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The Mini Bonsai Kit



Synopsis

With this kit, complete with a 32page book explaining bonsai gardening, an instruction sheet, a small pot, a peat pellet, a packet of seeds, and a pair of scissors, indoor gardeners can grow a peaceful mini-garden anywhere they choose. Whether it's on a desk or in a kitchen, this little bit of greenery will brighten up the day-just add water! Also available in a full-size kit

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 2.9 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (46 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #81,966 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Japanese Gardens

Customer Reviews

What you should know before buying this kit is that no one experienced with bonsai trees seems to be growing Jack Pine Trees. So, it can be difficult to find supplementary information. Also, I planted all six seeds and only got one to sprout. Now that I've done more research, I am a little surprised that I got even one. Most trees that need cold stratified stay in the refrigerator for 90 days, not one week. However, I did get my one tree from this kit, and he seems relatively happy. He's nothing like a tree yet even though he's more than a year old. He looks more like a pom-pom on a little twig and doesn't have any real branches yet. This leads me to think that this is not the best species of tree for a beginner. There are so many things that can go wrong, and having a tree that takes forever to mature makes it even more stressful. This book tries to make the process sound easy and short when it's actually a fairly long process. Some of the shortcuts in its directions probably greatly reduce your chances of getting a good tree established. A better place to start would be: [...] All of their seed packs cost less than \$5 and come with ten to fifty seeds and documentation specific to the kind of seeds with step by step directions. You'll be just as good starting there if you want to start growing a bonsai tree from a seed.

I'm an outdoor hobbyist that lives in the extreme heat of Las Vegas, so I figured it would be nice to have a bonsai since it is difficult to cultivate outdoor plants in the extreme heat with water regulations. I bought this kit around the same time I bought a four year old juniper bonsai and my bonsai collection started. There are several things any bonsai beginner should know: 1.) Any tree acquired through a seed will not become a full fledged bonsai for at least 2-3 years. This meaning, you won't trim it, though it may be easier to train into a desired design. 2.) Conifers, which the Jack Pine is, need to be outdoors to grow properly. This applies even to bonsai. 3.) Pines are not the best beginner bonsai, nor are seedlings. Don't feel discouraged at buying one from a store, many bonsai sensei never grow their own bonsai from seed. I bought a money tree bonsai at the 99 cent store and have been growing it mainly for cuttings for friends to start their own bonsai fetish: money tree bonsai are fairly easy to tend to and are indoor bonsai. Bonsai Boy is a good place to look for good beginner trees, for semi-cheap prices. In any case do a bit a research into bonsai before deciding; Jack Pines live for a couple hundred years. For anyone who has purchased this kit, I suggest leaving the seeds in the refrigerator, but changing the paper towel weekly until the seeds have sprouted and become tangled in the towel, then gently place all the seeds about 1/2 inch in the bonsai pot. When the following spring comes and it is time to repot it might be best to repot ALL the seeds either in the same pot separated areas or in separate pots entirely. I suggest this because its nice to experiment with different styles of bonsai. When, in time, pruning is needed forget the scissors- gently pinch/pull off new buds to encourage more compact growth needed for bonsai. Good luck, may your soil stay moist, but not rot the roots.

The Mini Bonsai kit caught my eye at a local bookstore because I've always wanted a bonsai, but I'm very good at killing plants. I figured I'd pick this one up and take a look at it. While it's rather neat, it's still a bit of a disappointment. My first complaint is with the box, it says it contains everything needed to grow a bonsai garden. The kit contains everything needed to grow a bonsai tree, but not a garden. Small difference, but still somewhat puzzling. I'm having the same problem with this book that I'm having with the mini Zen Gardening Kit. When you open it fairly flat, you can see where it has been sewn, which make me worry that I'm going to destroy the book by reading it. The instructions for getting your bonsai tree started are very clear and are explained pretty well. It takes eight days to get the bonsai up and going, but at least you're told that in the first 2 instructions. The book also goes through caring for a bonsai, and the science and art behind it. The rest of the kit is pretty straightforward and decent. More than one jack pine seed is included, so you're not out of luck if one doesn't sprout. The pot is some kind of non-plastic, non-metal pot, standing about an

inch tall and about 2 inches across. There's a peat pellet included so you don't have to go buy soil or dig up your neighbour's yard, and there is a set of miniature scissors included as well. The scissors are little plastic cheap scissors, but they cut paper, so they will probably work in pruning a bonsai.

A lot of people claim that their bonsai hasn't grown because of the instructions, but I've also noticed that a lot of amateur bonsai enthusiasts go against the instructions in the tiny book by way of cold stratifying beyond suggested time, using techniques too advanced for this particular kit, et cetera. However, it's been a couple of months and my bonsai is thriving. Call it luck, but I planted it during a less than forgiving summer (rather than spring), watered it with tap water, kept it indoors for weeks at a time, and yet it's becoming a little masterpiece on my desktop. I have actually owned this kit twice; the first being when I was just 11 years old. The first time I threw away the instructions by mistake and planted the seeds without cold stratifying, and it sprouted shortly before wilting to death due to my childhood apathy of growing stuff. Today my desk is graced with the company of a maple bonsai I found (bonsai are everywhere, even if the kit were to fail), and the included pine that, currently, vaguely resembles the unknown variety of pine in my yard. The kit itself doesn't come with everything for a beginner, however. There are many more tools used in the delicate art of bonsai other than the tiny scissors. Perhaps this the one essential that should have been added would have to be training wire.

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