

PBA NEWSLETTER



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TREE OF THE MONTH

Willow Oak *Quercus phellos* By **MARY HOLMES**

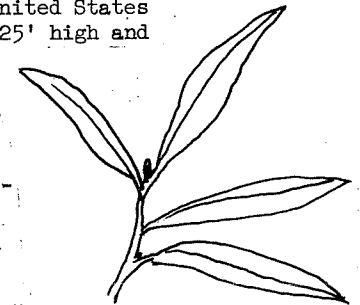
The willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) is a black oak native to the Eastern seaboard and Gulf states. Conical in shape, it has a more delicate frame than most of its cousins. Sources I consulted disagree on its eventual height, but 80-100' under ideal conditions seemed to be the commonest figure. The largest willow oak in the United States is in our own back yard in Queenstown, Maryland. It is 125' high and has a spread of 106'.

Named because of the resemblance of its leaves to that of a willow, *Q. phellos* is perhaps the best oak for bonsai because of its leaves. Long, narrow, unlobed, the leaves are 2-5" long and truly do look like that of a willow. Though they do not reduce much in the bonsai process, the naturally slender and graceful leaves keep the tree from looking overwhelmed and out of scale. Bright green in summer, leaves turn brilliant yellow in the fall. Unlike some of its cousins, willow oak does not usually retain its leaves during the winter, though in the southernmost reaches of its range it may be semi-evergreen.

True to its black oak family, *Q. phellos* has a blackish, deeply-furrowed rough bark and seems quite willing to start developing this trait at a fairly early age. It's a fast-grower for an oak and an 8-10' tree will reach 20-25' in five or six years. The trunk is short and not nearly as massive-looking as the white oak, though the largest specimens will reach a respectable 3-4' in diameter.

Q. phellos grows best in moist bottom lands, in rich loamy soil. It is one of the two oaks (swamp oak being the other) which will tolerate wet soil. Despite its preference, however, the willow oak shows itself to be quite soil tolerant and will establish itself on old quarry sites and bulldozed areas (a number of them were taken from the Golden Triangle where soil was pure sandy clay). The one thing it will NOT tolerate is alkaline soil.

Willow oak for bonsai is (to my mind) best collected. Nursery stock, besides being expensive, is also apt to be less interesting in shape and rootage. The main problem to be contended with either way is the tap root typical of all oaks. It is one of the easier oaks to transplant, but not as easy as one would like. My personal preference is to collect from an area of poor soil. This condition seems to promote small roots closer to the trunk, hence a smaller rootball (and container) are necessary, and the tap root can generally be cut shorter or taken off altogether. The smaller the tree taken, the better its chance for survival, and I would put a limit of 2-3" trunk diameter as maximum without danger of a high mortality rate. Trees taken from areas of poor soil are apt to be older for their size than those taken



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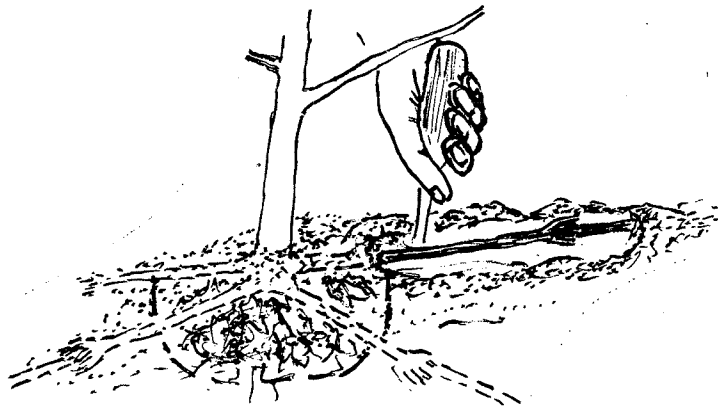
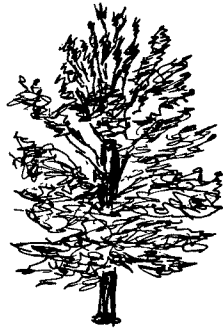
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from rich soil. Bark is already furrowed and the tree is already on its way to looking matured and old.

The best time to collect willow oak is in the spring and the best time to identify it is in the summer or in the fall before the leaves fall. The moral of this is that you need two outings in order to get it. Unlike beech or hornbeam or evergreen material, willow oak will not distinguish itself sufficiently to be readily in all seasons. To collect it in the spring after the leaves are out is pre-meditated disaster, so it must be tagged the season before in order to be collected in late winter-early spring. Like most deciduous trees, it can safely be cut back to stump and, despite your doubts that adventitious buds could ever sprout through that thick bark, they will, forming a new branch structure.

Wiring should be done after the leaves have matured, but while branches are still limber (late spring to mid summer). As with all bonsai, the soil should be dry to the point where leaves are almost wilting for best results and fewer broken branches. After pruning and/or wiring trees should be kept in semi-shade before being gradually re-introduced to full sun which they like best.



The above sketch illustrates how a one-inch diameter, 24-inch high willow oak was collected in the fall of 1978. The ground was broken outside of the diameter of the soil normally taken for a root ball. It was found that there were four long roots going who knows where. The soil was carefully scraped away to clear each root for a length of about 24 inches. The loose soil was put back over the roots to prevent drying out while the remaining roots were freed. In planting the tree each root was stretched out to its full length. The tree survived in spite of the fact that it was taken at what is considered to be a poor time of the year.

PRICELESS PLANTS FROM MARYLAND

Two botanists have discovered a priceless collection of 300-year old plants of colonial America actually gathered in Maryland from 1697 to 1736, which are carefully preserved in a locked case in the British Museum (Natural History) in London. The Md. collections were used by Linnaeus, The Swedish biologist, to compile his Species Plantarum, internationally recognized as the beginning of all botanical nomenclature, says UM botanist Jim Reveal. He and Rose Broome, former UM professor, have examined the collections and photographed several. The results of their preliminary work are now at UM, and Reveal hopes to do further research to identify more of the centuries-old plants and determine their historical significance to plant taxonomy. "The collections are extremely significant to the history of botany and to understanding more about currently endangered plants in Md.," says Reveal, who would like to work in the Linnaean Herbarium to see what specimens were used in originally naming Md. plants. He is looking for funding for the project so that the information can then be shared with U.S. botanists, plant lovers, and historians.

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PBA NEWCOMERS

PBA extends a warm welcome to the following new subscribers:

Ralph Lang, Pa.
Jim Gillespie, Pa.
John Herbert, Ga.
David Hockstein, Md.
Frances Church, Ia.
Mrs. Lambie Heighton, Canada
Myron Ackerman, N.Y.
Charlene Smallwood, Ore.
Evelyn Solf, Va.
Ruth Musil, Ore.

WATER --- HOW MUCH? HOW OFTEN?

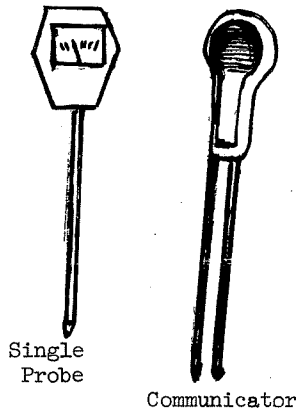
This is the third article on how to keep your plants alive or why plants die. Too much water as everyone knows taint good for the plants, - it eventually causes the roots to rot and the plant gives up and goes to bonsai heaven where many of my past efforts are residing because of that problem. Many people are gifted with a green thumb and subconsciously can recognize when their plants need water. However, in my case where I'm not that gifted and also have a variety of plants whose watering needs differ and dry out at different rates when it is sunny compared to when it is overcast or because of high winds or different soils, I rely on a moisture meter. Of the two I've tried,

I prefer the two-pronged plant communicator over the single probe moisture meter shown in the adjacent diagrams:

The single probe is more accurate in dial reading. However, the two-pronged communicator works better in porous soils and also does not require visibility of a dial. The communicator houses a small dry cell battery and emits a clicking sound whose rate is dependent on the amount of moisture in the soil. The more moisture in the soil, the faster the clicks or beeps. After the pots have been immersed in water/liquid fertilizer solution, the communicator will indicate if the plant is over or under fertilized. Since I leave for work in the morning before there is any light, I find the communicator easier to use since I listen to the beeps or clicks. Watering should be done in the morning hours. Plants don't accept the water provided in the late afternoon and will just sit and tend to rot in the moist soil until daylight returns.

All of the plants used for bonsai that appeared on the lists for the two meters fell in to the moist category as opposed to the wet or dry category. (The pines were the only ones listed as dry.) This equated to a reading of 3 to 4 on a full-scale reading of ten for the single probe moisture meter and one click per second on the communicator for the moist condition.

The communicator can be obtained from Agronic Corp. of America, Inc. P. O. Box 5630, Seattle, WA 98105



NAME THAT TREE

This month I would like to start the TREE ID with leaf, leaf pattern, and fruiting characteristics. The leaf of this plant is a simple, sharply and double serrated. Veins seldom fork at ends. Leaf size 2½-5". The leaf pattern is alternate. Male and female catkins are found on this plant. Male catkins (flowers) range from 1-1½" long. Female catkins (fruits) range ½ to ¾". The nutlet is attached to a three lobed leaf structure called bracts.



Book Nook

A MUST!!! IN YOUR LIBRARY

"GARDENING WITHOUT PESTS"; Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record, Plants and Gardens; Brooklyn, N.Y. Order by name and Number 89 from Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11225. Otherwise look for it at nursery bookshelves. Price: \$ 1.95 plus 60¢ postage.

"Gardening Without Pests" is one of those inexpensive, invaluable booklets that the Brooklyn Botanic Garden is famous for. The booklet arrived as one of a number of booklets that are sent to members of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden without any extra charge. These booklets as well as other benefits including one small plant, arrive as surprise packages throughout the year. Being born and raised in Brooklyn, I finally succumbed and sent in the yearly dues of \$15.00 two years ago and have not been disappointed ever since. Incidentally the mystery plant sent this year arrived in October, - it is a black pussy willow which came from Bountiful Acres Nursery in Maryland.

The booklet is a very comprehensive collection of articles covering the control of insects and plant diseases. It brings the information up to date and cross references insecticide /pesticide and fungicide chemical names to the trade names of off-the-shelf products available today. Of particular interest to all should be the section on "Chlorosis - What Is It and What We Can Do About It?" This chapter describes how one can detect plant disorders by the color or pigmentation of a plant's leaves and relates them to mineral element deficiencies in the soil. The chapter contains corrective measures to remedy soil deficiencies.

"Gardening Without Pests" covers insects; fungi and viruses on trees, shrubs and flowers; weed control/air pollution. It is a "Comprehensive Treatment Guide". A list of the contents is reproduced below:

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BONSAI SHOPPER GUIDE

SHOEN BONSAI & JAPANESE GARDEN

Shoen Bonsai & Japanese Garden - Bonsai Trees, Pots, Lessons, Tools, Small Japanese Gardens Designed is a recently established enterprise at 601 E. Gude Drive (In the Jack Irwin Building), Rockville, Maryland, 20850. It is across the road from the entrance to the County landfill area. The hours are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Mondays through Fridays and 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturdays. The business telephone is (301) 762-0878. The best time to telephone is around noontime since the proprietress, Juli Y. Haga, spends most of her time outside of the building except for the lunch-hour.

Harvey Everett discovered Juli Haga when he attended one of her classes on Japanese Gardens at the Montgomery College. This meeting prompted her to place the full-page advertisement in last month's PBA Newsletter, and through talking to Harvey and Juli, I couldn't wait to meet this dynamic person.

Juli is of Japanese descent, was born in Hawaii, and educated in California universities to matriculate with a Doctorate of Philosophy in Molecular Biology and Biophysics. The intricacies of keeping plants alive and successfully propagating them were no mystery to her when because of personal reasons, she had to spend a year in Japan. At that time she studied under a bonsai master in Kyoto. Hence it is easy to realize that with the benefit of her educational background and experience working in the field of biophysics that Juli easily mastered many of the intricate, intimate fine points of bonsai.

During my all but brief visit with Juli at Shoen Bonsai on last Wednesday, the 29th of November, I learned the following:

Juli will lecture on bonsai subjects. She prefers to limit them to one and a half hours. Her favorite topics are mame bonsai, pines, maples, satsuki.

Arrangements can be made for workshops, - preferably at her shop where the material and tools are available. Her shop can accommodate about 6 to 8 people for classes. As an example: we discussed the possibility of having a class on grafting, especially on how to graft branches where desired. Juli indicated that two 1½ to 2 hour sessions would be needed to complete the class. Soooo in late March, as she suggested, I for one am looking forward to learning about grafting.

Some plant material can be imported from Japan by Juli.

Her store handles a complete line of Kaneshin tools,
Copper and aluminum wire
Pots

(If she does not have it on hand, she will try to order it either from Japan or the USA.)

Don't try to schedule Juli for the afternoon of 12 January 1980. She'll be the lecturer at Northern Virginia on that date. See the calendar for further details, - all interested parties are invited provided there room enough in my rec-room. Juli cannot leave her business on Saturdays before 1:00 pm. All of the facilities that offer free space for meetings, such as libraries, nature centers, have their meeting rooms booked for their in-house events on Saturday afternoons.

JULI WILL SELL KANESHIN TOOLS IN STOCK AT CURRENT PRICES UNTIL 1 Jan. 80. PRICES WILL GO UP AFTER THAT

International Bonsai Convention

New York City N.Y.



ORIGINAL
PHOTOGRAPHS

BY
ROBERT
SITNICK

For those of us who couldn't make it to the International Bonsai Convention this past summer, Bob Sitnick brought back some excellent slides of the trees and demonstrations. Thanks Bob.



**INTERNATIONAL
BONSAI
CONVENTION**

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Styling Azaleas

Susumu Sudo's Lecture

At the International Bonsai Convention last Summer, one of the two guest lecturers from Japan was Susumu Sudo. His topic was Basic Styling for Azaleas. He opened his lecture with an interesting method for assigning numbers to the roots, branches and trunk which can act as guides in selecting the front of an azalea as well as the desired branch lengths and trunk curvature.

In selecting bonsai material, the general rule is to select the material in the following descending order of importance: first one with a good thickness at the base of the trunk and a consistent tapering to the top of the trunk; next one with good rootage (i.e. thick roots); and lastly branch arrangement. Personally, I tend to overlook the importance of selecting material with good rootage. This is all too often the case with nursery stock which does not achieve the root thicknesses when grown in pots, and that is one reason why people go on tree collecting expeditions.

Susumu Sudo brought home the point of how important rootage is to a bonsai by describing a method for selecting the front of a bonsai with emphasis first on the roots. He suggested the assigning of numbers to each of the roots beginning with the heaviest or thickest diameter root as number 5. All roots with diameters equal to the thickest

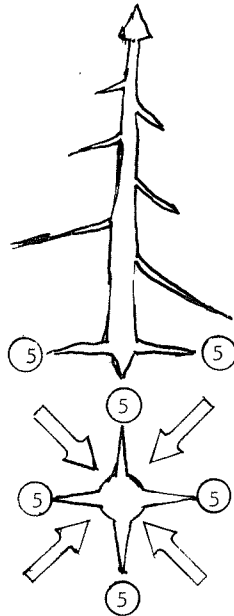


Figure 1.



Figure 2

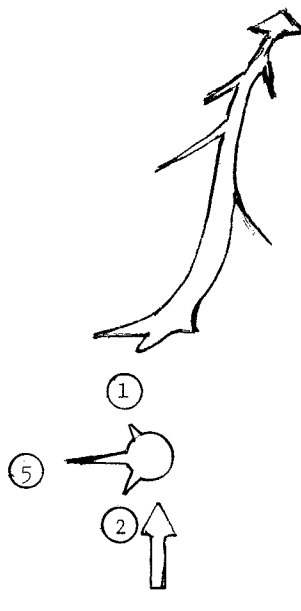


Figure 3

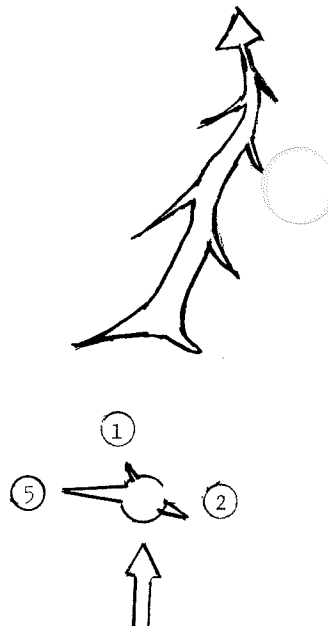


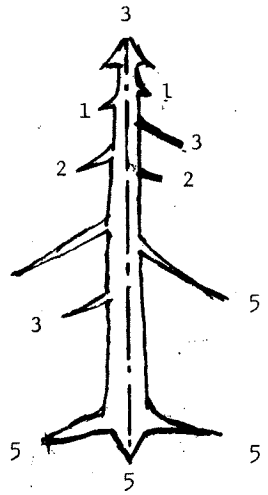
Figure 4

root would be assigned number 5. The thinner roots would be assigned numbers such as 4, 3, 2 or 1 depending on their proportionate thicknesses to the number 5 root.

Figure 1 shows four roots of equal thickness, - each has the number 5 assigned. The front of the bonsai should be placed so that the bonsai could be viewed in the direction of any of the four arrows. (Arrows indicate viewing directions.) However for Figures 2, 3 and 4, the bonsai are positioned so that the front contains the roots whose sums are maximums. In Figure 2, root (5) and root (3) add up to 8 which is the maximum combination of any of the four root pairs.

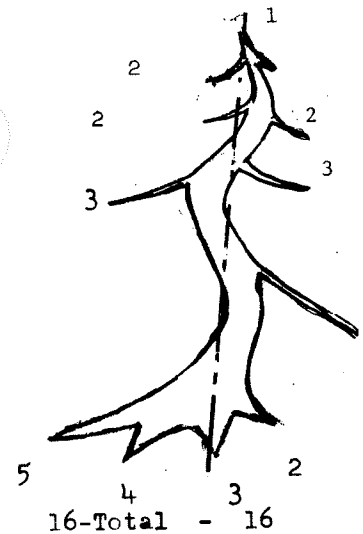
One of the reasons for placing root development before branch arrangement in priority in selecting bonsai material is that root structure is much more difficult to develop whereas branches can be pruned, removed or grown in place with less difficulty. Figure 5 indicates how numbers from 5 to 1 can be assigned to branches of different lengths with the longest branch being given a number 5 rating. The tree is divided vertically by an imaginary line. The sums of the branch numbers and the roots on each side of the line should be equal. Pruning can be used to bring about the equality. Note that the apex growth is assigned a number 3 and the number five root pointing toward the viewer is assigned a number 5 which values are halved ($1\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ respectively) to be added to the numbers on each side of the vertical dividing line. If one has a plant with no respectable rootage, the branches alone are pruned to produce the numerical equality on each side of the vertical dividing line. Figure 8 shows the proportions of the trunk lengths when setting the shape of a curved trunk bonsai.

To some bonsaiists the above approach may seem to be too automatic and they may prefer to rely solely on their artistic senses. However, it still should be interesting to even them to use the above approach to evaluate the results.



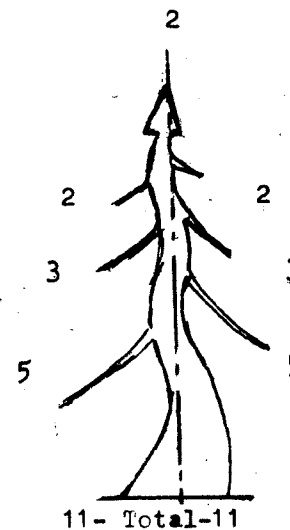
16 - Total - 16

Figure 5



16 - Total - 16

Figure 6



11 - Total - 11

Figure 7

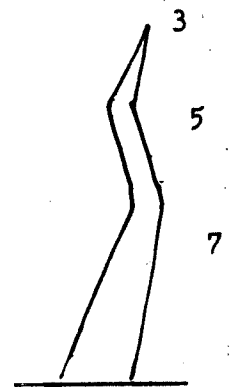
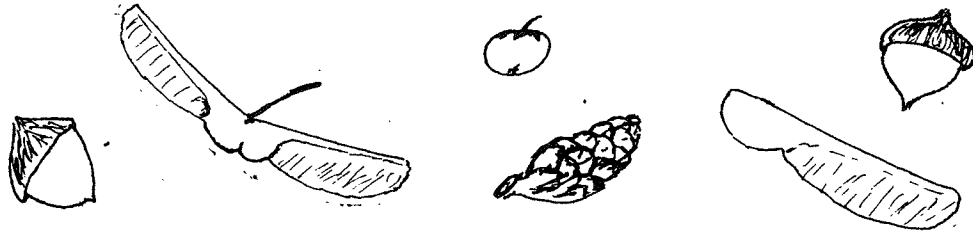


Figure 8

HOW ABOUT SEED COLLECTING TO IMPROVE YOUR BONSAI COLLECTION



You can grow some very nice trees from seed without ever visiting a nursery. You can pick up your own seeds in the wild, and if you're patient, have a flowering dogwood, an American holly, a pine tree or an oak tree growing in your bonsai pot or training container.

Dogwoods come up all over the place from seeds scattered by birds. Birds eat the berries and drop the seeds. To get seeds, don't let the birds beat you to them. And pick berries from trees growing near other dogwoods: seeds will be better with good pollination.

Leave the fleshy covering over the dogwood seeds and plant them as they are. Cover them with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of soil and mulch with two inches of tree leaves, pine needles or something similar. They should sprout in the spring. Remove the mulch about mid-April. The seedlings far best in light shade. When they are eight or nine inches tall, replant them pruning and spreading the roots for good root formation.

Ripe American holly berries can be picked in late fall, early winter and early spring. Remove the fleshy covering and plant them immediately, outdoors, of course, covering them with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of soil. Mulch them with leaves or straw for the winter. Be patient with them because they usually do not germinate until the second spring after planting.

Seeds from pine cones can be collected in the fall. With most species they're ripe enough to pick when they've turned brown. Trees growing in the open usually provide better seeds than those in the woods, and as a rule, younger trees produce larger seeds than older ones.

Plant pine seeds immediately, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. The seedbed should be mulched with leaves, burlap or pine needles until the following spring when germination is well underway. Usually pine seedlings don't require shading after germination.

Ripe oak acorns can be collected in the fall from the ground or picked from the tree. To retard early germination, white oak acorns should be collected soon after they've fallen.

Remove the cap, and plant the acorn $\frac{1}{3}$ to one-inch deep, depending on size. Mulch with leaves. In spring after the danger of frost is over, remove the mulch and keep the seedbed moist until after germination.

President's Message

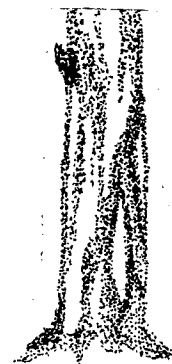
Happy New Year! It's a new year, a new decade, and a time to turn over new leaves. Right? I try to be realistic and only resolve to try to change the things I want to change. I have lots of favorite vices that I probably should change, but I like them, don't have the will to change them, so why waste the effort even considering the matter. (In some circles that's called a cop-out).

One thing I do have the will to change is my slovenly, lazy, winter bonsai habits. My trees are asleep for the winter - can't work on them in mid-winter, why not be lazy. Spring is a few months away. But spring always catches me unprepared. I procrastinated in building those wooden boxes so I could pot-down that beech and collect the tree I marked in the fall. Spring is too late to do it. And I forgot to check to see that I had enough of the right gauge wire to wire the trees that badly need it. In spring I've got to run all over at the last minute when I should have finished the job. I also meant to read up on soils during the "dark ages" evenings and by spring I not only don't know enough to do the experimenting I wanted to do, but I don't even have my basic soil mixed and some of my trees will be too far along to be repotted this year. Sound familiar? Knowing I'm in the same boat with other procrastinators doesn't help much because there's always some joker who does get things organized and still has time to loaf. And I feel foolish talking to my trees and telling them that I really do love them despite appearances to the contrary. It's a self-imposed guilt trip to look at my unkempt, unimproved trees.

Therefore: Be it resolved that I will now: inventory my wire and get what I need (I know I'm out of #10, I'll need it, and I can't get it at the local hardware store); get the Terra-green I'm out of so I can mix my soil during the next blizzard; do the figuring, buy the wood, and build the containers I need; buy the bonsai containers I need (I have planned ahead here because I know just what I want and where to get it - have known for the last two years); get my reading materials together so I can curl up on another blizzardy night and do some studying. After all this is resolved and done, I further resolve to do some more resolving for next year. After all, one should not attempt too much at one time.

--- Mary Holmes

NAME THAT TREE



This tree may grow in many forms. It may be seen as a multitrunk bush or a single trunk tree. The foliage mass, in habit, is mostly irregular. The bark is smooth, gray, with very strong features. The trunk is the most obvious identifying characteristic. Mostly found as understory trees in the forest.

Club Calender

JANUARY 1 H A P P Y N E W Y E A R ! ! ! ! May all your bonsai be winners.

Tuesday
Midnight

JANUARY 6 PBA Newsletter for February 1980 goes to press. All Newsletter staff members and other interested parties come to J. F. Koetsch residence, 6709 Caneel Court, Springfield, VA. If directions are needed, telephone (301) 569-9378. NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 12 NOTE CHANGE IN TIME AND PLACE- residence of Jules Koetsch, 6709 Caneel Ct. Springfield, VA., (703) 569-9378. Juli Haga about whom there is an article in this Newsletter, will give a lecture on one of her favorite subjects - Japanese pines. She will described the growth characteristics and styling of the three most popular varieties of Japanese pine, - five-needle white pine, black pine, and cork-bark pine. The lecture will be followed by slides of bonsai that Juli had taken in Japan. All are invited. Please telephone Jules at the above number if you plan to attend. Directions to 6709 Caneel Ct. will be mailed to NOVABONSO members. Others can obtain them by telephoning the above number.

JANUARY 17 Soils/lecture/workshop by Harvey Everett. All materials will be supplied. Bring containers for free samples. Tree-of-the-Month :- Evergreen Elms. Please bring examples of these trees along with questions and/or answers about their care. Meeting at our new location: Audubon Naturalist Society 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase - in the Gate House.

February Meeting : Three-ring-circus BROOKSIDE

NOTE !!!!! Other Club events were not submitted in time for inclusion in this Newsletter. PLEASE NOTE THE DATES AND TIMES WHEN THE PBA NEWSLETTER GOES TO PRESS! If you want an event or article to appear in the PBA Newsletter for a specific month it must be in the Newsletter staff's hands by the press date shown in the calendar for the previous month.

FEBRUARY 10 PBA Newsletter for March 1980 goes to press. See the entry for January 6, 1980 for specifics.

Sunday

1:00 PM Those interested in what their Club may be doing in January 1980 contact your EVP:

Annapolis -----Vicki Ballantyne 647-3224
Baltimore -----Arschel Morell 669-1487
Kiyomizu-----Godfrey Trammel 645-3519
Washington-----Warren Howard 546-0598

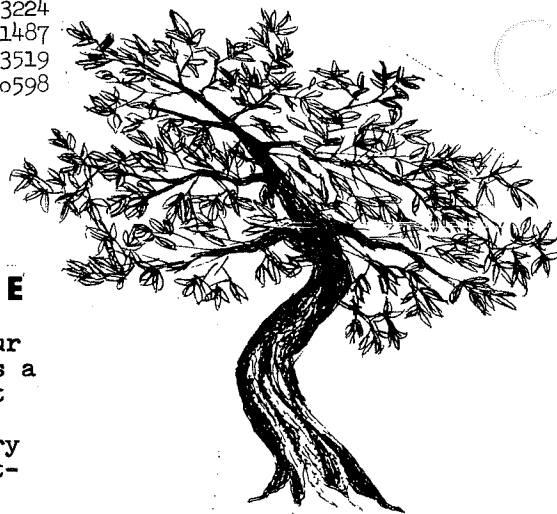
NAME

THAT

TREE

If your conclusion was Hornbeam your answer is correct. This tree makes a great bonsai. I collected one last year. It has been potted up since that time. The tree budded out very nicely, and the results of defoliating (leaf pruning) were excellent.

-Linda Mayben



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- selected seeds
- books

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YES!

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