

Wild olives apparently prefer soil with a pH of about 7. To ensure that the soil does not become acidic as a result of repeated feeding, charcoal (in pea-sized lumps) can be incorporated into the soil mix. Charcoal can also be mixed into the layer of drainage pebbles placed at the bottom of the container.

SEEDLINGS

Wild olives grow easily from fresh seed. Allow to grow until the trunk is fairly thick and cut off at the required height. The pruning technique discussed above can be used to stimulate the growth of lateral buds. Choose some of the resulting branches to give form to the tree and when it is reasonably well shaped it can be transplanted into a bonsai container.

CUTTINGS

Use hardwood cuttings of the previous year's growth. Dip into hormone powder and plant in a mixture of equal parts of washed river sand and peat. Firm down well and keep moist. It can take quite a while for roots to form.

NURSERY MATERIAL

Young trees of good quality are becoming harder to find, but occasionally one strikes it lucky. Look out for good branching and a solid base that tapers. A few years can be gained but the older branches will be hard and shaping with wire will be difficult. Cut the tree back to a basic frame, even if all twiggy growth has to be removed. It is better to redevelop this from scratch.

COLLECTED TREES

The choice is naturally larger but the principles are the same as for nursery trees. Our experience is that repotting should not be done for two to three years. It is important that all strong roots are cut back to

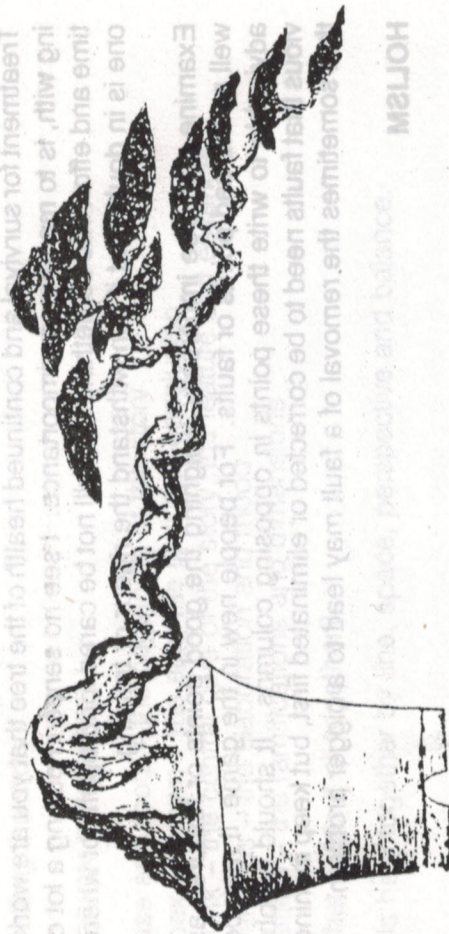
the final bonsai container size at the time of initial potting.

Transplanted trees that you anticipate difficulty with, can be put in intensive care by placing the whole tree in a transparent plastic bag to obtain a greenhouse effect. As it starts to grow a few holes at a time can be made in the plastic to acclimatize the tree to fresh air and the bag can then be removed.

STYLES

In our opinion, wild olives are suitable for most styles except formal upright, and they are excellent for group plantings, informal trees, saikei, bunjin, cascade, etc. We even collected a natural windswept in the veld recently.

Good luck with your wild olives!



Think holistic. That is taking all its parts as well as the action as well