

## Carambola - *Averrhoa*

**General Information:** Averrhoa is named after Averrhoes, an Arabian physician. The most popular Averrhoa is the carambola or star fruit. A favorite in fruit salads, the carambola is just beginning to be used for bonsai. It is a small, tropical tree which grows to about 25 ft. Native to Malaya and S.E. Asia, it has dark green, evergreen compound leaves of 5-11 leaflets, small, rose colored flowers and fleshy five-lobed fruit. The plant will flower and fruit 2-4 times yearly.

**Lighting:** Will grow in semishade, although they prefer full sun.

**Temperature:** Young trees should never go below freezing. Older trees can withstand temperatures down to 28F.

**Watering:** Likes generous watering, although Averrhoa can be damaged by water-logged soil.

**Feeding:** Supplement liquid bonsai food/ half-strength plant food with trace minerals.

**Pruning and wiring:** No information available, as the use of carambola in bonsai is still in the experimental stage. Carambola is a naturally upright tree, so formal/informal upright styles are logical choices.

**Propagation:** Lesniewicz lists Averrhoa as a tree which can be grown from a seed obtained from a grocery store fruit.

**Repotting:** No information on time/frequency of repotting, although most tropicals like to be transplanted during warm weather. Averrhoa prefers acid soil, pH 5.5-6.5, although it will tolerate most soil types. It is not salt tolerant, however.

**Pests and diseases:** No serious pest problems, although caterpillars, mites and scale are occasionally reported.

### **Bibliography:**

Lesniewicz's "Bonsai in Your Home"

"Florida Fruit" by Lewis Maxwell

Florida Landscape Plants, Revised Edition, John V. Watkins, et. al.

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