

CUTTINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
BONSAI SOCIETY OF GREATER CINCINNATI

March 2009

www.cincinnatibonsai.com

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Spring is perhaps the most exciting time of the year for the bonsai enthusiast. This is the time when plans and dreams can be acted upon, and enthusiasm is at its greatest. The trees come back to life with a burst of energy and promise. Buds open, leaves and shoots emerge looking fresh and green. This is the busiest time of the year and there is much to be done. It all begins in March.

The CBE class March 14 is a must for beginners and an excellent refresher class for those who have only been in the club a few years. There are many ways to put a tree in a pot. It all depends on the root system and the tree. I had a real challenge with my Rocky Mountain Juniper five years ago. Without Boon's help I don't know if I could have secured the tree successfully; it had few roots and lots of weight on top. I learned a lot that day.

Structural pruning can be carried out, but avoid large branch removal. At this stage on Chinese elms, bad callous will form later. On pines and spruce, resin will bleed from the wound and stain the bark. Don't be alarmed by maples and birch bleeding, as they will come to no harm. The bleeding can be prevented or reduced by root pruning at the same time.

Check for pests and diseases. Black Fly and Greenfly are both common forms of aphids. They suck sap from the tree, and in large numbers can cause dieback of new or unripe growth. On trees in poor health, this can eventually lead to death if not dealt with. Aphids can also carry viral diseases from one plant to another.

Mike Scheid chaired a successful Beginners' Class. Many thanks him, and to John Short, Randy Wheaton, Greg Meiners, Dana Connelly, Chris Daeger, Dave Billing, Tom Mounce, Jeff Rhein, Carol Gray, Dave Radlinski and Don Brown for giving up their valuable time to help make this program a success. (I was there to enjoy it, too!) These folks epitomize what I mean when I talk about the importance of volunteering. The workshop had one instructor for every two beginners. That's terrific. Well-done, Mike.

Tom McCormack
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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 19, 2009

Marty Schmalenberg

Martin (Marty) Schmalenberg owns Stillwater Studio in Stillwater, NJ which he started in 2001. He also teaches Asian Studies at Blair Academy. Marty's bonsai experience spans about 37 years including studying in Japan with Hiroyoshi Yamaji and Mikio Oshima and others in the United States. Marty credits Bill Valavanis as a major influence on his early bonsai pursuits. Marty is a headliner at conventions throughout the US and has had the opportunity to work with world class bonsai artists such as Kimura, Salvatore Liberace, Nick Lenz, and Boon Manakan-tivipart. And early reviews of the limited edition book, North American Bonsai, compiled and edited by Marty, have been glowing. Don't miss this program!

Greg Robinson (513) 631-6866 greg.robinson@uc.edu



WORKSHOPS

Remember our policy has changed. You have to pay up front to get your name on the sign up sheet. Don't forget to bring you money or checkbook on Thursday.

March 21, 2009 Marty Schmalenberg BYOT Workshop Civic Garden Center

Martin Schmalenberg has been involved with bonsai (penjing) and stone appreciation for over 35 years. Marty is an avid collector of native material from the U.S. for use in bonsai and specializes in pines. He has been a featured artist/lecturer at conventions through the U.S. and has won numerous awards for bonsai design. Marty is also a published author, so be sure to pick up his "North American Bonsai" book. The workshop will be a BYOT workshop, from 9a-12p at the Civic Garden Center. We will have room for 12 participants. The cost will be \$50.

May 23, 2009 Marco Invernizzi BYOT Workshop Civic Garden Center

Graciously Hosted by Tom McCormack (<http://www.marcoinvernizzi.com/>)

Marco Invernizzi is an award-winning Italian bonsai artist and design consultant recognized internationally as a bonsai master. He became interested in bonsai after seeing the film The Karate Kid, Part III. In 1991 he began working with Milan bonsai artist Salvatore Liporace, with whom he studied for five years. In 1997 he completed a college degree in Graphic Design and Industrial Design, then moved to Japan to begin a three-year apprenticeship under bonsai master Masahiko Kimura. He was Master Kimura's first non-Japanese student.

Since 2001, Invernizzi has been touring internationally conducting bonsai workshops and demonstrations, including as headline demonstrator at a number of high-profile bonsai exhibitions. He published a book in 2003 on his training in Japan, Vado in Giappone sulla via dei bonsai (Going to Japan on the Bonsai Trail), and has published articles in bonsai periodicals throughout the world. His work has won Best in Show at the Italian Bonsai Exhibition and the Ginkgo Bonsai Congress, as well as the Crespi Bonsai Cup.

The cost is \$85. This will be an all day workshop, 9am-4pm at the Garden Center. How many all day workshops with an international master can you attend for \$85?

June 20, 2009 Erik Wigert Bougainvillea workshop Civic Garden Ctr.

<http://www.wigertsbonsai.com/>

Erik Wigert specializes in tropical bonsai, operating a full service bonsai nursery in Florida. He has a great passion for teaching the art of bonsai. He is a great young talent, and enjoys giving demonstrations and workshops. Has traveled extensively in Florida and elsewhere teaching and leading bonsai workshops since 2003. Erik's awards include Best Tropical Bonsai at the 1st US National Bonsai Exhibit, Rochester, NY Oct 2008; Second Place winner of Florida Bonsai Societies Scholarship competition in 2007; Second place at Joshua Roth New Talent Competition with American Bonsai Society in 2006; Trees displayed at Epcot center, Walt Disney World in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008; BSF Convention 2008 Demonstrator. This will be a Bougainvillea workshop at the Garden Center from 9am-12pm. The cost is \$50. Erik is bringing the bougainvillea from his nursery in Florida!

Please take advantage of these opportunities in order to support the BSGC and to further your bonsai experience and education.

The demonstrations and workshops are by far one of the greatest assets and values offered by your club, the BSGC!! Did you know if you were to attend a regional or national bonsai exhibition, the cost for such an event would be in the hundreds of \$\$\$!!

BONSAI MYTHS

BONSAI MYTHS & FABLES #2

by Lin Tang

My goodness, I never thought this series of articles would be so enthusiastically received. Thanks for your many email suggesting topics for future Bonsai Myths & Fables. I will try to use them all, especially the ones from Tom, who refused to give his last name.

Myth # 2—Never water a Bonsai during the heat of a summer day, as droplets of water on a leaf act as magnifying lenses and hot sun will burn the leaf

Truth #2— Hot sun will indeed burn a young tender leaf but I have no evidence of water having anything to do with it. It is critical to give your trees water when they need it, when you have time to do it, regardless of the time of day. My schedule is sometimes erratic and I will sometimes water my trees during the hottest part of the day. I will spray the entire plant including leaves, trunk and soil surface. I have never been aware of a single instance in which even soft leaf trees such as maples, beech, and elm have been damages by water. Given my choice and time permitting & trees needing water, I prefer watering late afternoon/early evening If it's true than bonsai do much of their growing in the evening hours it seems reasonable that the water should be available for them to do so---huh?? I'm not certain about the foregoing evening hour growing thing but I don't seem to be motivated to stay up all night to find out. If you do, please let me know how you make out.

This is Lin Tang wishing you a successful month of repotting & bonsai awakening. Look forward to Myth # 3 in April

MONTHLY TIPS

(Ed.'s Note: This is the continuation to last month's article by our own Scott Schowalter, originally published in an online forum.)

Bonsai Soil Recipes:

In general, you want to strive for 2 parts inorganics to 1 part organics for a standard soil recipe. You may want to increase the ratio up to 80% or more inorganics for some trees like junipers. By the same token, you may want to increase up to 80% organics for some tropical species. Like I said above, you need to do what works best for you.

The following recipes work well for me in the Cincinnati area. Many members of my club also use similar materials and proportions. If I need better drainage, I just go heavier on the rock.

For conifers: 1 part rock, 1 part turface, 1 part pine soil conditioner.

For deciduous: 1 part rock, 1 part turface, 2 parts organics (usually just pine soil conditioner, but I may substitute some peat for fruiting trees).

For tropicals: 1 part rock, 1 part turface, 1 part pine soil conditioner, 2 parts peat.

Like I said above, soil mixes vary with the local climate, the tree species, and the grower's own needs, abilities, and style. I like my soil to be fast draining so I don't have to worry about sheltering my trees (as of this writing, about 60 of them) from our frequent, heavy rains. I am only able to water once per day at most, usually in the late afternoon/early evening, so the soil must retain enough water to get through the next afternoon. I find that with my water-loving trees, like willows, I cannot skip a single day or I will get major die-back. Those have to be kept in a pan of water.

Here are some other mixes contributed by various members here at BonsaiChat.

From Ryan in Ohio:

"My basic mix has been 2 parts soft akadama to 1 part high fired. This is my general soil for everything. I have found that it works great on everything from ficus and maples to pines and junipers. [I use] 2 parts kanuma to 1 part high fired akadama for azaleas, camelias and gardenias."

MONTHLY TIPS

Also contributed by Ryan:

“Here is a soil mix by Kenji Miyata, a world famous bonsai artist from Japan that is currently working at New England Bonsai.

1 part soft akadama (increased for deciduous)
1 part high-fired akadama
1 part calcined clay (optional/ for water retention)
10% Kanuma”

From a member of Bonsaiweb, sorry, but I forgot who wrote this, or what part of the country in which these are used:

“Standard Bonsai Mix

Components should be screened to produce particles of about 1/4 inch diameter or less. Eliminate dust.

Haydite - 1 part
Granite or River Rock - 1 part
Turface - 1 part
Pine Bark - 1 parts

Shohin & Mame Bonsai Mix

Components should be screened to produce particles of 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch. Eliminate dust.

Haydite - 2 parts
Turface - 1 part
Pine Bark - 1 part.”

From Alvaro in Mexico City:

“My basic mix is 1/3 peat, 1/3 garden soil, 1/6 tezontle sand and 1/6 tezontle gravel (tezontle being a red porous volcanic rock abundant in Mexico). This gives a very fluffy soil that retains moisture well, drains rapidly and leaves a lot of air spaces. It is not very stable as tezontle is quite soft, so after a couple of years it compacts and I have to repot. Adding a bit of peat for azaleas or some grinded bark and pine needles for conifers is easy. I think, however, that most people would think my mix is too fine gritted for their taste.”

From JLDoggett in New Hampshire:

“I use commercial potting soil from miracle grow mixed with rotten (decomposed) granite which I collect locally. self-collected material should be washed well (to remove any dust or very fine particles) and sieved to size (I sieve to 1/16" and 1/8") Proportions of the mix depends on the tree. It drains fast yet remains moist, to test, I moisten it, grab a handful and squeeze it tight, it should feel damp but not soggy and poking the clump should make it fall apart... otherwise it needs more grit. The size of the grit depends on the size of the tree and pot.”

From Johnegert in New Mexico:

“A classic mix for many years was 1/3 sandy loam, 1/3 fir bark humus, and 1/3 decomposed granite.”

“A basic mix will be something like 1/3 sandy loam/soil, 1/3 coarser organic material, and 1/3 inorganic mineral "grit". This mix should be varied according to the needs of individual plants, generally increasing the grit for conifers and increasing the organics for deciduous or broad-leafed material.”

From Michel in Belgium:

"BASIC MIX BODY

For all trees I start off with the same, simple basic mix body, altering it by adding extra's according to the tree species and preferences.

1 Part Lava: Grade 2 (5-15 mm particle size), sieved.
1 Part Split (crushed gravel), sieved

"The lava gets a sturdy and coarse structure, rich mineral content and temporary storing of moist in the granules' cavities. Split even enhances that coarse structure, ensuring for immediate draining, rich silicate presence, and it decreases pores size in between too coarse lava granules. This is mixed to get the basic body of my bonsai soil mixes, and stored for future use.

"It's the additions, measured in the same volume parts, that really change our basic mix body into good bonsai soil:"

MONTHLY TIPS

1. ADDITIONS TO 2 PARTS OF MIX BODY FOR BASIC BONSAI SOIL

½ Part Loam

½ Part sphagnum, cocos peat or bog peat

Nowadays, I only use the chopped up sphagnum; it's to ventilate the mix, getting volume and extra moist retention

½ Part pine mulch (pine soil conditioner) For soil improvement, organic content, bacteria life and spore elements

Bone meal (1 teacup to 10 liters of mix body) Very slow releasing, essential organic fertiliser

Blood meal (1 big spoonful to 10 liters of mix body) Fast releasing, essential organic fertiliser

Horn- & Hoof meal (1/2 teacup to 10 liters of mix body) Very slow releasing, essential organic fertiliser

"All of this is added to the mix body to get the basic bonsai soil;"

2. ADDITIONS TO 2 PARTS OF MIX BODY FOR LIMEY BONSAI SOIL

½ Part Loam

½ Part sphagnum or cocos peat. To ventilate the mix, getting volume and extra moist retention

½ Part Maerl, natural lime meal available in Europe, to enhance the lime content

Bentonite (1 liter to 10 liter of mix body) This is basically "stone meal", for structural soil improvement

Bone meal (1 teacup to 10 liters of mix body) Very slow releasing, essential organic fertiliser

Blood meal (1 big spoonful to 10 liters of mix body) Fast releasing, essential organic fertiliser

Horn- & Hoof meal (1/2 teacup to 10 liters of mix body) Very slow releasing, essential organic fertiliser

"All of this is added to the mix body to get the limey bonsai soil;"

3. ADDITIONS TO 2 PARTS OF MIX BODY FOR ACID BONSAI SOIL

2 Parts Kanuma, sieved

The best natural soil acidifier/ acid soil I know of

1 Part chopped up sphagnum, cocos peat or bog peat, to ventilate the mix, getting volume and extra moist retention

1 Part Pine mulch For soil improvement, organic content, bacteria life and spore elements

Blood meal (1 teacup to 10 liters of mix body) Fast releasing, essential organic fertiliser

"All of this is added to the mix body to get the acid bonsai soil;"

Comments:

All of these soil mixes haven proven their value over some years now, and the organic meals (blood, horn & hoof, bone) allow for a first year after repotting without any extra fertiliser.

"All are used without a drainage layer; They are quite coarse and ,therefore, also very free draining: This avoids any risk of root rot in case of excessive and prolonged rainfall, but downside is the necessity for frequent waterings during hot spells."

From a-mused in Rochester, New York:

"If I'm doing a "final" potting, I use an appropriate soil from Hollow Creek Bonsai. They've got some of the very finest soil mixes you'll ever find pre-prepared. My "base" layer is almost always their "Coarse" mix. The main layer is chosen based on the tree. I typically finish the potting with a very thin layer of their "Master's Shohin Soil" for a very clean appearance. Even though most of their soils mixes contain their "Micro Plus" product, I still add an additional amount. The "Micro Plus" is a Mycorrhiza mix.

Where I tend to mix my own is for larger training/growing pots. The actual percentages used vary by species. My list of components include:

Pool filter sand , Turface or a non-clumping, minimally-treated cat litter (that's been tested to ensure it doesn't break down into mush), Screened pine bark mulch , Sphagnum peat, Perlite, Miracle-Gro Moisture Control Potting Mix, Micro Plus (from Hollow Creek)

For percentages, I usually start with the reference table in Naka's Techniques I. Regardless of the mix I'm creating, I always put in the Micro Plus. Additionally, I do sprinkle a little on the tree's roots just prior to potting it up. So far, I've found the soils to remain appropriately moist, with the water distribution being nice and even, and still drain nicely. I'll always put a layer of 3/8" to 3/4" river rock about 1" deep in the bottom of the pot, simply to ensure drainage. The addition of the Mycorrhizae spores, from my experience, helps reduce the transplant shock by helping the tree to establish itself quicker and get a more efficient water/nutrient uptake. I'm also a firm believer in Superthrive, so that's used as well."

ADVERTISEMENTS

The rates for advertising is \$10 for 12 insertions, for card sized ads. Contact Dana Connolly at (513) 271-0815

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CLASSIFIEDS

(Ed's. Note: This is a new addition to our newsletter, which will allows 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.

Bonsai Pots

Houtoku #777 dark brown - rectangular, radius corners - inside measurements: 18 x 13 x 4.75" deep purchased from the Monastery - Sale price: \$150

Tokoname 56F26 med. red brown oval - inside measurements: 17 L x 13.5"W x 5.25" deep imported from Japan / purchased thru Stone Lantern (Tokoname book page 56) Sale price: \$405

Tokoname 9F31 dark brown large shallow oval - inside measurements: 28L x 19W x 3" deep imported from Japan / purchased thru Stone Lantern (Tokoname book page 9) hard to find size! Sale price: \$687

All are exhibition quality pots, which I would like to see stay in our area. Unfortunately, they are just too large for the size of bonsai trees that I can handle and so it's time to free up some storage space and to find new homes for them. Pictures are available. Contact Judy Fister via email, solutions@augustinc.com or by phone: 937-434-2520, if you have an interest.