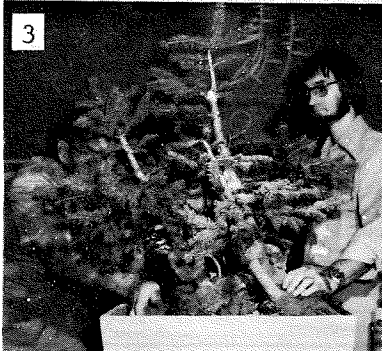


Newsletter

Vol. 4, No. 12

December 1974



COLORADO SPRUCE
...
(from front cover)
because of lateness of season. Future replantings will make rootball shallower for display in tray of more ideal proportion. Yose-ue later was center of attention at Naka reception held at Molly Hersh and Jo Finneyfrock Silver Spring home. Planting will remain in Richard Meszler's Reisters-town greenhouse before going to PBA President's possession in January.



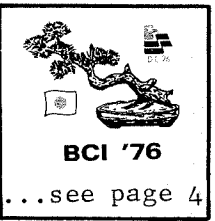
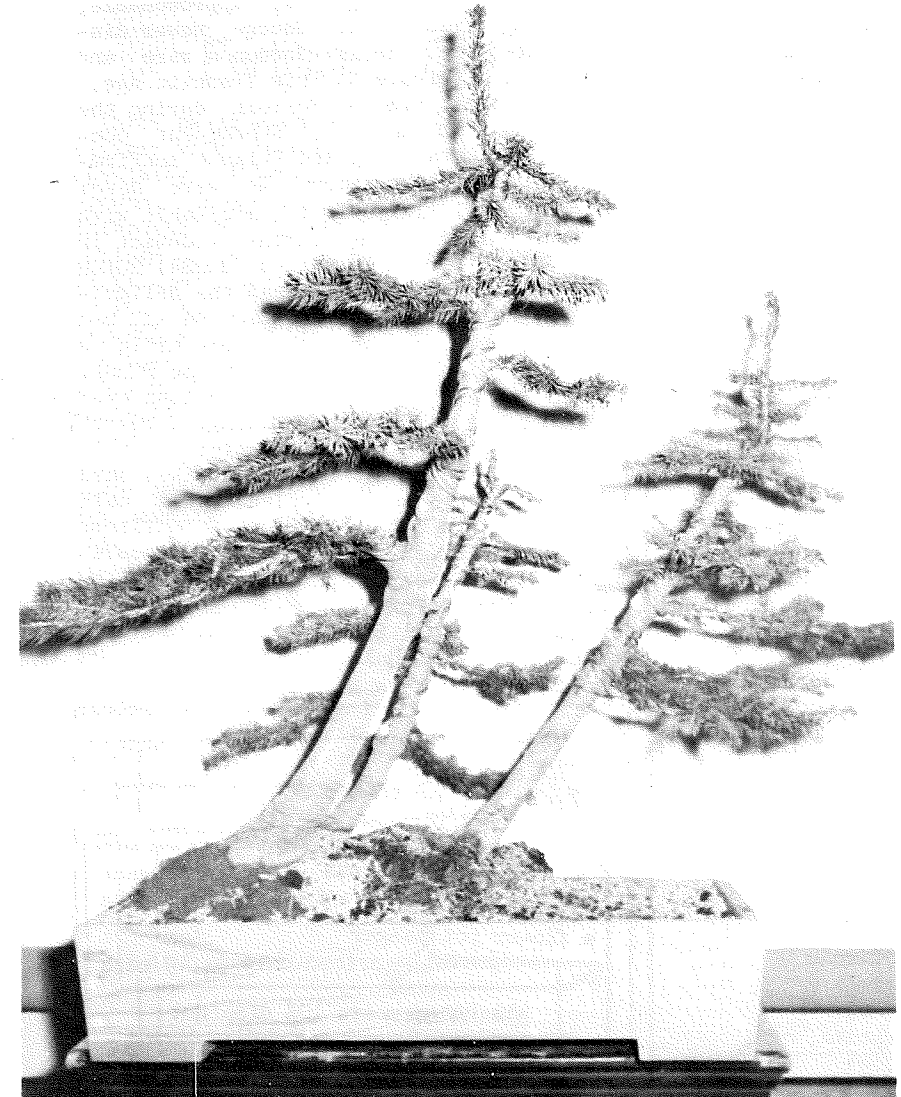
group planting). In photo 1, John Naka talks about the Colorado Spruce and proportions needed. Variations in size, harmony of basic shape, and branch placement all play parts in integrating Yose-ue design.

After initial pruning, Naka passed the trees to assistants, PBA President John Hreha and Educational VP Richard Meszler. In photo 2, Naka works on the large tree while Hreha, center, wires the already-pruned smaller tree and Meszler, hidden behind foliage, left, brings up apex of

middle-sized Spruce.

While Hreha, left, and Meszler hold two trees in place, Naka, behind center in photo 3, shifts third Spruce to obtain best placement in redwood tray. Note the blackboard sketch in background; such pre-placement sketching aids in achieving correct perspective, Naka explained.

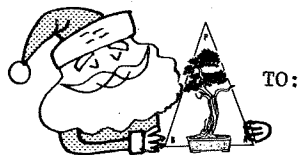
Wired in place, the three trees receive final pruning and wiring attention from the Master in photo 4. Finished creation on cover is culmination of four-hour-long session. (All photos by Newton)



COLORADO SPRUCE

YOSE-UE BY NAKA created at the October demonstration at the National Arboretum, consists of 3 *Picea albies* from Benkhe's Nursery. Redwood tray was built to John Naka's specifications by PBA President John Hreha after persistent search failed to turn up suitable ceramic tray in the Washington area. Largest tree is about 32" tall. All three were extensively pruned and wired, but roots were minimally cut. (see back page)

Potomac Bonsai Association
c/o National Arboretum
24th & R Streets, NE
Washington, D.C. 20018



TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL

HO-HO-HO

in memory of GEORGE FREDERICK HULL

The bonsai world lost one of its most ardent advocates when GEORGE FREDERICK HULL died November 20. At first thought to be a massive heart attack, later investigation laid the cause of death to blood clots in the lungs. He was buried November 21 in the National Cemetery in his home city of Chattanooga, Tenn. He is survived by wife Florence and daughter Leslie O'Rear of Atlanta.

The American bonsai scene is poorer for George's passing. Best known as the author of BONSAI FOR AMERICANS, he added much more than just a practical written guide. His photography of miniature trees, appearing frequently in bonsai publications displays the creative eye and discerning awareness that characterized my impressions of the man.

Although my contacts with George were limited to bonsai conventions, a few let-

ters, and an occasional phone conversation, it was impossible to miss the aura of gentility and dignity he exuded. In trying to describe the traits that just naturally drew one toward George, I find myself thinking of a stately Pine, tall, a head above lesser trees of the forest, but still an unmistakable part of the whole. Gently rugged yet approachable, inviting friendship, George never disappointed one. He listened, a rare and precious attribute in this frenetic age.

I first met him at Norfolk during the ABS Symposium in 1971. Subsequent contacts in Kansas City and Atlanta confirmed my first impression. We were never close, but I always felt comfortable with George. I had some further contact in the brief period I edited BONSAI FORUM for ABS, and of course, had the delightful though vicarious contact we all had with George through his superb articles and photography appearing in the BONSAI JOURNAL. All this made me more than ever sure he was a man worth knowing. I regret I did not get to know him better.

Yes, George Hull's passing strikes hard at American bonsai circles. His calm strength and utter absence of pettiness loomed large. His was a voice of moderation without servility, of progress without squabble, of innovation without a break with tradition. In short, we need men like George Hull.

I miss him.

JIM NEWTON, Editor

POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Published solely in the interests of the POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION, a non-profit organization, and its affiliate member clubs and societies, under the authority of its Board of Directors.

JOHN C. HREHA, President

POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
c/o National Arboretum
24th & R Streets, NE
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Why Fall Colors?

by JIM NEWTON

Those of us with deciduous bonsai have experienced one of the many joys of participating in this art form. That is the changing of colors in our trees.

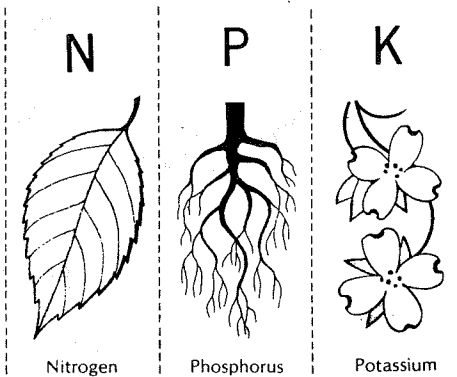
This year the yellows and browns and oranges have been more brilliant than I can remember, both in the country and around the Washington area. These colors have been mirrored in my Maples, Sweet-gums, and Elms.

Yet, strange to discover, even today science does not wholly understand the exact process which causes the change to take place. Botanists say the pigments which cause the fall colors are there all the time, hidden by the green of the chlorophyll. As the weather grows cooler, a layer of cells forms at the base of each leaf, blocking off its food and water. The chlorophyll fades away, leaving the underlying yellow pigments. In some trees, such as Oaks and Maples, red pigments develop as cold weather traps sugar in the leaves.

This sounds logical and rational, but the glory of the colors tends to wrap the gorgeousness of the trees in a little more romanticism for me. The Indian's legendary explanation appeals to me.

Their legend explains that fall foliage time is when celestial hunters kill the Great Bear of the Heavens. It's the Bear, dripping blood, and the cooking fire, that drips on the trees, turning them to red and gold.

Legend and science both agree that fall colors are beautiful. I'll buy that.



Nitrogen Phosphorus Potassium

Fertilizer Trio

Three major elements in a balanced fertilizer work together, but each has a specialty. Nitrogen (N) sparks foliage growth, phosphorus (P) root growth, and potassium (K) flower quality. The percentage of each is always marked on the fertilizer container, in the order shown above. Thus, 10-10-10 indicates an equal percentage of each.

Altogether, there are about 16 elements required for plant growth. Good soil mix contains them all, and most soils have enough of the trace elements, such as boron, zinc, and magnesium. It is the three major elements pictured here that are usually required in larger amounts than is normally released and must be added.

ADVERTIZING RATES

For advertizing rates, write or call the Editorial Office (see left column)

for membership information in the

American Bonsai Society

write: _____

Membership Secretary-PB
953 South Shore Drive
Lake Waukomis
Parkville, Missouri 54151

D.C. Recognizes BCI '76

The District of Columbia has recognized BCI '76 as an official part of their Bicentennial observance activities. This paved the way for final selection of a logotype, shown at right, to represent the annual BCI convention in July 1976.

The logo is described as: a venerable Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*) which denotes the primary area of interest of all convention attendees, that is, raising miniature trees in the Japanese manner. The flag of Japan in the lower left quadrant indicates the connection American bonsaiists have with that country through their development of bonsai as a living art form and their generous donation of 50 trees to the National Arboretum Bonsai Collection. The symbol in the upper right quadrant is the logotype of the District Bicentennial Commission and indicates the recognition of BCI '76 in the District's program for honoring the Nation's 200th



BCI '76

year, and sets the location of BCI '76.

Many PBAers, particularly members of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, will recognize the BCI '76 tree as a rendition of a tree owned by a Virginia resident and one appearing in two PBA Shows. It is also a fitting tree, since the owner is a Founding Member of PBA.

Muck Formula

Dorothy Young, President of the American Bonsai Society, is a student of the bonsai fall-out art form, Saikei. She demonstrated Saikei techniques and held a workshop for PBA in June last year.

An important aspect of Saikei creation is use of muck to form the walls holding the planting soil in place around and between the rocks. Dorothy was kind enough to share her formula for muck:

Ingredients: 40% milled sphagnum moss,

60% Michigan peat (free of foreign elements or lumps); measure by volume.

Add water and mix each ingredient separately until moist.

Mix together and knead until mixture sticks together and can be shaped into balls approximately 3" thick.

During mixing it may be necessary to either add water or remove surplus water. There are no exact measurements for the amount of water needed.

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tree of the month

Witch Hazel

by CLIFF POTTBERG

As bonsai, Witch Hazel, genus *Hamamelis* is somewhat limited. Its leaves are big, generally 3"-6", but slightly smaller in *H. japonica*. However, Witch Hazel leaves do not dwarf as well as many other plants suitable for bonsai. Its branches are not nearly as delicate as the Elms, Hornbeams, or Zelkovas. The styles into which it can be easily formed are somewhat limited, but its attraction lies in the fact that in winter it will blaze forth with tiny bright yellow blooms. Although it blooms in the dead of winter, it also can be forced to bloom when you wish it to.

There are several species available, both native and cultivated. These bloom at varying times in winter, and all are useable as bonsai. *H. virginiana*, the largest of the genus, blooms in late fall while *H. macrophylla* puts out its flowers in the very middle of winter. Then come the blooms of *H. japonica* and *H. vernalis* and, usually last, in March, *H. mollis*. Blooms last about two weeks, and are approximately 1/2"-3/4" across. Also, some varieties are available which have smaller flowers and in others, red blooms.

The wood is fairly flexible and easy to work. In fact, there are few difficulties in working with Witch Hazel, although care must be taken not to prune off next year's flower buds after they have finished forming. The buds are easy to spot however, being definitely round and very

different from the vegetative buds.

An additional attraction to growing *Hamamelis* as a bonsai is that it is able to grow in almost any soil, no matter how light or heavy. As bonsai it prefers, however, a moist, moderately rich soil and plenty of sunlight. Pests are rare (see WITCH HAZEL..., page 7)

THE WINTER BLOOMS

by CLIFF POTTBERG

One facet of bonsai often overlooked in this country is a sense of season and seasonal change. To the Japanese, for example, Bamboo signifies the lushness of summer growth, and Camellias of spring. This feeling is a gut reaction of long-held memories, not just in literature. From youth the Japanese learn to view, in a single leaf or bud, the epitome of a whole season. Even in the case of a never-changing evergreen like the Japanese Black Pine, there is a sense of season. By its symbolism of unchanging conditions and the sense of longevity it inspires, it acquires a special grace when all else seems dead naked and colorless. Other trees used for winter viewing, like the Zelkova, have this nakedness deliberately displayed.

This seasonal sense accounts in part for the reason the Witch Hazel can make a most attractive bonsai: it blooms in the worst of the dead season. Like a tiny bright yellow sun, it shoots its petals out against the snow-covered land like so many crumpled rays of warmth. It is a small reminder in the bitter months that all is not dead, but merely sleeping.

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Tap Water Okay

adapted from
TORONTO BONSAI SOCIETY JOURNAL

In an article appearing in "Trellis," a monthly bulletin of the Civic Garden Centre, what John Bradshaw has to say about the use of tap water for plants may surprise some bonsai growers.

He states that while rainwater or melted snow are best, the chemical commonly added to domestic water supplies do no harm. Fluorine, he says, has "no effect whatever, good or bad." Chlorine, another substance usually added to city water, passes off so quickly that most of the chemical is dissipated while the water is running into your watering can, the rest passing off as a gas when the water reaches the soil.

He adds a word of warning, however, about the use of water that has been run through a water softener - DO NOT USE IT! The softener removes calcium, but replaces it with sodium, a much more dangerous substance.

WATER LOSS SERIOUS

Sun and wind can cause serious water loss in evergreens during the winter. Water loss can only be replaced from the supply in the soil. Make sure your trees have that moisture when needed.

TO FEED, LEACH

Granular fertilizer applied to the soil surface of a bonsai must leach down into the root area in liquid form before the tree can absorb the nourishment.

Mr. Bradshaw's findings confirm what has long been a tip for bonsaiists using tap water: rather than spraying directly with a hose, it is better to fill a large container and let the water sit for a time. Now it seems the time need not be very long before the fluorine and chlorine are dissipated and the water is safe to use on thirsty bonsai.



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ANNAPOLIS BONSAI CLUB - Main Library, West St., Annapolis, 2d Friday, 7 p.m. regular meetings; 6:30 p.m. workshops
BALTIMORE BONSAI CLUB - Cylburn Park Mansion, Baltimore, 3d Saturday, 3 p.m.
BROOKSIDE GARDENS BONSAI - Brookside Nature Center, Wheaton, 3d Friday, 7:30 p.m.
FOREST GLADE BONSAI CLUB - Glade Room, 11550 Glade Dr. in Hunter's Woods, Reston, 4th Friday, 7:30 p.m.
NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY - Gulf Branch Nature Center, Arlington, 2d Saturday, 10 a.m.

DECEMBER

- 15 ALL AFFILIATE CLUBS - 1974 Annual PBA Christmas Banquet, Sakura Palace, 7926 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, Md. (see insert this issue); although cutoff date has passed, call if you haven't made reservations; there may be some cancellations

JANUARY

- 10 ABC - Indoor Bonsai, by Joyce Pelletier; also Wiring Workshop, bring your own trees to work on
- 11 NOVABONSOC - Slides of Longwood Gardens, Dr. David Andrews and Marion Fyllenswan (of New York) by John Hreha; more (to be announced)
- 17 BGB - Slides of Chinese Bonsai, Dr. John Creech, Director, National Arboretum, taken on recent trip to Red China
- 18 BBC - Indoor Bonsai, Richard Meszler
- 24 FGBC - Indoor Bonsai, Glade Krivoy, assisted by Jim Newton

COMING

"Azalea Propagation and Care" by Arthur Frazer - BGB; "History of Bonsai" by Kirk Cylus - BBC

WITCH HAZEL...

(Continued from page 5)

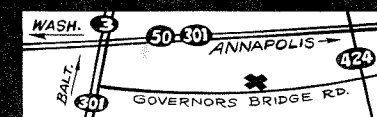
tively few and controllable.

Of course, Witch Hazel makes a fine bonsai in seasons other than winter. It should be of sufficient size to bring the leaves into scale somewhat. Leaves will dwarf on most species to 1 1/2"-2". They create interesting rugged and twisted shapes.

Try Hamamelis for multiple trunks and any single trunk upright except formal. It will bring much pleasure with its form and graceful foliage throughout the year. Then, when you least expect it, it will start pressing forth its small spindly golden flowers and fill the grey cold of winter with radiance again.

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