



Volume 38, Number 3
March & April 2008

Special Attractions Planned for the PBA Spring Bonsai Festival

In addition to the usual grand display of PBA members' best bonsai and suiseki, PBA and the National Arboretum are co-sponsoring special demos by internationally known bonsai artists to be held in the tent across from the museum (next to the vendors' tent)..

Shinichi Nakajima, President of the Nippon Growers Association, began his bonsai training at an early age with his father, bonsai master Tsuneichi Nakajima. Shinichi, a graduate of Meiji University with a degree in agriculture, was certified by the Nippon Bonsai Association in 1981. He has been a participant in Nippon Bonsai Sakufu-ten since its inception in 1976, and has received many awards for his work. Mr. Nakajima has traveled the world teaching bonsai and is the author of textbooks on the art. Mr. Nakajima's demonstrations will be Saturday, 3 May, at 1 p.m. and Sunday 4 May, at 12 p.m. and will involve working on a large juniper provided by Chase Rosade.

Cheryl Manning's love of bonsai started in 1981 with a basic skills course from Murata Bonsai Nursery in Orange County, California. She has since studied with bonsai masters such as John Naka, Ben Oki, Harry Hirao, and Jim Barrett. Ms. Manning is a member of several bonsai and suiseki clubs; and also is a board member of the National Bonsai Foundation. In 1994, Cheryl completed a 1-year live-in apprenticeship with bonsai master Yasuo Mitsuya in Toyohashi, Japan. During her 50-hour work weeks, she gained additional knowledge of styling, maintenance, special techniques, wiring, and display. Cheryl has given numerous demonstrations, workshops, and slide demonstrations to bonsai clubs in the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Her bonsai-related photos and articles have appeared in *Bonsai Today*, the California Bonsai Society's *Bonsai in California*, BCI's *Bonsai Magazine*, the Golden State Bonsai Federation's journal *Golden Statements*, the National Bonsai Foundation's *NBF Bulletin*, and *Bonsai: Journal of the American Bonsai Society*. She will be doing a demonstration on Saturday, 3 May, at 11 a.m. Her subject will be material provided by Todd Stewart (a PBA member) of Gardens Unlimited.

There will be additional demonstrations by vendors who have been generous in displaying their bonsai knowledge and skills. Their demonstrations will be held in the lower courtyard of the museum at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Martha Meehan of Meehan's Miniatures (one of the faithful vendors at PBA events) will be conducting a workshop for eight PBA members on Sunday, 4 May, from 9-11 a.m. Martha is a skilled bonsai artist and effective teacher. The subject will be fused-trunk bonsai using elms, with an assembled composition about 3" in diameter. The cost per participant has not yet been decided, but should be by the time members read this announcement.

John Ruth is making arrangements for this workshop. Please contact him at 410.681.7825 for pricing and to enroll.

Sensei urges bonsai lovers to take advantage of these infrequent opportunities to witness the knowledge and skills of professional bonsai artists.

- Jim Sullivan



PBA
Clippings
NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

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Non-Member Subscriptions: Individuals residing within the metropolitan areas of our clubs are encouraged to become members of a club to receive the newsletter. Annual subscription for 12 issues of the *PBA Clippings* only is US \$22.00 (US \$35 for international mail) which should be made payable to the Potomac Bonsai Association and sent to Ross Campbell, 728 Guilford Ct, Washington, D.C., 20901-3218

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E-mail contributions can be sent in Word, WP, PageMaker, MacWord, or Text documents to bittenhand@cox.net.

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Betty's bits ~

ed · i · to · ri · al [ed-i-tawr-ee-uhl, -tohr-]

- noun

an article in a newspaper or other periodical presenting the opinion of the Editor.

- adjective

of or pertaining to an editor or to editing: editorial policies; editorial techniques.

of, pertaining to, or involved in the preparation of an editorial or editorials: editorial page; editorial writer.

of or pertaining to the literary and artistic activities or contents of a publication, broadcasting organization, or the like, as distinguished from its business activities, advertisements, etc.: an editorial employee; an editorial decision, not an advertising one.

IF . . . you feel insignificant, look around . Notice someone or some good thing which needs help. Then help.

Say, did you all read that bit about writing your congressional representatives about the plight of the National Arboretum? Did you, in this interim, sit down to call or write them? No? There's still time. Pull up a chair.

← **Looky, Looky!!!**
Lookin' up!



Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though t'were his own.

~ Johann von Goethe

7-13 July 2009: World Bonsai Convention VI at the Condado Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lindsay and Debbie Shiba will be there, so I hope to, too. Where will you be? Lindsay's artistry is being recognized more and more. If you'll recall, PBA was Lindsay's first "outta California" lecture trip when we used to do our traditional Fall Symposium. Sure do miss those wonderful weekends.

**Hear Ye, Hear Ye!! Come One ~
Come All ~ to the Annual PBA
Auction, 24 May, from 10 a.m. to
Noon(ish.)**

Come see and share the excitement at Behnke's Nursery, 11300 Baltimore Ave in Beltsville, MD, just 2 miles north of the beltway on the left side. Pass the main entrance and take the next left. We have use of the parking lot behind the Dawn Rose building (as the auction will be held upstairs in that building (our usual place).

Anyone can be a buyer and claim a bidder number; but those selling goods must be members of the PBA. Early birds bring your items (up to 7) to register for sale from 8 to 9 a.m. Register for bid numbers and preview sale items from 9 to 10 a.m. The fun begins at 10 and usually goes to noon with furious bidding on all sorts of items: tools, books, wire, and plant material. We used to say "material" and "finished" bonsai but as any of us who have been at it a while know, a bonsai is NEVER finished. Volunteer auction helpers are always welcomed as we would like to continue the smooth flow of materials "run" up to the stage, others to "run" them to the holding area, and still others to "run" the paperwork. Call Ed at 301.559.4094. Plan to spend some time browsing the rest of Behnke's Nursery and at checkout, mention you are there for the bonsai auction. They have always been great about freely giving us space throughout the years, and we want to keep them blooming happy.

See you there!

Ed Zipeto, Brookside Bonsai Society

Ed. Note: If you newbies have any questions not covered here about this very helpful "trading" of bonsai material and equipment, check with your club's oldtimers.

Poetry Corner - Calm yourself

submitted by Bob Ulrich (LBS) If you bump into an haiku or other verse you feel your fellow members would enjoy, please contribute them (with illustrations, if possible) through Bob: bulrich51@excite.com.

Now and again
a birdsong gives rest
to the monk's silence
~ vincent tripi

so many boulders
in the stream
all of the water
finding its way
~ David Elliot

"I like trees because they seem more resigned to the way they have to live than other things do."

~ Willa Cather

**From Dave Bogan's Study Group
newsletter, Feb '08:**

Here is a tip for creating jin, on an older dead branch. Once a branch has died and dried out, the bark will be very hard to remove. The old bark can be sanded off but it takes a long time. Try this: wrap the branch in several layers of damp cloth or paper towel, and enclose the area with a plastic bag. Expose it to the sunlight. In summer this works quickly, maybe as quickly as a couple of days, but it could take as long as a couple of weeks. The bark will absorb the moisture and the majority of it will simply peel off.



Calendar of Events *compiled by Arschel Morell (BBC)*

Send your club's input to Arschel via e-: ajmorellsr514@aol.com; or snail mail to: 9 Six Notches Court, Baltimore, MD 21228

MARCH

Baltimore Bonsai Club

30 Group trip to Nature's Way Nursery for a talk and collecting

APRIL

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

5 10:00 a.m. Deciduous/Conifer wksp

Lancaster Bonsai Society

5 ? Van Heinekan dig

9 7:00 p.m. Spring critique – Roger

Lehman & Frank Thomas

Potomac Viewing Stone Group

6 1:00 p.m. Program TBA

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

12/13 Annual Spring Show at Merrifield Gardens

19/20 Roy Nagatoshi Wksps at

Meadowlark Gardens

Brookside Bonsai Society

17 7:30 p.m. Stephen Moran - How to

Make a Bonsai Pot Selection

Washington Bonsai Club

19 2:00 p.m. Program TBA

Baltimore Bonsai Club

27 1:00 p.m. Return of the root over rock bonsai from the Meehan program last year- wksp conducted by Jim Sullivan. Bring rocks and plants. Muck and soil will be provided. Skills refresher - How to make muck. Bring trees to be critiqued for the PBA Spring Show

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

27 2:00 p.m. Finalize tree selection for the PBA Spring Show

MAY

PBA SPRING SHOW/USNA BONSAI

FESTIVAL

4-4 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Free demonstrations by Shinichi Nakajima from Japan & Cheryl Manning from California will be sponsored by the arboretum. A wksp is scheduled, but is tentative as of this date.

4-5 Set-up for the PBA bonsai display is scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, 1 May. Volunteers are welcome and will speed the job. We have a good time and it's a good way to get involved with your organization. You don't need an appointment. Just show up!

Potomac Viewing Stone Group

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

No Meeting. Plan to attend the Spring Show at the Arboretum

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

10 9:00 a.m. Azalea cuttings – Pete Jones

10:00 a.m. BYOT wksp

Lancaster Bonsai Society

3 or 4 Tentative bus trip to Spring Show at the USNArb

10 (Saturday) Tentative Collecting trip to Frey's Evergreen Plantation

14 Tentative wksp with trees collected at Frey's

? Tentative club trip to The Brooklyn Botanical Gardens

17 Bonsai tour - Gardens of Roger, Ken, and Frank

Washington Bonsai Club

17 2:00 p.m. Program TBA

Baltimore Bonsai Club

18 1:00 p.m. Presentation on Shohin bonsai

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

24 (Saturday) collecting trip - Azalea Trace

Contacts on Back Page:

Bonsai Society of the Eastern Shore

Mid-Shore Bonsai Society

Chesapeake Bonsai Society

Events at The NB&PMuseum:

Spring Kusamono Exhibit

10-18 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Special Exhibits Wing/lecture-Demo (May 10 – 1:00 p.m.) Kusamono are potted arrangements of wild grasses and flowers in unique pots/trays which accompany formal bonsai or viewing stone displays. Exhibit features plant compositions by Kusamono artist Young Choe, who will give a free lecture/demo on Sat., 10 May, 1:00 p.m. Wksp Sat., 31 May.

Continued on page 5

Commune with Sensei Sam *by Jim Sullivan (Bowie)*

Sensei invites questions, or contrary experiences, methods, or information. Send your thoughts to Sensei Sam at vjvsullivan@aol.com. Your questions or responses can appear in *Clippings* anonymously if you prefer.

About Face

A PBA member, although an admirer of bonsai for a couple of years, had only recently decided to upgrade to a tree or two beyond those available from roadside vendors. I ran into him at the annual PBA auction and he asked my opinion of a few trees. Sensei stressed that when it came to selecting trees, my views were indeed only opinions, and that while I could point out strengths and faults in the bonsai or pre-bonsai, he should base his bids on his personal feelings.

My bonsai friend pointed to a Japanese maple which he admired. That maple, while healthy and with pleasing taper, had been wired in the classic 1, 2, 3, alternating branch pattern of almost horizontal branches. While reflecting the classic image of a bonsai, it was a caricature of a tree.

Sensei did not want this relatively new member of the bonsai community to attempt to conform to a rigid set of styling 'rules' that I had attempted to follow when I was introduced to bonsai those many years ago.

It was obvious which side the owner of the maple intended for the front; but the tree actually looked better from the opposite side. Why? The owner had been diligent in placing the branches, when viewed from the front, in the proscribed pattern, spacing, and pruning; but apparently had allowed the back of the branches, and the branches in the rear to grow more naturally. And the result was a more natural and pleasing presentation when the rear of the tree was viewed.

This conflict between orthodoxy and the natural became apparent to Sensei some years ago when I was rotating some of my trees to give them uniform sun exposure. Some, if not most, of my bonsai (as far as the branch placement was concerned) looked better from their back sides. They were more three dimensional, more natural, when viewed from the 'wrong' side. But, since the original viewing side was also decided based on surface root structure, trunk taper, curves, and features such as hollows and deadwood, the only solution was to reposition the branches or take the trees to the PBA auction and hope there were buyers who appreciated the rigid concept of first branch left, second branch right, third branch to the rear, repeat, repeat, repeat.

Sensei does not suggest you ignore the guidance of the masters of bonsai art. Careful branch placement, wiring, and pruning are required to achieve a refined work of art. But rather than following rigid guidelines, look to Nature for inspiration in design, and emulate the best she has on display.



photo by Jane Ashley-Fennel

Wksp: Introduction to Bonsai

17 10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Yoshimura Center
Designed for beginners, this class introduces students to horticultural and aesthetic elements of bonsai. Plant, pot, and soil will be provided. Student should have outdoor space available to grow the creation. Bring lunch. Fee: \$119 (FONA/NBF \$95)

Azalea Bonsai Exhibit

24 May to **8** June 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Special Exhibits Wing - Kurume and Satsuki azaleas are featured. Free

Workshop: Kusamono

31 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Young Choe will teach this introductory wksp. Ceramic container and all materials will be provided. Fee \$49 (FONA/NBF \$40)

PART 2

CONSIDERATION 1: PARTICLE SIZE

Particle size is important, because it has not really been fully understood before. It is now being considered as the most important characteristic of a mix.

Because of the surface tension properties of liquids, when potting mix particles are so close together (small) that the surface tension or water creates a capillary effect, the water will tend to rise against gravity or cling to the particles.

A pot filled with such a mix might not allow roots to grow; the interstitial (area between particles) spaces would be occupied by water and not air. Evaporation might briefly dry out the plant allowing some oxygen flow, but the plant would soon be struggling for water. The roots would perform poorly, new buds would be small, discolored, and weak. It would be very difficult to get the soil wet once it was dry. The water would tend to roll off the top of the mix, and it would be very difficult for the mix to dry out once it was wet. Some roots would rot every winter, and, eventually, the plant dies. Sound familiar?

How can this problem be prevented? Human nature, being what it is, has us watering our plants whether they need it or not. I'm sure you'll agree that more plants die from this overkindness than for any other reason. So, the problem may not be capable of complete resolution. However....
STRAINING THE POTTING MATERIALS HELPS YOUR PLANTS!

You can alleviate some of the problems by straining/sieving your bonsai mix materials. Particles less than 3/32 inch and greater than 1/8 inch should be strained out of each component of the mix, with the exception of the fertilizers and certain soil amendments. I've heard that 3/16 inches should be the maximum size, but apparently that thinking has recently changed.

WHERE DO YOU FIND SUCH STRAINERS?
 Most bonsai supply sources have them,

sometimes called "riddles", usually in sets of three and mostly with 1/16", 3/16", and 1/4" grid sizes. The grid dimensions vary about 1/64" to 1/32" from nominal. On occasion I have "borrowed" my wife's strainers, if they were of a size to suit my needs. Having been caught at this more than I care to admit, I was most thoroughly convinced that it was less hazardous to seek more conventional sources. To my surprise, I discovered that it was possible to buy common strainers of various mesh sizes in the housewares section of many stores like WalMart, K-Mart, etc.

At one time hardware stores carried a large selection of strainer mesh, usually bronze, but now about all you'll find is a "hardware cloth" of galvanized material with the smallest size in a 1/4 inch mesh. Some hardware stores may be able to provide a 1/8 inch mesh "soffit screen", but you'll have to search. You can make a simple frame to suspend/support the mesh as an aid to the straining operation.

HOW TO STRAIN THE ORGANIC AND INORGANIC MATERIALS

Before you start to strain your materials, be sure to let them dry out thoroughly. Otherwise, all you'll do is clog the strainer. It is useful to have the black tubs usually used for mixing small batches of concrete or mortar available to assist in the drying and straining process. Pour in your material and let it set in the sun for a while until quite dry. Stir occasionally during the drying process to expose moist material.

The straining of the inorganic and organic materials is done to remove excessively large and small particles. To be effective, this must be a two part screening. The largest particle size should not be in excess of that which can pass through a 1/8 inch mesh screen, while the smallest particles to be used should not be less than 3/32 inch, a shade more than 1/16 inch. You can always add larger sized material for large plants, if the need arises.

I was surprised to read that the Brooklyn Botanic Garden discards only the materials that passes through a 1/32 inch screen, and they practice graduated layer striation during potting. This book was printed in 1976, and it may not represent their current practices.

Some enthusiasts prefer to add shredded pine or redwood bark to their potting mix, in which case it might not be necessary to screen this medium, except to remove excessively large chunks that could interfere with potting or screening to remove the dust. If the bark is too large for your purposes, you might consider running it through a chipper/shredder to arrive at a suitable size. If you don't have a shredder, you might try running small batches through your blender, alternately chopping and straining until you get the size you want. It's noisy, but it works! It does not harm the blender, providing that you don't force or overload the container. Be sure to clean the blender thoroughly before inviting me over for cocktails.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE PARTICLES THAT ARE TOO LARGE OR TOO SMALL?

Those potting mix particle less than 3/32 inch can be used as a topping material for your bonsai prior to the application of moss or just for aesthetics. Other than that, it is suggested that you add the very fine strained materials to your garden. Your garden will love you for it. On the other hand, the very large clods or clumps which cannot be crushed into smaller pieces should be discarded. Unfortunately, these large pieces are not suitable for much more than filling a hole in your back yard.

Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions to the "nothing smaller than 3/32 inch" rule. The only substances that can be reasonably used in less than this size are bonemeal, bloodmeal, cottonmeal, gypsum, lime, acidic compounds, etc. The majority of these materials will be in nearly dust form and will be added as fertilizers, amendments,

and pH fixatives. It won't be necessary to strain these types of materials, because only small quantities are to be added and will not adversely affect the mix.

CONSIDERATION 2: TEXTURE

This is another important characteristic that is frequently overlooked. A smooth particle, such as river gravel, has less surface area than a rough particle, such as pumice or "sharp" sand. The roots of a bonsai would tend to slide around the smooth surface of the river gravel, while the rough textured pumice or coarse sand would tend to aggravate the roots, causing them to divide and subdivide into larger masses of the tiny root hairs. This directly results in branches that are more twiggy, detailed, twisted, and with greater ramification. If you have a choice, always favor materials of a rough texture in your mix.

Textured materials of an inorganic nature could be, but are not limited to, pumice, feather rock chips, lava cinders, lava rock, decomposed granite, river gravel, crushed marble, uncolored aquarium gravel, silica sand, swimming pool sand, coarse sandblast sand, fly ash, black beauty sandblast grit, pea gravel, solite, turf, chicken grit, horticultural charcoal, etc. Be aware that the featherrock chips are not a commercial product. They are a result of your labor of making little ones out of a big one. Lava rock is a similar product, requiring the same type of reducing labor.

It has also been suggested that kitty litter, vermiculite, perlite, garage floor oil absorber and other manufactured materials could be used in the mix, but you should be aware that some of these are relatively soft materials and may have a tendency to break down quickly or have a tendency to crush when worked into position around the roots. Some kitty litter has a tendency to mat together when wet, and colored litter has chemicals that may be hazardous to the health of your plants.

Adapted and reprinted from **NFBC NEWS**, Newsletter of the North Florida BC, Vol. 8, No. 4, April-June 1995. When we ran the first part of this article in our last issue, the editor forgot to mention it was generously shared with us by the Lake Charles BS *Bonsai News*. Thanks y'all in Louisiana. Wish I was there.

Potomac Bonsai Association Membership Application

Welcome! PBA is composed of the clubs listed here. Join one and be eligible to attend any club's meeting, in addition to receiving *PBA Clippings* monthly. We conduct a Spring Show and an annual auction, as well as other events. Residents of club communities are expected to join a club to receive all membership benefits, including *PBA Clippings*.

To become a member, call the contact person of the club convenient to your needs for current rate and where to send this application and dues amount. **(Please make check payable to the club joined.)**

Individuals residing beyond commuting distance of a club are invited to subscribe to *PBA Clippings*. For a subscription only (no entitlement to participation in club events), complete application and mail with a check payable to PBA for \$22.00 (see below for an international subscription) to: Ross Campbell, 728 Guilford Ct, Washington, D.C., 20901-3218. Check for Beginners' Hour, and other special functions. Meeting locations, times, and club contact numbers (for additional information) are subject to change. **Call first!** Events are listed monthly in the Calendar section of *PBA Clippings*.

How did you learn of us? (media, exhibit, garden center, friend, etc) _____

Chosen "home club" (club best meshing with your life): _____

- Individual club membership (Includes *PBA Clippings*)
- Family club membership (One subscription to *PBA Clippings* per household)
- PBA Clippings* subscription only, US \$15 (does not include club activities)
- PBA Clippings*, international subscription, US \$35 (E-mail version, US\$15)

Circle one of the following Association activities with which you can help:

Membership	Club Library	Exhibit Planning	Newsletter Staff
Publicity	Raffle table	Exhibit Construction	
Hospitality	Meeting Clean-up	OTHER _____	

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ +4 _____

Nation _____

Telephone: Home: (____) _____ or Office: (____) _____

Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc.
c/o U.S. National Arboretum
3501 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Baltimore Bonsai Club, 4th Sunday, 1 pm
Towson Br of Baltimore Public Library
Arschel Morell, 410.744.6478, ajmorellsr514@aol.com

Bonsai Society of the Eastern Shore

1st Wednesday, 7 pm
Talbot Hospice, Easton
Susan Jones-Amari, 410.943.9886, susanja@bcctv.com
Brookside Bonsai Society, 3rd Thursday, 7:30 pm
North Chevy Chase Rec Center, Bethesda, MD
Stephen Moran, 202.722.7191, framor@starpower.net

Chesapeake Bonsai Society

Call for meeting time and location
Sharon Katz, 410.263.3307 sharonkatz@excite.com

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

4th Sunday, 2 PM
Clearwater Nature Ctr, 11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD
Essie Wilson, 301.839.2471 wilsone@howrey.com

Lancaster Bonsai Society

2nd Wednesday, 7 PM
Conestoga House, 1608 Marietta Pike, Lancaster, PA
Bob Ulrich, 717.468.6458, LancasterBonsai@yahoo.com

Mid-Shore Bonsai Society

Saturday meetings TBA
Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely, MD
Kris Doherty, 410.778.6662

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

2nd Saturday, 9 AM
Walter Reed Community Center,
2909 16th St South, Arlington, VA

Judith Schwartz, 703.751.3768
jmschwartz1@comcast.net

Potomac Viewing Stone Group

Meets irregularly (~ 6 times per year)
Glenn Reusch, Ghreusch@aol.com, 540.672.5699

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

Call for meeting time and location
Todd Stewart, 804.448.4499

Washington Bonsai Club

3rd Saturday, 2 PM
Call first. (no July or August meetings)

U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.
Ross Campbell, 301.587.6898

Also visit www.potomacbonsai.com

www.bonsai-nbf.org

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