

AGE in Bonsai – by Jonathan Cain

If the bonsai is grown from seed, this is an easy answer. But if a tree is collected from a garden, wild, nursery or rubbish dump, you may need an expert. In this case the age is always an educated guess and all bonsai should have 2 dates. The first date being the educated guess (if age is unknown) as to the age of the tree and the second date as to when the tree was trained as a bonsai. Bonsai should be labelled as follows

Wild fig

Ficus natalensis.

Informal upright

Tree Year 1999

Bonsai Year 2001

The age of the tree "Tree Year 1999" is the known (or estimated) date of the tree.

The age of the bonsai "Bonsai Year 2001" is the date the tree was started as a bonsai.

We know that Baobabs live to 4000 years and Olives over 2000 years and some pines to 4600 years. Unfortunately some tree rings are always easily visible, such as in Baobab.

From wikipedia

"**Tjikko** is a 9,550 year old [Norway Spruce](#) tree, located on [Fulufjället](#) Mountain of [Dalarna](#) province in [Sweden](#). Old Tjikko is the world's oldest living individual clonal tree, however, there are many examples of much older [clonal colonies](#) (multiple trees connected by a common root system), such as "[Pando](#)", estimated to be over 80,000 years old.

Fully anchored chronologies (using counted rings of similar trees where the sample tree rings are not completely visible) which extend back more than 10,000 years exist for river oak trees from South Germany (from the [Main](#) and [Rhine](#) rivers)

The oldest living non-clonal tree, verified by dendrochronology (counting rings), is "[Methuselah](#)" (4,800 years old), a [Great Basin Bristlecone Pine](#) in [California](#)"