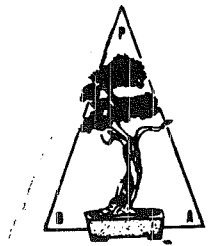


PBA NEWSLETTER

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TREE OF THE MONTH

Beech

by Joyce Pelletier

A mature beech tree (*Fagus*) is one of the most beautiful trees in a landscape. It also makes a fine bonsai. With its clear pale gray bark, its prominent clasping roots, and its fine branch ramification, it is a tree to be marveled at, with or without its leaves.

The beech is native to North America as well as to Europe. The American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is variously known as the "gray beech" from Nova Scotia to the mountains of Tennessee, which prefers alkaline soils; the "white beech" on the southern coastal plain and northward, on poorly drained acid sites; and between them is the "red beech" which likes well-drained acid soils.

The trunk is usually short, and the crown is wide-spreading. It is hardy through USDA zone 3, and to protect its long, pointed buds through the winters, the dead leaves, although deciduous, often cling to the trees until spring, making the tree quite distinctive in the winter landscape, just like the oaks. (Incidentally, the oaks and chestnut trees are also members of the beech family, the *Fagaceae*).

The leaves of the American beech are rather long, growing 5 to 7 in. in length, whereas the European beech (*F. sylvatica*) may have leaves 1 to 2 in. shorter - thus it is more suited to bonsai. Most beech trees in cultivation, and those sold in nurseries in America, are the European specie. The European beech also has more varietal forms - I counted 33 in Hilliers Manual of Trees and Shrubs - ranging from purple-leaved varieties ('*Purpurea*'), with pink leaf margins ('*Roseomarginata*'), to yellow variegated leaves ('*Luteovariegata*'), '*Toruosa*', a variety with twisted and contorted branches, '*Pendula*', a weeping form, *heterophylla*, a "fern-leaved" beech.

In the autumn the normal green foliage of the American beech turns a lovely yellow, while the European beech turns a less attractive red. The tree is equally attractive in the spring when the long pointed buds begin to swell and the fuzzy new leaves appear.

Collectors in the Potomac area have found beeches relatively easy to collect. There seems to be little or no tap root and the shallow surface roots have fine feeder roots close to the trunk. Trees with 8 to 10 in. trunks have been taken readily when cut back to stump, and adventitious buds break in the spring from this stump. In general they prefer a light, well-drained acid soil. The fibrous roots are shallow, so water well in the summer. While they are attacked by some insects and diseases, none are particularly serious.

Beech trees are monoecious, having both male and female flowers on the same tree, and they are wind-pollinated. The yellow-green male flowers are clustered separately from the long, whitish, female catkins which are very ornamental. The fruit is a triangular nut in a prickly, woody covering.

Propagation is by seed, stratified at 41°F in moist sand for 90 days. Branches should be pruned in the early fall or late summer, but leaf-pruning may be done in the spring.

Beech trees make marvelous single-trunk bonsai, and they are wonderful in group plantings. With their strong, shallow roots, they should also be excellent in root-over-rock style.

--- Joyce Pelletier

President's Message

"It is better to keep silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt."

Allow me to speak out. As PBA President, I'm supposed to, in this column. Actually, I think accepting the job as president is what removed all doubt in the first place. Nonetheless, I'm enjoying the job. PBA is a thriving organization, and its future is bright.

I can remember its humble beginnings. Its first meeting in the spring of 1971 enjoyed a rousing turnout of only 14 people, which was all of PBA. In fact PBA was just a club function then. To put it another way, it was an "umbrella" group looking for something to shelter. Then, in the spring of 1972, the Baltimore Club was formed, and PBA, which already numbered over 50, was well on its way.

Seven tumultuous years later, while I look back with nostalgia, I look forward with something akin to glee. We have six strong clubs and well over 250 members. After a brief period of retrenching and consolidation, PBA is growing again. There is a strong possibility of another club forming. And our membership is increasing. And more and more of our present members have a good solid grounding in the art, with excellent trees, of their own styling, in their collections. Many are developing specialties and making new discoveries to literally advance the state of the art.

Where there were rough edges, and even, occasionally, acrimony, now there is progress, education, harmony and fun. The squeaky growing pains of PBA's adolescence are quieting into the smooth development of a graceful and powerful maturity.

Consider:

The PBA symposium is artistically one of the most successful annual programs in the country. It is developing quite a reputation, too, which will also ensure its financial success which still remaining one of the least expensive gatherings anywhere.

The D.C. Flower Show this past spring put PBA on the horticultural map. We won second prize in our division (only the Smithsonian Institution beat us). And THERE WILL BE ANOTHER FLOWER SHOW next spring, with another chance at the Smithsonian and a chance to make some money too.

At the D.C. Flower Show, over 100 members turned out to help. Any volunteer organization would be grateful for that kind of support. It guaranteed our success at the Flower Show, and it guaranteed PBA's continuing success also.

The annual bonsai show at the National Arboretum is a strong tool for bonsai education also. The different club booths have taught us all much about the art of display as well as bonsai.

Plans are now underway to expand our Newsletter and make it a yet more valuable tool for all members. In addition, the Newsletter is already well respected by bonsai enthusiasts, professional and amateur, across the country.

Other new activities, too, are being considered.

So PBA is going places. The only question, of course, is where. That is up to you. Undaunted, your board is always willing to take on new responsibilities, jobs, activities, etc. Board members, please note! (Board members? Oh, board members...) Seriously, whenever you have an idea, let someone know. And if you can help, don't wait to be asked, tell someone.

One new additional activity is the incorporation into our symposium of a plant collecting trip to one of PBA's really good fishing holes: Contee. Available: excellent Virginia pine (with good root systems), rigida pine, red maple, birch, chokecherry, blueberry and others.

Next month this column will be devoted to collecting tips, especially on pines, in preparation for our symposium collecting trip. Prepare for it and come if at all possible. It will be well worth it.

Book Nook

Two new books just on the market look to be of interest to bonsaiists, though neither one is directly related to bonsai.

How To Grow Trees Indoors by Penny and Cronan Minton gives general information on care, feeding, lighting and just about any question one might have on growing of tropical and semi-tropical "trees." The information is precise and specific. Another section deals with individual types of trees, their growth habits, soil, light and watering preferences, and what can be expected of them. Many of the trees included in this section are commonly used for indoor bonsai, such as Ficus benjamina, jasmine, etc. A worthwhile addition to any bonsai library. 100 pages, published by Doubleday, \$4.95 paperback.

The second book is Simon and Schuster's Guide to Trees. This is a book more valuable on field and collecting trips as a tool for tree identification. Arranged in alphabetical order according to types of trees, it has good color photos of each tree and general information on habitate, soil, hardiness, etc. Although the sections are, to my mind, somewhat confusing (evergreen and deciduous are lumped together in one section called "Broadleaves"), it is decipherable and the illustrations and descriptions are good. @600 pages, published by Simon and Schuster, \$7.95 paperback.

--- Mary Houlton

Snips and Slips

THE CASE OF THE BAFFLING BUTTONWOOD

One of the questions those of us who are struggling with buttonwoods have voiced was answered for me at the BCI Convention - No, you cannot overwater a buttonwood. As a matter of fact, I was told, they will live for a month or more in Florida submerged up the first branches in a pail of water. When they are potted, however, the soil should be WELL drained, and perlite is a favorite soil additive with Floridians. Watering should be done with WARM water, and if buttonwoods are kept outdoors for the summer it might be well to water them separately from the other trees to ensure the water is warm.

--- Mary Houlton

HORNBEAM DILEMMA

I have had problems with trunk die-back on collected hornbeams, even loss of one whole side of the trunk. Is there a way to prevent this?

--- Harvey Everett

The best way I have found to prevent trunk die-back is the use of good old Elmer's Glue. As soon as the collected tree gets home, put a good slathering of the glue on the stump right at the cut and smear it over the edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " or so. Trees that have not had this treatment will die back as much as 6" from the top, but those which are treated will bud back right at the cut. For trees which have already suffered die-back, the only thing to do is cut the stump and dead wood back to where you can see living cambium and make a sabamiki out of it. Then treat that with the Elmer's Glue or you'll have the same problem all over again.

--- Mary Houlton

A NEW SLANT ON THINGS

A problem with too-wet soil may be helped by placing something under one end of the pot to tilt it and allow water to drain out more easily. Although it is, at best, a stop-gap measure, it may allow you to alleviate the problem until a more propitious time to repot the tree.

--- Cliff Pottberg

ASHES TO ASHES (OR JUNIPERS)

Old-timers will tell you that you should never clean the ashes out of your fireplace. If you're lazy like I am it's nice to have a justification. Aside from the fact that the old ashes make for a better fire in the fireplace, though, they also serve as a handy source of potash in the spring and summer when some of my bonsai love it. Junipers will green up noticeably in a few days with a trowel full of ashes sprinkled on the soil surface and watered in. It also works well on buttonwoods, though the results are not quite so dramatic.

--- Mary Houlton

MORE FUNGUS AMONG US

A biological control has been found for tree wound decay. Dr. Alex L. Shigo of the USDA Forest Service reports that a common soil fungus applied to fresh wounds on red maples prevented decay for 2 years. The fungus acts as a parasite on decay organisms. So rub that pruning cut with good soil instead of "painting" it.

--- Tory Pottberg

PBA Bazaar

The great success of the silent auction of a bonsai collection at the last PBA Symposium has encouraged us to provide this service again this year for anyone wishing to sell bonsai or related items. PBA will receive a commission of 15% on all sales. The silent auction is to be primarily for bonsai. Stock plants and other bonsai related material will be sold in the flea market section.

Participants wishing to sell items must register them on Saturday morning, preferably prior to the start of the first program. Each item will receive an identifying number and the name of the seller, type of material and the asking price will be recorded. Please bring a list of this information with the material you wish to sell to facilitate this registration. Donated materials for PBA will be greatly appreciated. Both the auction and the flea market will be closed at the end of the Saturday session, all items must be picked up by this time.

Now is the time to start thinking about what you want to sell. Come to PBA Symposium '78. You will have an opportunity to exchange not only knowledge, but bonsai materials as well. If you have any questions or wish to help in this endeavor please contact: Richard Meszler (301) 833-9559.

--- Richard Meszler

PBA SYMPOSIUM

By now everyone should have the dates of September 23-24 reserved on their calendar to attend the PBA Symposium. We've changed the format somewhat from previous years and think we've come up with an exciting program for you. The theme is centered on indoor bonsai and multiple plantings (forest, saikei, etc.), with some neat combinations thereof.

A look at a local map will show how simple it is to get to the Sheraton Inn where the Symposium will be held. The Inn is on US Route 450 right at the Washington Beltway (exit 30W). For those who wish to stay at the hotel, special room rates are available at \$25 per day for single and \$30 per day double. When reserving rooms be sure to state you are with the PBA Symposium in order to get these special rates.

In addition to the program, a bazaar will be held again this year. It promises to be bigger and better than ever. To date, participants will be PBA (see other article for details), BIG, Modern Plant Technology, Keith Scott Dwarf Trees, and Heritage Arts - the last, handmade pots by Sharon Muth, is joining us from the State of Washington!

The banquet Saturday night is also the PBA annual banquet. Barring unforeseen circumstances, Bill Merritt has promised to repeat his smash performance on the jazz piano at the cocktail hour beforehand.

As was mentioned in last month's Newsletter, the creations to be done by John Naka and David Andrews will be raffled following each demonstration. If you don't win a raffle item, though, you don't have to go home empty-handed because there will be an optional workshop and an optional collecting trip following the close of the formal part of the Symposium. (This is, of course, in addition to the items you will be buying at the bazaar.)

The cost of the Symposium is a low \$20 for the program only until September 11. Thereafter the cost will be \$25. Banquet cost is \$11, but reservations must be received by September 15. The workshop cost is \$20 (materials included) and reservations for this must be received by September 11. You will need to bring your own bonsai tools for the workshop.

Come to the Symposium and share a weekend of bonsai adventure with old and new friends. See you in September!

PROGRAM

Saturday

- 8:30-9:30 - Registration
- 9:30-10:30 - Movie "The Green Machine" produced by public educational television.
- 10:30-10:45 - Break
- 10:45-12:15 - Demonstration, Cliff Pottberg
- 12:15-1:15 - Lunch break
- 1:15-2:15 - Lecture on horticultural aspect of bonsai
- 2:15-4:15 - Demonstration on saikei, David Andrews
- 4:15-4:30 - Break
- 4:30-5:30 - Accent plants and their care, Marion Gyllenswan
- 5:30-7:00 - Free time
- 7:00-8:00 - No-host bar
- 8:00-10:00 - Banquet

Sunday

- 9:30-12:30 - Demonstration on forest planting, John Naka
- 12:30 - End of formal Symposium
- 1:30-4:30 - Saikei workshop by Marion Gyllenswan, or collecting trip (optional)

abs bonsai bonanza

American Bonsai Society selected Cornell University, July 5-9, for their '78 Symposium. Cornell and Ithaca, N.Y. are at their best in July. Yuji Yoshimura was the Master-in-Residence. He is always a superb Bonsai Sensei. Also featured were horticulture seminars by the Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture staff and scientists of Cornell.

About 22 PBA members were among the 270 who attended the ABS Symposium. Tours and workshops preceded the Symposium. The Symposium opened with a banquet catered by the Cornell School of Hotel Management. Dr. H. B. Tukey, Jr., head of the Horticulture Department, talked on rain and mist affecting the bleaching out of fall coloring during August. He also gave an excellent illustrated talk on the physiology of plant growth. A slightly expanded text of his talk would make an excellent reference for Bonsai practitioners. Other outstanding talks were given by Dr. G. L. Good on dormancy and winter protection, Dr. R. W. Langhans on artificial lighting, and Dr. J. W. Boodley on soil media. Several other Bonsai related topics were discussed by Cornell staff members.

The highlight of the Symposium was Yuji Yoshimura's demonstrations. It was my first exposure to Yoshimura in action. I find him effective, using questions to the audience as his teaching technique. He styles his trees with deliberate moves which must have been planned through advance preparation. He created the five basic styles; formal upright, informal upright, slant, semi-cascade, and cascade all in one-hour session. The wiring and potting were completed by five associates, Bill Valavanis, Joseph Burke, Chase Rosade, Dorothy Young, and Marion Gyllenswan.

In another one-hour session Yoshimura created two group plantings; a formal, 9-10 year old tree planting of Hinoki Cypress in a tray, and an informal planting of three Balkan Pines on a slab. Assistants were Marion Gyllenswan and Dave Andrews. We had a final question-and-answer session with Yoshimura. The Yoshimura creations were raffled. Jules Koetsch, NOVABONSOC, won the formal group planting which was the most popular item. Besides the ABS meeting, previews of the combined ABS-BCI 1979 convention in New York and the 1979 Symposium at University of California, Davis, there was a dazzling slide show of the 1977 ABS Symposium in Japan.

The social side was not neglected. We had box luncheons while on tour of Cornell Plantations, A BBQ and evening at Taughannock Falls State Park, a reception with seven prize bonsai displayed at the art gallery, and another sumptuous banquet just to cap things off. I vote for a return engagement at Cornell.

--- Harvey Everett



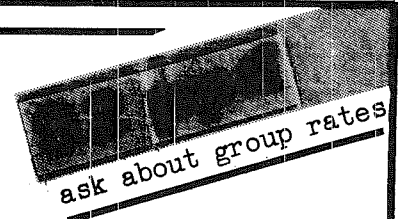
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CLUB CALENDAR

- August 10
Thursday Discussion of summer care of bonsai led by Fern Jacobi. Wiring demonstration by Joyce Pelletier. 7:30 p.m. Library, West Street. ANNAPOLIS

- August 12
Saturday Film on pruning by Brooklyn Botanical Garden and slides of the 1977 fall John Naka Japan trip by Bob Sitnick. 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY

- August 18
Friday Tour of U.S. National Bonsai Collection. 7:30 p.m. National Arboretum. Tour of the Bonsai collection by Bob Drechsler, followed by a talk on the collection. Meet at Administration Building BROOKSIDE

- August 19
Saturday Tour of National Arboretum by Joyce Pelletier. 2:00 p.m. National Arboretum. Tour will focus on old trees in the Arboretum which are good models for bonsai, and other matters of interest. WASHINGTON

- August 20
Sunday Outdoor workshop - preparation for October 29th show, plus advanced styling of pines and junipers. 1:00 p.m. 6253 Gilston Park Road, Baltimore (home of Arschel Morell). For directions call Arschel at (301) 747-7404. Also, bring current and prior charter trees to be rephotographed. BALTIMORE

- August 26
Sunday Tour of Japanese Embassy. For details and reservations call Chuck Bird (301) 292-3167. KIYOMIZU

- September 2
Saturday Demonstration by Cliff Pottberg on bunjin and cascade. 10:00 a.m. Severna Park Library. Follow-up workshop by Cliff in the afternoon. Bring bag lunch or plan to eat out. ANNAPOLIS

- September 17
Sunday Demonstration by Cliff Pottberg. 2:00 p.m. Louis Cosca Nature Center. KIYOMIZU

NO MEETING IN SEPTEMBER FOR WASHINGTON CLUB. Members are urged to attend the Symposium.

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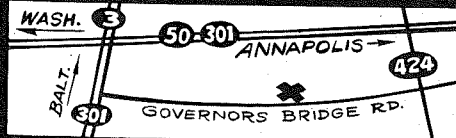
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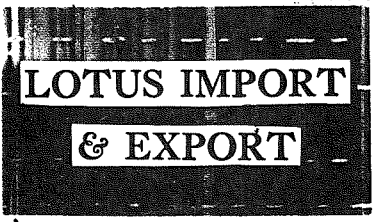
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