

PBA NEWSLETTER

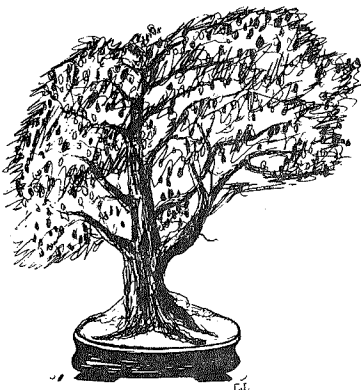
VOLUME 7 NUMBER 7

JULY 1977

TREE OF THE MONTH STEWARTIA

by Joyce Pelletier

If you're interested in beautiful, flaking, colorful bark on bonsai, then consider the little-known Stewartia. Why it is less known, I can't imagine, because it is a very ancient tree. Fossils of Stewartia dating back to the Oligocene era have been found in Europe, as well as in Japan. It was known to 18th century botanists in Virginia, and was written about in early colonial literature.



Original Drawing by
Mrs. Fern Jacobi

There are eight or nine species of Stewartia, two of them native to America, while the others originated in China, Japan and Korea. My research indicates that the American species was known before the Asiatic species were discovered and described. Stewartia, sometimes called "Stuartia," was named after John Stuart, the Earl of Bute, who helped establish the famous Kew Gardens in England. He was a friend of the American botanist who discovered Stewartia in colonial America.

Stewartia have conspicuous, white, camellia-like flowers borne singly in early summer, usually in July. Since there are few summer-blooming woody plants, these are of special value. The bright, peeling bark is somewhat similar to that of the sycamore tree, but more colorful. It is a tree for all seasons, with its pretty, sometimes fragrant flowers, glorious autumn foliage, and wonderful bark.

The leaves are alternate, simple, toothed, deciduous and semi-evergreen, dark green in summer and orange-red to purple in fall. Size of leaves varies from 1-1/2 to 5 inches. Flower sizes vary from 1 to 4 inches in diameter, and have purple or yellow-orange stamens, depending on the species. The fruit is a woody capsule.

Stewartia are usually shrubs or small trees, and are members of the tea family (Theaceae). Other members of the tea family are the "Camellia" and the "Franklinia." Stewartia can be found in a few nurseries, but if you should be out collecting in the southeast United States, keep an eye out for the native Stewartia. *S. malacodendron*, known as "Silky camellia," is found primarily in the coastal plains from Virginia to Florida, and west to Mississippi. Its 4-inch flowers have bluish anthers. *S. ovata*, "Mountain camellia", is found in a range from the Virginia coastal plain to the adjacent piedmont and mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. It has orange anthers in a 3-inch flower.

The beautiful collected specimen in the National Bonsai Collection was identified by the Japanese donor as *S. pseudo-camellia* ("Japanese Stewartia"). However, according to Mr. Bob Dreschler, curator of the National Bonsai Collection, other taxonomists and botanists have identified it as *S. monadelphica*, as the nameplate may soon be changed. *S. monadelphica* has the smallest flower, while *S. pseudo-camellia* has the reddest bark.

Mr. Dreschler says that the Stewartia he cares for is pruned after all the leaves have come out. Flowers are produced on new growth, but not on the tips of branches, so it is still possible to maintain the bonsai shape without removing flower buds.

Stewartias, like camellias, prefer moist, acid soil in a woodland setting. They prefer a soil with a pH of 4.5 to 5.5 supplemented with leaf mold or peat moss. They do best when there is sun most of the day, but shade during the hottest periods. They are difficult to transplant from the ground, and should be moved with a large soil ball in early spring while still small. Their hardiness varies from Zone 5 to Zone 8, depending on species.

Propagation may be accomplished by layering lower branches in August; by seed which is best soaked for a few days before sowing; or by cuttings of short side branches about 3 inches long, with a heel, taken in July. Cuttings should be grown under mist, and protected through the following winter until well established. Mr. Clifton Pottberg of Croton Hill Bonsai Nursery states that *Stewartia* are very difficult to propagate from cuttings. ---Joyce Pelletier

WATH YOUR TREES — INSECT POPULATION UP

The following letter is from Charles L. Staines, Jr., insect and pest specialist with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Annapolis. Readers who attended the first PBA Symposium and BCI-76 will remember the outstanding, slide-illustrated lectures that Mr. and Mrs. Staines presented at those events. Charles also wrote and illustrated a comprehensive article on insects and pests which was serialized in *Bonsai Club International's* monthly magazine *Bonsai*.

"Many people have the idea that the populations of many plant pests would be low this year due to the cold winter. While it is still too early to tell about a few species it appears that most of the insects survived the winter quite well.

"Surveys by the Maryland Department of Agriculture indicate a reduced population of bagworms and wax scale. The Nantucket pine tip moth is still present in high numbers but did not emerge until three to four weeks later than normal.

"The populations of spider mites and aphids are higher than normal this year due to the hot, dry spring we had. Also the first Japanese beetle adults have been seen this year." ---C. L. Staines, Jr.

BROOKSIDE BONSAI TOUR

Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club members, and all PBAers who wish to join us, will meet at the Nature Center parking lot at Brookside Gardens at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, July 16, for a tour of two of our "Brookie's" collections. John Hreha and Janet Lanman have graciously agreed to play host to all who wish to come and view their collections, and will answer questions regarding their trees and the care they give them. Bring a lunch for picnicing. Drinks will be provided. If you have any questions call Mary Houlton at 345-3606 after 6:00 p.m. ---Mary Houlton

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

What benefit does a bonsai club member derive from his/her club's affiliation with PBA? How does the \$5.00 of their dues that goes to PBA benefit them? These are questions that were raised at the recent annual business meeting and are important considerations that I would like to discuss. I have touched on this subject in previous columns (Vol. 7 #1, 2, 4, and 5) and would like to review them here.

In a word, the value of PBA to those interested in bonsai is "numbers." To function effectively and flourish, every organization, hobby, discipline, etc., requires a certain "critical mass" of supporters who communicate ideas, methods, and generally maintain a level of interest and activity. This in turn helps encourage and improve individual performance. PBA is an affiliation of local clubs that serves to increase the resources available to each member by bringing together a larger number of bonsai enthusiasts than is possible on a local basis. PBA is not intended to fulfill the role of a local club, but to function when the large resources of the total membership is needed. The geographical disparity of the membership is overcome by the Newsletter. This alone accounts for a major portion of the dues paid to PBA. Approximately \$3.50 of each member's contribution goes to direct costs for printing the Newsletter. There are also hidden costs, such as the attorney's fee for incorporation and obtaining tax exempt status (so we can take advantage of bulk mailing at 2 cents per Newsletter instead of 13 cents) as well as donated services for which we would normally pay.

The remaining portion of the PBA dues supports such programs as visiting bonsai teachers (honorarium and travel), the annual symposium (we usually just manage to break even, due to poor attendance), underwriting workshops, etc.

As I have stated before (Vol. 7 #4) PBA as well as local club activities are entirely dependent on voluntary efforts of the members. Yet, there doesn't seem to be many volunteers. Even the recent annual business meeting was very poorly attended. Perhaps communication is part of the problem. PBA activities are usually generated at Board meetings and we must depend on the club representatives to relay information to their respective club as well as to solicit and encourage participation in PBA activities. The Board representatives have an important job. They not only represent their clubs at PBA Board meetings, but also they represent PBA at their club meetings. If they cannot attend a meeting, an alternate ought to come in his/her place.

In addition to communication via club representatives, we have been and are taking steps to improve lines of communication. The most obvious way to do this is through the Newsletter. Minutes of Board meetings have been and will continue to be summarized in the Newsletter.

If individual clubs would like to have greater communication of club activities, there is no reason why they cannot use the Newsletter. All that needs to be done is to submit the articles, schedules, notices, etc. to John Hinds by the 15th of the month and it will be included. It would be valuable to all PBA members to have subsections of the Newsletter designated for each club's activities. All that is required is copy. With our current format, space is not a problem.

A letters to the editor section can also be started. If you have any suggestions, comments, criticisms, etc., write them down and send them to the Newsletter. Let's discuss and evaluate our activities. That way we have fewer misunderstandings and can improve our program.

It is up to each of us to make use of the programs and resources of PBA and our local clubs. The only way we can function is through the cumulative and voluntary efforts of the membership. Our goal is to provide a resource for each of us to use to advance our abilities in the art. The more each of us contributes and participates, the greater the resource.

---Richard Meszler

PBA FISCAL REPORT

BALANCE AS OF 30 APRIL 1976

\$ 926.69

RECEIPTS

Total Dues		\$ 1,292.50
(Annapolis)	\$185.00	
(Baltimore)	282.50	
(Brookside)	261.00*	
(Columbia)	30.00	
(Kiyomizu)	68.50	
(Northern Virginia)	325.50	
(Washington)	90.00	
(At-Large)	50.00	

*\$120.00 received end of April added to last FY's report.

Donations		99.55
(Walter Schmidt-% of sales)	\$53.46	
(Close-out of Columbia)	46.09	
Newsletter ads		307.50
Symposium		1,520.61
BCI-76 Convention (incl interest)		6,564.87
Bazaar sales at BCI-76 Convention (aprons, slides, jewelry, etc.)		2,873.97
Bi-Centennial, Part 2 (incl advertising)		1,605.75
BCI-76 repayment of loan		650.00
Miscellaneous		154.10
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$15,068.85
		15,995.54


EXPENDITURES

Newsletter		\$ 776.38
Postage		569.43
Phone		75.71
Workshops and Demonstrations		526.27
Symposium		1,615.66
BCI Affiliation dues		22.50
Auction Disbursements & Consignment Sales		180.90
Repayment of Jewelry Loans (in full)		851.70
Final share of BCI-76 to BCI		437.29
BCI-76 Expenses: Hospitality		145.55
Photographs during convention		1,190.69
1/2 profits - sale of aprons (BGB)		235.25
1/2 profits - sale of slides (Nor.Va.)		381.09
D.C. Tax on sales at Convention		102.60
Bi-Centennial, Part 2-Printing (1000 cys)	3,467.00	
Advertising of Bi-Centennial, Part 2	247.49	
Purchase of 75 copies of Part 1	1,260.50	
Bulk mail privilege (Applic \$20; Annual Fee \$40)	60.00	
Stationery and application blanks	402.00	
Cost of incorporation	517.28	
Miscellaneous		135.17

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$13,200.46

TOTAL BALANCE ON HAND (21 MAY 1977)

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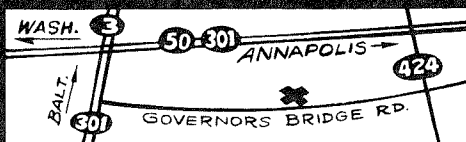
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member BONSAI ARTISTS LEAGUE

CLUB CALENDAR

- ANNAPOLIS - July 8 (Friday), 7:30 p.m. Annapolis Public Library. Slides of the 1977 Southern California Bonsai Show and of the A.B.S. Philadelphia show.
- July 16 (Saturday), 2:00 p.m. Workshop to be held in the National Arboretum auditorium in conjunction with the Washington and Baltimore clubs. Plants (*Ficus nerrifolia*) to be provided at cost. A \$4 individual fee. Call Vicki Ballantyne, 647-3224, for reservation of a tree. This tree is noted for the aerial roots coming down from branches. Marion Borchers of the Florida club and Cliff Pottberg of the Baltimore club conduct the workshop. The previously announced trip to the Japanese Garden is postponed.
- August 12 (Friday), 7:30 p.m. Demonstration lecture and discussion of secondary plantings by Tory Pottberg in the Annapolis Public Library.
- BALTIMORE - July 17 (Sunday), 3:00 p.m. Cylburn Park. Marion Borchers will give an illustrated lecture on *Ficus nerrifolia* and if material is available will give a demonstration.
- 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 - July 16 (Saturday). Time and place of meeting to be announced. A tour of three bonsai gardens of BGB members.
- KIYOMIZU - July 24 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. Same location as June meeting. Wiring workshop.
- NOVABONSOC - July 9 (Saturday), 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. Styling discussion, including slides and pictures on three or more trees in a planting.
- July 16 (Saturday), 2:00 p.m. Join Washington and Annapolis clubs at the National Arboretum for workshop with Marion Borchers. (See ANNAPOLIS.)
- August 13 (Saturday), 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. Lecture and demonstration by Marion Gyllenswan on multiple planting of blauwis juniper. If interested in an afternoon workshop, contact: Jules Koetsch - home, 569-9378, office - 920-7570; or Rene Cardenas, 354-1574.
- WASHINGTON - July 16 (Saturday), 2:00 p.m. Indoor material lecture and workshop by Marion Borchers from Tampa, Florida. There will be material suitable for indoor bonsai available in a range of prices. Bring tools and wire. There will be a \$4 charge for those participating in the workshop and \$2 for observers. The Northern Virginia club and the Annapolis club will also participate. For reservations, call Joyce Pelletier in Bowie, Maryland, 262-8578.



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PBA ELECTION RESULTS — ONE MAN'S COMMENTARY

Two years ago the PBA Board sought for an equitable way to elect PBA officers. The By-Laws were changed to open nominations to all members, and vote by mail. We had our first election this year. The nomination through to election process worked without a hitch.

We had 35 votes from about 250 eligible voters, or about 14%. While votes came from members of each club, one club was represented by one vote, and another club by two votes. Almost any club could have swamped the voting for any office with an organized write-in.

While this response was about a 50% improvement over the voter response at annual meetings, I would still call it a weak showing of interest. I cannot think of a more equitable, democratic election process than we have in PBA. Let's use it! ---Harvey Everett

SPRING AUCTION — YOU MISSED SOME GOOD MATERIAL, BUYS

The PBA annual spring auction was held at Behnke's Nursery on Saturday, June 11. The selection of material was among the best yet offered at any of the auctions. The auction table held everything from boxwood to black pine and hornbeams to Hinokis. In addition, a consignment table for less expensive items offered a wide selection of bonsaialia and was very popular.

The receipts from the auction and consignment table totaled \$1838. \$260 goes directly to PBA as donation items and sale of PBA-owned material. Another \$157 goes to PBA as the result of the 10% commission charged for items sold, making a total of \$427 for PBA.

The crowd at the auction was not large, and those who attended know the wealth of good material for sale, much of it going at bargain prices. For those who complain they can never find good material and didn't attend the auction, look for the announcement of the next auction and then be there. PBA benefits financially from these auctions, but it is for YOU that they are run and it is YOU who benefit the most. ---Mary Houlton

BONSA IDEA: A CHICKEN GRIT REPORT

I have heard that several PBA experts are substituting chicken grit for sand in their soil mixes. It sounds unorthodox, but it is quite sensible and economical too. The Gran-I-Grit brand sold by Southern States Co-op is crushed granite, an insoluble rock, very sharp and irregular in shape. It comes in three grades: Starter (finest), Grower (medium), and Developer Layer (coarsest).

I bought a 50-pound bag of Grower size for about a dollar, and sieved it. A negligible amount remained on 4 mesh-1/4 inch sieve. Two-thirds went through 4 mesh and remained on 8 mesh-1/8 inch sieve. One-third went through 8 mesh and remained on 16 mesh (window screen). About 1% went through 16 mesh; of that, half remained on 20 mesh and the remainder was 100 mesh or finer.

In summary, I consider Gran-I-Grit an excellent substitute for sand in bonsai mixes, well-graded, clean, cheap, and ready to use.

---Harvey Everett

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30 MILLION YEAR OLD LEAVES A PLANT PHYSIOLOGY LESSON

Scientists at the New York Botanical Garden are studying 30-million-year-old leaves that are still green and almost as unaltered as if they had been pressed in the pages of a book a few weeks ago.

Instead of a book, a volcanic ashfall in Oregon trapped the leaves, "mummifying" them in a dry, sterile environment that preserved not only their shapes and veins but also their cellular structure and, within the cells, chemical compounds such as chlorophyll.

Normally, plants so old have turned to stone or coal. Only one other discovery of preserved leaves in such good condition is known; they are from Germany and have not been studied in detail.

The Oregon leaves, which can be lifted free of the now hardened volcanic ash, are from elm, hackberry and zelkova trees that flourished in a region near the Idaho border in an epoch before the Rocky Mountains were lifted up. Zelkovas, a member of the elm family, now live only in Asia.

When the trees were alive, North America was the home of little three-toed horses, humpless camels and prong-horn antelopes. There were also pigs seven feet high and rhinoceroses 12 feet long.

But the trees, judging from a detailed chemical analysis of the green leaves, appear to have been identical with today's forms, right down to the precise structure of their component molecules.

"The way the paleontologist looks at the bones of a dinosaur, we're looking at the biochemical bones of these plants," said David E. Giannasi, a plant chemist at the botanical garden's Harding Research Laboratory in the Bronx. Dr. Giannasi is studying the leaves with Karl J. Niklas, a paleobotanist and administrator of the laboratory.

In addition to chlorophyll derivatives, the scientists have found other pigments such as the yellow-orange carotenes and flavonoids, a large class of compounds that includes red and blue pigments.

Normally, if individual leaves are preserved at all, it is as blackened imprints on a rock. The black, actually a thin layer of coal, is the carbonized remains of a leaf that was subjected to high heat in the rock.

Thick accumulations of ancient leaves, when subjected to heat and pressure, become coal. Because the formation of coal is not well understood, study of the green leaves may shed light on some of the initial chemical transformations in the process of becoming coal.

The fact that the 30-million-year-old leaves remained green indicates that they were not subjected to much heat.

The leaves were discovered in the 1950's by an amateur paleontologist in Oregon, Bake Young. He sent them to the botanical garden which merely stored them along with its reference collection of more than four million other dried or fossilized plant specimens.

There the leaves remained until Dr. Niklas spotted them in a routine look through the collection. Dr. Niklas said that the man in Oregon, the only person who knows where the leaves came from, believes he can find the spot again and plans to take the scientists there this summer to collect more specimens.

The site, near Succor Creek in Oregon, is a small patch of grayish, hardened volcanic ash, known to geologists as a tephra lens, embedded in shale.

Dr. Niklas and Dr. Giannasi hope that more leaves from the Succor Creek site and more leaves from other sites yet undiscovered can be found to build up a more complete knowledge of the chemistry of ancient plants. Then it may be possible to trace not only evolutionary pathways but also ancient geographical distributions. ---Boyce Rensberger, The New York Times

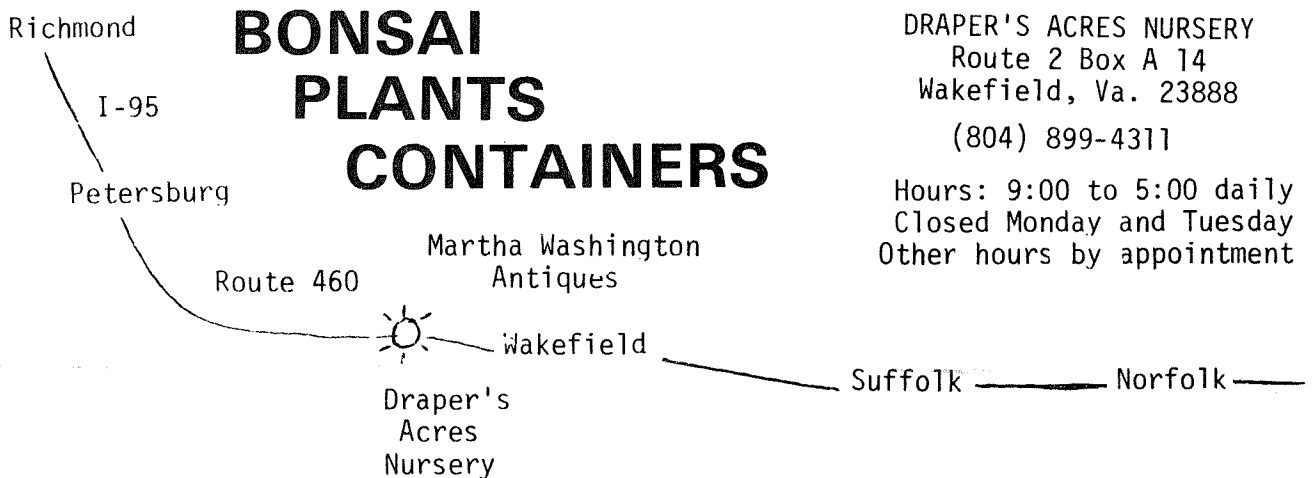
MARION BORCHERS WILL TEACH INDOOR BONSAI

Come learn about plants that are great for indoor bonsai. July 16 and 18 (see individual club notes) Marion Borchers of Tampa, Fla. is going to lecture and conduct workshops on indoor bonsai. Marion has a degree in botany; a yummy bonsai nursery; a growing reputation as an authority on indoor material which makes her a sought-after speaker throughout the Florida clubs, and is the proud possessor of an elegant English setter who points collectible trees instead of birds, and a husband who digs same unflaqqingly. ---Tory Pottberg

BALTIMORE CLUB NOTES

Naked, that's what the huge maple brought in by Cliff Pottberg looked like when the club members Cliff Tom-Sawyered into leaf pruning it finished with it. (Note: the maple is now fully releafed and thriving.) Other trees brought in by members were also leaf pruned so everyone developed an idea of how far they could go with stripping leaves.

Tory Pottberg started the meeting with a lecture on secondary/companion plantings which she ended by challenging members to bring in their best weeds at the next meeting.



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