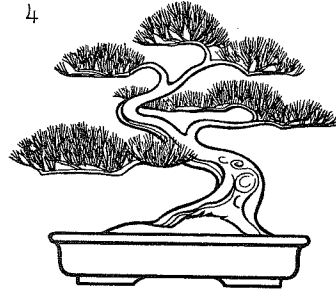
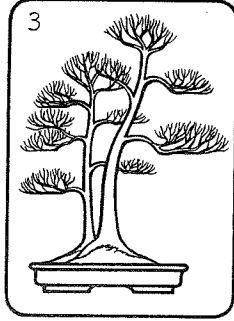
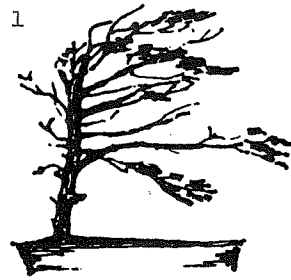


Which Will Be New ABS Logo?



American Bonsai Society members recently were asked to submit their choices for a logo, given the four choices shown here. Numbers 1 & 2 have been used previously; numbers 3 & 4 are new designs.

Which one would you (or did you, if you are an ABS member) choose?

In Pursuit Of Art

by Mary Houlton
Laurel Area Bonsai Club

Bonsai is an art,
A snare to trap, enslave.
You have to get the trunk just right,
Or make that branch behave.

The trunk looks like a ramrod;
It just doesn't want to taper.
So you go to work -- it has to work --
'Cause you've got it down on paper.

The roots and branches next.
They refuse to ramify.
You wire and fuss and prune and cuss,
Till there's naught to do but cry.
It's started looking better,
And you think that you may win it,
But -- here comes problem 99 --
Do you lop that branch or jin it?

Now many winters pass.
Years of care have done their duty.
You now stand back full of pride
And say -- that IS a beauty!

DUES DUE? Check your club Treasurer

BGB Sets Exhibit, Bazaar

The Brookside Gardens Bonsai May program will consist of an Exhibit and Bazaar on the grounds of the Brookside Botanical Gardens on May 22. More information will be carried in next month's issue of the Newsletter. BGBers interested in helping may call Mary Houlton, new BGB Educational VP. Trees, stands, ideas, manpower, and suggestions will be needed.

POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
c/o National Arboretum
24th & R Sts, NE
Washington, D.C. 20018

Volume 6 Number 4 April 1976

the year of



BICENTENNIAL BONSAI



Cornelian Cherry

National Arboretum Bonsai Collection

P
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NEWSLETTER



PBA
Newsletter

Published by the
POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
a non-profit organization, in the interests
of its affiliate member clubs and societies
to inform and educate amateur and profes-
sional growers of miniature trees in the
philosophy, principles, and techniques of
the living art form called BONSAI.

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The Printed Word...

Strictly speaking, then, bonsai are not miniature copies of natural trees, but they are artificially perfect or ideal trees created to grow in a pot that enhances their beauty. Their creation is based on the emotional response to a tree whose form is good and whose appearance leaves one feeling somehow impressed. It may be that such an ideal tree cannot be found anywhere in nature; bonsai are, indeed, more natural than nature itself.

BONSAI

by Kenji Murata & Keiji Murata

did you know?

Most Apple varieties are self-pollinating; that is, it will set fruit with its own pollen.

At The Polls

PBA Nominates

A slate of officers was selected by the PBA Nominating Committee during its meeting on March 18. Their recommendations: President - Richard Meszler, Baltimore First Vice-President, Gary Weinberg, Washington

Educational Vice-President, Harold W. Merritt, Northern Virginia Secretary, Mary Holton, Brookside Treasurer, Molly Hersh, Brookside

For the two At-Large Director positions up for election this year, Molly Hersh and Peter Abresch have been recommended.

Everett Heads BGB

Harvey J. Everett was elected President of Brookside Gardens Bonsai at that group's meeting March 19.

Serving with Harvey will be: Josephine Finneyfrock, First Vice-President

Mary Holton, Educational Vice-President Milton Kidd, Secretary Ann Edwards, Treasurer

BBC Board Set

A new Board of Directors was constituted for the Baltimore Bonsai Club as members elected two new Directors, who join four incumbents. The newly selected are: Edith Rider and Bud Kisinger, Jr. They join Richard Meszler, Cliff Pottberg, Kirk Cylus, Helen Lauenstein, and Felix Ready.

on the cover

The yellow flower of the Cornelian Cherry (Cornus officinalis) is one attraction of this unusual bonsai. Called Sanshyu in the Japanese, the 100-year-old tree is the gift of Mr. Yoshimi Nemoto of Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture. The 25-inch-tall tree was collected from the mountains and has been in training for 30 years. It is one of the 53 trees of the National Arboretum Bonsai Collection that will be dedicated July 9. (USDA photo)

pH Explained

by CLIFF POTTBERG
Baltimore Bonsai Club

All plants have specific acid tolerance levels. To grow them well means knowing how acid your soil is. How does one learn this? An easy way is to test the pH level of your soil.

It is not necessary to have a complete understanding of the complicated chemical background involved in determining pH. For our purposes its use is simple. Even for those growers who are not chemists or have no chemical background, the mystery is easily explained.

Water, chemically known as H₂O, has two hydrogen atoms for every one of oxygen atom. These bond themselves into molecules, with that two-and-one composition. But there always are a few molecules that have "come apart," as it were. When this occurs, they split into two pieces, called ions, one a hydrogen atom alone and the other composed of one hydrogen

and one oxygen atom. In pure water there are only a few split molecules; these are called hydroxyl ions.

Let's assume - although the assumption is not strictly accurate - that one out of every ten million molecules is split in pure water. Mathematically this is written as 1 x 10⁻⁷ molecules that are split. Since one hydrogen atom is formed for every split molecule, there are also 1 x 10⁻⁷ hydrogen ions formed. If, however, something is added to the water which has, for example, hydrogen ions of its own, but no hydroxyl ions, the numerical balance between the two ions is thrown off, and the solution, having an abundance of hydrogen ions, is called acid. The degree of acidity, or how acid the soil is depends on the what abundance of hydrogen ions were added. If the solution now has ten hydrogen ions for every ten million water molecules, or, in other words, one hydrogen ion in every million molecules, it is written as 1 x 10⁻⁶. Similarly, if there were a hundred hydrogen ions in every ten million molecules, that would be equivalent to saying 1 x 10⁻⁵.

pH, then, is defined as the level of free hydrogen ions in a solution, expressed as the reciprocal power of ten of the actual number. In pure water the number of hydrogen ions is 1 x 10⁻⁷: the power of 10 is -7, and the reciprocal of that power of 10 is the reverse, or +7. So the pH of pure water is 7. When water or soil or whatever has ten times that many hydrogen ions, it has 10⁻⁶ hydrogen ions. The power of 10 here is -6; its reciprocal is +6; therefore, that soil or solution has a pH of 6. A soil with a hundred times as many hydrogen ions as pure water, then, has a pH of 5.

Since the concentration of hydrogen ions is what acidity measures, figuring the pH of a soil will tell you how acid it is. A soil with a pH of 7 (that of pure water) is neutral, neither acid nor alkaline. When the pH is 5, the soil is quite acid; some, but not many, plants will live in it. A soil whose pH is 4 is superacid, and only a handful of plants can withstand it. On the other hand, if the pH is above 7, the soil is said to be

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More On The Heath Family

by CLIFF POITBERG
Baltimore Bonsai Club

In the May 1973 PBA Newsletter an article appeared on the Heath family of plants. A large family, it includes the Rhododendrons, azaleas, Mountain Laurels, blueberries, cranberries, Japanese andromeda, and many other fine bonsai subjects. A later article, in April 1975, followed up on the subject of dwarf Rhododendrons. But because the family has so many good plants, the subject is far from exhausted.

All members of the Heath family have a special cultural requirement which lets them be grown very easily. The family is occasionally called the acid-loving plant family, meaning most grow well in soil that is too acid for many other plants to survive.

For Ericaceae (Heath family) the pH level should be between 5.0 and 6.0. This is important, and simple to make happen. The trick is simply to add a good bit of leaf mold (oak) or peat humus or peat moss to your primary soil mix. If you use kitty litter and sand, use about two parts of that mix and one or two parts humus or leaf mold, or one-half to one part peat moss, which often has a pH of 3 or less. To make sure you are right -- and you should make sure -- test your soil with pH testing paper; such testing is too easy not to do. The reward for insuring the correct pH level is two or three times more growth on all your trees if each has the right soil acidity level. Other ways of acidifying soil for the

Ericaceae are to add elemental sulfur or ferrous sulfate. Do not add aluminum sulfate, even though often recommended; many members of the Heath family, including most Rhododendrons, seem to be quite allergic to it. When you buy soil additives, instructions are always included and should be followed carefully.

In an acid, moist, humus-rich soil the Heath family members thrive, even if not fertilized. They should have some fertilizer, of course. Many brands of organic fertilizer on the market are designed specifically for acid-loving plants. Use them, starting at much lower levels than recommended, and work up until you get the growth you want. Never go above recommended levels.

There are so many species suitable for bonsai within the many genera of the Heath family that more deserve to be listed. The sandmyrtle, Leiophyllum buxifolium, can be collected from New Jersey to Florida. It has tiny (one-third-inch) leaves and even smaller flowers and interesting bark, making it a fine choice for mame bonsai. An even better choice is a somewhat similar plant, the evergreen blueberry, Vaccinium myrsinites, an excellent material for mame or small bonsai. It does not grow over three feet and has the fine qualities of the sandmyrtle, as well as a very rugged bark that quickly looks aged and the habit of flowering profusely even

(to page 6)

Election Change Proposed

The proposed changes to the PBA constitution (included as an insert with last month's Newsletter) are to be considered at the Annual Meeting on April 24. A primary change proposed is to the method for electing PBA officers, and is in response to requests for a popular vote method.

Currently, PBA officers are elected by the Board of Directors. This group is made up of one director from each affiliate club and four directors-at-large elected by PBA members at the annual meeting. Only the President must be a member of the Board.

While this method may appear to leave selection of officers to an exclusive group, it also places responsibility on the PBA leadership of eight directors selected by the individual clubs and four at-large. The officers selected have to date served PBA admirably.

With the PBA affiliate membership spread over an area of 40 mile radius, the constitution committee which worked on the proposal considered an election meeting unfair to those members living at a distance. The proposed change there-

fore features balloting by mail, giving each PBA affiliate member equal opportunity. To provide an equitable nominating procedure, the process starts with notices in January and ends with a teller report at an annual meeting in June. The proposal to be considered April 24 considers the change in three steps:

- Constitutional changes on officers and directors.
- By-Law changes on voting and elections.
- By-Law changes caused by the preceding changes.

It will be moved that current at-large directors be allowed to complete their terms.

Harvey Everett
Chairman, Constitution Committee

pH...

(from page 3)


alkaline, or basic, and a different set of plants will thrive in it. Almost no plants will live where the pH is greater than 9.

A very easy way to test a soil's pH level is with pH testing paper, which is commercially available. Various chemicals turn different colors when exposed to varying levels of acid. pH papers are coated with these chemicals. By wetting the soil thoroughly and making it into a wet solution, then dipping the pH paper into it, the paper will turn color. By comparing the color with a chart provided with the paper, the pH of the soil can be ascertained.

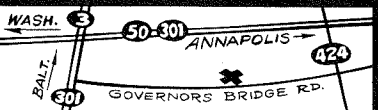
Early May

BBC Workshop Set

Baltimore Bonsai Club members will have an opportunity to attend a workshop in early May, to be held at the home of Edith Rieder, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call Helen Lauenstein, 256-5612, for details.



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tree
of
the
month | **Heath...**

(from page 4)

when very young. Although native to the south of Washington-Baltimore, it is hardy in Washington and in Baltimore with some protection.

Another new plant deserving to be tried as bonsai is *Zenobia pulverulata*, or Gray Lady, so-called because the foliage is so covered with a glaucous bloom that it is truly gray. Its leaves can be dwarfed easily from their maximum three inches, and it bears a heavy set of half-inch white bell-shaped flowers.

In the tried-and-true genera of the family some fascinating new varieties are becoming available. The Japanese *Andromeda*, *Pieris japonica*, has variegated and curly-leaf forms; red, pink, and white forms; and two dwarf forms that are outstanding: *P. j. pygmaea* and *P. j. Bisbee*. A good and different *Rhododendron*, hardy here with protection, is *R. keiskei*, with a colorful yellow flower.

New azaleas also are becoming available. The choice has been between the Kurume types with their smaller, more in-scale flowers, and the Satsuki types with larger flowers but more flexible and less breakable wood. Some good and available Kurume types not mentioned before are: Izumigawa, Kirin, Kure-no-yuki, Hoo (or Appleblossom), and Surprise. Good Satsuki varieties include: Kinsai, Kusudama, Sakuragata, Eikan, and the much-used Gumpo and Gumpo pink.

Since there are some 70 genera and more than 1,500 species in *Ericaceae*, an immense number of discoveries remain to be made in addition to the wide choice of already familiar plants. More and more growers are turning to the Heath family to find good bonsai subjects.

Something Fishy

Bonsaiists with aquariums may be overlooking a source of organic tree food.

It's simple; when you change water in your finney pets' tank, save it. The deposits in it will be highly organic and quite tasty to bonsai (many of which already are used to fish products as fertilizer). Use this "used" water to feed your trees.

The fish won't mind at all.

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Returned from Florida with many collected baldcypress, large and small.

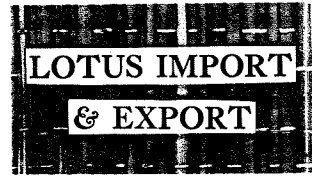
Also, many tropicals.

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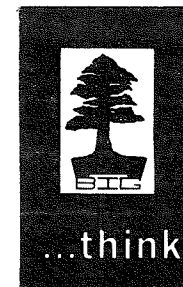
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PBA Affiliate Club Activity Schedule

2	PBA - Banquet, Andrews AFB Officers Club; cocktails 7 p.m., dinner 8 p.m.
3,10 17,24	LAUREL - Outdoor Workshop, weather permitting; Schmidt residence, 9272 Old Scaggsville Rd; bring your own trees; 1 - 5 p.m. (NOTE: no regular meeting this month)
4	ANNAPOLIS - Collecting Trip to Eastern Shore; Pot Luck Luncheon - call Marie Rabyor, 721-2254, to coordinate food items; call Joyce Pelletier, 262-8578, for car pooling and instructions
4	BALTIMORE - Collecting Trip to Eastern Shore (with Annapolis group); call Cliff Pottberg, 366-8844, for car pooling and instructions
10	NORTHERN VIRGINIA - Workshop; bring your own trees, or choose from limited stock available at meeting, 10 a.m.
12	COLUMBIA - (NOTE: second Monday meeting this month only) Soil Mixing, with Cliff Pottberg, Baltimore Bonsai Club (snowed out last month); Phelps Luck Neighborhood Center, 8 p.m.
16	BROOKSIDE - Propagation, lecture by Miss Lynn Hottle, Horticulture graduate student from University of Maryland; Layering Demonsatration by Harvey Everett; 7:30 p.m.
18	BALTIMORE - How to Get Super-Fast Growth in Pre-Bonsai and Bonsai, plus Soils and Fertilizers, by Cliff Pottberg; and Plant Diseases by Helen Lauenstein; Cylburn Park Mansion, 2 p.m.
24	PBA - Annual Meeting, vote on constitutional changes, National Arboretum auditorium, 24th & R Sts, NE, 10 a.m.; Demonstration of Catlin Elm Planting, by James Barrett, BCI President, National Arboretum auditorium, 2 p.m.
24	WASHINGTON - Business Meeting on reorganization of club, election, and new constitution, National Arboretum downstairs classroom, 24th & R Sts, NE, about 12 - 2 p.m., between PBA Annual Meeting and James Barrett demonstration; bring lunch and make a day of it.
25	KIYOMIZU - Propagation, lecture by Miss Lynn Hottle, Horticulture graduate student from University of Maryland; Layering Demonstration by John Hinds; 2 p.m.
25	PBA - Catlin Elm Workshop, James Barrett instructor; by reservation only; observers welcome; National Arboretum auditorium, 2 p.m.
26	PBA - Chinese Elm Workshop, James Barrett instructor; by reservation only; observers welcome, 7 p.m.



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