

The white elm

Ulmus parvifolia.

Family: Ulmaceae.

Origin: Northern hemisphere. South of China and Taiwan.

The mostly used species is *Ulmus parvifolia* with its very small, dark green brilliant leaves. Depending on the climate the leaves are permanent or will fall late in winter after showing a beautiful orange color.

Light: Needs much light, likes inclusive direct sun exposition.

Temperature and exposure: They can be raised in interiors but should pass a fresh winter. Elms support cold winters against the opinion of lots of specialists. I have had even a little snowfall on them, without losing any branches.

Pruning and cleaning: I remove the dry leaves in autumn because they don't fall very easily on their own. During the vegetative phase which is very intense, be sure to prune the long branches to avoid big distance between knots. This way ramification is assured. Leaves can be removed in June, but normally it isn't necessary because the leaves are quite small anyway. When summer ends, structure pruning should be done to prepare the tree for the colder seasons.

Wiring: Not much wiring is done on the elms, only when the tree is young to form the main branches. Wire at the end of June and remove the wire in October. Form is mainly given by continuous pruning.

Watering: Elms prefer high humidity, vaporize often. In summer they need a lot of water but be sure to have a good drainage.

Repotting / Soil: Should be done between spring and summer every two years into a bigger pot. Cut around 2/3 of the roots. The mixture I use is 2/4 compost, 1/4 humus and 1/4 sand. I like the blue ceramic pots, normally rectangular.

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

Diseases: Elms are not very sensible, but if the atmospheric humidity is not high enough, red spiders will attack the little leaves turning them dry in a short time. Shower the tree a lot of times during the day because water is the worst enemy of the red spiders. If that doesn't help apply Compo anti red spider mite.