PBA NEWSLETTER

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TREE OF THE MONTH

by Mary Houlton

American Hornbeam

The American hornbeam is the Mikhail Baryshnikov of the plant world. Its tapering trunk ridges under the smooth gray-brown bark like muscles rippling under taut skin and flows down into a beautifully buttressed root system. Many-twigged branches reach up into a rounded crown, and the whole effect is of sensuous power and stability combined with an astonishing gracefulness.

Carpinus caroliniana is one of the most widely distributed deciduous trees in North America. It ranges from southern Ontario and Quebec, south as far as northern Florida and westward to Minnesota and the eastern Great Plains. Surprisingly, it picks up again in Central Mexico on the southeast edge of the Gulf of California. This beautiful little tree is a bonsaiist's dream come true. The oldest specimens have little taper to the trunk, but a tree 8" in diameter at the base tapering to 3"-4" three feet above the ground is not at all uncommon. It is ridiculously easy to collect, will grow almost anywhere deciduous material is found (a specimen sent to a friend in Los Angeles is doing beautifully) and yet it is rarely seen in bonsai collections.

Also called blue beech, water beech or ironwood, the American hornbeam is often confused with the hop-hornbeam (Ostrya virginiana, also called ironwood). The trees look remarkablly alike. The hop-hornbeam has a gray bark, its leaves are almost identical, and its size very like the hornbeam. Though the hop-hornbeam tends to have a less muscular trunk, the only reliable way to distinguish the two is the fruits. Carpinus produces a catkin-like fruit while Ostrya produces a fruit like the hop for which it is named.

The wood of Carpinus c. is close-grained and hard, but the tree is small (rarely more than 35' tall), slow growing, and scarce enough, even in its wide range, so as to commercially valueless as a forest tree. Nurseries rarely carry the American variety, though the European variety (C. betulus) is readily available as an ornamental tree.

The hornbeam is a secondary-growth forest tree, most commonly found in beech and oak forests. It is a moisture-loving plant and not found naturally more than a few hundred yards from a water source. The soil in which it grows is a sandy loam, heavily mixed with clay. Fallen leaves covering the forest floor decompose to make the soil on the acid side, and hornbeam are often found flourishing next to mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia) and rhodedendron.

2 to 4 inches long, the lush green alternate leaves are veined and serrated. The American hornbeam is unhappy if it receives more than a few hours of morning or late afternoon sun and leaves will burn quickly if given too much sun. The leaves themselves will reduce beautifully to about 1 inch long, though newly collected plants will often produce larger-than-normal sized leaves for the first year or so until the tree becomes accustomed to living in a pot. Foliage and wood alike are nearly pest-free. The only serious problem I have encountered is with leaf hoppers, who seem to love the tender new buds as they break from trunk or branch.

With the possible exception of Carpinus laxiflora, the American variety has the best fall colors of the hornbeams. Yellows and rich golden bronzes predominate, though one of my trees produced a dark bronzy red for me. Even in southern California the hornbeam put on its fall show. After coloring, the leaves may either drop or turn brown and remain on the tree, producing its own kind of winter beauty.

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With its shallow root system, hornbeams are a delight to the collector. There is no tap root and only a second set of main roots 3" to 6" below the soil line. These other roots can often be cut off at the time the tree is collected. Fine feeder roots are found close to the trunk on even the largest specimens so that main roots can be cut off to within a very few inches of the trunk. My biggest tree measured $7\frac{1}{2}$ " at the base and went straight from collecting site into a container 18" wide and 8" deep.

Because they are forest trees, hornbeams are rarely found with low branches except where they grow at the edge of a clearing. In most cases trees must be cut back to stump, which will bud back readily from adventitous buds to within a few inches of the cut. Experimenting has shown that stumps treated with a good slathering of Elmer's Glue on the cut at the time of collecting will prevent dieback and trees treated this way will bud back right on the cut. They do, however, love to sucker from the roots and base of the trunk. Even the largest trees in the wild often have multiple smaller trees growing from the base. It may take several months to dissuade a newly collected tree from producing suckers, but these must be regularily checked for and removed or strength will be taken from buds developing on the trunk.

Trees may be collected fall or spring, but I have found that those taken in the spring seem to grow better, at least the first year. They should be completely bare-rooted, which is a tremendous help when you have parked your car some distance from the collecting site. I know some people who have not bare-rooted their horn-beams, but their trees have gone directly into the ground. I do not have that luxury and have to pot my trees. I found that all of the trees I potted without removing all or most of the root ball did not survive, while none that were bare-rooted failed to survive. Trees were placed in pure kitty-litter and given periodic feedings of bone meal, blood meal, or Tree Tone, supplemented occasionally with Miracid, during the growing season.

If allowed to "grow wild," the collected hornbeam will often put out growth of 2 feet or more in its first season. Unless there is indication that the roots have become pot-bound, though, it is advisable not to repot it until the beginning of the third season. Hornbeams seem to grow fastest in hot weather and mine grow vigorously well into August, though they are not fed past mid-late June. The soil mixture for hornbeam should be rich and WELL DRAINED. They will not do well in poor soil, but neither will they tolerate soggy soil and wet feet - damp, never dry nor water-logged. Hornbeams will succumb to root rot. Growth should not be wired for the first few years, nor should they be trimmed again drastically. Only remove branches you know you don't want, and then do it as the bud breaks from the trunk. New growth does tend to grow from the trunk in either a vertical position or at an odd angle and this can be gently "propped" to grow at the desired angle when growth is 2"-3" long and still tender and green.

In my mind the American variety is the best hornbeam for use as bonsai. Others are good, but the trunks tend not to be nearly as muscular nor the roots so impressively buttressed in comparison. On top of that is the fact that the cost is only that of finding and collecting it - a price many of us gladly pay for far less rewarding trees. Carpinus caroliniana truly deserves to take its place among the most prized possessions in our bonsai collections.

--- Mary Houlton

President's Message

For those members (and guests) who haven't collected from the wild before, the PBA 78 Symposium is an excellent place and time to begin. For those who have, many know of the value of where we will be collecting: Contee.

The Contee Corporation is, among other things, a sand and gravel mining corporation. The conditions they create in their mining operations are ideal for dwarfed growth of several of our native trees, especially the scrub, or Virginia pine. As they dig, or mine, sand, they must be ever watchful not to reach the clay substrata which would contaminate the naturally very pure sand. So they stop, often within 12 inches of this heavy clay, and go on to newer areas. The Virginia pine as it sprouts finds that its roots cannot penetrate the water-saturated clay. The roots will then grow only in the upper sand, which is kept moist by capillarity from the nearby clay. Thus it grows in a gigantic training pot with an automatic watering system. The roots are often extremely fibrous, the plant grows slowly with short internodes and a thick trunk, and the potential masterpiece is easy to collect, with a high chance of success.

This short column cannot possibly give a full account of how to collect, but it can give you some tips. The best and most important is to damage the roots as little as possible. Many species, e.g. Acer rubrum, the swamp red maple, have fine root hairs emanating from the root tips which tenaciously grab adjacent soil particles. These are the parts of the roots which do the absorbing from the soil, and they are easily damaged. Other trees, especially pine, have no, or only rudimentary, root hairs, and instead live symbiotically with one or another fungus, The underground strands, or hyphae, of these fungi penetrate the root walls and absorb water from the soil, and the plant then has access to this water and the nutrients therein. Taking away or disturbing the soil takes away the complex absorbing structure of root and fungus which together are called mycorhiza. In each case a solid undisturbed ball of soil taken with the plant does much to ensure success.

In the sandy soil we encounter in much of Maryland and Virginia it is often difficult not to disturb the root ball. Often the best alternative (with pines and others) is to collect as much root as possible. In wet weather especially it is often possible to travel 10 or even 20 feet along a small shallow or surface root, all of which can then be coiled together and placed in the burlap or collecting container. Another help is to take home a lot of extra native soil which is laden with the fungal mycelia to add to your potting mix. Also, if any of the plant roots are bare, gently 'paint' some muddy water on them using some of the native soil you brought along for mud. This is called 'puddling.' It coats the root with soil making it less likely to dry out while repotting, and with pines it reassociates the fungus with the root immediately.

During our Symposium and for about a month after will be a good time to collect and a fair time to repot. As the temperature falls, the plant roots, dormant in the heat of high summer, begin growing again. Thus the plant can overcome the effects of root shock before the strain of winter.

Anti-transpirant on the leaves is as important now as in the spring. The sticky coating of pine resin on the leaves helps keep the plant from losing more water through transpiration than it can absorb through the roots. In winter water loss can continue, thoroughly dessicating the plant without such protection. The terms anti-transpirant and anti-dessicant thus refer to the same group of pine resin products. Be careful which you use, however. There are important chemical differences. The reasons for their importance are little understood, but they are important. Try not to use pinene resin. Finolene and others are better. 'Wilt-pruf' is pinene and should be avoided. 'Vaporgard,' 'Exhalt' and many others are satisfactory.

Finally, remember this. Our area is badly infiltrated with the Nantucket pine tip moth whose larvae invades the new pine shoots often killing not just the shoot but whole branches, and sometimes, the tree itself. It has 2 generations each year: April and early July. It is important to prepare your pines for the onslaught by spraying them with a systemic insecticide just ahead of time: Cygon is recommended by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. It lasts for about 6 weeks, so spraying

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in March and late June will give good protection. Other systemics are possible, but don't use a granular systemic which is to be sprinkled on the soil, like Disyston. The roots of the newly collected plant are damaged, remember, and cannot absorb enough of the insecticide from the soil.

Unless you are diligant, you can hurt many plants in your collection when collecting Virginia pine. The Nantucket pine tip moth also likes Scotch pine, and delights to find a morsel of mugho pine or Japanese black pine. Only the white pines are fairly safe. Once the moth is wiped out of your area, of course, you need not continue spraying.

Some of the many good species available at Contee are: Pinus rigida, the pitch pine; hornbeam; our native cherries, Prunus serotina and P. virginiana; mountain laurel; several species of blueberry; birch; Amelanchier or shadblow; as well as the aforementioned Virginia pine and swamp maple.

See you there!

--- Cliff Pottberg

BCI Convention

The 1978 BCI Convention in Portland, Oregon, July 19 through 22, was a delightful and thrilling experience. A chance, again, to see old friends and make new ones - to see the Masters we have come to love and respect creating the beauties we would give our eye teeth to possess - John Naka whacking away at an Alpine fir, Tosh Saburomaru reducing 7 Alberta spruces to a beautiful forest; Toshio Kawamoto & Tom Yamamoto, using extraordinary Pbigawa stone from Gifu Pref., in Japan, to design a gorgeous saikei. And - a new thrilling experience came when 2 new, beautiful faces were introduced to us - Dan Robinson and Larry Aguillar - not necessarily because they are beautiful, but because of the exciting and unique technique used, not only in collecting, but in designing bonsai. Dan's descriptions and running patter were a delight and delicious to listen to. He is completely unconventional and a true non-conformist - but a very impressive collector and creator. In a nutshel, he does his collecting during the maximum growing stage - in the heat of the summer. He looks for pockets of fine roots near the surface, slips plastic (preferably black) under a small portion of the roots, wraps wet peat moss around those roots, and ties the plastic around this root bal, in effect, doing a "root layering." He waits at least 2 weeks for new roots to start showing (it sometimes takes a month), at which time he severs the remaining roots and digs his tree, and puts it in a container that he generally makes - he has to make his own containers, because the trees he digs are too large for any commercial containers. Since the specimens he collects are really huge, and the size of wire needed to train the branches not adequate or available, he twists and bends the branch almost to the breaking point and secures it with guy lines to the trunk. He used a Ponderosa Pine with a trunk yea big that he had collected a month before the Convention, for his demonstration. We anticipate seeing Dan in action at a PBA function in the near future.

The delegates meeting and general meeting were opened by our own John Hinds (former member of Kiyomizu), President of BCI. The principal items of business were constitutional changes, including name change & membership classification (neither approved), changing date of assumption of office by newly elected officers, future conventions (Peachtree City, Atlanta selected for 1981), and establishment of an endowment fund by Mary Cabell, which was generously contributed to by many BCI'ers.

Six other hardy PBA'ers also enjoyed (I know, because I asked them) this Convention and well-displayed exhibit.

Snips and Slips

Dottie Warren (Brookside) would like her friends to know that she has moved. Her new address is: 3511 Farragut Avenue, Kensington, Maryland and her phone number 933-3511.

Dottie has a large old American boxwood in her new yard with multiple trunks. She does not have the time to bonsai it and will be glad to give it to the first person who calls and is willing to come dig it up. She also has some flowerpots and other containers suitable for training pots she will give to anyone who wants to come pick them up.

Dottie also has some color pictures that were taken at the D.C. Flower Show last March. She thinks there are pictures of all the trees that were in the Show. Anyone who had a tree in the show and would like a color positive of his tree can buy one from Dottie for \$1.00 (to cover the cost of the processing).

MOSS IS BEAUTIFUL BUT ...

... it can also be a villian. A heavy cover of moss growing on a bonsai is a lush and beautiful sight. Too much moss, though, can rob a tree of its vitality. For many trees (like pines) that like to stay on the dry side, in order to keep the moss green you have to water more than the tree can stand. A heavy cover of moss can also take the nutrients meant for the health of the tree. All the lovely fertilizer you use feeds the moss, not the tree. Moss can also prevent air from circulating into the soil and starve roots of oxygen. I have removed moss from a bonsai pot only to find fine feeder roots growing up into the moss in order to get air. If you simply have to have a permanent planting of the beautiful stuff, do it with rocks, not trees, and let your bonsai go moss-less except at a show.

--- Mary Houlton

SEPTEMBER SLOWDOWN

September is the time to cut back on the amount of water you should be giving your plants. Although there are still many hot summer days in this month, it is time to start thinking about winter and encouraging your plants to be doing the same thing. A summer watering schedule only encourages further growth which will not be sufficiently hardened off by the time the first frosts arrive a month or so later. In addition, the trees will not have "changed gears" from a growth stage to a nutrient storing stage and may not be able to store up a sufficient "larder" to get them through the winter months ahead. Fertilizers should also reflect the change in season and be low or non-existant in the nitrogen which promotes foliage growth.

Bug Off!

BIODEGRADABLE BUG CONTROL

I have always been interested in ways other than poisons to control the bugs in my garden and on my bonsai. I have two small children so I don't like using poisons in areas where they play. Since my bonsai are scattered all over the yard, and in fact, even seem to be taking over the yard, that makes the problem difficult. I think I have found a delightful solution in the form of Basic H. It is a product distributed by Shaklee Corp. and advertised by them for use as a household cleaner. I was tipped off by Cliff Pottberg of Modern Plant Technology as to its other uses. (Modern Plant Technology also distributes Basic H). found out about it from Marion Borchers in Florida.

Apparently, Basic H is a biodegradable soap that makes water wetter. It also changes the chemical fluids of the cells of bugs: it creates such an imbalance in the fluid of the cells that the bug dies. I am afarid my explanation is a little inaccurate, but it works.

To date, I have tried Basic H on all of my plants and on all bugs in my area - aphids, Japanese beattles, slugs, mosquitos, caterpilars, ants, termites. I had no luck with scale, but Stan Townsend did. Maybe I didn't know they were dead. As I said, I have tried it on quite a few plants - ficus, fuchia, trident maple, Japanese maple, orchids, crab apple, beech, azalea, hawthorn, white fly on serissa, carissa. The only disasters were a lithop and a begonia. Apparently, they have such huge water retentive cells that this product killed those cells. I haven't completely lost the plants; they have just been sick for a while.

The most convenient features of Basic H is the fact that I mix 1 teaspoon in one pint of water in my spray bottle, or one Tablespoon in the large quart size spray bottle. Then I carry the bottle out with me when I check my plants. I don't have to worry about poison deteriorating and washing my hands thoroughly after using a poison. It is ready all the time. And that means I can take care of a bug problem immediately instead of putting it off.

As I said before, Basic H makes water wetter, so I add a little mixed with water to my bonsai soil mix. If I have a plant that is really dried out, a little Basic H in the soil insures that the root ball does get $\frac{1}{1}$ thoroughly wet and revived.

I would like to hear of any one else's experience with this product. I am quite impressed.

--- Vicki Ballantyne

Book Nook

PIRATING PLANTS is the intriguing title of a book written by Peter Tobey that I found in the Montgomery Public Library (631.63, T628p), Tobey Publishing Co., 1975, hardback and paperback. It is an amusing guide on getting something for nothing propagation by cuttings, seeds, layering, division, and grafting. It is written for the amateur who wants a simple explanation of what works and what doesn't. It is well illustrated with many sketches and step-by-step drawings. There is a 33-page table of recommended propagation methods for about 500 plants. There are slight mentions of Bonsai techniques, however the author claims no expertise. It is a fun book and you will enjoy reading it.

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Bamboo Show

HELP!! HELP!! HELP!! HELP!! The U.S. National Arboretum Bamboo show wants PBA.

The National Arboretum's Bamboo show, October 14-22, 1978 promises to be a gala affair. Bob Drechsler, Curator of the National Collection, has indicated that he would like to include a display of PBA Bonsai in conjunction with that show. This requires a lot of coordination through the Arboretum Committee (non-existing) by its chairman (yours truly). Until a Committee has been formed I am asking the EVP's of each club to work with me on this project, accepting donations and time from your members and forwarding that data to me.

The following needs must be met by October 10, that is, I must know whose trees and/or time can be counted on for the show.

1) Trees: We will need ten to twelve trees to show.

- 2) Monitors: We will need people to help with the booths during the week and on weekends (if everyone plans to spend an hour or two at the show we will have it made).
- 3) Demonstrations: We will need 4 demonstrators for the following dates and times: 10/14 at 2:00 p.m., 10/15 at 11:00 a.m., 10/21 at 11:00 a.m. and 10/22 at 2:00 p.m.
- 4) Set up and tear down: Set up is scheduled for Wednesday October 11 and tear down after 4 p.m. on Sunday the 22.

Please help make this affair a success. Contact the Educational Vice President of your club with your donation of trees and/or time, or contact me direct: 8:30 to 3:30 weekdays at (301) 594-8250 or after 6 p.m. and weekends at (301) 669-1487. Thank you.

--- Arschel Morell

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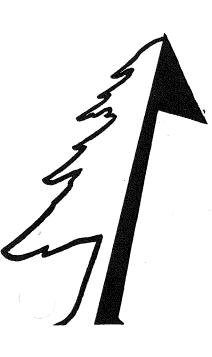
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remember, whatever you want or need for bonsai call any of us, anytime:

Cliff Pottberg
301-366-8844
Arschel Morell
301-669-1487

Stan Townsend

703-450-5987



Special PBA Meeting

A special PBA meeting is called by the PBA Board for 9:00 a.m., September 23, 1978 at the Sheraton Inn Northeast, prior to the PBA Bonsai Symposium. The only business of this meeting is the consideration of the following proposed PBA By-law change, Article II, Voting and Elections. The proposal deletes the provision to elect officers by mail and substitutes election by members attending the Annual Meeting. The change was proposed at the May 1977 Annual Meeting. The reason for the change is the very poor voting-by-mail response.

Proposed Changes to Article II, Voting and Elections:

Section 1--No change

Section 2--No change

Section 3--Delete last sentence and substitute "The Nominating Committee shall prepare the list of all nominees and it shall be reported the the April Newsletter.

Section 4--Complete change as follows: "The President shall appoint a committee of three Tellers who shall prepare the official ballot. The ballot shall list all nominees previously reported and a space for a write-in vote for each office. Preferential ballots may be provided if appropriate."

Section 5--No change

Section 6--Voting shall take place at the Annual Meeting. The voting shall be limited to members in good standing attending the meeting.

Section 7--Existing wording plus the following: "The Tellers shall report the results of the election." Section 8--Delete.

--- Molly Hersh Harvey Everett

Club News

The Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club has a new meeting place at the Brookside Botanical Gardens. The Head House is located at the Gardens between the two greenhouses, located in the same building as the Library. The new quarters has a concrete floor so that workshops can be held there and we can make a much lovelier mess than we have been able to do in the past. See you at the next meeting.

--- Mary Houlton

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PBA SYMPOSIUM

Why a symposium? Why do the committee members work their heads off for a day-and-a-half program? Certainly not because they have nothing elso to do. (No bonsaiist has nothing else to do.) There's no glory in it, but there is reward. The reward of helping to bring off a symposium that has something in it for them. So is this a program for the "in-group"? Certainly not! It's for you, me, John Doe and Jane Smith - for everyone. It's not geared toward the beginner, nor toward the advanced student, either. There's something to be gained by every person who attends.

The PBA Symposium is an important teaching tool for YOU to use. You'll never find a cheaper one. \$20 for a day-and-a-half of programs, a group of experts to talk to and answer your questions, a bazaar where all kinds of bonsai paraphenalia are available - all under one roof. In addition to the bazaar participants we have already told you about, a new one has joined the list. Kodansha Publishers from New York will be participating and promoting the new book "Beginners Guide to American Bonsai" by Jerry Stowall. Jerry will be at the Symposium to autograph his book, and 8 other titles from Kodansha on bonsai and bonsai related titles will be available.

The \$20 registration fee is in effect until September 11 when the price goes up to \$25. Fees for the banquet and saikei workshop (\$11 and \$20 respectively) remain the same, but you must register for the workshop by September 11 and for the banquet by September 15. There is no charge for the collecting trip.

Tear the registration form off the last page of the Newsletter, fill it in and send it with your check NOW. Don't miss out on a great weekend of fun and bonsai.

--- Mary Houlton

PROGRAM

Saturday	• •
8:30-9:30	Registration
9:00	Special PBA meeting
9:30-1:30	
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:15	Demonstration by Cliff Pottberg
	Lunch break
1:15-2:15	Panel discussion on indoor bonsai and winter care. Panelists
	include Richard Meszler, Janet Lanman, Norman Haddrick
2:15-4:15	Demonstration on saikei by Dr. David Andrews. Raffle of demonstration
	creation follows
4:15-4:30	Break
4:30-5:30	Accent plants and their creation and care by Marion Gyllenswan
5:30 - 6:30	Free time
6:30 - 8:00	No-host bar
8:00-10:00	Banquet
Sunday	
9:30-12:30	Demonstration on forest planting by John Naka. Raffle of
	demonstration creation follows
12:30	End of formal Symposium
1:30-4:30	Saikei workshop by Marion Gyllenswan, or collecting trip (optional)
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SEE LAST PAGE FOR REGISTRATION FORM

CLUB CALENDAR

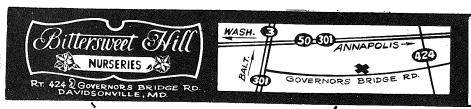
September 9	Lecture & workshop on theory of cascade and bunjin by Cliff Pottberg
Saturday	10:00 a.m. Severna Park Library. Bring suitable material or buy material there for workshop in afternoon. Public welcome at demon-
	strations. ANNAPOLIS
September 9 Saturday	Plant grooming & styling indoor plants. 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY
September 15 Friday	Basic bonsai for beginners (and brush up for non-beginners). 7:30 p.m. Head House, Brookside Botanical Gardens. Bring trees for critique and help. Bring your own tools. BROOKSIDE GARDENS BONSAI
September 17 Sunday	Mame workshop. 3:00 p.m. Cylburn Park. Tree of the month - Fig. BALTIMORE
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

(ed. note: ALL PBA members are urged to attend)

	PBA SYMPOSIUM. 9:30 a.m. Saturday through 12:30 p.m. Sunday. Sheraton Inn/Northeast, 8500 Old Annapolis Rd., New Carrollton, Md. (Beltway exit 30W) See program and registration form elsewhere in Newsletter.
October 12 Thursday	General workshop. 7:30 p.m. Annapolis Library. Members bring own materials and tools. Selected leaders from club will guide & help new members. ANNAPOLIS
October 14 Saturday	$\frac{\text{Collecting trip. Specific data will be furnished in next }\underline{\text{Newsletter.}}}{\text{NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY}}$
October 15 Sunday	Problem tree workshop. 1:00 p.m. Croton Hill Farms. BALTIMORE
October 20 Friday	Bonsai in winter by Richard Meszler. 7:30 p.m. Head House, Brookside Botanical Gardens. Emphasis on indoor bonsai. Bring trees for critique. BROOKSIDE GARDENS BONSAI
October 29 Sunday	Workshop on restyling and potting. 2:00 p.m. Clearwater Nature Center. KIYOMIZU
October 29	Annual Baltimore Bonsai Club Show. 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Cylburn

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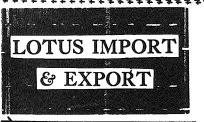
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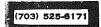
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Vicki Ballantyne, Registrar PBA Symposium 538 West Drive Severna Park, Maryland 21146

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