

The ginkgo

Ginkgo biloba.

Family: Ginkgoaceae.

Origin: Japan.

This ancient, nearly prehistoric tree should be named Ginkyo, which is the latin adoption of the chinese word Yin-Kuo which means "silver apricot". It has a pyramidal silhouette with a straight trunk which grows aerial roots on the older exemplars. The ginkgo trees are perennial showing the leaves a beautiful yellow color in autumn.

Needs much light, likes inclusive direct sun exposition. The younger exemplars should be placed in mid-shadow during the hot summer because of their smaller pots.

Temperature and exposure: Ginkgos are supposed to be sensible against freeze, my experience is that ginkgos are very resistant trees, being there no difference between very high and very low temperatures. My tree is outside the whole year and the temperatures in Madrid are quite extreme.

Pruning and cleaning: Pinch the new sprouts you don't want to let grow. Also pinch the new sprouts at the extremes of the branches to help develop lower branches. Remove some leaves leaving more or less 2 or 3 leaves per branch. Branches should be pruned in spring when you repot the tree. Remove the branches you don't like and cut the rest to 2/3 of its length.

Wiring: The main form of the ginkgo trees is given by pruning, in the case of my tree i had to wire the main trunk because it was totally straight and didn't look natural at all. Be careful and protect the soft branches with raffia.

Watering: My ginkgo doesn't seem to need a lot of water, but i keep the soil humid. Never water when the sun burns down on it, neither do it when very cold temperatures are expected. Vaporize the trees several times a day.

Repotting / Soil: Should be done between spring and summer every two or three years into a bigger pot. Wait until the new sprouts are visible. Cut about 1/2 of the roots. The mixture I use is 1/3 compost, 1/3 humus and 1/3 sand. I like the blue and black ceramic pots, normally circular.

Fertilizer: Should be applied during the spring and autumn but not in summer. Never use fertilizer after repotting, wait for about two months. I prefer the solid type which dissolves itself when tree is watered.

Diseases: Ginkgo are very very resistant against parasites, i have never had any parasites on my tree.