

Tree Profile: *Alnus* - Alder

General information: Alder is the common name of a genus of flowering plants (*Alnus*) belonging to the birch family Betulaceae and comprises of about 30 species. With a few exceptions, alders are deciduous, and the leaves are alternate, simple and serrated. The flowers are catkins with elongate male catkins on the same plant as shorter female catkins, which are woody - similar to conifer cones.

The Alder is very suitable for Bonsai and the most commonly used are:

Black Alder - *Alnus glutinosa*, origin in Europe, Central Asia; introduced to Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Northeastern America and Canada.

Green Alder - *Alnus viridis*, origin in temperate Europe, Asia and North America.

Grey Alder - *Alnus incana*, origin in Eurasia and North America.

Position: Full sun, but semi-shade in summer. Protect from hot northerly winds and from frost in winter.

Watering: Likes a lot of water, especially in summer! Keep moist all the time - don't let them dry out!

Feeding: Very little fertilizing required, once a month during the growing season. Use liquid fertilizer or half-strength general purpose food if deficiency symptoms occur.

Repotting: Jung plants every year, older ones every second or third year in spring or autumn when plant is dormant. Use standard bonsai mix - not too free draining to keep the moisture up!

Pruning and Wiring: Cut back new shots to two leaves after four or five leaves have formed. Structural and heavy pruning in autumn - can also be carved. Wiring can be done from spring to autumn - on older trees use raffia to protect the bark. Keep checking regularly for scarring!

Styles: Formal upright, Informal Upright, Slanting, Cascade, Semi-cascade, Literate, Broom, Rock-over-root, Twin-trunk, Clump, Group Planting and Saikei

Propagation: Hardwood cuttings and seed! Cuttings to be taken in autumn after the leaves drop and placed in propagation sand. Seed to be sown as soon as it's ripe and to be kept cool - it will germinate in spring.

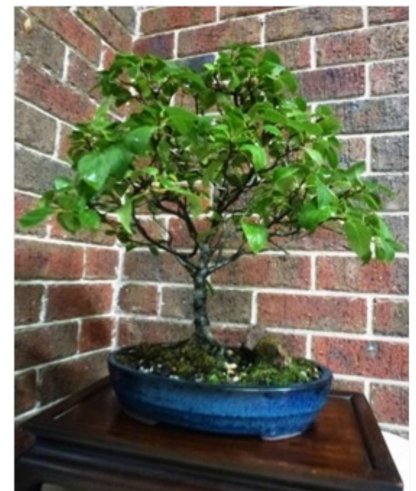
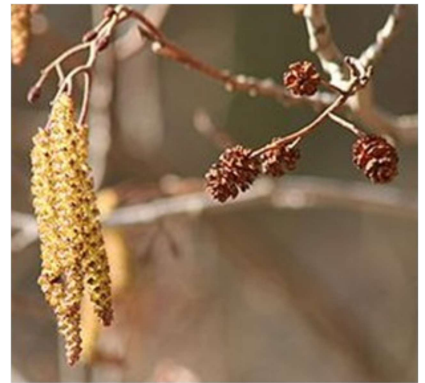
Pests and diseases: Aphids, Powdery Mildew and Branch dieback.

Species most suitable for Bonsai:

Black Alder - *Alnus glutinosa*, the bark of young trees is smooth, glossy and greenish-brown while in older trees it is dark grey and fissured. The glossy dark green leaves are rounded, pale green underside and short stalked.

Green Alder - *Alnus viridis*, smooth grey bark even in old age. The leaves are shiny green with light green underside. Catkins appearing late in spring after the leaves emerge - unlike other alders, which flower before leaves appear.

Grey Alder - *Alnus incana*, smooth grey bark even in old age. The leaves are matt green. Catkins appearing early in spring before the leaves emerge. It can create stump and root suckers.



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