



TREE OF THE MONTH

Thuja occidentalis

by Mary Holmes

Thuja occidentalis (arborvitae, eastern white cedar) is so common as a landscaping plant that it is largely overlooked as bonsai material. Overlooked, that is until one encounters them on a collecting trip where they grow naturally dwarfed. (Would you believe less than 30" high and 75-100 years old!) Then one can realize the real beauty and potential of this "commoner" as a bonsai.

Up to 40' in the forest, arborvitae grows, for the most part, beautifully straight, with a fine thick, tapering buttressed trunk and root system and lovely shedding reddish brown bark. Even young trees exhibit these qualities at an early age. Characteristics of the younger and even the middle-aged tree is the fan-like scaly evergreen foliage which grows in a verticle position and so thick it is hard to see the trunk at all. Foliage flattens into a horizontal position as the tree becomes old. Branches are numerous and slender, but do not generally grow at all at the same height on the tree (as do pines) so that branch selection is relatively easy. Even old trees tend to keep their lower branches - a tremendous help when reducing the height for bonsai because you have something to work down to. Slender oblong cones about $\frac{1}{2}$ " long develop in mid-summer and are borne upright on the branches.

Thuja o. grows in most parts of North America, from northern Canada to southern Georgia, missing only the Gulf of Mexico and southern California and Arizona. They do best in moist soil and seem to prefer some humidity in the air. They prefer full sun but will tolerate some shade. Soil preference is on the acid side, but I have collected arborvitae that were growing in pockets of decompsed organic matter in limestone rock, so an educated guess would be that these trees are widely tolerant of a variety of soil conditions, particularly considering their wide distribution. Arborvitae will develop a fine fiborous root system and adapt readily to living in a pot.

Pruning and repotting are best done in the spring just before new growth begins. Tips of the foliage can be pulled or pinched off in the manner we have learned to pinch back junipers. If needles become pale in color feed lightly with a 5-10-5 fertilizer to restore the natural emerald green coloration.

Although I know of nowhere in this area to collect naturally dwarfed arborvitae (and am under pain of death if I reveal the whereabouts of the spots I do know), they are readily available from any nursery which has even slight pretensions of calling itself by that name. The dwarfed specimen I have seen have mostly had jinned tops, so that reducing the height of a nursery specimen is no great trick unless you prefer an apex to have foliage. Even at that, with the numerous small branches a rounded crown can be achieved.

Give the "commoner" a chance and it will prove that it can be a very uncommon bonsai.

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REVIEW:

Slide Program: BCI slide tape program - "Rock Planting"

"Rock Planting" is a 25 minute, 66 slide program, and narrated on a pre-recorded cassette tape. The narration is very clear and informative. The tape approaches the subject in a manner that is very easy to understand and had the slides been of more consistent quality, the program would have been perfect.

The slide portion of the program is not as successful as the narrative, since a few of the slides are underexposed where it is important that the differences in texture and surface be visible. The slides of equipment and finished plantings are excellent and almost overshadow the deficiencies in the slides of the rocks and soil mix components. These underexposed slides are few in number and BCI should make an effort to replace them.

Even with its faults, this is a good slide program worthy to be included in your programming for the coming year. It is available from:

Bonsai Clubs International
 attn: Virginia Ellerman
 406 Thomas Avenue
 Forest Park, IL 60130
 (312) 771-5860
 Fee: \$15.00 (portion refundable)

P.B.A. Fifth Annual Symposium

October 6 & 7, 1979

RAMADA INN LANHAM

"EAST - WEST: BROAD LEAF EVERGREENS AND DECIDUOUS CONIFERS"

We are pleased to have with us:

KHAN KOMAI: Demonstration - Azalea and Workshop - Azalea

DR. DAVID ANDREWS: Demonstration - Bald Cypress

CLIFTON POTTBURG: Demonstration

NICK LENZ: Slide/Lecture - Larch

MARION BORCHURES: Lecture - Bald Cypress and other native Florida Evergreens
 Workshop - Selected Broadleaf evergreen

DR. HACSKAYLO: Lecture - Mycorrhiza

*****PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING NOTATIONS ON THE ENCLOSED FLIER*****

There is no charge for the collecting trip scheduled for Sunday.
 Late registration date is September 24; late registration fee is \$5.

Banquet reservations must be made on or before October 1.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, October 6	Sunday, October 7
8:30 Registration desk opens	8:30 Bazaar Opens
9:00 Bazaar opens	9:30 Khan Komai "Azalea"
9:30 Dr. Hacskeylo "Mycorrhiza"	12:30 End of formal Symposium
10:30 Break	1:30 Khan Komai "Azalea Workshop"
11:00 Clifton Pottberg	Marion Borchures "Broadleaf Evergreen Workshop"
12:30 Lunch Break	Collecting trip
1:30 Nick Lenz "Larch"	
2:30 Dr. David Andrews "Bald Cypress"	
5:00 Free Time	
6:30 Cash Bar	
8:00 Banquet	
10:00 "	

Linda Mayben



TAKING A STAND

Special Thank You to PBA friend Jim Everman of California who donated to PBA a bonsai stand he purchased at auction at the New York BCI Convention. The stand is large enough to accommodate a fairly large bonsai and is a welcome addition to the Club's bonsai accessories. PBA and their fans will be able to admire it the next time we have an exhibit (which will be at the Symposium). Thank you, Jim!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Jules:

Several months ago Mary asked if anyone knew where to get pumice for potting mix. One of our members called the largest dealer in California to find out if there was a pumice distributor east of the Rockies. Their answer was NO! You have to buy a truckload and the transportation costs were so high it would cost \$20 per bag. We decided to forget it.

If you want to try a small amount in a small pot, there is a way. I am told (but cannot vouch for it myself) that lava rock is pumice and if you take some lava rock scraps and put them in a bag and beat the bag with a hammer, you will end up with fine pumice. I have not tried it myself.

Ken Warsh
Cactus & Succulent Society
of Maryland

Snips and Slips

HOW TO MAKE A PRUNING CUT CORRECTLY



A Correct cut is made cleanly and close to the bud.



This cut slants too sharply.



This cut is too far above the bud.



A jagged cut damages the living cells.



This cut is too close to the bud.

Jules Koetsch

GETTING NEEDLED

This tip comes from John Naka by way of Arschel Morell. To reduce the length of the needles on black pines, cut the needles off at the desired length in late summer. If they're cut earlier in the season the tips will turn brown. Cutting the needles will produce shorter needles on subsequent growth. I wonder if this would work also on our own Virginia pines. What say you, expert Richard Meszler?

--- Mary Holmes

CONVENTION CONVERSATION

About 25 PBA'ers attended the International Bonsai Convention (IBC) '77 in New York July 4 to 10. It was truly international with significant delegations from Latin America and even Italy. It was disappointing, exciting, and perhaps expensive. Disappointing because Holmes missed being elected to the BCI Board by four votes. Exciting because of the exposure to many bonsai experts continuously was overpowering. We were kept so busy that we didn't have time to fret over hotel costs.

One inexpensive highlight was the Brooklyn Botanic Tour. It was well conducted. I especially admired the Japanese garden (now appreciating the fine points). Frank Okamura's IBC '79 logo grove of trees and his other bonsai treasures were on display. However, they were displayed in a turn-of-the-century greenhouse, which did not do them justice.

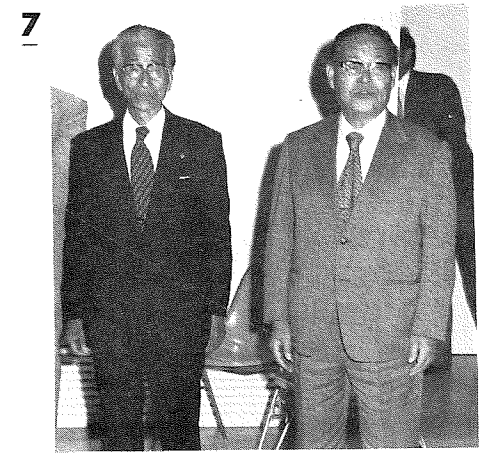
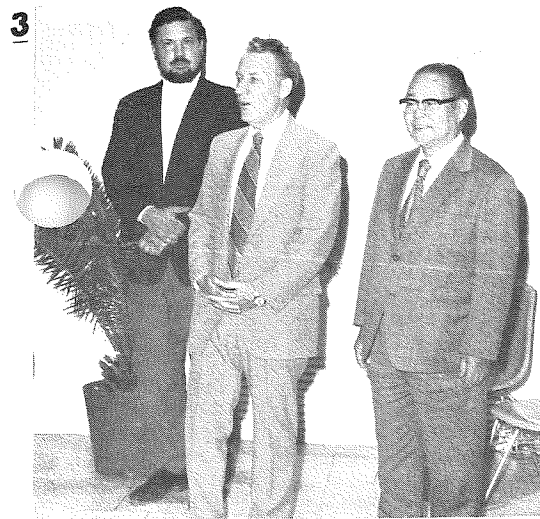
The guest masters were excellent as showmen, artists, technicians, and teachers. Frank Okamura created a group planting around a huge rock. David Andrews presented a slide lecture on forest planting, expanding his BCI '76 slide lecture. Chase Rosade created a clump of five individual maples in which the trunks will grow together at the base of the group. John Naka worked on his favorite species, a huge Black Pine. He talked about when, what, and how to prune the candles. Dan Robinson's creation featured a startling split into the trunk of a huge Ponderosa Pine in order to get the effect of a tree which has struggled to survive. This tree was previously root layered, and the very large wooden pot with a ceramic-like finish was both light-weight and attractive. Yuji Yoshimura lectured on flowering bonsai and then demonstrated a saikei featuring dwarf azaleas, cotoneasters, and dwarf wisteria. As in his practice, he modeled his plans before the demonstration.

The Japanese masters were young men with impressive credentials. Susumu Suda instructed on how to choose the style and the front of a tree from the locations and sizes (valued 1 to 5) of the visible roots. For example, the Moyogi or curved style should flow from a #5 root toward lesser roots. He spoke about removing old soil and fertilizing. Mr. Suda's demonstration was a Satsuki Azalea, which is his specialty. Iasuji Matsuda worked on an Acer palmatum dissectum var. atrofiliatum, a beautiful tree. He had many comments on the treatment of scars, defoliation, floating roots, faulty branches, winterizing, choice of wire, summer sun, and filling cavities with colored cement. Both Japanese masters had slide lectures. Mr. Suda's Japanese garden is breath-taking.

Then there were three sessions of concurrent mini-lectures, eleven in all. The most one could fit in was three. Felton Jones, on bunjin, deserved full scale coverage. He emphasized simplicity in styling bunjin. It should have old textured bark, no taper, and a reversal of space to mass. He spoke of many tricks to facilitate bunjin styling. The Jim Barrett and Jerald Stowell mini-lecture on soils was also well attended. They emphasized sifted inert soils. Stowell removes everything which passes through a 16 mesh screen and uses the coarser portion of it for bottom soil. His inert mixtures included Waylite, a cinder material which this reporter is intending to explore. Bob Oreshlor spoke about how he buffers his pH 8 water to get a lower pH.

There were twenty workshops which involved a lot of students. They were filled in spite of the cost. That was smart marketing! The overall quality of the programs was very good. So good that there were always more questions and work to be done when the lecture stopped and the next event overdue.

Harvey Everett



**Nippon Bonsai
Association
Visit**

April 19, 1979

captions page 9



Photos by: D. H. Morse



CLUB CALENDAR

September 3
Saturday
10 am
Discussion, lecture and workshop on root-over-rock and root-on-rock styles with Cliff Pottberg. Bring own rocks or slabs, plant material and lunch. Home of Sylvia (Williams) Jerace, 1641 Pleasant Plains Road. (Just down the road from St. Margarets Church.) ANNAPOLIS

NOTE: No regular Tuesday night meeting for Annapolis Club in Spetember.

September 8
Saturday
10 am
Outdoor display/show of members' trees, open to the public, at Gulf Branch Nature Center. NORTHERN VIRGINIA

September 15
Saturday
2 pm
National Arboretum. Slide program: "Styles" classical bonsai pictures taken from the Nippon Bonsai Association's book. Narrated by Chase Rosade. There will also be some discussion on fall fertilization. BRING A TREE you would like to talk about or one you are having problems with. Raffle of selected plant materials. WASHINGTON

September 15
Sunday
3 pm
Cylburn Park Mansion: "A Three-Ring Circus" Three people will be styling three pieces of material at the same time. BALTIMORE

September 21
Friday
7:30 pm
Demonstration of Bunjin style bonsai by J. Newton and D. Flipse. Head House, Brookside Botanical Gardens. BROOKSIDE

*October 6 & 7 PBA FIFTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM! See page 3 for further details.

NOTE: Because of the PBA Symposium, the Annapolis Club will not hold a meeting during the month of October.

October 20
Saturday
2 pm
National Arboretum. Winterizing. Further details in next issue. WASHINGTON

October 21
Sunday
1 to 4 pm
The Annual Baltimore Club Fall Show. Cylburn Park Mansion. BALTIMORE

OF SPECIAL INTEREST AT THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

OCTOBER 14
SUNDAY
2 pm

PLANT HUNTING IN JAPAN - Dr. John L. Creech is an acknowledged world leader in field od plant explorations for ornamentals. In his plant explorations, he has specialized in wild ornamental trees and shrubs of the Far East, with particular emphasis on azaleas. His searches for diverse types of ornamentals have taken him to Nepal, Taiwan, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Japan, a country and culture he regards with special fondness.

On a recent trip to Japan, his efforts took him to the major nursery areas near Tokyo, Osaka, and Kurume. In addition, he visited the remote island, Yakushima and climbed to the highest mountain swamp of Hana-No-Ego at 1600 meters despite the presence of a typhoon. The trip yielded over 800 collections of plants and seeds. LECTURE SERIES



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By now the dates of October 6-7 should be emblazoned on everyone's mind and engraved on everyone's calndar. It is the dates for the fifth annual PBA Symposium.

The theme chosen for this year is Broad-leafed Evergreens and Deciduous Conifers and should hit a target in nearly everyone's collection. Who among us doesn't own an azalea, or a bald cypress, or a mountain laurel, or a boxwood, or a larch, or a The list is practically endless. Do you know how best to care for it? style it? prune and wire it? and when to do all the things you're supposed to do for it? The Symposium Committee has worked hard to bring to you the experts who will tell you all these things and show you how it is done. A look at the schedule will show you we have selected a star-studded cast.

In addition to the tremendous learning opportunity, a large bazaar area will provide, all in one place, those tools, pots, stock, and other materials that are either hard to find or inconvenient and expensive to chase all over for. Saturday night will be the PBA annual banquet and there will be plenty of time after the program to run home and pick up a non-bonsai spouse or, if you plan to stay at the Ramada, more time to shop in the bazaar area, socialize and relax.

The PBA Symposium is one of the best bargains going. The registration fee is very affordable (you can even register for one day instead of two if your mother-in-law is coming to visit for the weekend and you only dare sneak out one day), you don't have to travel great distances to get there, you don't have to take time off from work to attend the activities, and it's a great chance to talk with other bonsai enthusiasts both expert and non-expert (everyone has something to contribute).

Support you local Symposium. See you October 6-7!

--- Mary Holmes

NIPPON BONSAI ASSOCIATION VISIT
Photos from pages 6 & 7.

1. Entrance of the members of the Nippon Bonsai Association.
2. Cliff Pottberg, Dr. John Creech, and Nobu-kiche Koide.
3. Mary Holmes distributing PBA gift to the Nippon Bonsai Association Members.
4. Some of the members of the Nippon Bonsai Assoc.
5. Sabura Kato & Nobu-kiche Koide.
6. Luvenia Miller & Mr. Uesugi.
7. Hideo Kato and Klifton Pottberg admiring the famous "cascade".



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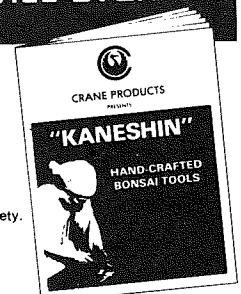
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John Naka's Bonsai Holiday in Japan Tour—
Nov. '77, contact Crane Products,
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SOIL SURVEY II

"Soil Survey" appeared in the October 1978 issue of PBA Newsletter and was reprinted in the June 1979 issue of Bonsai International. It offered a technique for measuring each phase of bonsai soil media and compared several bonsai soils with Dr. J. W. Boodley's ideal soil medium of 50% solids, 25% liquids, and 25% soil gas.

The testing to date include 33 samples of single and combinations of materials used in bonsai soils. I find that I have only scratched the surface, and that there are hundreds of possibilities largely because each type of material may be highly variable in retention of water and creation of air pockets. For example, sand is highly variable, and I have only looked at six samples. Among the six there was 14 times difference in the extremes of air space left in the sample after drainage. The solution is to grade bonsai materials according to size such as John Naka does in "Bonsai Techniques," and Yuji Yoshimura, Jerry Stowell, and others in their texts.

In my tests I sieved each sample through a series of 2, 4, 8, 16 mesh screens, and when appropriate, through 20 and 50 mesh. Mesh size is the number of holes per linear inch. Anything on 2 mesh was discarded. The material on 4, 8, and 16 mesh was generally used without further separation. The material through 16 mesh was used in one sample and discarded as the next sample.

Returning to the six different sand samples, there were at least three different shapes and a wide range of sizes. So when these sand samples are sifted to narrow range sizes, the air space variability was 35% as compared to 1400%. In real terms, sand containing fines through 16 mesh allowed 1 to 5% air space. Sand with the fines removed developed 11 to 14% air space.

Feather rock, which is a porous material, left no air space, (did not drain water) when it contained 61% fines through 16 mesh, but developed 40% air space when these fines were removed. Incidentally, Grower Chicken Grit with no fines also developed 40% air space.

Similar resulting air spaces were observed for Vermiculite, Perlite, and kitty litter with similar sieve analysis. These three retained slightly more water, perhaps 40% compared to 35% for the screened sands.

Comparing Jumbo Terrigreen to kitty litter, its little brother, the large baked clay has more air space but retains less water as expected. When the Jumbo Terrigreen was screened to remove the part less than 8 mesh there was a 2 to 4% increase of air space and reduction of water.

When these single materials are put into mixes along with organic materials the principle of removing fines to assure some air space still holds. If one wants more air space, the soil should contain a larger proportion of solids in the range between 4 and 8 mesh. The water-holding properties of soils are greater when the particle sizes are smaller, like those in the range of 16 mesh screen size.

A mix with 1/3 each of Jumbo Terrigreen, Grower Chicken Grit, and 4 to 16 mesh leaf mulch had the average characteristics of each of the separate phases, namely 50% solids, 20% water, 30% air. When regular Terrigreen or kitty litter is substituted for the Jumbo, the characteristics of the mix were 50% solids, 33% water, 17% air. If your soil drains too rapidly for a particular tree, you might consider adding 2 to 5% fines. If it doesn't drain well, remove the fines and add course solids.


However, if you really want to know the actual texture of your soil, measure the respective volumes of the solids, liquids, and mostly the air.

Harvey Everett

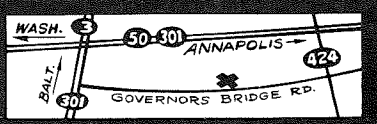
STOLEN BONSAI

Rare bonsai stolen from the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Frank W. Krause, Cranford Union County, New Jersey, Monday May 28th between midnight and 6 a.m. The 75 year old western five needle pine, naturally collected plant, was obtained by the owner from Yuji Yoshimura 13 years ago. Front of pot and trunk accidentally sprayed with bursts of white spray paint. Paint was not removed by owner prior to theft. The pine is approximately 36" high, informal upright style. Trunk diameter is 4" to 5". Ferns and large pots in evidence at base. Medium brown, terra-cotta, unglazed rectangular pot about 14" x 18", and 8" to 9" deep. Pot and plant 125 lbs. Dr. Krause is a member of the NJ Bonsai Society. REWARD for information leading to return. (201)272-5549.

Editor's Note: A picture of this plant can be obtained from an officer in your club.




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