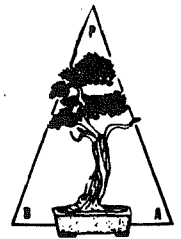


PBA NEWSLETTER

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TREE OF THE MONTH

by Vicki Ballantyne

Nyssa

Nyssa is a genus of three species of North American and Asiatic deciduous trees of the dogwood family (*N. sylvatica*, *N. austica*, *N. biflora*). Tupelo, sour gum, black gum, and pepperidge seem to be the common names. *N. sylvatica* has the most distinctive branching of any native trees. The branching is horizontal but drooping very gradually and gracefully at the ends even in the very young tree. The winter silhouette presents a bold, twiggy outline against the sky, perfect for bonsai.

Leaves are alternate, practically or wholly without marginal teeth. The leaves are 3-5 inches long, and somewhat broader toward the pointed tip. I found different shaped leaves on the 12-foot tree I collected. Some looked almost like a dogwood leaf. But I also noticed that the leaves dwarfed down to less than an inch long, which makes it a good candidate for bonsai. One of the easiest ways I found for identifying the tree was in the feel of the leaf; it seemed to have a very smooth, almost buttery feeling.

The flowers are small, greenish, and not showy, and are borne in a small head-like cluster. The fruit is an oblong, one-seeded, and black-purple in all three species. Nyssa may be raised from seed, but it must be fresh and stratified at once. I plan to collect seed from a nyssa in my yard this spring and try some. I do not have many small seedlings growing wild in my garden, so I am not sure what conditions they need to grow. I did find 10 seedlings in my daffodil bed, which I mulched pretty heavily, so I'll check that soil and try to duplicate it.

I became interested in the Nyssa this fall on a collecting trip. The foliage is such a beautiful scarlet color, which I think makes it very good addition in a bonsai collection. It doesn't seem to need direct sun either to get the best fall color, which seems to be a problem with maples. I have a Nyssa in my yard, and every year I look forward to its beautiful fall color. But until this year I has assumed my tree was a wild cherry because of the small purple fruit it dropped all over the ground. I don't know why I didn't notice that it dropped its leaves much sooner than another tree in the yard which I knew to be a wild cherry. The bark is also quite rough on the Nyssa, while the bark of the wild cherry is smoothish. I am very glad to have finally identified the beautiful tree in my yard.

But to get back to identifying it in the woods. All the ones I have noticed have had very straight trunks and a pyramidal shape. The branches on very young trees and even seedlings already slant down, so very little wiring should be required on our bonsai. Now, the problem with collecting this desirable specimen for our bonsai collection seems to be its long taproot with very few hair roots. I collected one 12-foot tree which I cut down to 15 inches and also a few seedlings just as an experiment to see if they will live. That was a fall collecting experiment. I also plan to collect some in the spring, again one larger tree and a few seedlings. I think they will make excellent forest plantings and also specimen trees. Every book I have checked about Nyssa says they are extremely difficult to collect, but perhaps not enough of the tree top has been removed to compensate for cutting off so much of the root. Maybe fall is a better time to collect, or maybe spring. I did put my collected material back in the ground.

Look for Nyssa in moist, swampy conditions, near rivers or creeks. I haven't seen seedlings or trees in any of the nurseries in my area, which I mentioned to Cliff Pottberg. M.P.T* now is a source for well-rooted seedlings.

*(Ed. note: M.P.T. is Modern Plant Technology. See ad)

President's Message

In another month spring will semi-officially begin with the opening of the D.C. Flower and Garden Show. As last year, it will have all manner of horticultural exhibits, including our own - an even larger bonsai display. Those who help out, as last year, will be given free entrance to the show. And also as last year, we will be doing bonsai demonstrations during the show.

While our display will be appreciably larger, it will be more easily filled with good trees than last year. Richard Meszler is capably handling this aspect of the show as he did before, and with the added time to prepare people to prepare bonsai, we will have even better bonsai than ever before. Another reason for this is the gratifying one that PBA has reached a degree of maturity in bonsai ability, and members are achieving more good bonsai than ever before.

Last year, over 100 PBA members helped in the multi-faceted task of putting on our show. This year will be no different. And while we will have no problem filling all those positions, there is always room for more help. The ability to join is one of the reasons for PBA's existence, so if you want to be part of our convivial cadre, don't hesitate to let someone know. If you wish to join in the fun you are welcome, and your help will be very much appreciated. There are many jobs yet to do, and if we have even more people we can do even more than we expected. Last year we finished second in our display division, behind only the Smithsonian Institution and their budget of many thousands, so we have some improvement to shoot for, but it won't be easy. Here are some people you can call if you have time or bonsai to volunteer: me (301) 366-8844; Richard Meszler (301) 833-9559; Mary Holmes (301) 345-3606; Linda Mayben (301) 552-3921; Arschel Morell (301) 669-1487; Alan Johnson (202) 396-6261; Jules Koetsch (703) 569-9378; Molly Hersh (301) 589-3725; Harvey Everett (301) 933-0483; Bob Sitnick (703) 921-3142; Chuck Bird (301) 292-3167.

On another note, PBA will soon go through another change of leadership. We are fortunate to have so many capable people who are willing and able to do the jobs required. Your board has made an exhaustive look at as many candidates as possible. Those who were nominated are fully competent to lead PBA strongly forward this year. But sometimes there are people who are overlooked. While it is our responsibility to support the board when they are right, it is also our responsibility to point out when they are wrong. So think hard about the nominees. Support them if you can. If you really feel a mistake was made anywhere, though, let someone on the board know. It is your right to nominate anyone you chose, and it is easy to do.

It is often not so easy to find exactly the right person for the right job. So let us consider the candidates. The board has done its work. Now we must do ours. If you agree with the board's nominees, then say so. When the time comes, vote!

--- Cliff Pottberg

Nominating Committee for PBA

The PBA Nomination Committee has presented a slate of candidates to the Board for the year 1979. They are:

President	Mary Holmes*
1st Vice President	Linda Mayben
Educational Vice President	Arschel Morell
Secretary	Jules Koetsch
Treasurer	Vicki Ballantyne

Election of officers will be held at the PBA annual meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the Annual Show. A cheese and Punch party will be held at the National Arboretum on Saturday April 28 following the Annual Meeting.

* ex Houlton

Frame Up

What to do about a cold frame when you have neither a quarter acre nor a back-hoe? When you don't want to spend a fortune on lumber but all your plants died last winter? When you have some this year that you'd really like to see live till spring?

This is a story about a cold frame built from scrap. I'll let you know in April how well it worked.

I live in a Capitol Hill row house with a smaller yard than most. But the building next door extends several feet further back than mine, making a sheltered corner under my back porch, two sides of which are brick walls, which--at least according to the gas bills--leak heat. The yard is paved with patio blocks set in sand.

The only cash outlay for my cold frame was to pay a neighbor boy to lift up about eight blocks and dig a hole about a foot deep in the corner formed by the back of my house and the side of the building next door. Free lumber came in the form of two doors left over from a renovation down the block. And I had some styrofoam insulation left from another project in the house.

Always conscious of the aesthetic, I cut the doors according to the Pottberg Mean, somewhere where the wood was thick and obviously between $\frac{3}{5}$ the $\frac{2}{3}$ of their length. The long pieces became front and back. One of the short pieces became an end and the other a hinged partial roof. The brick wall of the neighboring building served as the other end, with the two long sides held apart by a brace.

Because of some dampness in the basement apartment, we had installed a French drain along the back of the house--a perforated pipe about 18 inches under the surface, lying in a bed of gravel and leading to a storm sewer. It provides adequate drainage for the whole back yard. The cold frame sits directly above this engineering marvel and hopefully its own gravel floor will drain into it.

My bonsai are sleeping there now, not as deep as the frost line but I am counting on heat from two building walls to raise the temperature just a bit. And I am counting on styrofoam nailed on the inside of the walls and roof to keep the heat in. (When I ran out of door pieces with the frame only $\frac{2}{3}$ --or was it $\frac{3}{5}$ --roofed, I filled the gap with a double thickness of styrofoam.) A beautiful maple which was growing on a rock has been transplanted into a 5-inch hexagonal pot because I was afraid its half-inch of muck would freeze too easily. I'll re-rock it next spring, if it survives. A tiny juniper in a one-inch diameter square pot is buried in another hex pot for insulation. Everybody is sitting on towers of patio blocks with gravel below and bark mulch above. I plan to use an Aqua-Kane humidity tester regularly to see when water is needed.

Watch this space!

Edmund L. Castillo
D.C. Bonsai Club

Snips and Slips

A BORING SUBJECT

Jerry Stowell, at his visit to Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club recently, passed on a tip for ridding your trees (especially apples, dogwoods, birch, etc.) of borers. At the time he puts his trees into winter storage he places two or three mothballs on top of the soil of each tree. This, he says, "fumigates" the soil and kills any eggs or larva that winter over in the soil. The mothballs don't harm the tree and are an easy and painless way of protecting them from those nasty pests.

CUTTING THE HASSLE OF REPOTTING

Richard Meszler relates a method of removing trees from their pots for repotting that works well with large bonsai and especially with forest plantings. Rather than removing the tree(s) from their pot and trimming the sides, he takes a sharp, heavy knife (like a hunting knife) and cuts through the soil, cutting the desired amount off the sides before lifting the tree(s) out. This prevents jerking the bonsai around and, in the case of forest plantings, loosening the intertwined roots and messing up the placement of the trees. Once the sides are trimmed, the bonsai can be easily lifted out of the pot, trimmed on the bottom and repotted.

FEELING THE PINCH

As spring will soon (we hope!) be peeking around the corner, another tip by Jerry Stowell on pinching and pruning will not be out of order. We are all anxious to start training our bonsai to shape, but do not be too hasty to pinch out buds or candles as soon as they start to grow. Says Jerry, if pinching is done as soon as growth is noticed it prevents or inhibits the spurring of root growth and storage of nutrients necessary for the health of the tree. New growth should be allowed to elongate, then be pinched back to the desired length. In addition, for flowering-fruiting species pruning should be delayed until late June or July. This allows carbohydrates to collect and flower buds to form.



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... think **BIG**

CLUB CALENDAR

February 10
Saturday

Grafting of maples. 10 a.m. Gulf Branch Nature Center. Grafting workshop lead by Brian Campbell. Materials furnished. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY

February 13
Tuesday

Grafting techniques. 7:30 p.m. St. Margaret's Church. Driving on Rt. 50 toward Bay Bridge, turn right at Pancake House, go @ 1½ mi. on Old Mill Bottom Rd. until it comes to a "T." Turn left at T and drive 50 feet to a right turn to St, Margaret's Church. Meetings held upstairs in the addition attached to the church. Grafting techniques demonstrated by Brian Campbell. ANNAPOLIS

February 16
Friday

Grafting workshop. 7:30 p.m. Brookside Gardens, Head House. Grafting workshop conducted by Brian Campbell. Materials furnished. BROOKSIDE

February 18
Sunday

ABS slide program, Fig workshop. 3 p.m. Cylburn Park. Slide of Japanese bpnsai in Japan and fig workshop. BALTIMORE

March 14
Wednesday

Slide program on propagation and lab workshop. 7:30 p.m. St. Margaret's Church. Presentation on propagation techniques and a workshop by Dr. Hank Metyga of the University of Maryland Horticultural Dept. ANNAPOLIS

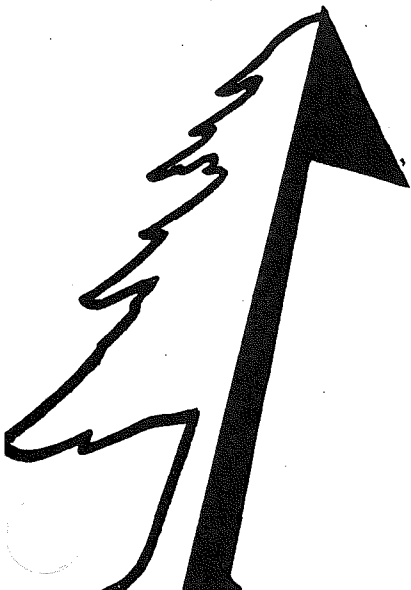
March 18
Sunday

Restyling or redefining forgotten bonsai. 3 p.m. Cylburn Park. Program by Cliff Pottberg. Bring trees that need restyling. BALTIMORE

March 31
Saturday

Collecting trip. Collecting trip to Laurel, Md. Further details in March Newsletter. BROOKSIDE

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Club News

HELP - HELP

PBA must vacate their storage space at the Arboretum. We desperately need a secure storage area for our bonsai stands, risers, and foot locker. We need a minimum storage room of 8'x8'x12'. Does anyone have space available?

As an alternate it has been suggested that we obtain a storage trailer of the above mentioned size. Does anyone know where we can obtain one for not to exceed \$500? Please call Chuck Bird (301) 292-3167.

HELP - HELP

--- Chuck Bird

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET THE FLOWER SHOW

The Flower Show will be only a few weeks away by the time you see this note. I hope by now we have a good list of bonsai available for our display. We need approximately 30 trees for the show, and perhaps more so we can rotate trees on display. Please cooperate and enter your bonsai. To do so contact me at (301) 833-9559 - home, (301)528-7992 - office, or contact your club representative now.

--- Richard Meszler

GREETINGS!

The Potomac Bonsai Association needs you! In a few days, your club will receive a schedule for the Bonsai Exhibition at the Flower Show at the D.C. National Guard Armory (19th and East Capital, N.E., Washington, D.C.) from March 2, 1979 through March 8, 1979. To insure that there is enough "personpower" to act as aides at the Bonsai Exhibition, each bonsai club will be assigned a day. Please alert your members and solicit their help.

Thank You
The Guide/Guard/Host
Personpower Committee

Allen E. Johnson 396-6261
&
Dorothy Miller

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