

Ulmus parvifolia, var 'Dynasty', has smooth dark grey bark, smaller leaves and is vase-shaped, with red fall color in the north.

Ulmus parvifolia, var 'Frosty', has a small (.75 inch long) white-margined leaf which may revert back to green.

Ulmus parvifolia 'Hokkaido', a very popular cultivar because it sports so many bonsai qualities. Firstly, this cultivar is a fast grower, second, it has very tiny leaves, third, it has short internodes and lastly, it has corky bark at a very young age. On the down side, it is a very fragile plant, so handle with care, especially if you wire your plant. The best method for developing this tree is clip and grow.

Ulmus parvifolia 'Yatsubusa' 'Yatsubusa' is the Japanese word for 'dwarf'. Another Carl Young introduction like '**Seiju**', with very interesting elongated medium green leaves to 1 1/2 inches. It has the corky bark similar to '**Seiju**' but takes a little longer to develop, but it grows a little faster. Ultimate height is perhaps 8-10 feet.



Seiju Elm Care Sheet





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

The Seiju Elm

(*Ulmus parvifolia 'Seiju'*)

General Information: *Ulmus parvifolia 'Seiju'* This sport of 'Hokkaido' was introduced by Carl Young of Lodi California. It has all the good qualities of 'Hokkaido' in a larger plant. The leaves are identical except they are about 1/2 inch and the plant may reach about 10 feet if planted out. The leaves will slightly reduce over time in Bonsai (down to 1/4") but the initial full growth leaves are only around 1/2", so don't attempt leaf reduction procedures as it's really not necessary. It has the same deeply fissured corky bark that begins roughening in about 2 years. The wood is stronger and more flexible and can be wired. Grows quickly, about 18 inches a year.

CARE

Temperature: Zone 5a. They can endure temps down to 20F just fine. Take care to keep the roots from too much cold by mulching the pots into the ground or wrapping them with some insulating material. Elms have fleshy roots that can easily be damaged if they are allowed to get too cold or have to endure freezing and thawing in a cycle. If the tree gets too cold for too long, loss of some of the fine ramification may result.

Lighting: Full sun or partial shade. If they start spring in full sun, they will be able to withstand full sun all year.

Watering: Needs a lot of water. Evenly moist. Let dry somewhat between waterings. Do not let fully dry out.

Fertilizing: In the early stages, feed well and feed often. In the growth and establishment phase, fertilize bi-weekly at half strength. They will thank you with rapid growth. Be careful with the fertilizer as with a dwarf of this type, the leaves may get a lot larger with too much nitrogen. As the tree evolves, start cutting back on the fertilizer – especially nitrogen. On established or finished trees, fertilize every 6 - 8 weeks. As with many

deciduous trees, additional fertilizer generally can result in extraneous growth that needs more attention and pruning, a situation you don't need in finished trees.

Pruning / Training: An excellent species for pruning as it will back bud readily in all areas including the trunk. Seiju can develop an unusual looking or swelled appearance especially in areas of heavy pruning. Try to limit your hard pruning to young trees. On older specimens, you can diminish this area slightly by removing some of the corky bark in the swelled area, but it may stand out just as much due to the bark differences. Typically when pruned (especially if hard pruned), they send out a multitude of new branches around the pruned area. Reduce these down to a couple to help avoid swelling at the pruned areas. Remove all extraneous trunk growth as it appears. In spring, due to the rapid new growth rate, you will need to occasionally thin out some areas to allow light penetration to the inner areas. Small new branches will die off very rapidly after the spring growth flush if they don't receive sufficient light.

The wood becomes brittle with age, be careful wiring. Watch closely for rapid spring growth as wire scars are hard to heal on this species.

Insects / Pests: Aphids, scale, borers and chewing insects seem to be the only pests bothering the plant. Cankers may develop on young trunks where soil is excessively wet. Resistant to Dutch Elm disease.

Propagation: Because these dwarf varieties are sports of another plant, they can only be propagated by cutting or layering. Cuttings may be made from new tip growth taken in early summer. 6 inch cuttings taken with sharp, clean scissors in the summer. Place in a glass of water and roots will soon develop. Repot rooted cutting in a quality bonsai soil or a mixture of 2 parts loam, 1 part peat moss, and 1 part sand.

Repotting: Repot approximately every two years in the early spring. As with most of the elms which

have been started from sports, the roots are very fleshy. Build your root system slowly; starting when the tree is young, you can remove large fleshy roots, but be cautious and only remove a couple per year. Elms do not react well to extreme root pruning, so avoid pruning the roots too far back when repotting. After repotting, water thoroughly and keep the plant in a shady location for several weeks in order to help the new roots grow. The roots are similar in texture to buttonwood in the fact they seem like soft spaghetti and break off very easily. Due to their fleshy nature, be careful when cleaning the soil off the root system. Do not use root hooks, wash out the old soil with a hose and you'll experience less damaged or broken roots. Excluding the large fleshy roots, you should have no problems removing almost 1/2 the root system if required. Any type of soil with good drainage seems to grow them well. They have heavy root growth so must have root room.

Design and Styling: This cultivar is best for Shohin through medium sized bonsai. It should be large enough to allow the bark to fully develop, but also can be grown to six inch caliper in a reasonable amount of time.

Other parvifolia species suitable for bonsai:

***Ulmus parvifolia*, var 'Catlin'**, is a sport of the common Chinese elm. It is partly evergreen in mild climate and evergreen in the south. Its leaves are a 1/4" to 3/4" long and are a shiny dark green, lanceolate and smaller than zelkova. John Catlin, a landscape designer in California, found this sport on an *Ulmus parvifolia* or Chinese elm in a nursery in about 1953. Jim Barrett named it Catlin Elm to honor the man who found it and to separate it from the Chinese elm.

***Ulmus parvifolia*, var 'Drake'**, USDA Hardiness zone 7 to 9. has small, dark green leaves, sweeping, upright branches forming a rounded crown and greater leaf retention being almost evergreen in CA and FL.