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PBA NEWSLETTER

1.10 No. 2 Feb. 1980

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TREE OF THE MONTH



Larch or Karamatsu Slanting
Trunk Style

The larch (karamatsu to the

Japanese) is the only cone bearing tree that loses its leaves or needles in the winter. The tamarack, hackmatack or American larch is native to Alaska, Canada south to Pennsylvania where its timber has been used for telegraph poles and railway sleepers. In addition to the tamarack, there are the Western larch, the Tibetan larch, the Dunkeld larch, the Dahurian larch, the common larch or European larch, and lastly the Japanese larch. Most larches grow to heights of 60 to 100 feet with the Western larch towering to heights of 200 feet. The Japanese larch is a fast grower. which accounts for its popularity as a forestry tree. In its native habitat, Japan, it can be found growing on the slopes of Mt. Fuji.

Nick Lenz at the 1979 PBA Symposium proved to the attendees through his autiful larch bonsai that the tree makes an ideal bonsai.

Everything that follows this is a translation of the article on karamatsu which appeared in the Japanese book "Directions fof the Preparation of Pines , and Conifers Bonsai with Illustrated Explanatory Notes" by Suzuki Makato; and published by Makoto No Bun Doo Hika Sha , Japan.

The larch is an extremely good candidate for bonsai because it is usually a robust, healthy tree which grows vigorously and has leaves or needles which provide a soft appearance to the foliage with their somewhat yellow-green coloration. The author prefers to grow one species although there are a number available. The Japanese name is rakuyooshyooutoi.

Although it is possible to grow the larch from a seed, it is advisable to purchase a 7 to 8 year old tree.

For group plantings, select a number of trees with different diameters. If collecting trees, do not use the trees until they have been left in the ground for one year.

FIRST YEAR: Purchase the tree in February during the last ten days. Select a tree which is between 7 and 8 years old, about 12 inches tall and about 3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter at the base of the trunk. The tree should also have many large branches distributed along the trunk.

During February, after purchasing the plant, put it in a training pot. In April put the plant outdoors on a shelf in full sunlight. Water whenever the topsoil looks dry due to exposure to the sun.

During May fertilize using two fertilizer balls. The number of fertilizer balls depends on the pot size, and two should do for the size tree above.

During July protect the tree from the intense summer heat and keep it in the shade for one-half a day. It is best to avoid exposing the tree to afternoon sun. Do expose the tree to morning sun.

July through August, do not expose the plant to afternoon sun. Apply pesticides to prevent damage to the young sprouts that appear then.

September, put the tree on the shelf and allow it to receive sunlight throughout the day. At the same time prune the new sprouts. Remove all of the new growth except for two new sprouts. Do not cut sprouts which do not appear vigorous in their growth. When the topsoil appears dry, sprinkle

October is the time to view the change in foliage color to yellow. November finds the leaves falling from the tree.

December: If the plant cannot be put in a greenhouse, it can be put under a shelf or table in the ground for wintering. Try to expose the three sides of the tree to the south.

SECOND YEAR: (Pruning and wiring) March is time to place the plant on the shelf exposed to the full sun. Do the same each season relative to watering, applying pesticide, and providing half-shade.

May is the time to prune the new sprouts. Prune all the new sprouts to about one inch in length and do not leave any unpruned because you like them or expect to do it in the summer.

October: Wire the trunk to bring it to a straight shape. Use aluminum wire which has been paper wrapped. Use a numer 12 wire to wire the full length of the trunk. Start the wire by putting it into the soil at the base of the trunk to about the middle of the soil. Wire the trunk going under each branch as shown on the drawing.

THIRD YEAR: This is when the finishing touches are applied. Pot the plant in a bonsai viewing pot and insure that the plant does not rest on the base of the pot, - leave a layer of pebbles for drainage.

October: This is the time to wire the branches and the sprouts. Use number 14 or 16 wire for the branches and number 18 for the sprouts or smaller branches. The branches in the lower portion of the tree are wired so that they slant downward at a slight angle from the horizontal. The branches in the mid-section of the tree are wired to be horizontal. The branches in the upper part of the tree are wired to slant slightly upward. Also wire the branches in the horizontal plane as shown on the diagram. Only wire a few at the top, those which can be wired in the latter fashion. Before the extreme cold sets in, winterize the plant.

FOURTH YEAR: Repeat the third year schedule except repot only once every three years. Repeat the pruning and wiring operation and maintain a triangular shape to the branches/needles. Do not let the width of the triangular

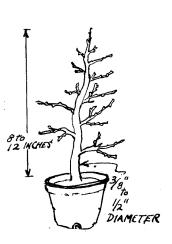
Note: - The larva refered to under the First Year illustration and for which a pesticide must be applied is the woolly larch aphid. This aphid, which may almost completely ruin early spring foliage hibernates as larva in a silk-lined case attached to the branches and main trunks. As new needles are put out, the larva drill and mine into them, eating as far as they can without leaving their cases. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden booklet "GARDENING WITHOUT PESTS" which was reviewed in last

month's Newsletter, lists on page 29 the pesticides to use as Malathion or Metasystox-R when first observed. The larva develop into filmy, gray moths are seen in June and July and in autumn a new brood of larvae is hatched.

The green, black-headed larva of the larch sawfly defoliates extensive areas of larch forests. The above booklet recommends Carbaryl as a pesticide.

FIRST YEAR (Purchase of Tree)

Appearance of New Sprouts

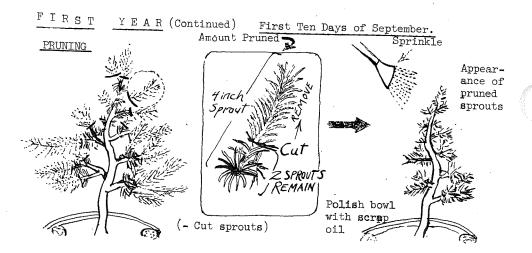




PURCHASE A TREE 7 - 8 YEARS OLD WITH AN ALMOST STRAIGHT TRUNK

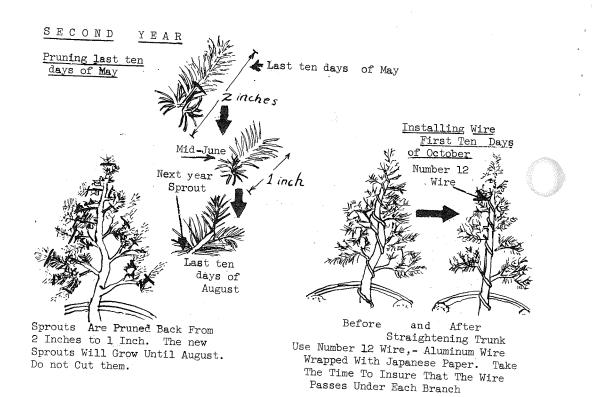
PREPARE THE TRAINING POT - Purchase one of appropriate diameter Place on shelf in first ten days of April -Soil (one part red Put entire pct ball clay, one under shelf during part fuji sand) July and August 8.8 well Number 5 pot spraying for pests. Pebbles

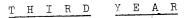
Prepare the pot and after planting the tree, provide adequate water. Watch the amount of sun and also spray for pests.



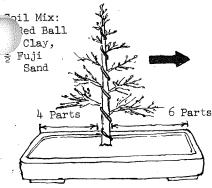
Due to vigorous summer growth, the sprouts will have to be cut back from 4 to 2 inches.

Before long the new growth will appear.

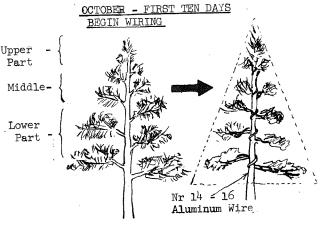




MARCH - FIRST TEN DAYS PUT IN BONSAI VIEWING POT



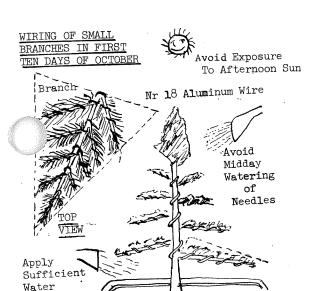
Pot Tree So That 3 Parts Are Occupied By The Root Ball And One Part By Soil Alone. Put in Pebbles for Bottom So That Plant Roots Spread Outward. Water Adequately.



Before Wiring

After Wiring

Wire With Nr. 14 to 16 Aluminum Wire. Wire lower branches so that they are at an angle slightly below the horizontal, the middle branches are horizontal, and the upper branches are angled slightly upward.



Use Nr 18 Aluminum Wire For Wiring Small Branches. Wire every small Branch. Repeat These Efforts Every Year.



LARCH SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PERIOD OF MONTH	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR
February Last ten days	Procure material. Pot tree in training pot.		
March First ten days		Place outdoors in ful sun. Water adequately.	l Place in bonsai pot.
April First ten days	Place outdoors in full sun. Water adequately.		Place outdoors in full sun. Water adequately.
May First ten days	F e r	t i l i z e	water sacque tery.
May Last ten days		Prune	Sprouts
July thru August	Apply pest co	ontrol to protect o	
September First ten days	Place in	full sun outdoors	
Mid ten days		Fertil	i z e Remove wire from trunk.
October First tan days		Wire trunk	Wire small branches.
Last ten days	Fall	Colorin	g
November	L E	A V E S	F A L L
December First ten days.	Put in gree	enhouse	Provide outdoors Winter protection.

4-th Year and subsequent: Each year thereafter repeat the 3-rd year schedule appearing above but only repot every third year. Maintain an open branch structure, (Larch branches require a large amount of light.)

COLLECTING BALD CYPRESS IN FLORIDA

BETTY GAYLE &

Florida is delightful this time of year, particularly in February when winter seems most bitter in the Washington area. And for those who find sunbathing less than a full-time activity, what better way to spend your time than collecting naturally dwarfed trees native to the area.

Much has been written on the subject of bald cypress in recent bonsai publications. One of the most stimulating pieces we've seen is Cliff Pottberg's article on collecting bald cypress, in the Autumn 1979 issue of International Bonsai, which we took to Florida with us. In addition, Marian Borchers wrote a very educational article on the training of bald cypress, which appeared as the "Tree Of The Month" article in the October 1979 issue of the Newsletter. Our purpose here is certainly not to attempt to add to the technical knowledge on this subject but rather to urge you to take a trip to Florida and enjoy first-hand the pleasures of collecting in a warm and sunny climate.

Those having the time to drive their own vehicle down will have no problem in taking the few necessary tools with them and, most importantly, in transporting your collected trees back home. We did not have that much time and so flew down and back, and rented a car while there. Although at first we worried about the logistics, as a practical matter they turned out to be very easy.

The only tools and supplies you will need are (1) a shovel, (2) a small pruning saw to cut through the tap root, (3) pruning shears for smaller roots and for any necessary branch pruning, (4) heavy-duty plastic for wrapping the root ball (heavy plastic garbage bags can be used), (5) sphagnum moss to keep the roots wet, and (6) cord for tying up the wrapped root ball. We purchased all of these materials at a hardware store in Florida. However, if you have a folding trench shovel and a folding pruning saw, they could probably be packed in your suitcase along with the other items and taken down with you.

Once in Florida, the question is where to find those little devils. In his article in International Bonsai, Cliff Pottberg mentioned Alligator Alley, which crosses Florida between Fort Lauderdale and Naples. Cliff suggested contacting the Bonsai Societies of Florida, Mayna Hutchinson, President, P.O. Box 430983, Miami, Florida 33143. You also might call Marian Borchers at (813) 988-5844 for information about collecting; she and her husband, Marc, own The Bonsai Garden at 7219 40th Street, Tampa, Florida 33604.

We were staying in Hillsboro Beach and had been told to go to an area several miles inland from the international airport in West Palm Beach. We will be happy to give more specific instructions to anyone wishing to collect in that locale. (Call Felix at (202) 862-1040.) The swampland we collected on is up for sale for commercial development, which probably means the ancient wilderness we saw will soon be bulldozed to smithereens.

We drove our car off the highway onto a grassy clearing and parked at the edge of the grove of trees where we hoped to find the dwarfs. As we walked into the grove, which surrounded a small, shallow lake, we were impressed by the unusual and picturesque quality of the woods. The trees were almost silver, reflecting the bright but low winter sun. There was a fairly solid, sandy floor which was relatively free of undergrowth. Looking around, we quickly became aware of the many thick-trunked bald cypress no taller than ourselves. As an added bonus, on the trunks and branches grew a variety of mosses, lichens, and Spanish moss and other epiphytic plants.

It was the kind of natural beauty that lifts one's spirits, and we were glad we had brought along a camera. We flushed a number of cranes but didn't stumble across any alligators, snakes, or black scorpions (which is not to say they weren't there). Accompanied by our friend, John R. Coleman from Knoxville, Tennessee, we had a most enjoyable time searching the grove for the best candidates for collecting, and finally settled on two bald cypress. Both were dug and wrapped in plastic in a relatively short time, and the holes in the ground were refilled with soil. As the sun set, we left the grove thinking of the many fine trees still there.

After a good deal of thought about how to transport our two trees back to Washington, we decided simply to carry them on the plane like two tennis rackets. The root balls were first wrapped in wet sphagnum moss and then enclosed in plastic tied down with cord; the trunks and branches (pruned back somewhat) were left uncovered. Each weighed between 10 and 20 pounds, and was under 30 inches high. We encountered no resistence from the airline when we carried the trees on the plane; at the stewardess's suggestion, we put them in the enclosed overhead compartment above our seat. Once home, we immediately potted the trees and soaked them in water containing a strong solution of Superthrive. We plan to keep them in a place protected from the freezing cold during the remaining winter months and have our fingers crossed that they will survive.

If you don't have the time or energy to collect your own trees while in Florida and plan to be in the Miami area, pay a visit to Ed Fisher. Ed has collected hundreds of

spectacular bald cypress and buttonwood in south Florida. Although he does little advertising, his trees are for sale and at reasonable prices. He told us that he has more than 2,000 dwarf trees! After seeing his trees, we wished that we had a truck to bring some of them back to Washington. Ed, however, will ship his smaller trees to you. Call him ahead of time at (305) 856-6228 to arrange a time to get together with him. He can also probably give you some information about where to go collecting.

Rocks Are Where You Find Them

A letter from Charles Sullivan, a member of the Buffalo Bonsai Club, sparked by George Reichert's article on Saikei (Bonsai Magazine October 1976), reminds us that rocks of one kind or another are available almost anywhere or a few miles from anywhere! Speaking of the Niagara Escarpment, he points out that this fascinating formation extends from near Rochester, N.Y., to Wisconsin, in addition to its long ramblings northward into Canada. His remark "The cement companies think it is as pure as they can find" strikes a chill into the hearts of many people engaged in an unending vigil to protect the more beautiful rock faces in certain areas of the escarpment, from being carted away to be transformed into high-rise buildings in nearby urban centres.

Mr. Sullivan says: "If you are not an amateur geologist you probably don't know what interesting rocks are available right in your own stamping ground. Before starting a search on your own, ask the local Geologist what is available and where. You will find him in the local museum, the Extension Society, or in a college in your area. If you still cant find him, try a "Rock-hound" group. Some of these enthusiasts have a reject pile from which you can get some dandy rocks, for they are only interested in the minerals. There is a topographic map available at our Museum of Science which shows the location of seventeen different kinds of rock outcroppings in our county. Undoubtedly there are similar maps for your home town. In our area we have the added bonuses of foreign stones brought in by the glacier, the rubble piles of the gypsum quarries, the rocky shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, and several river gorges.

"Everywhere I've gone there have been beautiful rocks for Saikei. Don't be jealous of the black rocks of the Sudbury, sparkling minerals of Thunder Bay, or honeycombed limestone from the caves of Kentucky, because you just might be living on top of rocks just as interesting."

Rock-hunting is a rewarding week-end activity for Bonsai people, especially during such seasons as are not suitable for tree-collecting. Good rocks and good trees, from the Bonsai point of view, are so often found together, it may be possible to tag a tree or two for future removal - always hoping that someone doesn't take a fancy to it before you get back!

The above article was written by Edith Kenzie, Canada. It was submitted by Vicki Ballantyne so that bonsaiists can consider rock-hunting as an outdoor winter endeavor to fill in the lull till spring arrives and the bonsaiist is up to hers or his armpits in work. The editor was out walking around the construction going on at Crystal City during a few lunchbreaks. I did find a few interesting specimens in the rocks on top of the soil of the plants used as part of the Holiday Inn landscaping. Wandering a little further afield one day, I found some fine rocks which had been unearthed by the construction equipment.

SOIL SURVEY UPDATE

HARVEY EVERETT

The author's previous articles on Soil Survey examined only one aspect of soil components and mixtures, namely the ability of a medium to both drain and retain liquid and therefore provide space for soil gases. Both soil liquid and gas are essential to plant growth. Pr. J. W. Boodley in a lecture to the 1978 ABS Symposium, and published in the Fall 1978 ABS Bonsai Journal, says that ideal soil phase proportions for most potted plants are 50% solids, 25% liquids, and 25% soil gases.

There is not much point to having a criterion if it can't be measured. The purpose of "Soil Survey" in PBA Newsletter, October 1978 and BC1 Bonsai International, June 1979, was to present a procedure for measuring the three phases and some sample results. Hore results were reported in "Soil Survey II", PBA Newsletter, September 1979.

This technique for measuring the phases was useful for assessing not only tamiliar soil media but also for exploring some new ones. For example, No. 2 Q-Rock holds water and no air, while Grower Grade Gran-I-Grit looks pretty good. Sifted compost looks useful as a soil component. In general, all components should be sifted to remove the fine particles through a 16 mesh window screen. On the other size end, soil particles 1/4" or larger tend to make the soil very porous.

The phenomenon of perching has been showing up in some of the recent tests. This is a situation where the water film across the bottom of the soil medium does not break and allow drainage. This perching could have been caused by a 16 mesh screen across the bottom of the test medium during draining. Previously, either a 4 mesh or no screen was used. When perching occurs, it can be broken by tilting the jar or pot. In order to remove the ambiguity of perching involvement in the previous test results, a number of tests were rerun.

Nearly half of the test results are tabulated below. They are grouped as organics, soil conditioners, inerts, and mixes. Seven "as is" examples of materials are shown compared to their sifted counterparts, in which the fines are removed. Four unlisted samples of builder's sand were also examined, all with more fines than the listed sample and less porous. The sifted Feather Rock and Arundel Expanded Slag may have possibilities as a soil ingredient. In addition to being sifted they should be washed to remove appreciable quantities of 100 micron dust. Caution must be exercised in the use of slag in a soil. Slag may have a pH as much as 8.5

Some of the non-porous characteristics of a soil ingredient may be balanced by proper selection of inert materials. For example, a soggy peat moss may be improved by adding chicken grit and kitty litter.

Much variability has been observed in sands, kitty litters, composts, and crushable materials like Perlite and Vermiculite. The amount of residual moisture remaining in these materials is also a factor to consider when making a measurement. Generally, the tabulated materials were either dried or observed to be dry. Consequently other experimenters may get

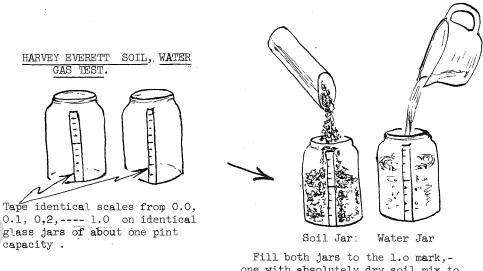
different results with comparable materials. The author will appreciate any reports.

The Boodley proportions of 50/25/25 should not be considered inviolate. By coincidence most of our bonsai media have about 50% solids. The variation is in the distribution of liquids and gases. In the opinion of this author bonsai solids should be selected so that the liquids and soil gases each range between 15% and 30% depending on specific plant needs.

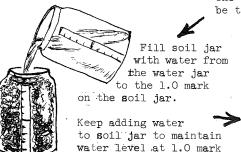
This proposed approach for choosing soil ingredients from the measurement of solid, liquid, and gas percentages is a more positive way to select a soil medium than conventional approaches especially when the soil material does not have quality control or we established properties.

Individual bonsaiers are urged to make their own assessments. The author encourages independent reports with the same or new materials.

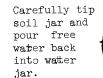
The author is grateful to Cliff Pottberg for encouragement, advice, and suggestions of new bonsai soil media. The basic causes of perching needs to be investigated. It may be a problem in some bonsai practices.



one with absolutely dry soil mix to be tested and the other with water.



until soil absorbs no Measure water level in water jar. For ex.: A is 0.4



Use kitchen strainer to catch soil which might fall from jar.

B ---is 0.65

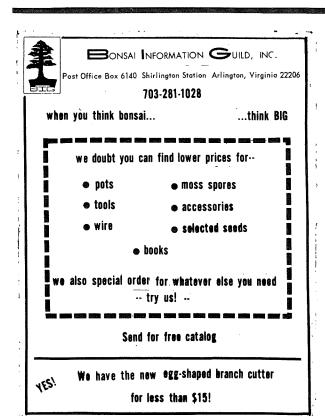
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Calculations

Water absorbed = 1.0 -0.65 = 1.0 -B = 0.35 or 35%

Gas space = B - A = 0,65 -0.4 = 0.25 or 25 %

Solid = 1.0 - (0.35+0.25) = 0.4 Or 40%



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TABLE OF SOIL MEDIA. WATER AND GAS BY VOLUME

Harvey Everett

SOTT MEDIA			SIEVE GROUP					PERCENT		
i.	SOIL MEDIA				/	02/30		15/20 / 12/07	o-/_	° /
ORGANIC Media	Milled Peat Moss Leaf Compost Sifted Wood Chip Compost Sifted	0 -	35 30 35	30 70 65	12	23 - -	32 36 45	1	35	
S COOD	Kitty Litter As-is Kitty Litter - Sifted Vermiculite As Is Vermiculite Sifted Perlite As-Is Perlite Sifted Terra Green As Is Terra Green Sifted Junior Jumbo Terra Green As-Is Jr. Jumbo Terra Green Special Sift	0 - 0 - 0 - 10 -	31 34 53 7 5 1 3 21 26 63	60 66 18 25 41 97 62 74 25 0	5 - 29 - 58 - 13 - 2	4 - 0 - 0 - 1 4 - 0 - 0	45 44 35 35 38 40 34 38 44 43	38 37 57 46 35 39 38 28 27	17 19 8 19 16 25 27 24 28 30	
INERT MEDIA	Builders Sand As-Is Builders Sand Sifted Creek Sand Sifted Creek Sand Sifted White Sand Chicken Grit Grower Grade - O Crushod Feather Rock 4 Feather Rock Sifted Arundel Expanded Slag As-Is Arundel Expanded Slag Sifted		12 46 50 99 67 8 23 31 66	16 54 49 0 33 27 77 16 34	72 1 1 53 0 8 -	0 - - 47 0 53 - 11	67 63 57 54 57 45 45 42 50 42	31 26 31 32 42 6 55 18 14 18	2 11 12 14 1 45 0 40 36 40	
goil Mixes	leach: - Chicken Grit, Kitty Litter 1/3 Each: - Chicken Grit, Kitty Litter and Peat Moss 1/3 Each: - Chicken Grit, Kitty Litter and Leaf Compost 1/3 Each: - Chicken Grit, Terra Green and Wood Chip Compost 1/3 Each: - Chicken Grit, Jr. Jumbo Terra Green and Leaf	-	50 45 44 43	50 43 56 57	12	-	47 55 52 42	31 32 31 3 ⁴	22, 13 17 24	
	Compost	-	41	59	-	-	44	30	26	

Editor's Comment: Because the quality control of the items noted above may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, it is advisable to test your own soil mixes.

CLUB CALENDAR

Sunday 1.:00 PM

FEBRUARY 10 PBA Newsletter for March 1980 goes to press. Jackie Dorsett will telephone EVP's one week before the 10-th of February. Please have your March 1980 programs ready to read over the telephone. Any candidates for articles should be mailed to Jules Koetsch by then. NEWSLETTER

NOTE: The next Newsletter metting will be at the home of Dave Morse. The Address is 9901 Goodluck Rd. #102 Seabrook. Md. Phone: (301) 794-8127 (call if you need directions)

Wednesday 7:30 PM

FEBRUARY 13 N O T E ! !! New meeting night. Tory Pottberg will give a program on proper placement, color, and shape of pots. Location: - St. Margarets Church, ANNAPOLIS

Thursday 7:30 PM

Three ring circus. Trees will be styled simultaneously by Dave Garvin, John Hreha, and Janet Lanman. Come to learn, critize, and meddle. Finished masterpieces (?) will be offered as doorprizes!!: Tree of-the-month: - Kingsville Boxwood. Bring your pet specimen and help exchange advice on care and training.

We also want to start a monthly swap shop where members can bring unwanted material for exchange or sale.

SLATE WILL BE PRESENTED FOR APRIL ELECTION OF CLUB

LOCATION: Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Rd.,

Chevy-Chase in Main Building. March Meeting: -- A collecting field-trip, probably Saturday,

22 March.

BROOKSIDE

FEBRUARY 23 How to prepare for a collecting trip.

WASHINGTON

Saturday 2 PM

MARCH 15 Saturday

Collecting trip.

WASHINGTON

Those interested in what their club will be doing in February 1980 contact your EVP:

Baltimore ----- Arschel Morell 669**-1**487 Kiyomizu ----- Godfrey Trammel 645**-351**9 Northern Virginia --- Pete Jones 521-0674 Washington ----- Warren Howard 546-0598

MAY 24 & 25-th PBA Annual display at the Arboretum.

The PBA Newsletter wishes to thank Jackie Dorsett for her patience and untiring effort to obtain the Club Calendar events!!!!!

Snips & Slips

Walter Schmidt sent the following:

It is important to note that the mimosa thrives, more than most trees of its size, on pruning. Untended, it has a limited lifespan; it will grow pretty well for 25 years or so and will die-off, but with constant trimming, the mimosa can go on and on, bursting out with pink flowers year after year.

Goodluck LINDA

Linda Mayben has left the area to take up residence in Texas. Linda gave unstintingly of her time in behalf of PBA and Newsletters past. PBA Will miss her as vice-president and the Newsletter will miss her as a talented artist. GOOD-LUCK Linda!!!!!!

Subscription

Information

For members of other clubs and societies who are interested in a subscription to the PBA Newsletter, A one year subscription is

Make checks payable to: Potomac Bonsai Association.

Mail to: Vicki Ballentyne 538 West Drive Severna Park, Md. 21146

Jules Koetsch or 6709 Caneel Ct. Springfield, Va. 22152

