

PBA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 4

APRIL 1978



TREE OF THE MONTH

Shad Bush

by Fern Jacobi

If you are lucky enough to own a copy of MARYLAND'S WAY cook book of the Hammond-Harwood House, just turn to page 77. You will find a picture of a delightful Shad Bush (*Amelanchier*) in bloom. This was taken in the garden of Esther Sappington, who was for many years the leader of Dirt Gardeners of Annapolis. What an appropriate memorial to her horticultural achievement.

Shad Bush is the only tree I know which was named for a fish. About the time when the shad run up the streams to spawn, it blooms. In bloom it looks like a white cloud in the awakening early spring woods. Racemes of tiny white flowers appear at the ends of the branches. Shad Bush petals are like narrow white ribbons. Fresh out of the bud the five petals stand apart at the ends. Shad Blow, another name for the tree (sometimes listed as Service Berry) describes the fall of the petals while they soar on the wind, then drift to the ground like snow as the leaves begin to appear on the branches.

At the highest point in my garden overlooking the South River a Shad Bush grows about thirty feet tall. In winter the smooth gray branches hold the pointed buds looking up to the sun. They look much like beech buds, but these have tiny dark red scales spiraling round to the tip, where a silvery white appears. They surpass most buds in beauty and flair. Last year, looking for Bonsai material, I had difficulty in distinguishing the seedlings from those of the ubiquitous chokecherry, since the leaves of both are a beautiful sap green tinged with Alizarin pink. Against the snow this winter it was easy to find two shapely young seedlings which I have drawn for you. Stems of the terminal branches are flushed with alizarian crimson, so they, as well as the buds, lend a warm tone to the winter landscape. The buds with red scales, as well as the delightful curves and zigs and zags of the branches identified them surely as the children of my old friend. In addition, two of last years leaves still clung to a branch of the tinier one. Since this tree should not be pruned until shad blow, I plan to dig the young plants as soon as the ground melts, carefully retaining all the roots and soil ball, and set them into a soil carefully mixed to help thicken the trunks. Four parts of garden soil, one part of sand, and one part of sphagnum moss should help to start them on their way. In late spring I will start fertilizing them weekly, but will give none in midsummer and none in winter.

After the petal fall the trees are seldom noticed, but blend into the leafy canopy of the woods until July or August when the fruits ripen. Two of the species have blue fruit, but mine are like tiny red apples, $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter. They are supposed to be deliciously sweet, but I have not tasted them. Last year the birds devoured them before I could get to them. Flickers, robins, cardinals, and cedar wax-wings are said to enjoy them - all likely suspects in this area. Berries of some varieties were used as food by American Indians, and are now sometimes used for jelly. Surely the American colonists, who frugally fished the streams for shad must have noticed the charming little trees lightening up the river banks, and perhaps even tasted the tiny apples later in the season.

Amelanchire occurs most frequently in moist, slightly acid soils. Growth and fruit production are generally best in full sun, but the trees tolerate some shade. The former oak and chestnut forests, now in groupings of red and chestnut oaks, red maple and sourwood with some Virginia pitch pines, support Shad Bush. Woods in rich upland soil from Newfoundland to the Dakotas are the range of this little tree.

A member of the rose family, the shrubs have deciduous, simple, alternate leaves. They are elliptical or ovate in shape, about 2" to 1½" long and about 1¼" wide. Most varieties are toothed, but some are plain. Flowering time varies from March to May. In some species the fruit is sweet and juicy, in others it is hard and dry. Seed dispersal is by animals and usually takes place when the fruit is ripe. The branches seek the sunlight in random abandon on trees that may become forty feet high. All thrive in ordinary garden soil. Usual method of propagation is by sowing seed in fall out of doors, but seeds may be stratified and sown in early spring. One variety, *A. oblongifolia*, can be increased by dividing the clumps in autumn after the leaves have fallen. Softwood cuttings 3" to 6" long may be taken from vigorous specimens. Hormone treatment and bottom heat are needed. Nursery germination was only 40%, and zero in a 70° greenhouse with no cold treatment.

Twigs and foliage constitute ½ to 2% of the diet of the white tailed deer and 2 to 4% of the diet of the eastern fox squirrel. On intensely managed areas where the public has direct access, the Shad Bush should be protected for its beauty and its usefulness to wild life. The shrub is sold in nurseries, and is used in parks and gardens.

--- Fern Jacobi

Snips and Slips

For comments and contributions call:

Washington area

Mary Houlton 345-3606

Mary Fox 524-6636

Baltimore

Barbara Bogash 922-9310

Annapolis

Vicki Ballantyne 647-3224

MIXING IT UP

Did you know that you can effect a color variation in the blooms on purple/red azaleas? I have a large, dark reddish purple azalea which I keep indoors during the winter. When it blooms, the blossoms are lighter than those of its brothers and sisters who stay outdoors. This year, when about half of the blooms were open I moved the plant from the sunny room where it is normally kept to a much less lighted one. Blooms which have come out subsequently are a pale pink, and the combination is very striking.

--- Mary Houlton

BONSAI FOR SALE

We regret to hear that Bobbe Cooke of the Brookside club is leaving the area. She would like to sell a number of her bonsai before she leaves and those interested may call her at (301) 340-8229. Bobbe lives in Potomac.

LIQUIDAMBAR

My apologies to Walter Schmidt for inadvertently messing up his delightful poem in last month's Newsletter. The correct spelling is Liquidambar, not -er. It's a fact of life that I have never owned a typewriter yet that can spell correctly, so, Walter, both the IBM and I are sorry.

Dottie Warren, who also called the mistake to my attention, informed me that the name comes from the color of the sap, which is an amber color. The sap of the Liquidambar has historically been used for pharmaceutical purposes for treatment of sores, catarrh, etc., and even as a chewing gum.

--- Mary Houlton

HELP!

Do your Bonsai make it hard for you to plan a vacation? Do you have trouble getting "sitters" who understand your trees' individual problems? Would you be interested in seeing the Association develop a file of Bonsai people who would be willing to help each other?

Janet Lanman would be glad to do the preliminary work in coordinating such a venture if there is sufficient interest.

Use the following form if you like the concept and please give your own ideas.

--- Janet Lanman

Janet Lanman
9120 Burdett Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20034

- I am interested in help when I go away
- I would be willing to take care of someone else's plants
 - in my back yard
 - in my house
 - in my greenhouse
- I would be willing to make daily house calls
- I would need some remuneration
- Volunteer
- Fund raiser
- Would like to find a "buddy" and set up a one to one system

I suggest _____

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

SPRING SONG, or, THE BONSAIIST'S LAMENT

Have you ever stopped to wonder
That it happens every year.
You wait and wait for spring to come,
And it never will you fear.

It starts on toward late winter
When the ground is still hard frozen.
It seems you just can't wait to work
On the hobby you have chosen.

You know you don't dare touch your trees,
But self-restraint is hard,
The urge so strong you cannot bear
To venture in the yard.

The winter wind is now less chill
But still the time's not right.
You mix your soil and choose the pots,
Make sure your tools are right.

Then suddenly it's on you
And you greet the same old fate.
Yesterday was still too soon,
Today's it's near too late.

--- Mary Houlton



ARRANGING HAIR-LIKE ROOTS WHEN PLANTING A SEEDLING ... to cope with their tendency to cling together when wet, coat with powdered clay or soil. The powder clings to the wet roots and soaks up the excess water. Instead of hair size, the roots are now the size of pencil lead, and are quite manageable.

ADVANCE HEALING of a scar left by a trunk-fattening branch ... several years before removing it, cut the branch half way through at its juncture with the trunk.

--- reprinted from
Bonsai Magazine



BONSAI CARE

a simple guide for owners

PUBLISHED BY

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DAVID E. FLIPSE
JAMES R. NEWTON

... think **BIG**

President's Message

Second To the Smithsonian Isn't Bad.

Most PBA members probably know that our hard work on our exhibit for the Flower Show was well rewarded. Not only did we receive a second place ribbon for the display and a blue ribbon and plaque for the quality of plant material, but we were all motivated to join together in possibly the best cooperative effort in PBA history. Nearly every PBA member contributed in some way and can take pride in their role in our success.


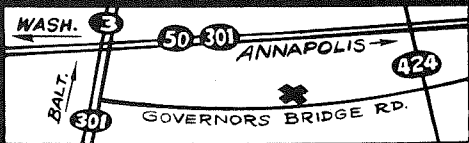
The final spurt of activity began at 6PM on the Tuesday before the Show when some of us met at Brookside Botanical Gardens to pick up the display tables and transport them to the Armory. By the end of that evening the crew, which was enlarged as new workers drifted in, nearly completed assembling the tables. The next day the burlap was put on and sprayed with fire-retardant, the lighting put up and things were ready for the trees to put in place on Thursday.

Most of the trees were delivered Thursday morning and we spent quite a bit of time moving them from one place to another trying different combinations until we felt comfortable with the arrangement. We were still at work when the judges appeared. They agreed to return later that afternoon and, apparently agreed that we had done a good job. The trees were in good condition, especially in view of the weather and time of year. In fact with this in mind, we were fortunate to have enough trees delivered later in the week so we could replace some trees and let them go back to a healthier environment. For myself, I would like to thank all of you who contributed your bonsai to the display. Your cooperation made my job a lot easier. I would recommend that in the future, all clubs keep a record of the showable bonsai belonging to their members. This would be an enormous help to the clubs and PBA in putting together bonsai displays.

In all, I believe we accomplished our goal of a fine display. It was gratifying to see the long lines, on the weekend, of people waiting to see our trees. The audiences for the demonstrations were also rather good. I expect we will get quite a few new members as a result.

Take down on Wednesday night and Thursday went as well as set up. The champaign we drank in toast to our success was well deserved and should have been shared by many more members. Thanks to you all for a job well done.

--- Richard Meszler

 <p>Bittersweet Hill NURSERIES RT #24 2 GOVERNORS BRIDGE RD DAVIDSONVILLE, MD</p>	 <p>WASH. 301 ANNAPOLIS 424 BALT. 301 GOVERNORS BRIDGE RD.</p>	<p>8 a.m. - 6 p.m. seven days a week Phone (301) 798-0231</p>
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|---|--|
| Dwarf Rhododendrons | Japanese Maples, all sizes and varieties |
| Dwarf Pomegranate | Cotoneasters Secondary Planting Materials |
| Dwarf Conifers | Azaleas 13 varieties of Junipers |
| We now have seedling Bristlecone Pine, Small Pots & Bonsai Dishes | |
| Japanese Black Pine for growing on - for Bonsai | |

PBA Annual Meeting May 14

Annual PBA Bonsai Show

There's been lots of publicity about "The Flower Show" held March 3-8. PBA had a big part to play in its success, and I think it's wonderful that so many people volunteered to help, but I hope you haven't forgotten the PBA has its own traditional, annual, strictly bonsai, show. It's true, and it takes place on Saturday and Sunday, April 29 and 30, 1978 at the U.S. National Arboretum.

In case you might be wondering why we need another show - this isn't "another one." This is the original bonsai show in this area, and it gives PBA members a chance to display their skills and talk about their marvelous hobby to fellow enthusiasts and to strangers who've never heard of bonsai before. It brings great publicity to the Club, and lots of new members. Don't forget, we need members and their dues, so we can hire Bonsai Masters like John Naka to do demonstrations without further charge to members; so that we can sponsor our up-and-coming PBA Symposium in the fall; so we can pay for the Newsletter, and so many other educational activities.

At the Flower Show in March, many people were exposed to bonsai for the first time, and were intrigued by it. They'll want an opportunity to follow up their interest, and the perfect opportunity will be at the annual PBA show in April. There will be continuous demonstrations showing how bonsai are styled, wired and potted. Each member Club will have its own display area, manned by Club members, but there will also be areas of interest sponsored by PBA at large, such as the Educational Exhibit. Members will be asked to stand as guards and hosts, minding the trees and answering questions from the public. I can hear some of you now saying to yourselves, "I don't know enough to answer questions about bonsai" - but that's not true, because a person who's had only one lesson in bonsai, or attended just a few Club meetings, already knows more about bonsai than the average person on the street. Besides, there will be lots of "experts" around to whom you can pass the hard questions.

This year's show will take place when the azaleas are in bloom, just as it did three years ago. At that time, approximately 5,000 visitors saw our show, so you can see, we'll need lots of help. Show committee members will be getting in touch with you, to see where you'd like to help, and better yet, where you'd like to have fun - 'cause it is lots of fun, and educational, too.

--- Joyce Pelletier

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Other hours by appointment

Draper's Acres Nursery

NAKA School

Despite a miserable, cold, snowy weekend and competition for time with the Flower Show, March 4-8 held an unforgettable bonsai experience for many PBA members, with the visit from John Naka. Naka-san's talent is two-fold. Not only is he unquestionably a bonsai Master, but he is equally a bonsai teacher, able to impart some of his knowledge to and inspire those who work with him. A rare combination we benefitted from.

On Saturday and Sunday mornings, demonstrations were open to all PBA members, and the number of attendees was a tribute to the regard in which John is held. The trees, a San Jose juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* v. San Jose) and a pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis*) were raffled following each demonstration and won by Bob Caldwell of Brookside and Amy Powers of Kiyomizu, respectively.

Workshops were broken up into two classes - advanced and intermediate, each meeting twice for four hours apiece. These were limited as to the number of participants, but were well attended by observers. Material ranged from buttonwood to beech and azalea to pine. John showed an incredible knowledge of each type of tree and a true artist's ability to find the best features of a tree and develop its potential. Every participant went home with a Naka-drawn sketch of his tree as it should ultimately look, and I have a feeling that more of these sketches will end up framed and hanging on a wall than will be found on a workbench where they'd be handy for ready reference.

Feelings for this intense bonsai weekend ran high, many people attending every activity, and there was no one who did not express sadness that it was over. We missed Naka-san almost before he was gone. For those who shared the experience there was a feeling of kinship in having been a part of it.

For those who missed it — shame on you! Tentative plans have been made to have John back for our annual fall symposium and you'll hear more of this soon. Plan to attend and don't be a two-time loser. You can bet that those who shared this weekend will move heaven and earth to be there.

--- Mary Houlton

Club News

BROOKSIDE

John Naka will be with us on Tuesday April 18 at the Nature Center for an "Evening with Naka." There will be tree critique followed by a punch and cookies reception for more informal bonsai talk. Those wishing to bring trees for critique are asked to call Mary Houlton at 345-3606 after 6 p.m. We ask that trees presented have been in training for several years. They do not have to necessarily be in bonsai pots. All PBA members are invited to attend, though we regret that trees for critique are limited to Brookside members.

Preparation for BGB show at Brookside Arboretum May 20 and 21, noon to 5 pm. Wanted: Volunteers to set up booths on May 18 at Brookside, 7 to 10 pm; tear down on May 22, 7 to 8 pm. Call Harvey Everett, 933-0483.

Trees to show, both quality and in development. Call M. Hersh, 589-3725 or Harvey Everett to indicate your off. Tree set-up at May 19 meeting.

Volunteers to monitor BGB show and explain bonsai. Call M. Hersh.

PBA ANNUAL AUCTION

The date of June 3 has been set for the PBA spring auction. It will again be held at Behnkes Nursery, US Route 1, Beltsville, Maryland. Put this date on your calendar and be thinking what trees you can bear to part with, and also what kind of material you need to pick up. Further details in next months Newsletter.

CLUB CALENDAR

- April 5
Wednesday Tree selection for PBA Show and workshop. 7:30 pm, National Arboretum. General potting workshop and tree selection for PBA Show. WASHINGTON
- April 8
Saturday Collecting trip to Eastern Shore. 9 am SHARP, MacDonalds, Route 50 near Bay Bridge. Bring your equipment, lunches, drinks, etc. for collecting trip for beeches, hornbeams, sweetgum, etc. All PBA members welcome. ANNAPOLIS
- April 8
Saturday Workshop and elections. 10 am, Gulf Branch Nature Center. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY
- April 13
Thursday Slides of Philadelphia Flower Show, discussion about collecting, Election of officers. 7:30 pm, Library, West Strret. Also discussion of selection of trees for PBA Show. ANNAPOLIS
- April 16
Saturday Collecting trip to Eastern Shore. 10:30 am, MacDonalds, Route 50 near Bay Bridge. Collecting trip to different are on the Eastern Shore. All PBA members welcome. ANNAPOLIS
- April 18
Tuesday John Naka. 7:30 pm, Brookside Gardens Nature Center. (Note change of day). See Club News for further details. All PBA members welcome. BROOKSIDE
- April 23
Sunday Tree selection for PBA show. 1 pm, probably at Stadler House. Call Molly ~~4~~ 478, 537-3725 for further details. BROOKSIDE
- April 23
Sunday Selection of trees for PBA show plus workshop. 2 pm, Clearwater Nature Center. MIYOMIZU
- April 25
Sunday air-layering demo on Japanese maple in-ground and annual meeting with elections. 3 pm, Cyburn Park. Tree-of-the-month, bald cyprus. BALTIMORE
- April 29-30
Saturday & Sunday PBA ANNUAL SHOW. 10 am-5 pm. National Arboretum.
- May 6
Saturday Collecting trip. Details to be announced. WASHINGTON
- May 13
Saturday Cyburn Market day. Sale of all types of plants. Cyburn Park, Baltimore.
- May 20
Saturday Azalca workshop and air-layering demo. 10 am, National Arboretum. WASHINGTON
- May 20-21
Saturday & Sunday Bonsai Show. noon to 5 pm, Brookside Botanical Gardens. BROOKSIDE
- June 3
Saturday PBA Annual Auction. 9 am to whenever, Belukes Nursery, Beltsville.

PBA DUES ARE DUE