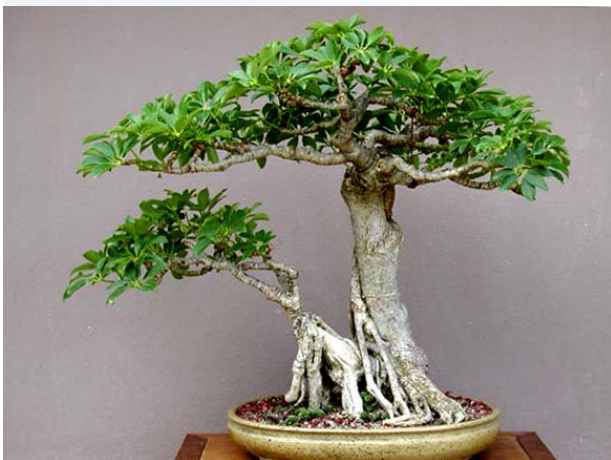


Schefflera Care Sheet



Brought to you by
S & S Bonsai of Colorado Springs, Colorado
(Most of the included information is obtained from several
online sources.)



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*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if
you were to live forever."*
—Mahatma Gandhi—

The Schefflera

(*Schefflera arboricola*)

General Information: Schefflera arboricola (reaching 6–12 feet in height with 4-7 inch leaves) is commonly referred to as the Dwarf Schefflera while Brassia actinophylla (reaching 30 feet with 24 inch leaves) is the full-sized Schefflera. Scheffleras have a compound leaf, meaning that the leaf has more than one leaflet per petiole or “stem”. This makes the leaf look larger than it is. Both Scheffleras have a relatively large leaf and petiole which makes the creation of very small sized bonsai difficult. The arboricola and its dwarf variety are native to Taiwan even though it is sometimes referred to as Hawaiian Schefflera it is not native to Hawaii. Schefflera actinophylla (Brassia actinophylla) are native to Australia.

Some bonsai purist do not feel that Schefflera are true bonsai. But as you can see from the photos on the cover of this care sheet, they make very good bonsai.

Younger trees do not have a particularly woody trunk or branches. But as the tree ages it develops what looks like wood. In actuality, they do not have a wood core or true growth rings as a true tree does. Due to the type of wood and bark on these trees they are a bit difficult to shape with wire.

Scheffleras form aerial roots with ease and are very useful for designing banyan tree forms or forms requiring dramatic exposed roots. The strong surface rooting and fleshy roots makes root-over-rock styles very easy and gratifying.

The Schefflera arboricola 'Luseane' has the smallest leaves and is very desirable for bonsai, it is a slow grower and although now very common was once hard to find. Produces aerial roots in moist humid conditions.

CARE

Temperature: Zone 9B-11. Protect below 40° F.

Lighting: Scheffleras tolerate fairly low light levels. More light is of tremendous benefit and allows the tree's leaves to be smaller and the plants to have more growth and vigor.

Watering: The Dwarf Schefflera likes a moist soil and must not be allowed to go bone dry. Schefflera does quite well with low humidity.

Fertilizing: p.H: 6.0 - 7.5. Use a houseplant fertilizer diluted to half strength and use it at weekly intervals to provide adequate nutrition. Always water your tree well before fertilizing. Reduce the fertilization to once a month during the winter rest period or when the tree is not actively growing.

Pruning / Training: Clip and grow technique works best. Can be defoliated once a year in the Spring to create smaller leaves. Since Scheffleras do not have a really woody trunk they are a bit touchy to wire. It helps to wire them when branches are still relatively young. Stems that are green to slightly woody will be the easiest to wire. Apply the wire a bit more loosely than on other bonsai and bend the branch gradually over a one-week period. Treat the stems like a stalk of celery that snaps if pushed too far. Make the bends gently and avoid drastic directional changes.

Insects / Pests: Aphids, mealy bugs and Scale.

Propagation: Stem cuttings can be placed into a container filled with a granular soil mix. The mix is then moistened and the whole is enclosed in a sealed plastic bag. In four to six weeks the cuttings will have set roots and can be removed from the bag. Failure to root will

likely be due to overly wet soil mix and rotting of the stem.

Repotting: Repot the trees every two years in the Spring when minimum night temperatures are consistently in the high 60'sF. It is safe to repot the Scheffleras all summer. Be careful with the roots as they are easily damaged. A good starting soil mix for the Dwarf Schefflera is one half bark and one half inorganic material.

Design and Styling: An Informal upright style with a large canopy. Root over rock styles with lots of exposed roots, and designs that emphasize aerial roots are also very suitable for this material. The easy formation of aerial roots on Scheffleras allows them to make great banyan style trees. Most commonly seen in multiple trunk clump.