different, with Chinese-style trees being more freeform and trained mainly by pruning, while Japanese trees are meticulously groomed and shaped, appearing more natural. The Hobby The growing of bonsai, which literally translates as "plant in a tray," is a truly satisfying hobby and combines both horticulture and art, creating trees that are often referred to as "living sculptures." Above all, it is important that the trees are kept healthy and in excellent condition, as with any potted plant. Pruning and shaping does, however, require a degree of artistic imagination to visualize the future development of the trunk and branches. Bonsai should embody all that is so wonderful about trees that naturally grow in such a variety of shapes and sizes. Large specimen trees, ancient trees with hollow trunks, trees that have been shaped by severe weather conditions or even small forests can all be recreated in the confines of a pot. By growing trees in this way, it is possible to have a mini arboretum of delightful, small trees in your own garden or even on a balcony, however limited in size. The timescale to create impressive bonsai is dependent upon the origin, general health of the tree and the species. Trees grown from seed or cuttings will invariably take longer to attain the images

required than much older material, perhaps collected from the wild or obtained as nursery stock. It can be most rewarding to build a collection from a variety of different sources. Actual age, however, is not as important as the illusion of how old the tree appears -- a well-trained bonsai may look far older than it really is. Misconceptions A common misconception about the hobby is that it is cruel, with the trees being starved in order to dwarf them. Nothing could be further from the truth. Bonsai trees require regular watering, feeding and reporting to keep them in optimum health, and in many cases they are actually healthier than their counterparts in the wild, enjoying the same longevity. Some trees in Japan have recorded histories spanning several centuries and are often traditionally passed from generation to generation, keeping them in the same family during their long lifetimes. Root pruning is a widespread horticultural technique, used by many gardeners to produce better root systems on plants grown both in pots and in the garden, and is not just associated with bonsai training. This practice facilitates the growth of a well-developed, compact root system with many fine, fibrous roots that are vital for taking up nutrients, and does not restrict the overall growth. Various branch- and shoot-pruning techniques are the methods by which the tree is dwarfed, in the same way as trimming a hedge keeps it from growing into a line of large trees. Indoor or Outdoor? Many species of tree and woody shrub are suitable for training as bonsai, but if planted in the garden they would grow into full-size specimens -- there is no such thing as a special "bonsai species." Pruning and shaping are required to create and maintain the desired shape and size. Some trees are often used to achieve the appearance of different species; for example, a juniper can look very effective when trained in the image of a pine. Trees that would naturally grow outdoors must not be cultivated indoors, where they cannot flourish and will soon die. Occasionally, outdoor bonsai may be viewed in the house, provided that a cool area is selected and that the duration is no longer than a couple of days. Only tropical species of trees are suitable for growing indoors. Figs, serrissas and pomegranates make particularly good subjects, although even these can benefit from spending the summer months outside. Appreciating Bonsai Bonsai can quickly become an important and very enjoyable part of your life. Do not be afraid to experiment with material -- it is all part of the learning curve. Spend time studying trees at exhibitions and in books to determine what makes them good or bad bonsai specimens. Most trees have faults of some kind and it is important to be able to identify these, but do look beyond individual features and learn to enjoy the actual bonsai tree as a whole unit. Patience is a definite virtue and the process of creating bonsai trees should not be hurried unnecessarily. Good bonsai can be trained in a relatively short space of time, provided that suitable material is selected from the beginning. Some of my trees have not always started out as ideal material, but through perseverance, surprising and satisfying results have been achieved. This is illustrated in this book by prime examples of the many detailed histories of trees drawn from my personal collection of bonsai, which I have had the immense pleasure of growing for many years.