

ASSESSMENT AND JUDGING BONSAI FOR EXHIBITION

Suggested Guidelines by Paul Goff

Item

Suitability of style

for the species of tree has the artist interpreted the tree in a convincing, natural realistic style that may typically be found in nature

Health and vitality

Does the bonsai display good husbandry and a vigorous quality, showing good health? Low marks for evidence of pest attack and disease or horticultural neglect.

Trunk base and roots

Good basal trunk flare with an even spread is ideal. Does the bonsai firmly grip the ground from which it emerges?

Trunk and Branches

Natural Taper in trunks is preferred with a good arrangement of primary branches to achieve a balanced design.

Foliage

Foliage should be in good condition, healthy and neatly groomed arranged in a manner typical of the species showing good colour, evidence of old decaying needles or leaves is not good.

Pots and containers.

Pots must be clean. Suitability of size and choice of pot is important. Does the combination of tree and pot extend the feeling of harmony in terms of colour and texture and does it suggest natural habitat and enhance the season of display?

Soil Surface and finish.

The soil surface should uphold the overall feeling of health and vitality, free from decaying foliage weeds and any evidence of solid fertiliser residue. Any underplanting must be appropriate and continue the natural theme of the individual exhibit.

Establishment.

It is important that the exhibit displays an atmosphere of maturity and timelessness as if it's been potted and established for ever. Evidence of a new or recent potting is not good.

Overall Artistic Merit.

Although subjective, does the bonsai have good aesthetic qualities and display artistic merit providing the viewer with an image of natural beauty? Evidence of large man made cuts, over wiring and other defects caused by techniques is not good.

Accessories and scrolls.

If the exhibit includes accent plantings or accessories such as scrolls or figurines they must enhance the natural theme and not detract the viewers attention. It is important that the additional items support the bonsai in terms of season and location. Flow and movement must also be retained. A base or stand must be used for accents and figurines but must not bear any similarity to the primary table or stand.