

CUTTINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
BONSAI SOCIETY OF GREATER CINCINNATI

March 2007

www.cincinnati Bonsai.com

FROM THE EDITOR

There are two important notices in this month's newsletter. Your Board has been very busy with several new programs for the membership. These programs will be for both beginners as well as more advanced member. Details are found on pages five and six of this newsletter. This is a perfect opportunity to advance your bonsai skills. The improvement comes with the price of your commitment, to an extended program that may involve several years.

The temperature is rising, repotting time is here, are you ready? With highs in the upper 40's and even higher this next week, your deciduous trees should be budding out very quickly. It is the perfect time to get at those roots. Try and correct any crossing or strange looking roots. You can either cut to a side root or even use wire to help work out a unruly root. The main thing is that you improve the root base of your tree every time you work the root system. If you are using

a porous mix and repot regularly, you cannot help but notice the amount of fine feeder roots that develop.

I would also like to thank Greg Robinson for his recent "Ways and Means by No Means" articles. I encourage submissions from the general membership. Articles, digital photos, sketches are welcome. I would love to have a backlog of things to print.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

New Member Folders--When I joined our bonsai society in the early 80's, I was given a specially prepared folder containing a lot of written info about our club, bonsai in Cincinnati, statewide & nationwide. It also gave me some hints on where to go to get bonsai stuff. Somewhere along the line the new member folder dropped by the wayside--a good idea gone bad. Since joining the bonsai board I have been trying to get someone interested in resuming the new member folder idea but could not find anyone willing to put in the time to get it done. I finally realized I was asking the wrong people. I needed to talk to the power source, the make it happen people, the movers & shakers of the bonsai family, the motivational center of all that is good---THE THREE MUSKA-KNITTERS!!!! Sue Mayes, Gayle Radlinski & Sharon Scheid.

These ladies got it done & done it good. Drop by the membership table & take a look at a job well done--but you can't have one unless to just joined. Many thanks to Sue, Gayle & Sharon for putting down their knitting needles long enough to really do a much appreciated service to the new members of the future.

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PROGRAMS

Date—normally the third Thursday of each month (watch Newsletter)

Time—7:00 PM to whenever you want to leave

Place—Civic Garden Center—exceptions, July Picnic & Xmas Party (watch Newsletter)

March 15, 2007 Repotting Workshop

Jack Douthitt will be coming to Cincinnati later this year or early next year. For reasons out of our control we needed to cancel. Instead we will be doing a *repotting workshop*. This would be a good time for beginners and seasoned bonsai enthusiast to mingle and get to know one another better while potting one of their own trees and helping a beginner pot one of their trees. We will provide the soil for the beginners. This an excellent time of the year to start repotting our trees.

April 19, 2007 Mike Scheid

Mike started working with tropical bonsai during the middle 1970's. He is currently experimenting with tropical plant material and climate control in order to grow tropicals in the home. In the last several years Mike has devoted much of his time developing junipers and collected trees from the West. He has worked with many masters in this country and abroad. Teaching and giving demonstrations is what gives Mike the most enjoyment. In the picture Mike is the one with the shiny head.



May 17, 2007 Boon Manakitivipart

Boon to most of us needs know introduction. He is one of the best skilled bonsai artist in this country. In 1993, the Golden State Bonsai Federation awarded Boon a Teacher Development Scholarship: two years later, he received the Ben Oki International Design Award for styling a Sierra Juniper. He studied bonsai in Japan under the direction of Yasuo Mitsuya for one year and has returned many times to study under Kihachiro Kamiya until his passing in 2004.



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WORKSHOPS

REMEMBER OUR POLICY HAS CHANGED. YOU HAVE TO PAY UP FRONT TO GET YOUR NAME ON THE SIGN UP SHEET. PLEASE DON'T FORGET YOUR CHECKBOOK ON THURSDAY.

March 17, 2007 BYOT Workshop Civic Garden Center

Jack Douthitt --- Due to circumstances beyond our control the workshop has been cancelled. We are trying to re schedule a program with Jack next year.

April 21, 2007 Shimpaku Juniper Workshop Civic Garden Center

Mike Scheid --- We are having a Shimpaku Juniper, Shohin, workshop. The trees will be furnished. The cost of the workshop is \$40.00. The trees have been in Cincinnati for one year and have been exposed to our wonderful weather. The workshop will be at the Civic Garden Center starting at 10:00 am.

May 19, 2007 BYOT Workshop Civic Garden Center

Boon Manakitipart --- This will be a BRING YOUR OWN TREE occasion. We are having this workshop at the Roe Arboretum starting at 9:00 am. This is our first instructor from the west coast this year and this is a great opportunity for new ideas.

June 23, 2007 Chinzan Azalea Workshop Civic Garden Center

Jerry Meislik --- This is one of the workshops you have been asking for. Jerry is doing a CHINZIN AZALEA WORKSHOP. The plants are all here in Cincinnati and ready to go. They are all potted in eleven inch pots and ready for styling at the Civic Garden center. The cost will be \$80.00 complete.

The club will be serving coffee and refreshment at all workshops. There will be *appropriate* refreshments for the afternoon sessions.

Mike Scheid
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MONTHLY TIPS

(Ed's. Note: The following is an article written by Ron Martin, proprietor of Tokonama Bonsai in Summerville, South Carolina. Mr. Martin is a frequent contributor to several bonsai internet forums and has had several articles published in the ABS Journal.)

NURSERY STOCK: Selecting Something to Start With

So where do I start? I have read almost all the books. Looked at a zillion pictures. Just what kind of pre-bonsai do I need to create a masterpiece? If I want to create a beautiful bonsai can, I start off with just any thing? A maple, after all, is just a maple. So all I need to do is get one and, presto, a few whacks and a bit of wire later one has, or should have, a masterpiece? Sounds simple...

What happened? I did have all the pieces-parts to do the job but, somehow it just did not work out. How could this happen? Wish there was a simple answer to this. None comes to mind but I do hope that the following helps a bit.

First, let me say that all trees are pre-bonsai. Every nursery has lots of pre-bonsai lined up in all those plastic nursery containers. A walk in the woods will yield plenty of pre-bonsai that can be dug up. They are easy to find. Pre-bonsai are everywhere. They just need a little work to become at least something.

Problem is sorting through all those pre-bonsai's and finding the potential bonsai among them. Lots to chose from but very few correct choices to make. A bit of time spent in the selecting process goes a long way.

Just what turns a "pre-bonsai" into a bonsai? More, importantly, what makes some not a good selection? How do we find the potential bonsai among all those possibilities?

Lots of answers to this question. None of them are all that easy to give in a few short paragraphs. Whole books could be written on the subject and still not cover it completely. It might be easier to tell you what to stay away from than to tell you what is good.

Bonsai is a time consuming art form. One makes a few cuts then waits for the tree to catch up. Then we use some wire and wait some more. Try as we may that tree will not be forced to grow faster that it wants to.

Styling a tree does damage the tree. Hopefully this is constructive, well thought out, but it is still damage to the tree. Cuts take time and energy to heal. What we do to the little bugger does slow down the growth process. Anything else that also slows down this process should be avoided at all costs. At least during the styling process.

Sick plants are bad. They slow down the growth process more than anything. Time must be spent getting it healthy again before we can start. Working on a sick one usually means disaster. If you do find that the sick thing in front of you has potential, then make sure it has enough to make the time spent in getting it back to healthy is worth the effort. Something to think about when you are tempted to save that half dead poor thing in one of those chain stores.

Sloppy pruning cuts, wire marks, poor graft unions and large amounts of dead wood are all good indicators of a bad choice. They all take time to correct and heal. Poor graft unions are one thing that you will be stuck with forever. Poor pruning cuts, etc, can be fixed, but again that takes extra time.

Time is a valuable commodity, only the young can afford to waste it, and even their supply is limited. Don't waste it on a sick or poorly formed tree. Get something healthy. You will do enough to the tree to slow down the process all by yourself. You don't need any extra help.



Bonsai Society Of Greater Cincinnati

March 7, 2007

To New & Intermediate Members of BSGC,

The Bonsai Society of Greater Cincinnati (BSGC) has determined there is a need to provide our beginner/intermediate members with a program to assist them in more fully understanding and developing their bonsai skills. Based on the results of the survey taken at the last meeting and at the beginners workshop there is a desire for continued study. The study group, to be known as Continuing Bonsai Education, is being formulated to begin in May, with the Class of 2007. The class will cover a twelve month period with nine to ten classes. The first session will cover tools, wire selection and soil preparation. Participants registered in the Advanced Bonsai Study Group will be lending their time and talent by conducting the classes and workshops. The cost for the program is \$75, to cover room rentals and incidental class materials. The costs of plants, pots and soil will be the responsibility of each student. Size of the class will be limited to fifteen students. Payment must be made at the time of registration, and participants will be enrolled on a first-paid basis. There will be a registration sign-up sheet at our March 15th meeting.

If you need additional information or have questions. Please contact Carole Gray at rcgray@cinci.rr.com.

Dave Radlinski
Chairman
Continuing Bonsai Education Committee



Bonsai Society Of Greater Cincinnati

February 22, 2007

Dear Fellow Member of BSGC,

The Bonsai Society of Greater Cincinnati (BSGC) is announcing the formation of an advanced study course entitled "Advanced Bonsai Study Group." The goal of this course is to help it's participants raise their knowledge of bonsai & improve their bonsai skills. This is not a course to teach the basics of bonsai; however, it is a course to aid motivated members to move their existing skills to the next level. We want to give the opportunity to participate to as many of our members as possible. Advancing the course participant's level of bonsai skills, knowledge and enthusiasm will have a positive impact on the long term growth and well being of BSGC. Participation in the course is open to all qualified intermediate and advanced members of the BSGC who are willing and able to make the following commitments:

- The initial term of the course is three years, commencing in the spring of 2008. Students must agree to a three year participation. Exceptions will be made in unavoidable situations such as moving from the area and personal financial and family matters.
- Pay the yearly fee in advance at the beginning of each year. Fees are non refundable.
- Students will provide their own class tree(s) and agree that the tree the student brings to class will be of high quality and good bonsai potential. To verify these conditions are met, trees will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee and approved prior to bringing to class.
- It is an absolute requirement that participants be willing to donate their time and talent to instruct beginning & intermediate classes and workshops as needed. These activities will occur monthly over a ten month period each year. A ten month lesson plan for teaching basic bonsai is currently undergoing development. This is intended to be the student's pay-back to the club membership and to pass on his knowledge to persons in the early stages of bonsai.

DETAILS:

The Advanced Bonsai Study Group will have an initial term of three years, commencing the spring of 2008. The course curriculum will be administered by a nationally recognized master/teacher that the participants will be involved in selecting. The course structure will involve four sessions per year scheduled in advance, occurring, for example, in March, April/May, June/July & then in October/November. These sessions will occur on the week-end & will last for one full day. We anticipate limiting classes to eight people. If sufficient interest is shown, a second class will be formed. The selection criteria, cost & level of commitment are such that mass club participation is not anticipated; however, we see two groups of eight members each as a strong probability. The cost to each participant will depend upon the number of students and negotiated teacher fees. We are using a budgetary projection of an annual cost in the range of \$250 to \$350 per student per year. Each class member would be required to pay the yearly fee in advance, and the fee will be nonrefundable.

If you would like to participate, you will need to complete the course application, which will be available at our March 15th meeting or may be obtained by contacting Don Brown. Completed applications must be returned to Don by no later than the date of our monthly meeting on April 19, 2007. Applications will be reviewed by an Advisory Committee, consisting of three board members and two persons from the general club membership. You will be notified by the committee of your qualification for participation in the course. We must have at least eight qualified students registering in order to cost justify initiating the course. We can easily accommodate a second class of eight.

Your Board of Directors are very excited about this program and what it potentially can do to elevate the bonsai skills of our club membership. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to commence a serious study program and kick-start your skills in our favorite art form.

Yours very truly,
Don Brown, President

MONTHLY TIPS (CONT'D)

But what makes for a good choice?

Trunk

Most important, and what takes the longest to grow, is the trunk. Does it have good taper? Does the shape suit your needs? Is it pleasing to look at? Growing a nicely shaped trunk takes time and, unless you are growing from seedlings a poorly formed trunk will always be a poorly formed trunk. Basically, if the trunk is small enough to bend with wire then it is going to be a long range project. Do you want to wait that long? Look closely and make sound decisions based on realistic goals.

The root spread or Nebari

Is there one and does it match the trunk? Big question. Sometimes you have a great Nebari and a great trunk, but they both go in different directions. Not an easy thing to correct.

Branches

It is better to have too many. You can always take off what is not needed. That is easier than putting them on. Heavy branches at the top and thin branches at the bottom are always a problem. So look closely.

Growth habit of the plant

Know the growth habit of the tree. One that wants to grow prostrate will not make a good formal upright and one that wants to grow upright will not make a good cascade. You will always be fighting to make the tree do something it doesn't want to do. Use its natural growth pattern. It is a lot easier that way.

- Domestic trees are always better than imported ones. Dwarf varieties are always preferable over the standard ones. Just a short note here. By imported trees I don't just mean trees that have come in from Japan, Korea, etc. Trees that have been brought in from a climate different than your own falls into the same category. Trees do not know borders, just climates.
- Fruits and flowers will not reduce in size. Colors will not change. Look hard at these things, you are stuck with them for the most part.
- Look at the size of the plant you're working with. A six inch plant will take years to make into a three foot tall masterpiece. Taller, however, can be cut down to size, the offending scars hidden and a nice piece completed in a shorter time.
- When you think about it the choices are not all that hard. The stock you start off with, to a great extent, will make the bonsai. Bad will get you bad and good will get you better. You just have to think about what you are doing.
- Spend some time, a lot of time, in the initial selection of your material. Look closely and study it hard. If you can't see the tree in it then DON'T BUY IT.
- Continue looking until you find that perfect specimen. Pass up the pre-bonsai and go for the potential bonsai. Don't waste your time, use it wisely.
- Decide what you want the finished product to look like then go in search of raw stock that will give you a chance of achieving these goals.

NOTES OF INTEREST

Bonsai With Sun and Surf

The BCI Bonsai Convention will be held at the Condado Plaza Hotel and Casino in San Juan, Puerto Rico July 11 - 15, 2007. The Condado Plaza is a five star hotel overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the Condado Lagoon. The headlining artists are from Japan, Italy, Spain, United States Venezuela, Martinique and Puerto Rico. There are demonstrations, workshops and tours available, for the latest information go to "bcifelab2007.com". Early Bird registration ends in March.

WAYS AND MEANS BY NO MEANS

TOOLTALK: Have you looked at your bonsai tools lately in preparation for spring? If you do not have tropicals, perhaps the tools have not been used for awhile. They may be rusty and the cutting edges dull. Rust contributes to a dull cutting edge. The use of clean, sharp tools is important for healthy bonsai.

Most of the common metals oxidize. When metals are exposed to oxygen, chemical changes occur turning the bright copper penny a dull brown and ultimately green. Iron is the primary ingredient in most of our steel bonsai tools and when oxygen and iron combine, we get rust. Rust can be accelerated by humidity and other chemicals or it can be retarded by chemicals such as petroleum products. Gun oil, available at many of the large box stores in the sporting goods section, is a very good petroleum based product for use on our bonsai tools to minimize rust. Gun oil on a Scotch pad (the green ones that you use at the kitchen sink) and a little rubbing will take care of most rust. If you don't like the oily feel or if you have extensive rust, there are some high tech products available. Boeshield makes a family of excellent products: one to remove rust, one to provide protection from rust, and a gum and pitch remover. The product was initially developed by Boeing Aircraft for protection of aircraft components. It has since been adapted for use by woodworkers. Boeshield, and other similar products, is available at fine woodworking stores such as Rockler near Tri-County and Woodcraft Supply near Cincinnati Mills. These stores also have some good quality carving tools for use on jin and shari such as those by Flexcut. Another option to minimize rust is stainless steel tools. They are more expensive than conventional steel. Stainless will rust but not readily.

Sharp pruners, cutters and shears contribute to a clean cut and facilitate healing of a wound. The next time you cut off a branch, try squeezing the discarded branch near the cut with pliers. Watch the bark and the critical cambium layer at the cut. You will see compression adjacent to the jaws of the pliers and tension at 90 degrees to the jaws pulling the cambium away from the wood. Both compression and tension cause significant damage to the cellular structure. Dull tools act similar to the pliers, to a lesser degree, causing more damage than necessary. Wounds do not heal well and the possibility exists for substantial die-back when dull tools are used. Keep 'em sharp. Mike Scheid sharpens tools at reasonable prices.

*Greg Robinson
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ADVERTISEMENTS

The rates for advertising is \$50 for 12 insertions, for card sized ads. Contact Dave Radlinski at (513) 831-6931 (Ed's. Note: Please Note that there has been a change in our insertion rate, effective July 1ST, 2007, the new rate will be \$10 per 12 insertions).

Bonsai Speakers Bureau

For Lectures-Demonstrations-Lessons-Programs-Tours

For information and rates, Call:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Dave Radlinski | (513) 831-6931 |
| Tom McCormack | (513) 563-0473 |
| Mike Scheid | (513) 984-0289 |
| Don Brown | (513) 831-1811 |

And/or other club members

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CLASSIFIEDS

(Ed's. Note: This is a new addition to our newsletter, which will allow members to post bonsai related items for sale, with 20% of sales going to the club (similar to the White Elephant Sale). Contact Steve Parr via e-mail (sparr@cinci.rr.com) with notices.