

# PBA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 6

JUNE 1977

## FUKIEN TEA A TREE WORTH KNOWING

In response to one of our reader's inquiry on the growing of Fukien Tea, I am happy to send along my experience. The trees are such a joy to have and care for because they are so healthy looking, blooming often.

I purchased my first Fukien Tea in Hong Kong (on the Kowloon side) at the Tsui Wah Garden to which I had been directed by Mr. Wu Yee Sun. My poor tree went through fumigation on entry into the United States, and when I received it, there was not one green leaf on it...just dried black ones clinging to it!

I soaked it, in the bathtub (submerged), changing the water every 3 to 4 hours to get rid of the gasses, for about 48 hours. Then I removed it and planted it in a super size tub in a soil mix quite heavy with sharp sand. Placed it in the shade and out of the wind. Within two weeks it was beginning to show tiny specks of green everywhere! The Fukien Tea has outstanding stamina. Little cuttings wilt down in the summer heat--spray them lightly with cool water--and in minutes they are standing erect again.

As everyone knows, who has ever seen them in Mr. Wu's book, "Man Lung Gardens," or "in person," their growth habit lends itself perfectly to Mr. Wu's method of "grow and clip," or "clip and grow." I find it unnecessary to use more than the tiniest amount of wire.

The foliage is beautiful, darkest green, and tiny, shiny leaves--serrated at the tips. I wish I had a nickel for every person who has accused me of spraying my Fukien Teas with "Plant Shine"! It blooms off and on all year--tiny white stars. It does bloom heaviest in the late spring. The white blooms become tiny green berries, hanging singly everywhere. The green berries progress to a lovely red, almost like clear Jello.

I have found that I have to put net over to keep the birds from getting the berries, and a net catcher under the plant for they fall and are lost. I have had the most success in harvesting and drying them in June. Plant them in a shallow tray 6 or 8 months later in a mix of 1/3 Perlite and 2/3 Vermiculite. I put them in the greenhouse, and, though I kept them moist, I had really given up when, after 3 or 4 months they started popping up in progressive stages. Every week, 5 or 6 more! By the way, they root easily from cuttings. Marvelous in Saikai.

Fukien Tea do not like to be soggy wet, but they cannot bear to be dry. They wilt quickly and drop leaves madly. Speaking of that, though they are evergreens, they seem to go through 2 and sometimes 3 heavy leaf shedding sessions annually. After all these years, I panic as soon as it begins--until I discuss it with myself! It seems to rid itself of the old, larger leaves at these times. One time that it usually happens is immediately after blooming and dropping a harvest of berries.

They do get aphids and I use Malathion spray pretty often. NOTE: Do NOT use Isotox anywhere near it!! From March to November (since I am in the northwest section of Florida), I use fish emulsion on a hose spray every three weeks. Soak it good, foliage and all. For winter, I make "cookies" from a "Fertilome" organic fertilizer with only 4% nitrogen. I mix the fertilizer (it is dry) with equal amount of flour and enough water to make a cookie dough consistency. Form it into flat cookies, 1-1/2 inch diameter, dry them on waxed paper, pack them in plastic cartons and keep them in the freezer. They can be placed at base of the trees in winter. Low nitrogen, plus very slow release, dissolving slowly as you water.

They love sun, as long as they don't get too much. Summer afternoon sun seems too hot for long periods. Do not let them go below 46 degrees at anytime. Mr. Wu told me that this should be the very lowest. I have talked to a couple of people who said they have let them stay out below it, but I do not recommend it. I think it can cause damage and changes that do not show up until later. I usually keep mine in the greenhouse in winter, but this year, I kept the large one in the house in a sunny window area. I misted it once or twice a day when our house heat seemed to be drying. I carried it outside every time weather got above 50

As I said, it roots easily from cuttings. But, do not trim it in winter. It doesn't like it, and even in the greenhouse the cuttings don't seem to root. Repot it in the spring or summer, giving it a good soaking with Super-Thrive at that time. When re-potting I use 40 to 50 drops to a gallon for a good soak. I usually put 1 or 2 drops to a gallon anytime I am just generally watering by hand. After the tree is pretty mature, potting will only be necessary every 2 or 3 years. Wire it in the pot in the beginning of each re-potting, it likes to be stable!

I hope this helps. I have really had to "play it by ear" because I didn't know anyone who had one when I brought mine back from Hong Kong. If there are any other questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

---Jean C. Smith, Ft. Walton Beach, FL  
Mrs. Smith is President of Bonsai Societies of Florida.  
From Florida Bonsai, Spring 1977

## PBA ANNUAL SHOW RATED 'BEST YET'

The PBA annual show was held at the National Arboretum on May 7-8. The format this year called for each club to set up its own exhibit area, and many visitors from previous shows expressed great enthusiasm for the way it was done and remarked that it was the best show PBA has ever done.

Set-up day on Friday was a beehive of activity, with members of all the clubs busy setting up their displays and arranging their trees. Each club had a different concept for displaying their bonsai and there was a good mixture of traditional and innovative ideas.

Four bonsai demonstrations were given by some of our best local talent -- Joyce Pelletier, Arschel Morell, Jim Newton, and Cliff Pottberg. No two trees were styled alike and the final products were displayed at Tory Pottberg's training exhibit.

In addition to the individual club booths, Tory again did a beautiful job with her training exhibit as a lead-in to the show. Walter Schmidt of Brookside created a saikei especially for the show and it was placed strategically in the middle of the PBA name display.

Brian Campbell, president of the Washington Club, loaned us two lovely stone water basins which he had carved, one of which was displayed in front of a Japanese Bloodgood maple (*Acer palmatum bloodgood*) loaned from Behnke's nursery and a screen loaned by Jim Newton.

Despite the rain Saturday, there was a constant flow of visitors to the show. Sunday cooperated beautifully with warm sunny weather and the show was always crowded. Visitors came from as far away as Poughkeepsie, New York, and from Connecticut to see the show. One visitor was from England and was delighted to learn that there are active bonsai clubs in her country.

The PBA show committee was headed by Mary Houlton, assisted by Jo Finneyfrock and Graham Houlton. Chairman for the individual clubs were: Vicki Ballantyne, Annapolis; Barbara Bogash, Baltimore; Graham Houlton, Brookside Gardens; Chuck Bird, Kiyomizu; Jim Newton, Northern Virginia Bonsai Society; and Brian Campbell, Washington, who also set up the PBA name exhibit. The show's success goes to all of the people who donated their time and effort so willingly to PBA and to their individual clubs.

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## TWO REPORTS ON THE WINTER THAT WAS

Early in September we prepared a rather large area next to the wall of our house (facing southwest, more or less) and bounded by railroad ties. We filled this 18-20" box with sawdust and sand and placed the bonsai in it, still in their pots. We then covered the pots with more sand and sawdust.

Tree Report: Alberta Spruce - did beautifully; Buxus microphylla - not too well, but look like they're recovering; Redwood - dead; Pyracantha lalandi - ok; Holly - took a beating, but coming back; Juniperus chinensis sargentii - fine; Red Maple - fine; Andromeda - fine; Weeping White Pine - fine; Flowering Almond - fine; Juniperus procumbens - not too well, but may recover; Juniperus San Jose - ok; Catlin Elm - making a comeback; Cotoneaster - fine; White Birch - fine; Trident Maple - may not make it; Osmanthus - ok; Chinese Elm - fine; Azalea - ok, has already flowered, even with a lot of "kill"; Ilex crenata - fine; Zelkova - fine; Engelmann Spruce - ok; Hinoki false cypress - ok.

On the other hand, the large beautiful and very expensive California Juniper which we bought from Dick Wydman when he was here last year, appears to have been totally killed. It was planted, in its redwood box, directly in the ground in a very sheltered area of our forest. If anyone has any ideas as to possible "resurrection," we'd sure like to know about them. We are heartbroken about that loss, needless to say.

We also kept several bonsai wintered in the house, under plant lights. They all fared beautifully, many of them blooming, except for two mame Wiltoni which appeared to die a few weeks ago. I have put them in a sheltered place outdoors, hoping for a return. ---Mrs. Albert Feiner

While the climatologists and atmospheric physicists may disagree on the direction of change in the world's weather, they don't disagree on one point: it is changing. And in case you just moved here from a long winter in Central Yucatan, the Washington area had the coldest winter since 1718. And there were bonsai losses.

My losses were in trees and seedlings which should have been repotted in the spring of 1976. Since the previous three winters had been very mild, I rationalized that they would be well protected in the poly house. Dumb -- for I knew the east-west jet stream had belied well south of Washington. The jet stream acts as an enormous aerial dam which traps most of the maritime arctic air from Canada on its north side.

Losses: 20 exceptional 3-year-old liquid amber seedlings. They had finely developed root systems which were webbed against the walls of the 3 by 3 by 3 plastic pots; 7-year-old Chinese Elm of exceptional trunk taper in a shallow round pot; 6-year-old Catlin Elm. The Catlin's two older brothers which were in large clay garden pots survived very well outdoors. However, the pots were buried to the rims and wood chips were banked high to the first branches. These trees had been purchased from Jim Barrett, the Arcadia, California Catlin king two years ago. Now, two winters on two trees of a species doesn't, at least scientifically, prove hardiness, but I am satisfied with the hardiness of my Catlins -- and that proper root pruning and winter protection are in order.

Liquid ambers are tough. But my big ones which were above ground and outdoors did not survive. Those which were mulched well still had top dieback.

All trees kept within my 10 by 24 foot, unheated, poly house survived well with the exception of the liquid amber seedlings.

Forecast: The coming winter will probably be as severe as the last -- according to the long-range prediction.

Moral: Root prune on schedule and protect all trees as much as possible. ---John W. Hinds

## BONSAIDEA: ANNEALING COPPER IN A TUBE

A neat way to anneal copper wire is to put the wire into thin wall steel tubing and anneal the wire in a wood-burning fireplace. Pinch closed one end of one-half inch, thin wall, electrical conduit about two feet long. Insert all lengths and sizes of wire into the tube. Let the tube heat up to a dull color glow. Pick up the tubing with tongs and dump the wire. Reload wire if desired. There will be scale on the wire which can be removed with sandpaper. ---H. J. Everett

# PBA, TWO CLUBS ELECT OFFICERS

Dr. Richard Meszler has been reelected as President of the Potomac Bonsai Association. Miss Joyce Pelletier was elected First Vice President. Mrs. Mary Houlton becomes the new Educational Vice President, while Mr. Milton Kidd is the new Secretary and Mrs. Vicki Ballantyne is the new Treasurer.

Election results were announced at the annual meeting of PBA held at the National Arboretum at 10 a.m. on May 21.

Miss Molly Hersh was presented with a sterling silver bonsai pendant which was created especially for her by Ms. Lee Roberts of Los Angeles. Molly has served as PBA treasurer since the Association was formed. She is one of the founding members of PBA.

The Northern Virginia Bonsai Society and Annapolis Bonsai Club also have elected new officers. NOVABONSOC officers are: President, Julius Koetsch; Educational Vice President, Rene Cardenas; Secretary/Treasurer, Mary Fox, and Librarian, Don Perussi.

The Annapolis officers are: President, Vicki Ballantyne, Educational Vice President, Joyce Pelletier; Treasurer, Bruce Ballantyne, and Secretary, Dorothy Bading.



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## AUCTION SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 11

The PBA annual auction will be held on Saturday, June 11, at Behnke's Nursery, 11300 Baltimore Boulevard (U.S. Route 1), Beltsville, Maryland. The auction will start at 10:00 a.m. and those wishing to submit items for sale are asked to have them there by 9:00. All types of bonsaialia will be sold, from mame to monster pots.

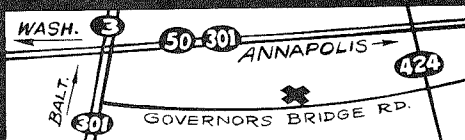
PBA will charge a 10% commission for each item sold on consignment. In addition to the auction there will be a sale table for items valued at less than \$5.00. This would include seedlings, small pots, etc. People wishing to sell items at this table should determine prices prior to registration of the items.

Two styling/potting demonstrations will also be given at 11:30 and 2:30.

Remember that PBA is now a non-profit organization and any items donated to the club for sale are tax deductible. Those wishing to donate items are asked to place a value on them at the time of registration. Receipts will be given for donated items at that time. If you have any questions, contact Mary Houlton at 345-3606.



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# L.A. BONSAI SHOW: A STANDOUT

I was favored with a travel bonus on an April business trip when an associate and I visited the California Bonsai Society show in Los Angeles. It was their 20th annual show at the Museum of Science and Industry. They show about 600 trees, about 300 at a time, over a two-week period. Along with the show, they have daily demonstrations, with two demonstrators and a speaker. These are notable bonsaiists, such as: Jim Barret, Jim Everman, Frank Goya, John Naka, Ben Oki, Melba Tucker, and George Yamaguchi, about 30 in all.

Each showing member has his own display section for three to five trees. The single magnificent species of show tree is the spectacular California Juniper in driftwood style. About fifteen were shown. There was a monstrous six-foot pine at the entrance. John Naka also showed one of his majestic pines. While the Southern California weather does not favor deciduous trees, there were wisteria, ginkos, azaleas, live oaks, and others.

They had museum cases displaying books, material, tools and methods. Several bonsai specialty nurseries had stands with material for sale.

There is little doubt that this is the best bonsai show east of Ueno Park. My business associate said that he thought these show trees were better than the gift trees in the National Arboretum collection. However, I prefer the National Arboretum display technique. ---H. J. Everett

## PRESIDENTS COLUMN

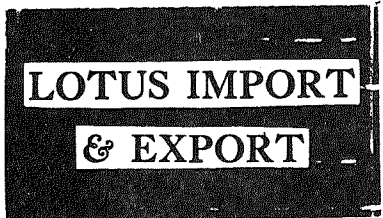
On a recent collecting trip to West Virginia I was particularly taken with the highlands and the unique character of the rocks and trees. It was my thought at the time that here we have a new style for bonsai. However, this style needs to be kept within the context of the environment which produced it.

Saikei seemed to me to be the best way to express this. My two companions and I collected some rocks and trees with the specific idea of creating saikei to express the spirit of the West Virginia highlands. Upon our return, we worked together to do just that and I believe were rather successful.

This is something we can all try. As we travel during the summer months, we can record what we see, not only with a camera, but by attempting to recreate through bonsai or saikai, the character of the natural areas we visit. Thus, we can learn from what we see, and if we are successful in capturing the feeling of the area that inspired our efforts, we can go back to it again just by walking into our backyard.

---Richard M. Meszler

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# CLUB CALENDAR

- ANNAPOLIS** - June 10 (Friday), 7:30 p.m. Annapolis Public Library on West Street. Leaf pruning and general workshop. Bring deciduous trees and trees for critique.  
July 10 (Sunday). Time and place to meet to be established. Trip to a Japanese garden and to the Ladew Topiary Gardens.
- BALTIMORE** - June 19 (Sunday), 3:00 p.m. Three people will style San Jose junipers. Tree of the month is the juniper. Bring own trees and participate in the forum.  
July. No meeting scheduled at this time.  
August 21 (Sunday), 3:00 p.m. Cylburn Park. Return of the zelkova which is the charter tree of the month. The new charter tree is the black pine which will be distributed at this meeting.
- BROOKSIDE** - June 17 (Friday), 7:30 p.m. Brookside Nature Center in Wheaton Regional Park. Dr. Tanada will lecture on plant physiology. Bring trees for critique.  
July 16 (Saturday). Time and place of meeting to be announced. A tour of three bonsai gardens of BGB members.
- KIYOMIZU** - June 26 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. Clearwater Nature Center in Louise Cosca Regional Park near Clinton, MD. Meet in the workroom for a pruning and pinching workshop and demonstration.  
July 24 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. Same location as June meeting. Wiring workshop.
- NOVABONSOC** - June 18 (Saturday), 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. Techniques of displaying bonsai, benches, stands, indoor, etc., by Bill Merritt, Ruth Lamanna and Jim Newton. Tour of the collections of Bill Merritt and Ruth Lamanna.
- WASHINGTON** - Please note revised scheduling and new directions aimed toward teaching basic bonsai skills to members. If you have any questions call Tory Pottberg - 301-366-8844 or Joyce Pelletier in Bowie, Maryland 262-8578.  
June 18 (Saturday) 2 p.m. A basic styling workshop using holly-wood junipers; there will be four teachers for individual attention and the junipers will be available at wholesale cost. Bring sruners, wire cutters and wire. If you have a maple, elm, or yelkova (not necessarily a bonsai) fertilize it properly and bring it to the June meeting for leaf sruning.  
July 16 (Saturday) 2 p.m. Indoor material workshop, we hope to have Marion Borchers from Tampa, Fla. to help us. There will be material suitable for indoor bonsai available in a range of prices. Bring tools and wire.  
Aug 20 (Saturday) 2 p.m. Wiring workshop with special techniques and alternative methods demonstrated. Bring tools and wire andy any material you want help with.



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# THE CARE AND FEEDING OF CATLIN ELM

Catlin Elm, *Ulmus Parvifolia* (Catlin) is a sport of the common Chinese Elm. It has no scientific name, other than *Ulmus Parvifolia*. We just added "Catlin" or "Catlinii" to further identify the tree and to recognize the man, John Catlin, who found it.

Catlin Elm has small, shiny, dark green leaves. It grows slower than the ordinary Chinese Elm but it produces a much finer network of twigs and branches.

Being a sport, nearly all of the material produced is from cuttings.

In temperate zones, cuttings may be taken at almost any time of the year, but June and July seem to be good months for a high percentage of success. New tip growth, about 4" long, should be taken after it has hardened. Trim the lower leaves halfway up the stem; cut it on a slant at the lowest node making sure not to damage the node.

Stick the cutting in sharp sand, or half and half sharp sand and peat moss, or any other medium you have had success with. Keep in semi-shade until rooted. The cuttings will root faster under glass with controlled temperature and humidity, but it isn't necessary.

When the trees are rooted, place them in individual 2" pots. When they are established and growing, be sure to trim periodically to produce branching and shape.

The next move will be to a 4" or larger container. At this time, the roots should be trimmed and untangled.

Continue the shaping by trimming until ready to place in a Bonsai container. Although elms can stand a soil mixture that stays moist, I find a porous mix of one third sharp sand, one third humus, and one third sandy loam works well for me. Make sure that some of the dust is removed from the mix before use.

To retain and produce small leaves, do not feed high nitrogen fast-acting fertilizers. Feeding three times a year is sufficient to maintain good color and healthy growth without enlarging the size of the foliage.

I feel that 90 percent of the shaping can be done by proper pruning. Wait until the new growth has several sets of leaves, then prune back to the first or second set. Branches growing inward or straight up through the body of the tree should be removed or redirected. Use wire to direct an unruly branch or shape the trunk.

Since elms have tender bark, watch closely for developing wire scars.

An elm should look like an elm in someone's front yard, or standing alone in a field. They should not be made to take on pine or exotic shapes.

Catlin Elm can be used individually or in groups. They are also used in on-a-rock styles, and are excellent Saikei material.

The hardiness of the material is not clearly known from a weather standpoint, but we know of trees being grown successfully from New York to Miami.

The only pest that seems to give me problems is black or brown scale. I pick them off with my fingers and spray with Malathion.

In temperate zones the tree is evergreen.

---Jim Barrett, Arcadia, CA  
From Florida Bonsai, Spring 1977