

Tree Profile: Dwarf Jade - *Portulacaria afra*

General information: *Portulacaria afra*, also called Money tree, Elephant plant or Small-leaf jade and is native to South Africa. Jade trees are excellent bonsai for beginners, because they grow very quickly, can be kept indoors, and can go up to 4 weeks without needing water. This is because like succulents they store water in their stems and leaves.

Lighting and Temperature: They can be grown both indoors and outdoors and will tolerate a variety of growing conditions. Growing best and very fast outdoors in full sun throughout the year. They will need protection in winter from frost, ensure that temperature do not fall below 10°C. Due to its versatility it has the ability to tolerate a wide range of temperatures, light and humidity conditions.

Watering: Always allow the soil to approach dryness before watering, but is not as particular about overwatering either.

Feeding: Feed between spring and autumn, does not need feeding during the winter months. Use a balanced liquid feed monthly, or a slow release organic feed - replacing pellets every two months.

Pruning and wiring: New growth should be continually pinched out to encourage stronger lower growth and to reduce leaf-size. Jades readily make new growth from wounds and individual leaves can be removed to quickly produce new branches.



branches. If you need insecticides use one that is not petroleum based.

Styles: Don't style the tree with long horizontal branches, because of their weight they tend to drop. Great for any style including cascades and rock plantings, informal and slanting. Very good for shohin and mame bonsai!

Never seal pruning wounds; wound sealants can trap moisture within the wound site and cause rotting.

Don't worry wiring Jade, it's easier to shape this species by clip and grow, however, they do respond to wiring well and set into new positions within 3-4 weeks.

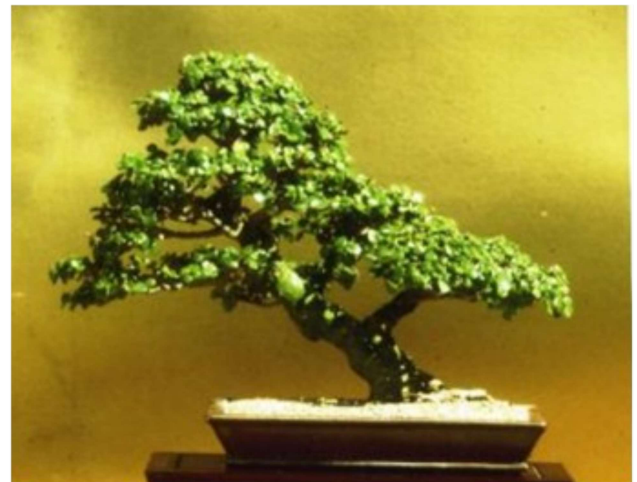
Propagation: Cuttings can be taken at any time, allow them to dry for a day before placing in well-drained soil. Large cuttings can be trimmed and shaped into a bonsai style, then rooted in a bonsai pot.

Group plantings can also be created this way.

Repotting: Spring is the best time to repot but it can be done at any time if given proper aftercare. It is important that you allow the soil to become dry before repotting or severely pruning the top. Do not water until new growth appears. Keep it in a semi-shaded location until new growth begins, then place it in its normal location.

Pests and diseases: The tree will show stress from both scale and root rot by dropping leaves and

branches.



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