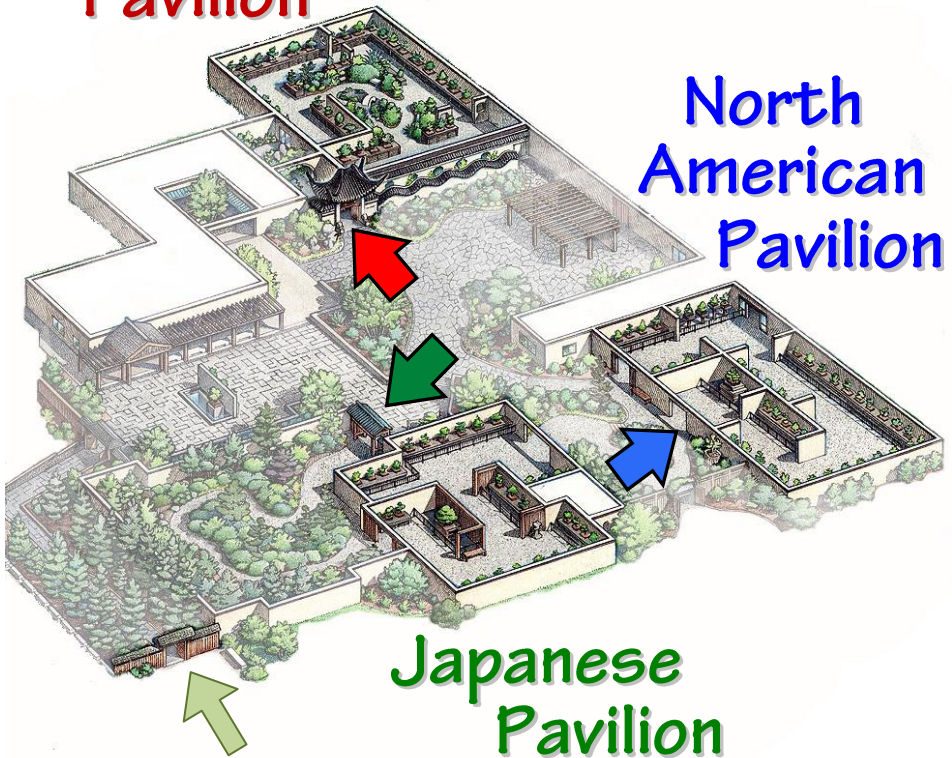


# Explore the World of Bonsai

NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING MUSEUM  
U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

**Chinese  
Pavilion**

**North  
American  
Pavilion**



**Museum Entrance**

# Chinese Pavilion

Enter a miniature landscape...

Chinese bonsai artists create

*miniature landscapes*

*in containers or trays* to remind them of enjoyable outings in nature.



Chinese painting showing a man enjoying nature.

**Imagine** that you are small enough to walk under the trees you see planted in pots and trays here in the Chinese pavilion. What might you be doing?

Can you find the landscape with a **man fishing**?

Write the number from its label here:

Where is the number on a label?

Look at the end of the bottom line



# Chinese Pavilion

Enter a miniature landscape...



*Chinese painting of a woman playing a musical instrument.*

Sometimes ***just one tree***  
in a container is enough to remind  
you of being in the countryside doing  
something enjoyable.

*Find a container with a single tree that has a person  
sitting under it.*

Write the number from its label here:

# Chinese Pavilion

Enter a miniature landscape...

If you were a person in this scene, what would you be doing to relax and have fun?

*Draw yourself into this picture.*



# Chinese Pavilion

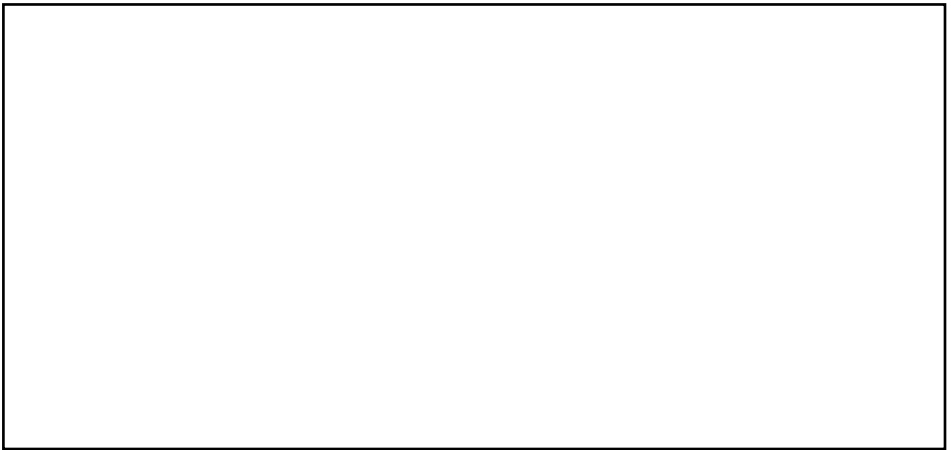
Enter a miniature landscape...

Sometimes Chinese landscapes are  
mostly mountains.

*Find a scene on a tray that is made mostly of*

***rocks.***

*Make a sketch of it in this box.*



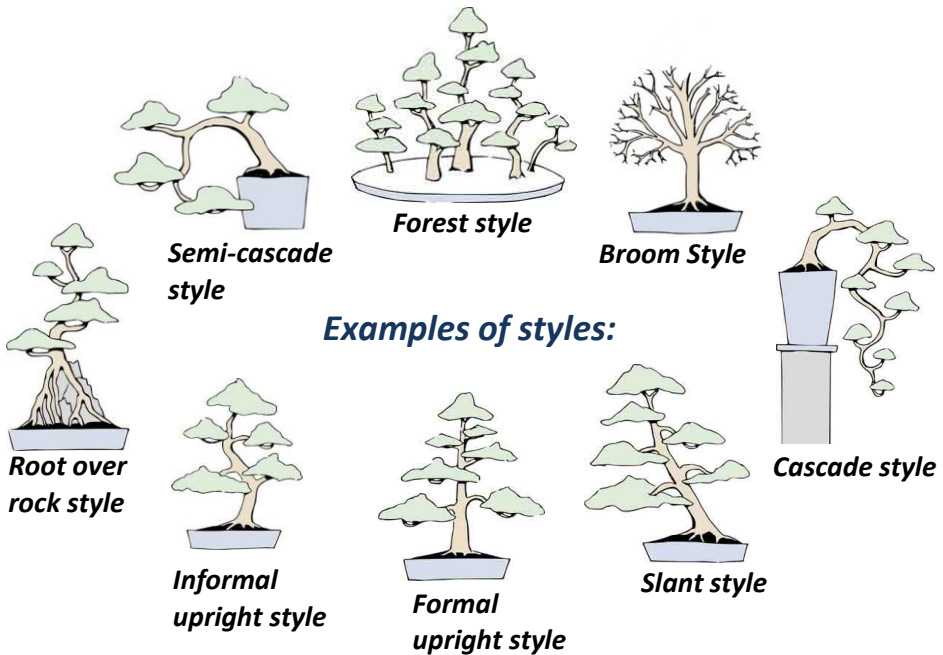
In China,  
*landscape scenes*  
*in containers or trays* are called  
***“penjing.”***

# Japanese Pavilion

Looking at trees...

In **Japan**, bonsai artists focus on the *shapes of trees*.

They create “*styles*” of trees that remind them of how trees grow in nature.



*Find bonsai* in the Japanese Pavilion that *match the styles of the trees* on the next 3 pages →

# Japanese Pavilion

Looking at trees...

## Root over rock style

*The tree's visible roots grow over a rock.*



Bonsai number

is in this style.

## Forest style

*Trees of various sizes planted together in groups.*



Bonsai number

is in this style.

# Japanese Pavilion

Looking at trees...



## Slant style

*The tree is at an angle so the top of the trunk is not over the base*

Bonsai number

is in this style.



## Informal upright style

*This trunk is curvy, but the top curves back to line up over the base.*

Bonsai number

is in this style.



# Japanese Pavilion

Looking at trees...

## Twin trunk style

*Two trunks grow from the base of the tree.*

Bonsai number

is in this style.



## Formal upright style

*The trunk is straight with no curves and the branches are almost horizontal.*

Bonsai number

is in this style.



# North American Pavilion

Discover secrets to looking old...

*Bonsai artists want their trees to look like they have lived a long time.*

*Why is that?*



Bristlecone pines  
(live up to 5,000 years)

(By the way, did you know trees are the oldest living things on earth?)

We especially treasure trees that survive into old age, like these North American trees:



California redwoods  
(live up to 2,000 years)

# North American Pavilion

Discover secrets to looking old ...

The best bonsai artists create *living sculptures* inspired by nature.



*They use many techniques to change the way their bonsai look, especially to make them appear **older**. They **study old trees** to identify features they can imitate.*

*What do you think makes a tree look old?*

*Use bonsai in the North American Pavilion to see if your answers **match the most common old-age features** used by bonsai artists. →*

# North American Pavilion

Discover secrets to looking old ...

## Trunk flare

*As a tree ages, its trunk and limbs become bigger and heavier. The base of the trunk flares out to support the weight.*

Find 2 bonsai with flaring trunks.

Write their label numbers here:



## Deadwood

*When a tree has lived a long time, especially in a harsh environment, some parts of the tree may die, while other parts continue to live.*



Find 2 bonsai with deadwood.

Write their label numbers here:

# North American Pavilion

Discover secrets to looking old ...

## Surface roots

*As a tree ages, sometimes the surrounding soil washes away to expose the roots closest to the trunk.*

Find 2 bonsai with  
surface roots.  
Write their label  
numbers here:



## Hollow trunk

*Many old trees have rotted out trunks. They continue to survive because the living part of a tree is on the outside.*

Find 2 bonsai with  
hollow trunks.  
Write their label  
numbers here:



Now that you have explored  
our museum, you can  
*use your bonsai knowledge—*



**W**hen you see beautiful  
trees in nature like this one...

...can you imagine them as  
**bonsai?**



*If you were a bonsai artist,  
which trees  
would inspire you?*

# How do you say **BONSAI?**

*“bone” + “sigh”*

盆

BON  
means  
“tray”

栽

SAI  
means  
“planting”

**Bonsai means “tray planting”**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Agricultural Research Service

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