

Tree Profile: European Oak - *Quercus robur*

General Information: *Quercus* is a genus of about 600 species of deciduous, semi-evergreen and evergreen trees and shrubs. Nearly all are slow-growing and long-lived species, some reaching heights of up to 40metres. The genus is native to the Northern Hemisphere, extending from cool temperate to tropical latitudes in Asia and the Americas.

Lighting & Temperature: Full sun and good air circulation to discourage mildew problems. Protect from hard frost below -5°C. Shaded branches on Oak bonsai have a tendency to die-back.

Watering: Give plenty of water when fruiting. Do not mist, as this encourages mildew.

Feeding: Once every two weeks at half strength after first growth has hardened off in Spring.

Pruning and wiring: Pruning mid to late Spring, trim new shoots and pinch out apical buds unless extension is required.

Wiring should/can be done from spring through the end of autumn.

Defoliation: Complete defoliation can result in larger leaves and on weaker trees, dieback of lower branches. Infrequent repotting helps reduce leaf-size, as does removal of apical/terminal buds before they extend in Spring.

The tips of most Oak branches will produce a swirl of 4, 5 or more leaves, remove all but the smallest to prompt creation of a new flush of smaller leaves.

Propagation: From seeds, sow seed outside as soon as ripe. Air-layering in late spring, but can be with difficulty. From root cuttings, many also sucker up from the roots, and the suckers may be separated from the roots in autumn or in the following Spring from their formation.

Collecting in Spring or Autumn with the maximum amount of root ball retained when planting the tree in a pot or box to recover.

Do use the method of submerging the potted tree into water after collection for 2 to 3 weeks. The abundance of water enables new roots to easily take in water and stops the leaves from becoming limp and falling.

Repotting: Oak should be repotted yearly as buds start to move in Spring until the tree is 10 years or older, then every 2-3 years. However, it is possible that repotting after the first leaves have opened or in early Autumn, which is better for *Quercus robur*.

Pests and Diseases: Very susceptible to mildew problems unless good air circulation is provided, also oak wilt, aphids and gall wasps.

Styles: Upright and slanting styles, multi-trunk styles, group planting in medium to large sizes. Suitable for subtle deadwood features.

Pots: Glazed in light and or textured, earthy colours.



Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



Q. Hello Mr Miyagi, when is it safe to re-pot my tree?

A. Different types of tree need to be re-potted at different times of the year.

- Deciduous trees should be done now (late winter or early spring), just as the buds have swelled and just before they open.
- Pines should be done in either spring once the temperature rises or in autumn.
- Azaleas should be done after they have finished flowering.
- Junipers can be re-potted anytime, but to reduce the amount of aftercare and any chance of root rot, its better left until mid-spring.

- Natives can be potted throughout summer, just as the buds have swelled and just before they open.
- Figs can be potted from late spring through summer, just as long as the overnight temperature is above 16°C.

It is important that all the wiring has been completed prior to the re-potting as additional movement of the tree after re-potting can damage the fine roots. Re-potted trees should be given a good drink of a fish emulsion after potting and placed into a shaded and wind protected area to recover for 3-4 weeks before slowly reintroducing them back to their normal position.

Members may submit questions to Mr. Miyagi c/ o the YVBS web forum or per the club email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au