

Fall Symposium Coming Nov. 8

The first Potomac Bonsai Association Fall Symposium will be held on Saturday, November 8, at the Center for Adult Education, University College, University of Maryland, College Park, Md., from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bill Merritt, Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, is Coordinator.

Under consideration as subject areas to be included are:

- A bazaar, at which tools, plants, and other materials will be sold by commercial firms and private individuals.
- Lectures and demonstrations by visiting experts in the bonsai world.
- Clinics and/or panels on such subjects as insect disease control, bonsai soil preparation, propagation, etc. Any PBA member desiring to suggest topics of interest should call Bill at 703-536-4052.

A relatively new facility, the site chosen boasts a cafeteria with reasonable prices and free parking. It is quite centrally located at the intersection of University Blvd. and Adelphi Rd. in College Park, and is easily accessible from the Capital Beltway (I-495).

The fee for all this will be a mere \$5 to any member of a PBA affiliate club, \$7.50 for non-members.

Die-Back Natural

Some twigs which could become branches on a tree die. If this were not so and a branch kept only two side shoots, then as each side shoot hardened into a branch itself, it also kept only two side twigs as well, in 10 years there would be a total of 19,638 branches from that one original alone!

So do not feel badly when side shoots die and drop off (unless you took off all the others). It is necessary for a tree to lose some side branching to maintain health and, for bonsai, shape.

Got ideas, hints, suggestions about our activities? Don't keep them to yourself. Call the Newsletter editor!

TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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



WESTERN WHITE PINE (*Pinus monticola*), belonging to Robin League of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, was certified by Page's Nursery (New Mexico) in 1972 as being then 80 years old. Robin bought it at the Kansas City Bonsai Congress and has been training it since. The tree is about 20" tall. Pot is brown stoneware. The tree now lives in Fairfax County, Va. (Photo by League)

August 1975 o PBA NEWSLETTER



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Potomac

Bonsai

Association


The Cover

JAPANESE BEECH FOREST (*Fagus crenata*) is one of 53 bonsai donated for the National Arboretum Bonsai Collection. This magnificent white-barked forest is half a century old and stands 83 centimeters tall. It presently is in a screen house at the USDA Plant Introduction Station; BCI '76 attendees will see it next year. (Photo by Newton)

FEED IN SUMMER

Most bonsai should be fertilized regularly during the summer, once a week usually, after leaves appear. Conifers require a less frequent fertilizer schedule - three or four times during the summer.

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.

PETER ABRESCH, President

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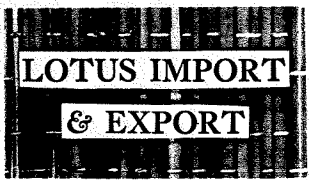
ADVERTIZING RATES
For advertising rates, write or call the Editorial Office (see left column)

Fall Auction Set For Sept. 20

PBA will hold a Fall Auction on Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Benkhe Nursery. The one-day affair starts at 10 a. m. and will feature demonstrations by Jim Newton and Dave Flipse, both of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, at 11 a. m. and 2 p.m., respectively.

In making the announcement, John Hinds, Auction Coordinator, notes that donations of all kinds are urgently needed. Proceeds will be used to defray costs of the forthcoming Fall PBA Symposium (see story this page). Materials for auction will be divided into bonsai and pre-bonsai classes. Rooted cuttings will be sold at fixed prices, except for rare materials, which may be auctioned.

Donated materials are especially wanted but items will be accepted on consignment basis, to be sold on a 30% of sale price charge to the consignee.



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Classes Starting

Bonsai classes sponsored by metropolitan areas and conducted by professionals who are members of PBA, are forming.

Cliff Pottberg, operator of Croton Hill Farms, has listed the following:

- Beginning Bonsai, Smithsonian Institute Washington, D.C., 7-9 p.m., start Oct. 8, 10 wks (emphasis on Japanese philosophy)

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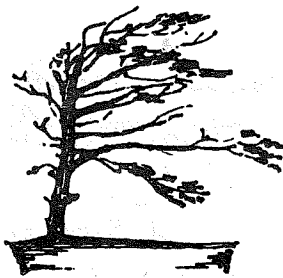
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Tree of the Month

by CLIFF POTTBERG
President, Baltimore Bonsai Club

There are many reasons why people want to grow indoor bonsai: many do not have an outdoors in which to grow outdoor trees; care is more routine indoors than outdoors throughout the year; and some feel a more intimate attachment to plants inside. Very important is finding a tree with excellent bonsai characteristics, one that will grow indoors. The Figs are good examples.

If there were a contest for "best indoor bonsai," the Figs, members of the Mulberry family, would place close to the top. Many species have small leaves, graceful habit, accept indoor climate easily, have interesting bark, present excellent root structure, dwarf well, and require very little care. Several have the fascinating feature of aerial roots, the phenomenon where roots grow downward like threads from high branches until they reach the ground and then begin to thicken, forming additional trunks. This feature is reproducible in bonsai Figs.

The common Fig, *Ficus carica*, is a hardy species. Several varieties will grow outdoors. It has a quite large leaf somewhat resembling the Maple or Sycamore (not surprisingly, since the biblical term for Fig was Sycamore, and to confuse the matter further, there is one species of tree called the Sycamore Maple). But the leaf will dwarf, the plant will fruit and it makes a satisfactory outdoor bonsai.



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Figs

The best known indoor Fig is the *Ficus elastica*, the rubber plant of so many living rooms. But its leaf is too large for bonsai. Of those with small enough leaves, the Benjamin Fig, *F. benjamina*, is perhaps best. It typifies the Fig's characteristics of great roots, small leaves (2 - 4 inches), easy indoor culture, spreading branches, flexible wood, and quick growth. But the *benjamina* is only one of many good Fig species.

There are: *F. nitida*, or *retusa*, with as small a leaf as *benjamina* and as easy to grow indoors; *F. nerefolia*, with an even smaller leaf (about 2"); *F. rubiginosa*, with an extreme propensity to form aerial roots; and *F. pumila*, a creeping vine that can be made to form a trunk, and which has the smallest leaves of any cultivated species, less than 1" long. For a leaf smaller yet, there is the *F. pumila* var. *minima*, with leaves only about 1/2" in length.

These Figs are all easily wired, although care must be taken to protect their usually smooth bark. Because of their generally quick growth, they form good bonsai in a short time, and once acclimated to an indoor environment, will grow with few problems. One precaution: if you buy a Fig from a florist it probably has been grown in a greenhouse. If moved from that humid environment to the relative dryness of your house, it may cause all the leaves to drop off. This does not mean the plant is dead! If

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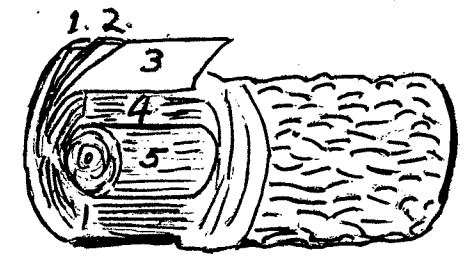
Analyze For Age

Why do some bonsai seem like young seedlings in a pot rather than an older tree in a small pot? Analysis shows that the following reasons combine to emphasize the attributes of youth instead of creating the impression of an old tree.

- Diameter of the trunk is too thin for height of the tree.
- Sub-branching and twigs start too close together and too sparsely to the trunk.
- Buttressed trunk is absent, or trunk diameter is too consistent from base to top (no taper), giving impression of a pole.
- Surface roots are not in evidence.
- Color, texture, and general appearance of bark is too youthful.
- Too-big pot makes tree appear smaller and draws more attention than tree.
- Leaves are too big and destroy proportional dimensions.

By avoiding or correcting these deficiencies, your bonsai will look older.

The Narrow Edge



All the life of a bonsai (and all trees large and small) goes on in a band of cells no thicker than a film.

The BARK (No. 1 in the sketch) is a protective layer. Sometimes it is like a skin, as on the Birch; at other times it can be as much as a foot thick. The inner bark or PHLOEM (2) is a spongy layer providing easy downward passage for sap.

Beneath the phloem is the CAMBIUM (3), a mere one cell thick, which contains all the growing power of the tree. Only the cambium has the power of making new wood and new bark. Both sides of this one-cell layer are constantly producing new cells - new wood, called SAPWOOD (4) on the inner side and new bark on the outer. In this narrow zone the tree's whole circulation system functions, with the sap going up in the new wood and down in the inner bark.

HEARTWOOD (5) is dead and is a receptacle for a tree's waste matter. It also gives strength and rigidity. (Adapted from *Bonsai Journal of Australia*)

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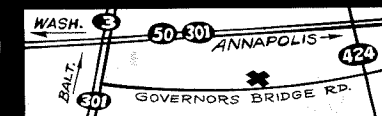
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FIGS...

(from page 4)

well fed and healthy, most Figs will grow a new set of leaves which can withstand their new arid environment.

Figs do need light. Keep them in a south or southwest window for best results.

A rich, moist, but well-drained soil will be best for Figs, but they are not really very choosy. Almost any soil used for your other bonsai will do quite satisfactorily.

The variety of bonsai styles available from the Figs is good. For example, *F. benjamina* will make good formal upright, broom, informal upright, slanting, root-over-rock, clump, raft, or forest bonsai. But its characteristics as a single tree are so fine it seems a shame to waste its potential in other styles.

If you want more Figs as bonsai material, use the cuttings from your prunings. Small or large, cuttings root very readily, without any special precautions, although standard practice in taking cuttings will increase success percentage to very near 100%.

Repot your Fig every year when new growth is just starting. Be certain not to time your work with the outdoor spring but with the plant's springtime. Occasionally an indoor plant will grow quite healthfully and merrily onward, thinking your central heating is summer and your air conditioning winter. As long as you care for its needs, it will continue living out of kilter with the real season to survive in this rhythm for many years to come.

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Pronouncing Guide

CERSIS

sehr' siss - Redbud; Judas Tree

CESTRUM

sehs' trum - Night and Day Jasmines

CHAENOMELES

key-nom' eh-leez - Japanese Flowering Quince

CHAMAECYPARIS

kam-eh-sip' ah-riss - decorative and timber conifer

CHINENSIS

chih-nen' siss - belonging to China

CHLOROSIS

kloh-roh' siss - loss of green color

CLONE

klone - plants derived vegetatively from one specimen

COMPACTUS

kom-pack' tuss - compact, dense

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PBA Affiliate Club

Activity Schedule

- | | |
|----|--|
| 8 | Annapolis - Beginners Workshop; bring plants to work on; 6:30 p.m. |
| 9 | Northern Virginia - Nursery Hop, with emphasis on how to select bonsai materials; meet at Gulf Branch Nature Center for car pooling; 10 a.m. |
| 12 | Columbia - Slides of Convention (IBC '75) by Bill Craig; showing of some new indoor materials; bring problem trees for suggestion and help; this month's meeting again at Phelps Luck Community Center, Phelps Luck Dr., Columbia |
| 15 | Brookside - Panel Discussion on Bonsai Styles; panel composed of John Hinds, John Hreha, and Jim Newton; slides illustrating basic styles; slides of IBC '75 bonsai in Miami; Brooklyn Botanic Garden film |
| 16 | Baltimore - Display of Trees Acquired by Various Members; slides of bonsai exhibitions and demonstrations, and discussion of activities and programs at the National Conventions |
| 16 | Laurel - Field Trip (weather permitting); assemble at City Hall parking lot, 10 a.m.; for transportation, call 725-2580 |
| 22 | Forest Glade - Talk on Boxwoods by John Hinds, PBA Educational Vice-President |
| 23 | Washington - All-Day Picnic and Visit to Cliff Pottberg (Croton Hill Farms) and Richard Meszler bonsai nurseries; meet for car pool at lot between 20th & 21st Sts and F & G Sts, NW, at 9 a. m.; for further information, call 833-1935 |
| 24 | Kiyomizu - Basic Training to prepare beginners for workshop in September |

Ninth Affiliate Meets

More than 25 persons attended the first meeting of PBA's ninth affiliate at the Clearwater Nature Center of Cosca Regional Park near Clinton, Md. on July 20. The group tentatively chose the name KIYOMIZU (Key-yoh-me-zoo) Bonsai Society. Kiyomizu means "clear water."

John Hinds, PBA's Educational VP, is

Acting Chairperson for the new group.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden film BONSAI was shown, as well as color slides illustrating the major Japanese bonsai styles.

Among attendees was Peter Abresch, PBA President, and John Hreha, PBA Membership Chairman.

Next meeting of Kiyomizu will be Sunday August 24 at 2 p.m.

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