

## Windswept: With Solar & Wind Power

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Redhawk Bonsai

Windswept style bonsai takes a little more maintenance than others in keeping the windswept look. Trimming and wiring of course are useful but here's a technique I use to get Mother Nature to help out with a bit of "solar power".

I've found that it is best if a tree is placed with the windswept direction facing due south (Northern hemisphere) and propped up at a 25 to 35 degree angle to get the best sunlight. This way there's fewer problems with branches growing in the wrong direction or opposite way of the "windswept" style. All growth will be directed towards the sun. This also encourages desired new growth from the underside of branches. Facing the equator at an angle between the horizon and straight up is the best that we practically can give it. Ideally I would follow it with the rising and setting sun, but I have better things to do and other trees to tend to!

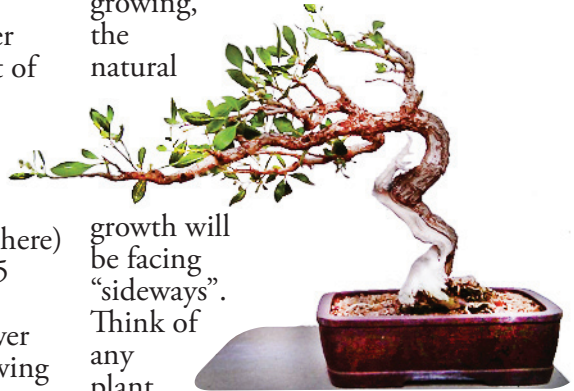
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### How timely and environmentally sensitive is this!

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All plants grow upward toward the sun; regardless of how much or how little sun they receive. Since the purpose of a windswept is to create the illusion of always having been blown sideways by the wind, you want the plant to continue to grow "sideways" in

that direction. So if the potted tree is placed at a tipped angle so that "sideways" is reaching more of an upward direction while growing, the natural



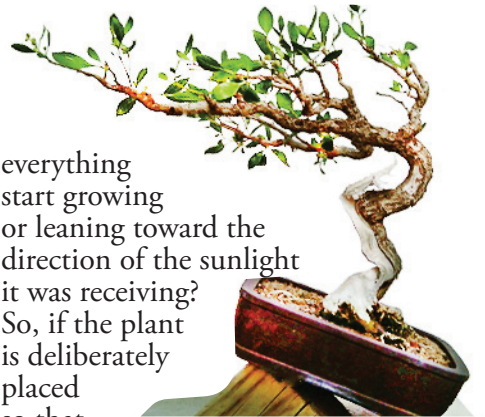
growth will be facing "sideways". Think of any plant

left in a sunny window facing one direction too long – doesn't

everything start growing or leaning toward the direction of the sunlight it was receiving? So, if the plant is deliberately placed so that

sideways is angled a little up, it will have a more natural windswept looking growth with less maintenance or having to trim and wire the branches to make them stay growing that way.

The upward angle doesn't have



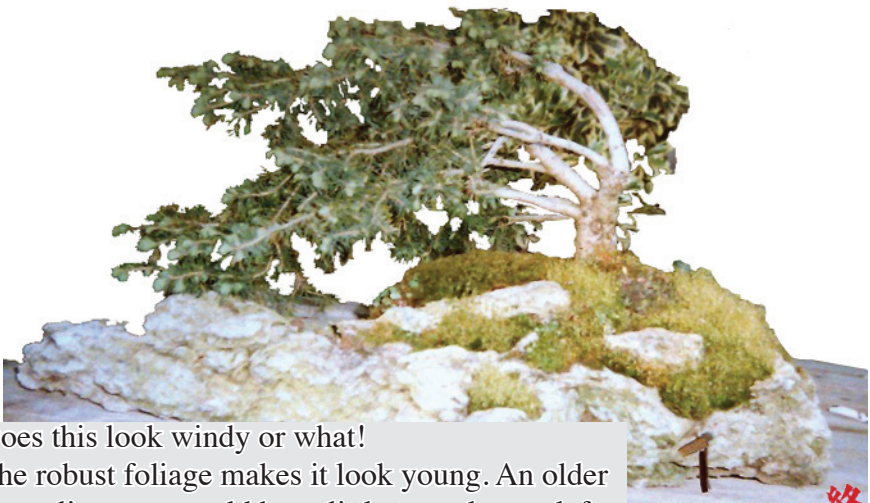
to be 90 degrees. By putting a couple of wooden wedges (around a 25 to 35 degree angle) under the end of the pot to prop the windswept end upwards, it'll be reaching more toward the sun. Down here in south Texas, facing the pot due south and propping upwards gives the growth maximum exposure to the sunlight all day and no need to move the plant around to follow the sun.

When watering with this technique, it's better to set the pot flat until the water has drained out, and then prop it back up into the sun. Then sit back and watch the sun help "maintain"

your windswept bonsai! On days that are less windy and the soil doesn't dry out I will prop up the "low end" during the night to help it dry out and help prevent root rot, then prop the "high end" back up in the morning. Because the chance of root rot is increased with this growing

method; always check both ends of the pot for moisture level. Periodic dousing with fungicide is always a good idea and be sure to re-pot annually with fresh soil.

While trimming and wiring will still be necessary for major shaping, using "solar power" to help with the general growing maintenance is an easy way to help grow your windswept trees!



Does this look windy or what! The robust foliage makes it look young. An older struggling tree would have little to no leaves left.

