

## Tree Profile: *Juniperus*—*Juniper*

**General:** According to Wikipedia - *Juniperus* are genuses in the cypress family Cupressaceae with about 60 species of juniper widely distributed throughout the world. They are evergreen with needle-like and/or scale-like leaves. They can be either monoecious or dioecious. The most popular variety for Bonsai is the 'Needle' Juniper - either Japanese or Chinese. The scale-like leaved one 'Shimpaku' is quite underrated in Australia, but favored in Japan and by myself too (not prickly)!

Many Bonsai Masterpieces are Shimpaku and Masahiko Kimura is known for having many outstanding Shimpaku.

It is one of the best beginner trees in the Bonsai world due to its forgiving nature and the ease of styling them.

**Lighting & Temperature:** Full sun, but in summer partial shade. Frost tolerant to about -8.0°C! Junipers prefer a humid condition and a humidity tray can help in providing the right level - but don't sit them in to the water to avoid root rot!

**Watering:** Don't allow to dry out and remain dry! Young plants benefit from soaking during dry spells. Good drainage is critical to prevent root rot, don't over water! They benefit from frequent misting to keep the pores dust free - during the growing season spray daily!

**Feeding:** Fortnightly with high nitrogen fertilizer in early spring, don't fertilize in hot summer. Slow release works well with a low level on nitrogen fertilizer in autumn and NO feeding in winter. Rather under than over fertilize ... it could kill them!

**Pruning and Wiring:** Pinching continuously from spring to autumn, but DON'T remove ALL growing tips - it will weaken your tree! If you cut the needles they'll turn brown. Junipers can handle hard pruning as well!

Wiring can be done anytime with care, best in autumn or early winter. Due to the flexibility of the trunk and branches whilst young heavy bends can be made easily. Older trees need to be protected with raffia or tape - watch out for the at times brittle deadwood! Depending on the age of the tree the wire can remain on from 3 months to a year, watch the wire over the summer month. "Clip and grow" achieves excellent results as well.

**Repotting:** Early spring is best when new buds appear. Avoid too much root disturbance, but remove any rotting or sick roots. For a better recovery don't remove more than about 25%. Add some washed coarse river sand to your bonsai mix for good drainage. Young trees every two years, older ones only every three to five years.

**Propagation:** Hardwood cuttings and air layer in spring, softwood or from seeds in autumn.

**Pests and diseases:** Scales, spider mites, webworms, aphids and needle miners - use specific pesticides. Rust fungus and root rot if poor drainage.

**Styles:** Every style and form of bonsai is possible! Great with Driftwood, Jin, Shari, Phoenix graft and for Landscapes too!

### Just to name a few species suitable for Bonsai:

***Juniperus chinensis* - Chinese Juniper**, showing juvenile needle-like leaves, adult scale-leaves.

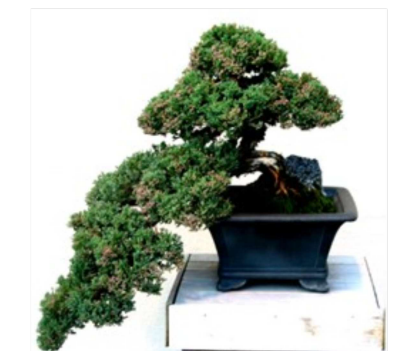
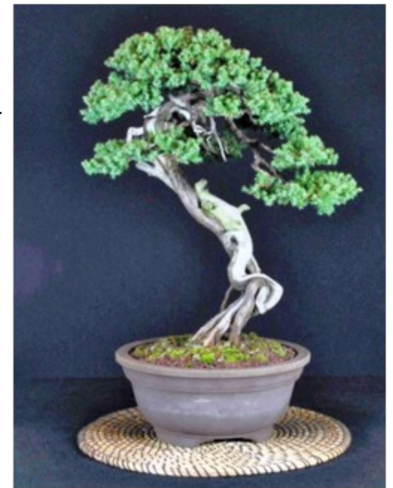
***Juniperus procumbens* – Ibuki Juniper**, very common as Bonsai with needle-like green leaves.

***Juniperus squamata* - Flaky Juniper**, valued for its needle-like bluish foliage and compact habit.

***Juniperus chinensis* 'Shimpaku' - Shimpaku Juniper**, its attractive scale-like leaved and beautiful bark make this one of the top candidates for bonsai.

***Juniperus communis* - Common Juniper**, it has needle-like leaves in whorls of three; the leaves are green, with a single white stomatal band on the inner surface.

***Juniperus rigida* - Temple or Needle Juniper**, open habit with graceful drooping branches with green needle-like and scale-like leaves. It is much loved as Bonsai with many fine and old examples.



Above - Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

