

**CARE AND MAINTENANCE
OF
EASTERN WHITE CEDAR**

BOTANICAL NAME: Thuja occidentalis

COMMON NAME(S): Eastern white cedar, arbour vitae

CHARACTERISTICS: The eastern white cedar is an evergreen conifer. It is not a true cedar; it is a "Thuja", an arbour vitae. Foliage is in fronds, somewhat reminiscent of Hinoki cypress, and in nature is a bronze-green. The bark is brown, with lots of character. Driftwood bonsai styles are popular with this "cedar" - the wood is relatively soft and easy to carve. Some very dramatic bonsai are therefore possible. Thuja can shed up to about one-third of its foliage in the fall.

PRUNING, PINCHING AND WIRING: Pruning and wiring can be done throughout the growing season. Hand pinching of new growth results in short, dense foliage. While budding back on old wood has been observed in nature, it has not been observed in bonsai culture. Fall shedding can be controlled by timely pruning and pinching in September.

REPOTTING AND SOIL: While repotting is done in the spring, Thuja enjoys a long repotting season, from about April through May. Repotting is done about every 3 years using the commercially available bonsai soil mix. Thuja has a very fine root ball and takes well to root pruning.

FERTILIZING: Chemical fertilizer of the 30-10-10 variety is most often used. This high nitrogen ratio gives Thuja foliage a nice deep green colour; it is applied throughout the growing season at bi-weekly intervals. The use of different brands of fertilizer is recommended. (Lower nitrogen fertilizers can also be used.)

WATERING: Thuja is tolerant of being kept a little on the dry side, but if in doubt, water as you would your other bonsai.

DISEASES AND PESTS: None to speak of in bonsai culture.

SEASONAL CARE: Thuja should be grown in full sun. Winter care is easy and simple. Thuja is very hardy, tolerating minus Fahrenheit temperatures very well. To err on the side of safety, smaller specimens should be dug into the ground or stored as you would your other outdoor material. Very large specimens can be stored above ground, in sheltered spots. Wind protection should be provided and covering the bonsai with snow, if you have it, is a good idea.