

FORT WAYNE BONSAI CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 12, Issue 1

<http://home.earthlink.net/~centaura/bindex.html>

January 19, 2008

FEBRUARY MEETING

We will meet at 10:30 am Saturday, February 16th at the Lawton Park Greenhouse at 1900 N. Clinton Street, Fort Wayne. This greenhouse is owned by the Fort Wayne Parks Department and used to grow plants for most of the city parks and for the Foellinger Friemman Botanical Gardens. We will be touring the greenhouses following our brief business meeting and there will be plants for sale during our visit so bring your wallet or checkbook.

We will also have a question and answer period or discussion group to answer any questions anyone has regarding bonsai or plants in general. Members are welcome to bring a tropical tree to prune.

We had election of officers at the January meeting. President/ Newsletter Editor will remain Darlene. The new Vice President is Cathy Blythe. Sharing the job of Secretary will remain Barb Kirkwood and Cat Nelson. Ed Hake will remain treasurer. Ed Hake is the one who weighed when we met 28 years ago.

If you have any trees you would like to show off you are welcome to bring them. If you have questions bring those. Note: Cat Nelson has updated our website so check it out using the link just under our masthead above. There might be a test at the meeting to see if you checked it out.

The last 2 pages of this newsletter is a communication I received regarding the National Arboretum in Washington DC. and the bonsai collection there. It is being threatened by a lack of funding for 2009 by President Bush and our current congress. We are being asked to take action to help stop this so this national treasure is not lost. These trees were given to this country by Japan, Jerry and I have seen them and they are beautiful. It would be a tremendous loss to the next generation not to have this collection to visit. I urge you to write letters.

Calendar of Local or Nearby Events

- February 16, 2008 10:30 Greenhouse tour at Lawton Park Greenhouse tour. Bring a tropical to prune.
- March 15, 2008 10:30 Cheryl Owens to speak on bonsai shows and show slides of bonsai shows in Japan.
- April 12, 2008 Nursery visit, 10:00 am meet at Kittle's for brief lesson on what to look for by Steve Moore then we head to a nursery to be determined.
- April 19, 2008 10:00 AM Bonsai Workshop with Bonsai Bob at Jerry & Darlene's Home. With Carry-in lunch with club supplying the meat.
- May 17, 2008 9:00 Set up for our Spring show which starts at 10:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm at the Conservatory
- June 21, 2008 A field trip to be determined or a lesson on wiring.
- July 19, 2008 Our Carry-in Summer Picnic at the Kittles. 11:30 am Club will supply the meat. Best Club tree contest, Best dead tree contest.
- August 16, 2008 To be determined
- September 20, 2008 To be determined.
- October 18, 2008 9:00 Set up for our Fall show which starts at 10:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm at the Conservatory
- November 15, 2008 To be determined
- December 20, 2008 11:30 am Christmas Luncheon Location to be determined.

Kathy's Korner

I've been browsing through the Winter 2008 ABS Journal. It has several interesting articles. The first one to read is the one titled Regional Bonsai Care: Bonsai Pest. The comments cover a variety of those pesky devils that we all have to deal with. And usually the pests are worse in the winter when the plants are stressed in an environment with too little humidity, lower light than they like, little to no air movement, no torrential rains to wash them off or even torrential hose blasts, and worst of all no predators.

The most common pests for me are mealy bugs and scale. A choice of treatment methods for these two pests and others are discussed. Whether you want to use chemical or organic there are treatment choices that could suit everyone. I find that my pest problem is much reduced with the use of fans in the areas where I have susceptible plants. And yes, the bugs do have preferred plants. So, I guess one method of control would be to NOT have plants that you know are going to be vulnerable to a particular pest.

There is an article giving instruction on perfecting your photos. It is the second part of a two-part series. The first part covered the composition of your picture. In this second part, Robert Kempinski addresses the digital camera and how to get the best use from it.

Will Heath gives background and design regarding the Literati Style. Perhaps you are like me and are shy on understanding the different styles and forms. The article outlines design considerations as well as other aspects of Literati style.

Tips and Techniques of using guy wires is written by Julian R. Adams. There are some very clear pictures to help the reader see and understand the techniques.

Andrew Smith details his acquisition and designing of a collected Black Hills Spruce. One can appreciate the patience that is needed to produce a really nice tree. He began work on the tree in 1996 or 1997. Several pictures show the progression that the tree has gone through. It is a very nice article.

Cheryl Manning then takes us from Trash to Treasure. I love this kind of article. Many of us start with nursery stock. Cheryl has done that with a Kingsville boxwood. The first picture shows the plant, "just out of the field." Over a span of time, techniques and sage use of cuttings, she produces a boxwood forest on a slab.

The ABS Journal is always a wealth of information. There is something in it for the novice and the more experienced. Take the time to look through the journals that are available to you through our library and choose one or two to take home for your study. It will be time well spent.

The club has the following items for sale:

Wire assortments: club members \$40.00, subscribers \$42.00, non-members \$45.00

Micromax micro-nutrients: \$5.00 for members, subscribers \$6.00, non-members \$7.00

Bonsai soil, shopping bag of 2 scoops: \$5.00 for members, subscribers \$6.00, non-members \$7.00

New Fertilizer blocks. ½ lb bag \$2.50 for members, Subscribers \$3.00, non-members \$3.50 1 lb bag \$5.00 for members, Subscribers \$5.50, non-members \$6.00 We also have bonsai slabs for forest plantings. Prices range from \$25.00 to \$50.00. Call Darlene or Ed regarding purchase. All these products

are great buys and priced lower than retail if they are even available in this area. Call or email Darlene or Ed if you want products brought to this meeting.

WHAT TO DO IN FEBRUARY

Towards the end of the month, if there are any brief mild spells, it is time to start to repot and wire those deciduous trees. If you have many trees, and the soil has thawed, it is never too early to start repotting. Branch pruning of deciduous and evergreen trees can be done. Any major redesign and reshaping of trees can be done now. Pines and evergreens can be grafted now, I may try again. Winter is an excellent time for heavy pruning, as sap is not flowing, and recovery is quick, new design and carving, needle plucking on pines (2-3 yr. old needles). Don't forget to take off old wire and add new wire if needed. This is a good time to decide which of your trees you want to repot this spring. Draw up a list of your trees that need repotting and order from Jerry as many bags of soil you may need. Think about some new pots, maybe. Finally, watch out for mice girdling your trees. Use mothballs or a hungry cat to prevent problems! And don't forget--read as many books on bonsai as you can. We can never get too much information. As for your tropicals, you will probably be seeing some new growth, since the days are noticeably longer. Maybe give them a little fertilizer. Prune as needed. Always clean off any yellowing leaves and dead twigs, again always checking for any insects, to catch them early. You may want to try to start some cuttings too. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask for help. Other club members are always willing to help.

By Ed Hake

American Bonsai Styles

by Brent Walston

Introduction

Styling in bonsai refers to the 'form' of the work, such Cascade, Slanting, Formal or Informal Upright. It can also be used to describe the particular the type of representation. For example, the basic round headed Pine tree 'style' is in current vogue. With the introduction of bonsai to the West, there is now the possibility of other styles using other species. This is the natural evolution of the art.

Styling goes hand in hand with the training methods and the materials used. I'm not very knowledgeable about such things, but it is my understanding that styling trends have gone in and out fashion for the last few hundred years in Japan. The current pine tree look has been around for a long time, and with the rise in popularity of bonsai in the West, I think emulation has prolonged its fashion reign. Folks new to bonsai want plants that look like the ones in the books which are mostly pine tree style.

I am a great believer in American bonsai. I don't mean to denigrate Japanese styles and work, they still style some of the most beautiful trees in the world, and they have such a rich heritage that it would be sacrilege to diminish their work. I feel that learning all their rules and studying their compositions is the best pretraining for most bonsai artists. I learned this way. Fortunately for me I learned without a sensei, and this has allowed me the freedom to experiment with growing techniques and styles. In almost any batch of plants I throw in a few off the wall wild things just to see what they will do, it makes life much more interesting.

Since bonsai is a representational art, it is bound to be greatly influenced by the natural environment of the artists. This is an important concept that is little discussed in books or lessons. Bonsai trees are not at all

miniature versions of magnificent ancient full grown specimen, no more so than a baby is a miniature version of an adult. Early paintings of babies as small scale adults demonstrate how ludicrous an idea this is. The tiny heads make them look pea brained. Bonsai is the same thing. If the leaves and branches were truly proportional, you would have to get out your magnifying glass to see individual leaves, and the tree would be so dense that it would just look like a shrub. The trick is to *represent* ancient specimen, to give the feeling and flavor and experience of such plants. This is where the true artistry comes in, since we are not simply mimicking nature. If that were the case, anybody could do it by copying photos of trees.

American bonsai should represent the American experience of trees. As I said, this is greatly influenced by the plant material, different species with different growth habits from the species of the East. I see this from trees of the West and I read about it from others who prefers to work with native material from the South. We are attempting to capture the flavor or essence of the beauty that these native trees give in their natural setting.

I am greatly influenced by the Sierras. I was raised on the East Coast and spent the first half of my life there, having never been to the West or even experienced *real* mountains. When I came to the West I was completely overwhelmed by the awesome and austere beauty of the high country. I will never forget my first hike to the top of Yosemite Falls. At the very top, where there is little soil on the smooth hard granite dome, there were hundreds of dwarfed Jeffrey pines, a zillion dollars worth of bonsai in every direction growing out of almost sheer rock. You can see the impact of this experience in my landscape designs. They are always open and spacious with the individual plants occupying their own space, attaining their own beauty, never crowding their neighbor and usually forming the tight dome so prevalent in the high country due to the high winds. The plants there hunker down for protection.

My bonsai has been influenced too. Most of my pines, even after fifteen years, are still in training, but many show the characteristics of high country pines. The most prevalent feature is that the trunk is formed by a series of leader diebacks due to wind and snow. Close to the ground, usually at the point that the first major branches grew, there is a severe, almost ninety degree bend, because the leader died and a side branch took over. From this side branch another leader developed and it too was destroyed creating another severe bend and so on. These trees do not look like what you see in books and do not have that wild look of Western Junipers, but it is a natural orderly style. By studying the trees as I have, you can learn the rules of development and create bonsai to represent the real thing. I am sure that the American Sierra pine tree look will become a new style, a truly American style.

Another American style that is sure to happen is the California Oak. There is nothing else like them in the world and each species has its individual quirks, that will vary from region to region, sometimes in as little as forty miles. This is not a tree of Asia, this will be a new style based on our experience of this tree. Naka has already done some of the analysis of what makes this tree give us the experience that it does, and has translated this into training techniques. The man is a true genius when it comes to this kind of analytical study. This doesn't come from studying the rules, it comes from studying the real trees. I have begun growing California Oaks for bonsai in anticipation of helping create this style.

And finally

I am sure all of us can work to make bonsai an even greater art, a changing and growing art, by taking the time to see what it is that makes *our* trees so great.

2008 Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival

Greetings Fellow Travelers–

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on Sunday afternoon, April 13th for the 2008 Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival.

Last year almost 2,500 guests and participants enjoyed the rich and various sights and sounds of the first Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival held in downtown Fort Wayne.

This year the Arts United Center as well as Friemann Square and the Fort Wayne Museum of Art will host an expanded list of performance and visual artists' performances and exhibitions.

See you then.

All the best. Noel Knox, Sister City Committe

Fort Wayne Bonsai Club - Meeting Minutes from 1-19-08

The meeting was called to order by Darlene Kittle on January 19 at 10:55.

We had a number of visitors at the meeting. Mark Chipson was here with Tim Robertson. Brent Edwards was at the show and is attending his first meeting.

The Sister City organization has given the club money to build a gazebo. Bruce Kennedy has agreed to use Bonsai Bob's design and will begin building it.

The rocks in the Japanese Garden were not put back in the same locations. The Sister City organization complained, reminded the city that it had detailed drawings of where they should be placed and requested that they be moved before the Cherry Blossom festival on April 13.

The February meeting will be held at the Lawton Park Greenhouse. Plants will be available to purchase that day.

Membership for the year is now due. Individual membership is \$25 and family membership is \$30. There is a discount for individuals over age 60 and that cost is only \$20. Please pay Ed Hake.

There was election of officers.

President- Darlene Kittle

Vice President Cathy Blythe

Secretary Barbara Kirkwood and Cat Nelson

Treasurer Ed Hake

Kathy Lee has agreed to continue as the Librarian.

Steve Moore has agreed to continue as the MABA representative.

Darlene has had a lot of complements on the newsletter and requests to reprint some of our articles

Darlene indicated that Ace Hardware in Warsaw is a good place to get tropical plant stock. There is a good bonsai shop in South Bend and the website is <http://fivepointgardens.com/bonsai.html>.

Bruce Kennedy will bring some red pine seedlings to sell at the March or April meeting.

If Cheryl Owens cannot speak at our meeting in March, we'll watch a video. We may reserve a room in one of the libraries.

Air Layering was the topic for this month and was presented by Ed Hake. For more information on this process, see the article in the January newsletter. It is safer than taking cuttings. Many different trees can be air layered. Outdoor trees may take longer. Ed recycles newspaper bags to provide the plastic needed to air layer a plant. You can use a small plastic pot but it is more difficult to see the roots. Because Ficus trees have sap, any cuts should be sprayed with water to dilute the latex sap. Make two rings around the branch you want to air layer. Cut the bark off, including the cambium layer. Put rooting hormone on the upper part of the cut. Where the cambium is coming down from the plant is where it will produce roots. Soak your moss in hot water. This helps it to absorb the water quicker. Form a wad of moss around the cut, wrap the plastic around it, and tie the top and bottom with a twist tie. In 3 – 4 weeks, you will see some roots. If you are doing this in March or April, the process may be even quicker, 1-2 weeks.

Some bits of information:

Ficus root fast.

You may need to add water which is easily done using a syringe.

It took Ed 1 ½ hours to root a pine tree.

Outside attempts can be done in March.

Various members tried air layering various plants that Darlene provided.

The meeting was adjourned at about noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Kirkwood

AIR LAYERING IN JANUARY





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Collections

February 8, 2008

**YOUR NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING MUSEUM
NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

The President's Budget for FY 2009 proposes to "downsize" the U.S. National Arboretum — which could cripple the ongoing operations of your National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

THE FACTS

In 1927, Congress established the National Arboretum "for research and education concerning tree and plant life." The Agricultural Research Service, which operates the Arboretum, is ignoring this Congressional mandate and proposes to eliminate the "Education" part of the Arboretum's mission. ARS would do this by cutting 40 percent of the Arboretum's budget for its Gardens Unit and Education & Visitor Services Unit, which would result in a possibly fatal loss of staff and services. The National Bonsai & Penjing Museum is part of the Gardens Unit and it is dependent on the Education Unit for many services.

As you probably know, the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum is the first and finest museum of its kind anywhere in the world. It was created in 1976 with the construction of the Japanese Pavilion on the grounds of the National Arboretum to display the bonsai given by the people of Japan to the American people to celebrate our country's Bicentennial.

In 1982 the National Bonsai Foundation was incorporated and since that time, with your help, we have raised millions of dollars for this Museum. In collaboration with the Arboretum we have made the tree and stone collections among the best in the world. Together we built more than 10 structures within the Museum complex and are in the process of completing a courtyard project that will make the Museum totally accessible to every visitor. With generous contributions from across the nation, some of the facilities that we have built include: the John Y. Naka North American Pavilion, the Yee-sun Wu Chinese Pavilion, the Haruo Kaneshiro Tropical Conservatory, the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion, the Yuji Yoshimura Visitor's Center, the Maria Vanzant Upper Courtyard, the H. William Merritt Entrance Gate, the Kato Family Stroll Garden, the Melba Tucker Demonstration Arbor, and the Rose Family Garden surrounding the Lower Courtyard.

If Congress approves these cuts in the Arboretum budget it will mean that the staff of the Museum will be cut, programs will be curtailed and pavilions will be closed. We cannot allow this to happen.

ACTION NEEDED

Please send a letter asking Congress to reject this short-sighted and harmful budget proposal and restore the funds needed to maintain the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Your letter might include the following points:

- (1) You are a strong supporter of this Museum and its mission to educate the public about bonsai and penjing;
- (2) It is a unique treasure that must be preserved; and
- (3) It is part of our national legacy.

You should mail your letter to the Chairs of the Senate and House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees as follows:

The Honorable Herbert H. Kohl, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
2362A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

If you contact your own Representative and/or Senator in Congress, please ask him or her to contact the Chairs of the Senate and House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees shown above.

If you are not yet a member of NBF, there is no better time than now to join. We need you now more than ever before.

Thank you for your support!

Felix B. Laughlin
President