

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Mark Saunders  
202-268-6524  
[mark.r.saunders@usps.gov](mailto:mark.r.saunders@usps.gov)

Ralph Petty  
[ralph.l.petty@usps.gov](mailto:ralph.l.petty@usps.gov)  
916-263-7161  
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## Postal Service Issues Bonsai Forever Stamps *Asian-Style Plants Commemorated on Postage*

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamp for media use only, email [mark.r.saunders@usps.gov](mailto:mark.r.saunders@usps.gov).

SACRAMENTO, CA — The U.S. Postal Service celebrates the beauty of the bonsai by issuing five First-Class Mail Bonsai 45-cent Forever stamps. The stamps, sold in booklets of 20, go on sale today at Post Offices nationwide, online at [usps.com](http://usps.com) and by phone at 800-782-6724.

The Bonsai Forever stamps were dedicated today in Sacramento at the Iva Gard Shepard Garden and Arts Center by U.S. Postal Service Sacramento District Manager Al Santos.

“Bonsai is an art form that stems from ancient, oriental culture and the art of the Bonsai is a rare form of beauty and craftsmanship which takes a lot of care and patience,” Al Santos said in dedicating the stamps.

Joining Santos were Edzard Schroeder, Treasurer and Budget Director, Iva Gard Shepard Garden and Arts Center and Ronald E. Krause, President, Sekiyu Kai Bonsai Club and Sacramento Postmaster Jeffrey Lelevich.

“The art Bonsai gives me a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and relax in the comfort of my trees,” said Krause.

For each stamp design, artist John D. Dawson of Hilo, HI, painted a particular style of bonsai under the direction of art director Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD. The stamps, from left to right are: a Sierra juniper in semi-cascade style; a trident maple in informal upright style; a black pine in formal upright style; an azalea plant in multiple-trunk style; and, a banyan in cascade style. The plants depicted are roughly 15 to

20 inches tall.

The Postal Service prints more than thirty new interesting stamp designs every year for use and collecting. The issuance of the Bonsai Forever stamps is part of the Postal Service's initiative to issue more different, colorful and pretty designs in booklet form that most Americans use. In addition to purchasing the stamps through the Postal Service, many grocery, pharmacy and big box stores are expected to offer them to their customers. And as an aid to retailers selling them, the booklet also features a new larger barcode.

### **Bonsai's Origin**

The word "bonsai" is Japanese for "plant in a pot." It also refers to the practice of cultivating plants — usually trees — in trays, pots or other containers.

Although no one knows when the first bonsai was created, it is generally accepted that Buddhist monks brought the practice from China to Japan about a thousand years ago. Today, bonsai are cultivated and appreciated for their beauty in many parts of the world. Favorite bonsai plants include evergreens, maples and azaleas, but many other trees and shrubs also are suitable.

For centuries, bonsai have served as objects of contemplation and meditation, as well as for decoration. According to *Utsubo monogatari (The Tale of the Hollow Tree)*, a Japanese literary work dating from around a thousand years ago, "a tree that is left growing in its natural state is a crude thing. It is only when it is kept close to human beings who fashion it with loving care that its shape and style acquire the ability to move one."

### **Other 2012 Stamps**

Customers may view the Bonsai Forever stamps as well as many of this year's other stamps on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at [beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview](http://beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview). *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](http://usps.com/shop) or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others) and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Bonsai Stamp  
Postmaster  
2000 Royal Oaks Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95813-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by March 23, 2012.

### **How to Order First-Day Covers**

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
P.O. Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### **Philatelic Products**

There are four philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 688063, First-Day Cover Set of 5, \$4.45.

- 688068, Digital Color Postmark (DCP) Set of 5, \$8.00.
- 688094, Notecards, \$14.95.
- 688099, Cancellation Keepsake (Random DCP w/Pane), \$10.95.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>.

For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional on this issue, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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