

PBA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual PBA general membership meeting will be held at 10 a. m. on Sunday, April 24, 1976, in the auditorium of the National Arboretum administration building. The main point of business will be voting on amendment to PBA constitution providing for direct member election of officers.

All PBA members are urged to attend.

Barrett and Catlin Elm

The PBA-sponsored spring demonstration will take place on Sunday, April 24, 1976 at 2 p.m. in the National Arboretum administration building auditorium. Guest expert will be James Barrett, nationally known bonsaiist and current President of Bonsai Clubs International. He lives in Los Angeles, and also is a member of the California Bonsai Association.

The following day, Sunday, April 25, he will conduct a workshop at the Arboretum. This will be limited to 15 persons on a first-come-first-registered basis. All attendees will receive a one-gallon size Catlin Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia* var. *Catlin*) and pot included in the workshop fee of \$20. Barrett is an acknowledged expert on the Catlin Elm, a dwarf variety with leaves only one-quarter to three-eighths inch long. Workshop trees will be 8 - 10 inches tall and very full.

John Hinds, PBA Educational Vice-President, emphasizes he needs an early indication of interest. He may be called after 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at 301-292-2914 for reservations.

No Food For Sick Trees

Resist the impulse to dose a sickly tree with plant food.

The tree could be ailing from too little light, too much or too little water, too dry an atmosphere, or exhausted soil. Addition of fertilizer can aggravate instead of help the situation.

Before you add fertilizer, know what your trees' problems are.

All The Shades...

Consider the various degrees of shade: partial shade, filtered shade, filtered sun, shadow shade, light shade, half shade, dappled sunlight, deep shade. If that's not enough, many plants create their own shade problem.

A fully branched and thick foliated bonsai growing in full sunlight may receive 10,000 foot candles at the top level of leaves, but less than 200 ft.c. at the lowest level. Full sunlight delivers 8,000 - 10,000 ft. c. at noon. Early morning and evening light are in the 1,000 ft.c. range, and on cloudy days the light intensity may remain below 1,000 even at noon. In those circumstances, think what the intensity is at the bottom of your bonsai.

This shading variation is one reason the lowest leaves yellow and drop first, and why inner leaves yellow and drop before outer leaves which receive longer exposures to higher light intensities.

What can be done to minimize these problems? Rotate your bonsai to give as even an exposure as possible. Keep foliage trimmed and cleared out (within the shape you are maintaining, of course). Pruning "so the birds can fly through" is one way to let more light inside and down lower.

TO:



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January 1976 • PBA NEWSLETTER

the year of



BCI '76

BICENTENNIAL BONSAI



Scrub Pine

Volume 6, Number 1

January 1976



PBA Newsletter

Potomac

Bonsai

Association

Be A Buddy

This is the time of year when every club treasurer is looking over the books to determine who has not paid their annual dues. Unfortunately, every year there are a number who do not renew their memberships. Some just forget, and when it's brought to their attention, a check is usually forthcoming.

But there are far too many who do not renew because they just aren't interested enough to do so. These are the "former" members we all should be concerned about. Ask yourself the question - why didn't they renew?

The Cover

SCRUB PINE, *Pinus virginiana*, belies the commonness of the popular name in its dignified mein as grown by Dr. Richard Meszler, PBA First Vice-President. Collected in 1972 in Maryland, it is 31 inches tall and estimated to be about 80 years old. Richard has named this fine Specimen "Delight;" who can argue that as a fact?
(Photo by Meszler)

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

Editorial Office

6394 Eighth Circle
Alexandria, Virginia 22312
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ADVERTIZING RATES

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

The reason is simple - they are not receiving what they want from the club.

Understanding the causes - and there are probably many different, but maybe related, causes - is what is difficult. Asked, the "formers" undoubtedly will give different answers: not enough workshops; too much talking and not enough doing; discussions too complicated for me to follow; too many rules involved; too far to travel -- sound familiar? These are all recorded answers.

What can be done? About the only thing one can say here is : planning. It is not enough to have a meeting. Each meeting may be a good one, but if they are not connected, the effect will soon be lost to a member who doesn't understand the basics of bonsai. If a person doesn't know the first thing about miniaturizing trees; a visiting expert talking about branch one and branch two; or about the

(to page 7)

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Don't Bug Me!

(This is the third in a 5-part series on measures that can be taken to help keep pests away from bonsai growing areas without resorting to dangerous insecticides. The series is based in part on a Johnny Horizon Program Information Sheet (No. 8) published by the Interior Dept. in January 1975 - Ed.)

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Biological control in growing plants aims at restoring the natural balance. It means using natural agents (parasites, predators, and sometimes insect disease) to control pests.

• Many BIRDS are great insect eaters. Encourage birds in your neighborhood. Put up birdhouses, bird baths, and feeders. Plant shrubs with berries and flowers such as California poppies, cosmos, and marigolds. Some birds - towhee, wren, swift, thrush, and purple martin - feed almost exclusively on insects.

• LADYBUGS consume many undesirable insects. They will eat several times their weight in aphids, whiteflies, and scale mites.

• PRAYING MANTIS is one of the best of friends a bonsai grower can have. Although it may appear to be from another world, it eats scores of insects, with a special taste for aphids, beetles, caterpillars, and even wasps. It sits quietly on a branch and suddenly snaps out its long front legs to grasp its prey. Its walnut-like egg case appears during the

late summer and early fall months on twigs of shrubs and perennials, generally, but may be built in bonsai branches on occasion. Never destroy it; protect it, and at the proper time your insect eradicator will get on with destroying the real pests in your bonsai area.

• GOLDEN-EYE LACEWING in adult form is a beautiful insect, with lovely netted wings. The nymph, called an aphid lion, feeds exclusively on aphids. Do not confuse this good guy with the lace bug, classed as a bad guy.

• TOADS are friends, too. The major portion of a toad's diet consists of harmful insects - slugs, aphids, cutworms, ants, spiders, and caterpillars.

(Next: Mechanical Control)

Seasons Set Feedings

How much food you give your tree is influenced by the seasons of the year. For older trees light feedings every few weeks in the spring, summer, and fall are beneficial. But it is best to stop feeding in winter. In deciduous species, feeding during their dormancy upsets this natural rest period by pushing new growth into activity. This subjects tender, unhardened growth to killing elements.

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Tree of the Month

by CLIFF POTTBURG
Baltimore Bonsai Club

One of the most handsome genera of evergreen conifer is podocarpus. As a garden plant, it is of great value as accent foundation plant, sheared formal hedge, occasionally ground cover, and as cut foliage in flower arrangements. Unfortunately, those used in landscaping in this country are not hardy here, so in the Baltimore-Washington area are thought of merely as house plants.

But what a house plant! It is ideal in many ways as an indoor bonsai. Many are dense with small dark green leaves and small bright red fruit. They can live in relatively low light and low humidity conditions, but also will grow in full sun and high humidity, and thrive. With proper care, they can stay alive and healthy for many years indoors. Furthermore, they have no special cultural requirements and are tolerant of many soil mixes, due in part to the fact that many species fix nitrogen.

The phenomenon of nitrogen fixing is often thought to occur only in legumes, the pea family, but in fact is quite wide spread. The process happens by bacterial action rather than by the plant itself. Various bacteria species live in nodules on and in symbiosis with roots of different plant species, converting atmospheric nitrogen into nitrates which the plant can utilize as fertilizer.

As indoor bonsai, podocarpus offers a number of outstanding species. The leaves of many closely resemble the yew in color and shape, and the fruit is often similar in color. As with most conifers, podocarpus wood is flexible and not brittle, more bendable than juniper, slightly less than spruce.

The species most often used by the Japanese is Maki, Podocarpus macrophylla 'Maki.' It also is the plant most often sold as a house plant. Leaves are only three inches long normally and will dwarf to some degree. Bark is soon furrowed and rough while still fairly young. Fruit is large for podocarpus fruit, about one-half inch, and dark purple. While Maki is thus limited to medium to large bonsai

it is excellent for several styles, including formal and informal upright, slanting, split-trunk, and multiple-trunk. There is a variegated form, argenteus, for those who enjoy added color.

Podocarpus nagi, also grown as a house plant, makes good bonsai. Its leaves are two to three inches long, but unusual in being an inch wide. Its fruit is very similar to Maki. Another podocarpus com-

Podocarpus

monly grown for houseplant is P. gracilior, but its leaf is considered a little too long and its habit too loose for the best bonsai.

Only a few other podocarps are in common cultivation in this country; most are from New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia. The easiest to find here, perhaps, is P. nivalis, another of those rarities which can be grown indoors or out in this area. It is hardy up to our neighboring state of Pennsylvania.

P. nivalis leaves are very dark green and yew-like, but generally are smaller, about one-half inch. Its fruit is bright red and very small. A wide-spreading plant, it is densely branched but rarely exceeds three feet in height. It is an outstanding material for bonsai and can be used for many more styles than Maki, including semi and full cascade, forest, raft, and root-on-rock. P. nivalis aurea offers a bronze leaf which is quite appealing.

Other podocarps occasionally found that are good bonsai materials include: P. totara, densely foliaged with yellow leaf less than one inch long; P. cunninghamii, with two-inch leaves and thin peeling papery bark; P. elongata, also called African yellow wood, with one or two-inch leaves and red fruit only about one-third inch long; P. ferruginea, with yellow-green, yew-like leaves and slender branch structure; P. alpina, with rich dark

(to page 5)

January 1976 • PBA NEWSLETTER

Plan Now For PBA Spring Dinner

The Annual PBA Dinner (formerly held as the Christmas Banquet) will be held at the Andrews Air Force Base Officers Club on Friday, April 2, 1976. Cocktails will be at 7 p.m., dinner at 8 p.m.

Dr. John Creech, National Arboretum Director, will speak on the National Arboretum Bonsai Collection and will show a 30-minute color film of the ceremonies in Tokyo when the Collection was turned over to the United States. The Nippon Bonsai Association, which arranged the acquisition of the trees for the Collection, produced the film.

Attendees will have a choice of two entrees: Top Sirloin Steak or Fillet of Flounder stuffed with fresh Maryland crab meat. Dinner includes salad, vegetable du jour, potato, dessert, coffee, and

choice of Chablis, Rose, or Burgundy wine. Price, inclusive, is \$7.95 per person.

A cash bar will be open for those wishing liquid refreshment during the cocktail hour.

Reservation forms and additional details will be published in the February PBA Newsletter. PBA Educational Vice-President John Hinds is making all arrangements.

PODOCARPUS...


(from page 4)

green leaves and tiny red fruit a mere one-fifth-inch long; and P. dacriddioides, the Kahika tea tree, which in New Zealand grows to 200 feet, with small bronze-green leaves and bright red and tasty meat around the seed.

One characteristic of the genus that appeals to bonsai growers is that it is relatively free from serious pests or problems, and thus hard to kill. Podocarpus does like a well-drained but moist soil, but most species will grow in either acid or alkaline conditions.

All species propagate easily from cuttings. And because of the nitrogen-fixing characteristic and easy root growth, repot easily and safely, even when out of normal seasonal bounds. However, the new soil must be reinoculated with some of the nitrogen and bacteria nodules from the old roots. The tree then will grow healthily, starting soon after repotting. Remember, too, that podocarpus species are dioecious (male and female flowers are on separate plants), so one of each sex will be needed for fruit to develop. Most start bearing quite early in life.

Altogether, podocarpus is a genus with great bonsai potential that, unfortunately, is used too little for that purpose in this country.



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PBA Affiliate Club Activity Schedule


6	Annapolis - Care and Use of Bonsai Tools, Bill Merritt, Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, plus demonstration and workshop on repair and sharpening of tools; bring your tools that need help
10	Northern Virginia - Exclusive First Showing of Official USDA Color Slides of Complete National Arboretum Bonsai Collection taken by Fred Ward; showing courtesy of Bonsai Information Guild; 10 a.m.
15	Columbia - To be announced
17	Brookside - Illustrated Lecture on Mosses and Lichens by Kay Lehr
17	Laurel - Field Trip to King property, Whiskey Bottom Rd and All Saints Rd, to select, prepare, and tag trees to be collected in spring, 10 a. m., weather permitting, otherwise, postponed one week; for information, directions, or transportation call Walter Schmidt, 725-2580
18	Baltimore - Bonsai Tool Care, Bill Merritt, Northern Virginia Bonsai Society; Hollies as Bonsai, Bill Kuhl; 3 p.m.
23	Forest Glade - Cooperative Review of Bonsai Books
25	Kiyomizu - Wiring Demonstration, with slides, John Hinds
25	Washington - Propagation Techniques and Slides of National Arboretum Bonsai Collection; McGovern Room, Sidwell Friends School, 3825 Wisconsin Ave, NW; 2 p.m.

YELLOW — CAUTION

Yellowish new leaves can indicate a lack of nitrogen. The same symptom could be produced by injury from gas fumes, too much water, and too little light. But when the cause is any of the latter three the older bottom leaves most often show the yellow color rather than immature new leaves.

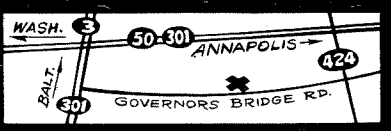
SMELLY CONTROL

An organic approach to aphid control has been listed by the Montgomery County Extension Service. This is a mixture of one part ground-up garlic with four parts water, or ground-up peppers mixed with water, and applied as a spray on infected trees. Drawback - these organic sprays may have to be applied once a day for effective control when aphids are present.



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BUDDY...

(from page 2)

cambium layer; or about jin; or about a hundred other aspects so familiar to the older and more experienced members, will soon lose his unknowledgeable audience.

This is just one example. If club members themselves make no attempt to provide the untutored with explanations plus an opportunity to be taught basic techniques, the chances are good that initial interest will soon wane.

Planning for continuity may keep the new member coming to learn more. But let him or her lose that incentive, and another name has to be dropped from the club rolls.

It's not enough to shrug your shoulders and say, well, I read a lot about bonsai; why can't the new members learn theory first? The fact that you learned that way is no reason to reject a person who has not. A gentle steering in the direction of what is good reading will help. So will personal attention. It has been suggested that if PBA affiliate clubs set

up a buddy system - that is, a personal contact who can answer questions, point the right direction, give moral and practical support - the new members get the feeling immediately they are wanted and appreciated despite their lack of experience. That often is the greatest incentive that can be given. I think it's a wonderful idea, and am recommending it to all PBA clubs.

For help, contact me or any of the other PBA officers and board members. A new position has been created that is meant to develop assistance in this area of membership. John Hreha is Membership Chairman. You can contact him at 301-253-4167. He's looking for new members as well as ways to keep old ones coming regularly and swelling the ranks of what we affectionately call "bonsai nuts."

Trunk Sets Shape

by JAMES R. NEWTON
Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

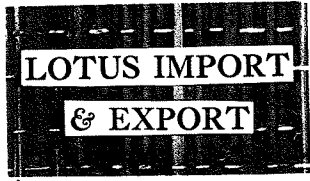
Bonsai style is set by the tree's trunk and not by the stylist. It is true that some trunks are supple enough to shape, but that, too, is a characteristic of that particular trunk which will let the stylist make the change. Disappointment usually follows for the person who tries to force a tree into a shape it is not prepared by nature to assume. Why try to dictate cascade style to a tree with a beautifully straight trunk? Or why attempt to make a formal upright out of a tree whose trunk has a graceful curve?

If every bonsai hobbyist would let the tree tell what style it would like to wear, the number of handsome bonsai would increase.

Talk to your trees. Ask them what they want. You'll both be happier!

TREE MAYBE STARVED

When a tree is suffering from starvation, it generally looks shabby and fails to put out new growth.



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