

SEPT 1977

# PBA NEWSLETTER

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## WHOSE WOODS ARE THESE? A REPORT ON ED FISHER'S BONSAI IN SUNNY FLORIDA

What plant lover hasn't dreamed of owning a little woods someday? Nothing pretentious, perhaps, but a nice cluster of trunks and branches with wall-to-wall moss carpeting and contrasting "No Trespassing" sign.

Such an idyllic situation doesn't have to require acres. You can grow as many as 20 trees or more on a card table, even if you aren't into bonsai, the traditional Japanese art of dwarfing trees.

Lucius (Ed) Fisher has a dense forest of hundreds of trees in his Coconut Grove front yard, and while chronic doubters may not believe that a cluster of trees only ankle- or chest-high can give the feeling of being in a genuine woods, they can. Like watching teeny people on a mini TV screen, soon the viewer's perspective shrinks, Alice-in-Wonderland style, and 36 inches of height for a 150-year-old tree becomes the norm.

"You feel like God, watering his half acre," says Fisher, surveying a wood box that holds a rock mountain miniature landscape, carpeted with different tiny mosses, baby's tears and pilea.

"This took me only an afternoon to set up after I made the tray. Its trees are not bonsai--many of my other trees aren't, either--but with time and training they could become bonsai. Right now they are still in the category of dwarfs."

Garden critters take on a different perspective among the dwarf forest, too.

"Lizards holding onto the tops of some of my bald cypress look like King Kong."

Fisher grows forests of *Bucida spinosa* and *spinosa* hybrids (tiny-leaved relatives of the black olive tree), bald cypress, buttonwood, strumfia, junipers, dwarf pomegranate and any other native or non-native that takes to confining and looks well-proportioned when dwarfed. He even plays with native pines although they're not ideal subjects.

He obviously is partial to the bald cypress and *bucida* relatives, as well as other natives of the Bahamas and West Indies.

"My first thing was the black olive. Now this year I'm getting into buttonwoods. Joe Samuels' great collection inspired me and I've learned a lot from him and with his help."

Miami Beach parks department supervisor, Samuels, has had his prize-winning trees exhibited nationally.

Like many collectors Fisher explores the wilds for specimens naturally stunted and usually growing in poor, rocky soil--although not always.

"Cypress grows in a lot of soils--sand or mucky, marly wet soil with little oxygen. Now land drainage is killing a lot of these trees. The buttress roots are rotting and the tap root can't keep up with the receding water table."

Fisher removes the cypress with a saw and shovel. *Bucidas* and buttonwood in limestone rock take a bullnosed chisel and a sledge hammer. A very bent and stunted tree very likely has its roots in rock and the roots are similarly bent.

He is concerned that overcollecting is going to decimate the few good and relatively accessible areas where these dwarfed trees grow.

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"I've had to justify my collecting wild trees but I've seen enough damage to know that informed collectors may be the only people who will preserve what's left of them. The plant protection law is useless, and I can't find anyone who can really define the endangered species law. There are so few people around to enforce it, anyway."

He is concerned about the hunters in swamp buggies that "drive over 500 cypress in one trip out" and the mass bulldozing of 100-year-old cypress.

"And they're wrecking the Keys. Most people aren't aware that there are people going down there with trucks to take out bucidas and buttonwood. I've just heard six more northern nurseries are considering trucking out dwarf trees."

These natural dwarfs--the ideal beginnings of bonsai subjects but fascinating as is--can not be treated like ordinary transplants once taken home.

"Buttonwoods are fairly easy to transplant but dwarf black olives really suffer from shock and need a fairly large container. Almost all these trees have to be treated like cuttings and put under intermittent mist for two to three months before they will develop enough roots.

Once established, his trees sit out in full sun on benches and are watered twice a day, the second watering coming at 1 p.m.

"It's really easier for me to adjust the soil for my trees than water one way for junipers, another for bucidas. This way they all can be on an automatic watering system.

His mix has about 30 percent sandblasting-type sand or Chatahoochee rock screenings, two parts potting soil, one part peat moss and one part perlite. Trees in large pots get a third sandblasting sand, half potting soil and a third peat moss, with water-holding Turface substituted for the sand in some cases. Sandblasting sand (builders sand) isn't easy to come by here. Fisher gets his from Florida Silica Sand Co. in Davie.

"The moss in the containers grows best on a well drained surface, in full sun. And it needs to be kept moist."

Pruning, he says, shouldn't scare beginners but they should seek good advice before cutting into a tree.

"The bald cypress, for example, should be clipped just before it starts budding in the spring."


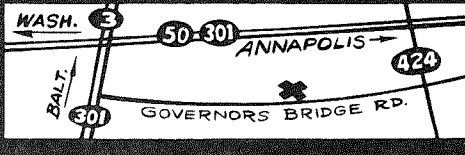
The first third of a subject's trunk should be free of branching, generally speaking, he says. There should be two main horizontal branches and a third leaning away from the "front" of the tree, then perhaps turning back somewhat.

"Be sure to cut an an angle--it heals better."

Fisher says the top of the tree should be well defined and the tree shouldn't have a number of branches "coming at your eyes."

"If you don't like a branch," he says, "but don't want to cut it, you might just wire it--with covered wire."

Although he likes to grow most of his trees as semi-wild specimens to give to collectors to shape into real bonsai over the years, he is also skilled at the techniques of bonsai and teaches beginners in five-hour intensive day workshops at his home. (Fee is \$20 and includes a take-home beauty.) ---Felice Dickson, Miami Herald Farm and Garden Editor

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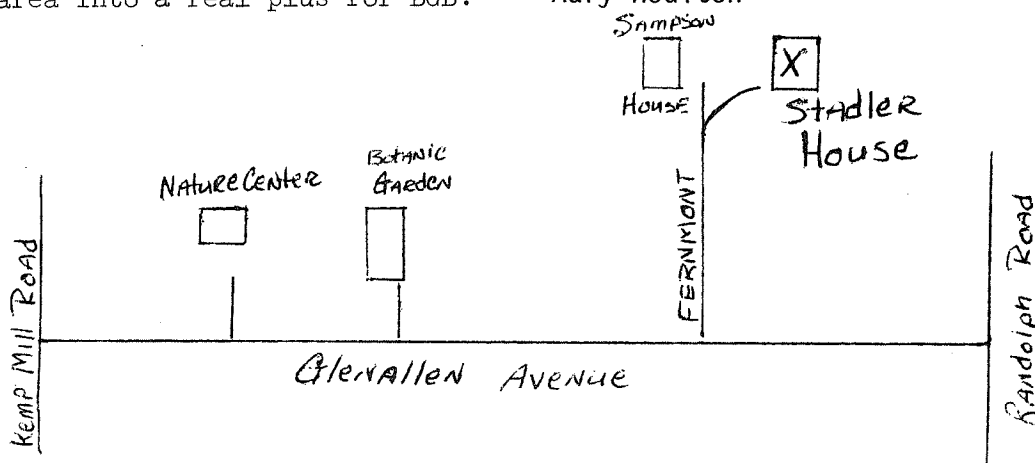
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# BROOKSIDE MOVES TO STADLER HOUSE

Brookside Gardens Nature Center is planning to expand their programs to include weekday evenings, leaving the Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club no longer able to meet at the Nature Center. However, lest anyone fear that we have become orphans of the storm, without a meeting place and without a name, take heart. Alternate arrangements have been made for the club to meet at Stadler House, a part of the Brookside complex and within shouting distance of Sampson House.

Harvey Everett, Molly Hersh and Mary Houlton met with Bob Haealey of Brookside on August 15 to discuss arrangements and suggest facilities to be included in the remodeling of Stadler House. While there is much to be done in the way of renovation, there are many plusses to the new location. Stadler House will be used for education purposes and the facilities will include work benches and sinks for hands-in-the-dirt workshops, while at the same time providing the same type of facilities for lectures, slide programs, films, etc.

The first meeting to be held there will be the September 16th one at which ~~Jim Newton~~ and friends will conduct a problem-tree clinic. Come and bring your problem trees, but also come to look over the new meeting place and offer suggestions as to how we may best turn this area into a real plus for BGB. ---Mary Houlton



## BSGNY TO HOLD SYMPOSIUM

The Bonsai Society of Greater New York will hold its second annual symposium on Saturday September 24 from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. Registration fee is \$12.50, with an additional charge for some workshops. A box lunch is also available for \$3.50

Among their participants will be Jerry Stowell, Sig Dreilinger, Marion Gyllenswan, Phil Tacktil, Marcial Rodriguez-Brossoise, Chase Rosade, Bill Valavanis, Doris Froning, Jennie Popeleskie, G. Gilbert Kleine, Jack Billet, Dorothy Young and Gordon Hennessey.

Further information may be obtained by writing The Bonsai Society of Greater New York, c/o Sigmund Dreilinger, P.O. Box #343, New Hyde Park, New York 11040. ---Mary Houlton

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# MARION GYLLENSWAN HEADLINED NOVA BONSOC MONTHLY MEETING

On Saturday morning, August 13th, Marion was the guest lecturer of NOVABONSOC. Besides giving a very informative lecture on the subject of forest planting, she did a superb forest planting of thirteen *Juniperus chinensis*, "blaauwis", in a 22 inch tray. The blaauwis came from Croton Hill Farms. The lucky winner of Marion's creation, which was raffled off, was Bill Merritt. Twenty-two NOVABONSOC members feted Marion as guest of honor at a dinner at the Japanese Steak House in the evening. ---Julius Koetsch

# METRO HORTICULTURAL HAPPENING

The "Metro Horticultural Happening" at Tyson's Corner Shopping Center on August 4, 5, and 6, went off smoothly. In a three-day program filled with lectures and demonstrations on numerous horticultural subjects, Joyce Pelletier demonstrated how to bonsai a robusta green juniper, in the 7:30 p.m. time slot on Friday, to a full house of interested spectators. Members of NOVABONSOC manned a booth where a number of people paused to inquire about bonsai-related matters, such as: what is bonsai? how to do bonsai? and what to do with sick bonsai? The display in the booth consisted of a four-panel Japanese screen portraying, in brief, the basic elements which go into the creation of a bonsai. The screen was supplemented with Tori Pottberg's informative display signs covering various bonsai topics. Suggestions were made that PBA could use something similar to the NOVABONSOC display for such events. The subject matter on the screen could be on poster board and made interchangeable so that different subjects could be presented, including one on how to recognize good bonsai. The display was designed to be tamper-proof, insofar as possible, so that the booth could be left unattended. The screen display was put together by Julius Koetsch with the help of Don Perusse. Copper wire was used to simulate wiring, and sand, soil and mulch were glued to the background to illustrate what makes a good bonsai soil mix. The PBA membership blanks were available as handouts. ---Julius Koetsch

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# PBA THIRD ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The program has been set for the third annual PBA Bonsai Symposium and it promises to be an outstanding one. Remember the symposium will be held at the University of Maryland Adult Education Center, University Boulevard and Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland on October 15 & 16. Registration fee for PBAers is \$18 for the program until October 1st and \$25 after that date. Registration for non-PBAers is \$20 until October 1st and \$25 after then. Banquet fee is \$11 for everyone, but reservations must be made a minimum of a week in advance for the banquet.

---Mary Houlton

## SATURDAY

- 9:00 A.M. - Welcome by President Richard Meszler and showing of the film "The Spirit of B nsai."
- 10:00 A.M. - Cliff Pottberg will give a lecture on the theory of bonsai and on advanced styling techniques.
- 11:00 A.M. - Dr. David Andrews will present slides and bring with him examples of some of the trees he has collected. His theme will be where and how to collect native bonsai material and the development of this material.
- 12:00-2:00 P M - Lunch. The cafeteria will be open. Opportunity also to browse and buy at the bazaar.
- 2:00-3:30 P.M. - Workshops. You should indicate on the registration form  
3:45-5:15 your first and second choice for BOTH sessions.
- (1) Marion Gyllenswan - forest planting lecture/demonstration.
  - (2) Jim Everman - Saikei. A hands-in-the-dirt workshop on placement of rocks and trees in creating saikei. Active participation limited to the first ten registrants. Observers welcome.
  - (3) Jim Newton - impossible tree clinic. Bring you own tree and bonsai tools.
- 7:00-8:00 P.M. - Social hour.
- 8:00-? - Banquet.

## SUNDAY

- 9:00 A.M. - George Baker will talk on bonsai development and the maturing process, using slides and live trees to show year-to-year progression.
- 10:00 A.M. - Keith Scott will explain how to grow trees from seed, nursery stock, cuttings, including watering, fertilizing, pre-styling. He will also demonstrate the kimono coat-hanger style. (If you don't know what this is, come and find out.)
- 11:00 A.M. - Chase Rosade will wrap up the symposium with a presentation on flowering and fruiting trees. He will also bring with him some of his famous hornbeams we remember so well from previous symposia.

PBA Annual Symposium  
Vicki Ballantyne, treasurer  
538 West Drive  
Severna Park, Maryland 21146

Please accept my registration for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) for the 1977 PBA Annual Symposium. I am enclosing a check (made out to Potomac Bonsai Association) in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Program only	No. _____ @ \$ _____.
Program and banquet	No. _____ @ \$ _____.
Banquet only	No. _____ @ \$ _____.

My choice for workshops are:

First session	Second session
(1) Marion Gyllenswan _____	(1) Marion Gyllenswan _____
(2) Jim Everman _____	(2) Jim Everman _____
(3) Jim Newton _____	(3) Jim Newton _____


Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Club affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

## CLUB CALENDAR

- ANNAPOLIS** - September 8 (Thursday). New permanent meeting day is the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Annapolis Public Library on West Street. Clifton Pottberg will talk on bonsai philosophy and principles.
- September 24 (Saturday). Beginner's workshop at Dave Brown's, 8174 Gov. Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Md. (Tel: 647-8225) Bring picnic lunch, tools and wire. Drinks provided. Trees available at cost.
- October. Regular meeting cancelled. Plan to attend the PBA Fall Symposium, October 15-16.
- BALTIMORE** - September 18 (Sunday), 1-5 p.m. Lecture/demonstration or workshop at Croton Hill Farm.
- October 16 (Sunday). Cylburn Park. Annual Baltimore Bonsai Show.
- BROOKSIDE** - September 16 (Friday) 7:30 p.m. Meet in Stadler House, Wheaton Regional Park. Problem tree clinic to be conducted by Jim Newton et al. Bring as many trees as you desire.
- KIYOMIZU** - September 25 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. Clearwater Nature Center in Louise Cosca Regional Park near Clinton, Maryland. Mr. Jim Newton will lecture on indoor bonsai.
- October. Regular meeting cancelled. Attend the PBA Symposium October 15-16.
- November 20 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. Note date change from regular fourth Sunday. Slide tape lecture on tree styles and slides of the trees on display at IBC 77 in Chicago.
- NOVABONSOC** - September 10 (Saturday), 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. Workshop. Emphasis on group/forest plantings. Senior members will assist in this project. Bring tools, materials, and pot. Observers welcome.
- WASHINGTON** - September 17 (Saturday), 2:00 p.m. Meet at the National Arboretum. Workshop on soil mixing and potting up. Bring your problems and expect to get dirty.
- October. Regular meeting cancelled. Plan to attend the PBA Symposium October 15-16 at the University of Maryland Adult Education Center.



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