

POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
c/o National Arboretum
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PBA NEWSLETTER

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TREE OF THE MONTH

クロマツ Collected Japanese Black Pine by Jules Koersch



This is the follow-on article covering collected kuro-matsu or black pine which was promised in the last March PBA Newsletter. Once again it has been translated from the Japanese book "Directions for the Preparation of Pine and Conifer Bonsai with Illustrated Explanatory Notes" by Rinboku Shunsoku and published by Makoto No Bun Doo Hika Sha, Japan.

This article will mention the many steps in preparing and designing a tree dug-up from the soil, i.e. collected.

REMOVAL FROM THE GROUND - 1st YEAR

KURO MATSU Patterned
after Tree in Nature.

Digging Up: Select the time to collect the tree in the fields or mountains during March or April. Choose a tree of the appropriate

size to have the basic shape desired and also be structured so that the detailed styling can eventually be carried out.

The first step is to select a tree with roots spread uniformly in four directions.

The second step is to reduce the height of the tree.

The third step is to skillfully cull out the sprouts leaving those with good quality needles. Of course, do not remove the branches next to the trunk since this will cause the sap to run and the cut will never heal. (Always cut a branch so that a stub still protrudes from the trunk. This will eventually die back so that it can be removed from the trunk without injury to the tree.)

Once the task of selecting the tree has been accomplished, the size of the root-ball must be determined on the basis of one of the three guidelines; for a tree with a trunk diameter of 2-inches (5 cm) take a root-ball of 12-inches radius (30 cm); 1-inch (3 cm) take a root ball of 8-inches radius (20 cm); 1/2-inch (1 cm) take a root ball of 4-inches radius (10 cm). Cut the thick roots which extend beyond the circumference of the root-ball. When excavating, let the soil fall back into the excavation to keep the hair-roots from drying out.

After the excavating has been completed, do not expose the root-ball unduly to the air but moisten the roots by misting and bundle them up in moist peat moss and in a plastic covering.

Preparation of the Pot: After bringing back the tree, immediately prepare the pot. Before potting the tree, use a very sharp knife to cleanly trim the ends of the thicker roots, - doing this with extreme care. (Crushing the root-ends with shovel or shears causes the root-ends to split and allow for root-rot and disease to enter the tree.) Never use shears to trim the root ends. The bottom roots will grow to restore an equilibrium to the tree for those roots removed.

Remove enough of the bottom of the root ball so that the tree will fit in the pot with the trunk-soil line intersection of the root-ball slightly below the rim of the pot. Do not remove any of the soil in the root-ball.

Use a "half-pack-horse fired" pot of 16 inches (40 cm) diameter. Fill the pot with river sand (arrow brand river sand, heavenly gods river sand) putting large grains in the bottom layer and about equal depths of medium-grained sand topped by fine grained sand. Eliminate enough of the bottom of the root ball so that the root ball fits when resting on the bottom layer of coarse sand.

To prevent the tree from expiring, water it in moderation, give it good air circulation, and place it so that it is in the shade for one-half a day.

Follow-Up Control: Provide adequate ventilation (pines like a breezy location), keep the plant in the shade for $\frac{1}{2}$ a day (preferably afternoon shade since the sun is hottest in the afternoon and the plants go through their most active cycle in the morning), especially insure that the tree receives enough water, and spray the foliage three to four times a day.

Once the tree appears to have survived, gradually place it in sun for the remainder of the day until it is in the sun for a full day in a breezy location. During the summer watch the surface of the soil and when it dries, water the tree, - usually about two to three times a day, - and reducing to one to two times in the autumn. Do not apply fertilizer during the first year.

During December 10th through 20th move the tree to a protective location for the winter "under the eaves".

2nd YEAR TRANSPIANTING

Transplanting Process: Do the transplanting or repotting during the first 20-days of March. Repot the tree in a "Half pack-horse" fired pot of 10 to 12 inches (25 to 30 cm) in diameter. Use river sand and place the sand of different sizes as done in the previous year, in three levels in the pot.

Remove the tree from the pot and prior to repotting, break away some of the old soil from the root-ball. Discard the old soil. Cut all the roots which extend beyond the original root-ball. The roots are progressively trimmed back over a four-year period as shown in the framed diagram which follows the 3rd year illustrations. The objective is to keep reducing the thick roots and encourage hair-roots to grow. Eventually the thick roots will be for appearance only as surface roots. Plant the tree in the middle of the pot and fix the bottom of the pot with soil so that the surface roots are at the proper height in the pot. Take the necessary precaution to have a sufficient depth of coarse sand in the bottom of the pot to permit rapid drainage.

After repotting, immediately place the tree outdoors on a shelf.

Follow-Up Control: During April place 6 to 7 individual fertilizer balls on the surface of the pot. Replace the balls as soon as the ones in place disappear. Replace with the same number of fertilizer balls and position them over spots other than those occupied by the previous fertilizer balls.

The general rule for watering is: water one to two times a day before the summer, two to three times in the summer, and one to two times a day in the autumn. (Remember that the combination of exposure to full days of sun and as much air movement as possible plus the sandy soil all add up to a combination that loses water rapidly.) From about December 10th to 20th until March 1st through 20th of the following year, keep the tree in winter storage "under the eaves".

After putting the tree in winter storage, water the tree when the surface of the soil in the pot appears dry.

3rd YEAR EFFORT

This year during March 1 through 20 also repot doing the same procedures as for the 2nd year. Cut the major roots once again (see the accompanying diagram) so that the thick roots fit into a number 7 pot. (It is estimated that a number 7 pot is about 7 inches in diameter.) Remove most of the soil from the root-ball. Finish transplanting the tree into the pot in the same way that it was done for the 2nd year.

After November and into the early part of the next year, begin to give the tree its fundamental shape. This is of primary importance. Remove any undesirable branches and reduce the lengthy branches. Try to derive the shape shown in the accompanying illustration for the 3rd year. Then wire the branches so that they can be bent to the desired angles. As before for other trees, - bend the upper branches slightly above the horizontal, bend the middle branches so that they are horizontal, and bend the lower branches slightly below the horizontal. The completed shape of the tree should be triangular when viewed from the front. Of course, do not retain any branches which point to the front and any growth on the underside of the branches. Remove the wire just before it "eats" into the bark. As a rule, this can be delayed one year.

4th YEAR MATTERS

Pot In A Bonsai Display Pot: Without question during March 1 through 20 place the tree in a bonsai display pot. A suitable pot would be an oval pot which is unglazed and of a pale color. Spread a layer of medium sized river sand (sand that passes through a screen of about 6 to 8 holes per inch not 12 to 16 holes per inch) over the bottom of the pot before inserting the tree. Also trim back the thick roots so that the tree fits into the pot. Do not remove any of the fine, hair roots. Position the tree in the pot so that the trunk splits the pot in the ration shown in the accompanying sketch of 4 to 6, and position the tree even if it means removing some of the root system. Finish the repotting by filling with soil to a depth so that the surface is slightly below the lip of the pot. This will prevent water from running off the soil-surface. Place the tree immediately on a shelf outdoors.

After March, carry out the same tasks as scheduled in the 3rd year through October.

Thinning of Needles: Do not do any needle pruning in the interval from after October until March. To aid in air movement through the tree and provide a desired appearance of openness, needles - both young and old are removed from the upper sides of the branches.

In thinning out the needles (opening up the foliage), the old needles are removed before removing the new needles. When the old needles have been removed, the new needles are removed so that there are 4 to 5 needles remaining on the uppermost branches, 7 to 8 needles remaining on the middle branches, and 15 to 16 remaining on the lowermost branches. One cannot look through the needles of the lowermost branches after the needles have been reduced to 15 or 16 needles.

5th YEAR AND THEREAFTER

The needles can be removed during the period from October to March to open up the tree-structure,- also branches can be removed. In addition, the small branches can be wired. Keep in mind the intended appearance of the tree and style the tree to eventually grow into that shape.

The appearance of the ideal slanting tree style bonsai is one which does not have a narrow, conical shape. To provide character to the tree, vary the lengths of the branches so that they do not provide a clean-cut outline to the tree.

Transplant or repot the tree every 5 to 6 years or it will not grow. After 5 to 6 years have elapsed, it is not necessary to put the plant under the eaves during the middle of December. If the tree is not healthy, mist the needles.

PROTECTION AGAINST INSECT DAMAGE

To protect the black pine's young shoots against disease and insect damage, apply an insecticide. Use lime-sulfur medical compound, one part in 50 to 60 parts of water during the rainy season and one part in 30 to 40 parts of water during the last ten days of January. Spray the entire plant thoroughly with the liquid solution.

Snips and Slips

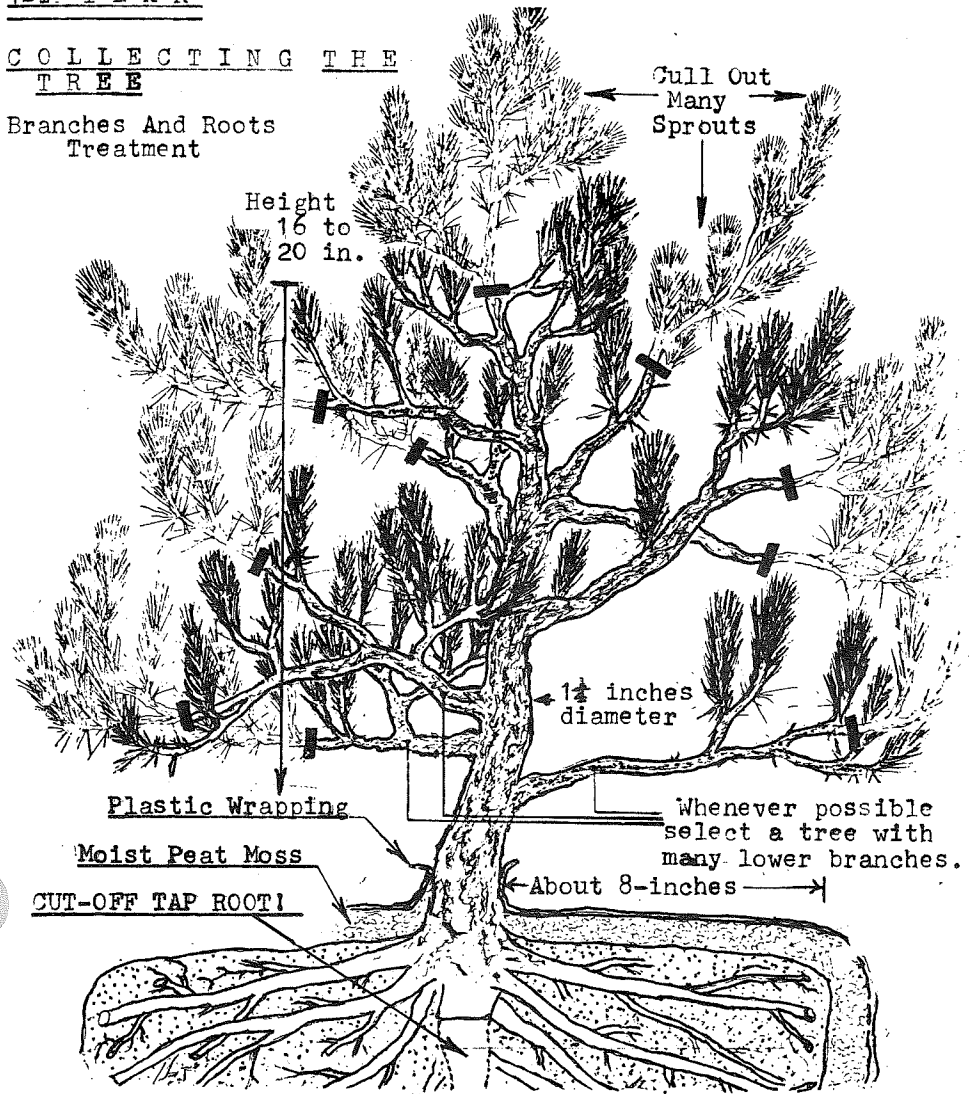
STUCK UP

This advice was published several years ago and bears repeating. Gardeners in general and bonsai enthusiasts in particular have a tremendous problem with crawling, flying, chewing pests in this area. One way to minimize some of the work involved in the "pest patrol" is to use a product called Tanglefoot on the legs of their bonsai benches. Tanglefoot is a sticky, gooey melage of a mess that is slathered in a ring around the trunks of trees or around the legs of a bench. It consists mainly of castor oil and vegetable gum and nothing crawling up from the ground can get by it. Ants can't get up to the trees to "cultivate" aphid colonies, slugs and catpillars can't get past it to chew on foliage or roots, and all this makes life a little easier because there is less of the enemy to watch out for.

1ST YEAR

COLLECTING THE TREE

Branches And Roots Treatment



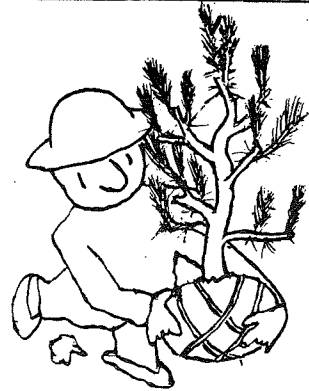
One Sided Roots
(Not Desired)

ROOTS SHOULD BE OF
GOOD QUALITY AND
DEAF SPREADING

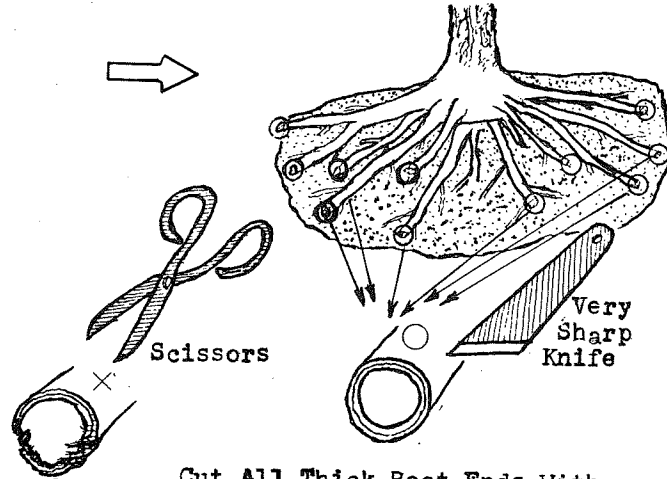


Roots On All Sides
(Desired Configuration)

STEPS AFTER TREE HAS BEEN DUG-UP AND BALLED



PRIOR TO POTTING



Cut All Thick Root Ends With A Very Sharp Knife. Leave Enough Roots (Thick and Hair) To Support Tree.



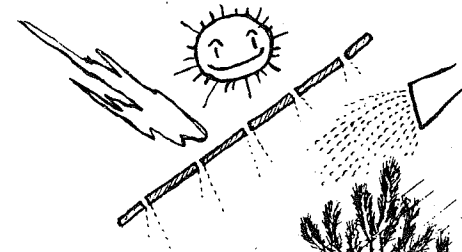
APPEARANCE OF TREE IN POT
MARCH OR APRIL

Unglazed Pot - About 16 Inches Diameter.

River Stone:-

- Small
- Medium
- Coarse

FIRST YEAR CARE FROM APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER



Mist Needles
3 to 4 times
Each Day

Place potted tree outdoors where it can drain freely. Provide sufficient water 2 to 3 times in the Summer months, 1 to 2 times in Spring and Autumn.

Slowly move the tree from shade into full sun. If the surface of the soil looks dry, water the tree.

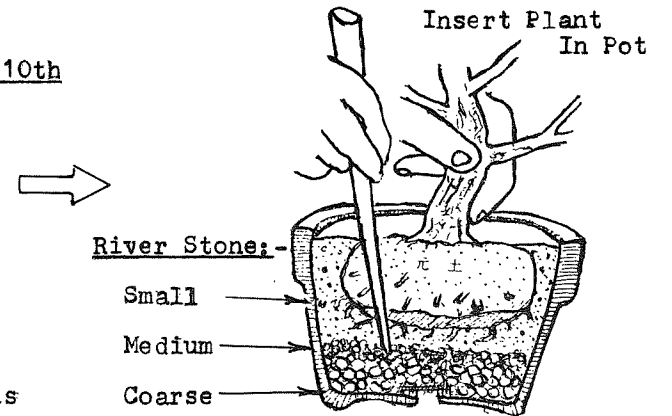
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2ND YEAR REPOTTING - STABILIZATION
OF TREE

REPOT MARCH 1st - 10th



Gradually remove as much soil as will fall away freely.



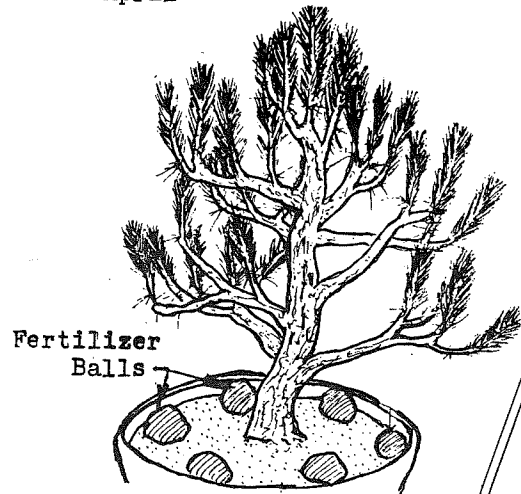
River Stone:-

- Small
- Medium
- Coarse

Roots will grow to fill out sections where soil had been removed from the root ball. Water sufficiently, place on shelf outdoors in full sun.

(2nd Year Continued)

Fertilize Starting In April



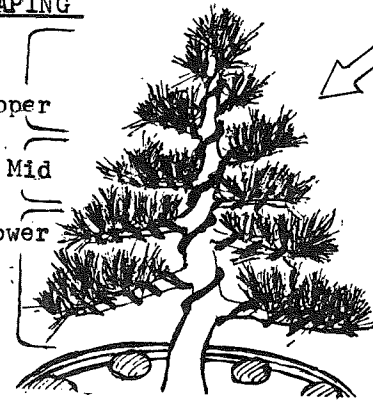
Fertilizer Balls

Polish pot with scrap-oil, - make 6 to 7 applications. As soon as fertilizer balls disappear, - apply new ones.

AFTER SHAPING

Sections:

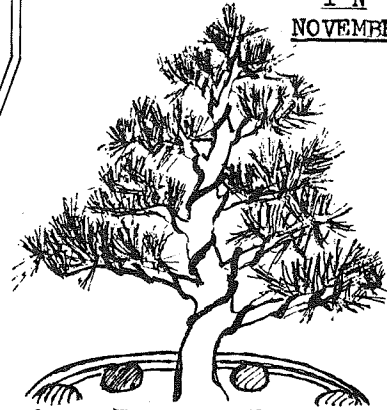
Upper
Mid
Lower



Bend the upper branches slightly above the horizontal, - the mid-section branches to horizontal, and the lower branches slightly below horizontal.

3RD YEAR

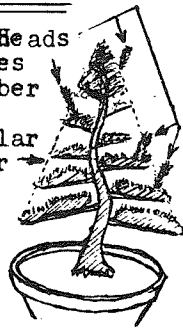
WIRE BRANCHES IN NOVEMBER



Remove ends of branches to form triangular outline for the tree. Apply 5 gage wire to every branch.

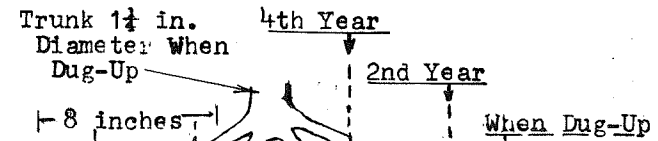
Remove Heads Of Branches In November

Triangular Taper

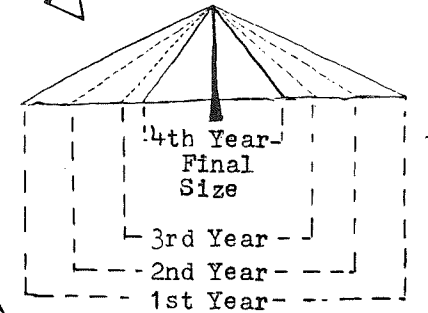


Sketch of shape of tree after wiring, bending and removing branches

STEPS IN SHAPING TREE



STAGES IN ROOT SHORTENING

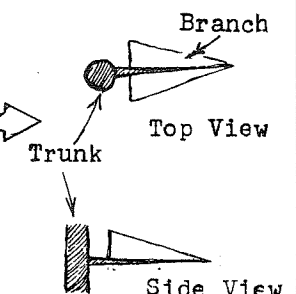
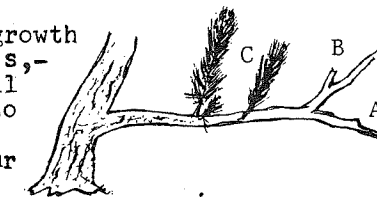


STAGES IN BRANCH SHORTENING



LOWER BRANCHES

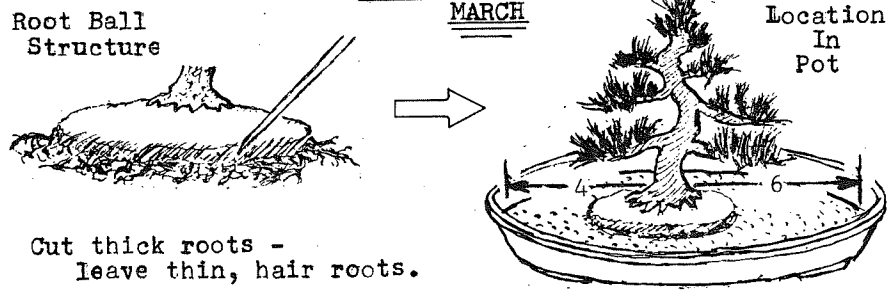
To encourage growth in lower branches, - pruning at A will cause sprout B to die. But new growth will occur at C.



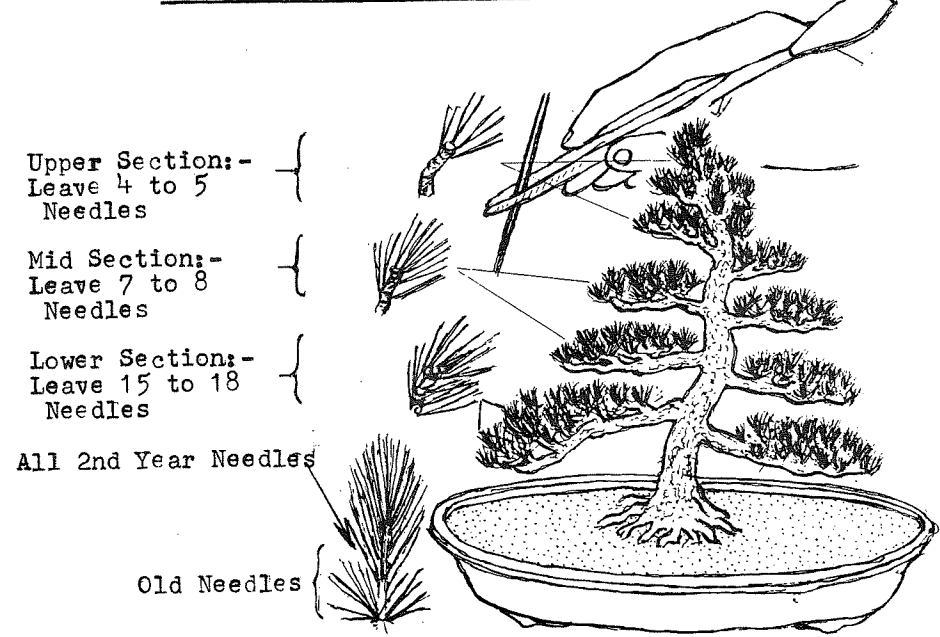
Note: When a branch or the trunk is pruned, the next closest limb will die.

Objective is to develop triangular shapes to the branch structure as above.

4TH YEAR PLACEMENT IN BONSAI DISPLAY POT
DURING 10 to 20
MARCH



REMOVING NEEDLES IN OCTOBER

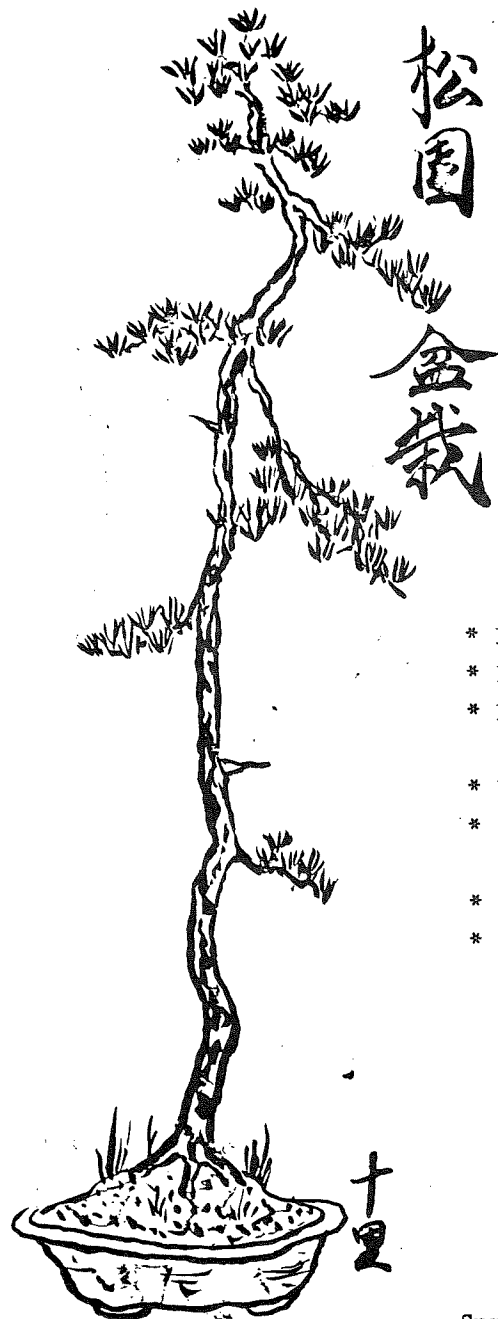


BLACK PINE
COLLECTED
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PERIOD OF YEAR	YEAR				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
JANUARY 20-31	Apply insecticide →				
MARCH or APRIL	Dig-up tree. Pot. Place in 1/2 day shade. Mist needles 2 to 3 times daily.				
MARCH 10-20	Continue to water well.	Repot	Repot	Repot in bonsai pot.	
		Put outdoors on shelf in full sun. →			
		Water adequately →			
APRIL 10-20		Apply fertilizer at a rate that there is fertilizer always present →			
JUNE	Place outdoors as soon as it looks okay				Cut the head branches
JULY 1-10		Apply insecticide →			
SEPTEMBER					Finish cutting head branches
OCTOBER					Start thinning out needles →
					Apply wire. →
20-31		Stop applying fertilizer →			
DEC 1-10	Provide winter protection, -"under the eaves". →				

6th Year and thereafter: Repeat the 5th year work every year. Transplant (repot) every 5 to 6 years.

Shoen Bonsai



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1:00 - 4:00 Sun

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the past year my President's Message has done a lot of upbraiding, exhorting, cajoling and, I hope, not a little praising. PBA is a vital organization with a lot to offer its members and the bonsai community in general.

One of the primary functions of PBA is to sponsor and promote special programs for its members, and the largest of these is the Symposium. Plans are underway and pretty well firmed up for the 1980 Symposium and every one of you should grab your calendars and mark the weekend of September 27-28 as the weekend you plan to attend this year's Symposium come hell or high water. We hope not to compete with the Pope this year and we've planned not to compete with a three-day weekend. It's a good time of year to hold a Symposium because it's a good time of year to work on trees and you can apply the knowledge you've gained right away and not wait til spring when you've forgotten half of it.

We will be welcoming new friends and welcoming back old ones on the program. The theme this year will be pines - the Japanese symbol of longevity and fidelity. Who among us doesn't have at least one in his collection, or has not at least tried one and wished to know more. Who has not looked at the beautiful Virginia pine with a bonsaiist's eye and admired the graceful bunjin style in our woods or the short, full style in an open quarry? Who has not gone 100 miles east or west and seen the battle-scarred pines of the seashore or the mountains? Who has not been awed with just the pictures of the beautiful bristlecone pines of the Western mountains?

The program is varied and full. Back this year to lead off the program will be Dr. Edward Hacskeylo of the US Department of Agriculture with a lecture on mycorrhiza which he, with Richard Meszler, will gear specifically towards bonsai. Bill Valavanis will join us with a slide program/lecture on pine varieties and propagation for bonsai. One of PBA's best friends Dr. David Andrews will be back to give a program on pine grafting, and the Saturday program will end with a three-ring circus of three trees styled simultaneously by Norman Haddrick, Lynn Porter and Richard Meszler. Saturday evening will see the PBA annual banquet.


Sunday morning will start off with a program by Howard Clark on bonsai photography and the Symposium will wrap up with a lecture/demonstration by Dan Robinson of Washington (State). We of the committee think we have come up with a smashing agenda. In addition to the regular program there will be a bazaar, an optional collecting trip or workshop led by Dan Robinson on Sunday afternoon, and a lot of opportunity to meet with and talk to some of the best bonsai experts in the country. It's a chance to enhance your knowledge, learn the techniques to improve your collection (even how to cheat and get away with it), to pick up much-needed bonsai pots and materials in one place - in effect to participate in the crazy, wonderful world of bonsai.

--- Mary Holmes

Club Calendar

JOHN NAKA WEEKEND

- May 1 (Thursday) Cylburn Mansion. 7:30 p.m. Workshop. BALTIMORE
- May 2 (Friday) Gulf Branch Nature Center. 7:00 p.m. Workshop. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY
- May 3 (Saturday) National Arboretum. 9:00 a.m. (Note time) Workshop. BROOKSIDE & WASHINGTON
- May 3 (Saturday) Home of Sylvia Jerace. 2:00 p.m. Workshop. Call Vicki Ballantyne for further details. ANNAPOLIS (\$2 for observers)
- May 31 (Saturday) Behnke's Nursery. PBA ANNUAL AUCTION. 10:00 a.m. Please have materials for sale at nursery for registration by 9:00. (See article elsewhere in Newsletter for further details).



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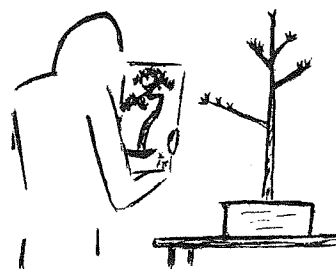
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SNIPS AND SLIPS

HOT SEAT?

The title is intriguing and the idea interesting, but I want no snide comments from the peanut gallery.

On a recent trip to Canada I collected a prize which I entrusted to no other bonsai enthusiast other than myself. About 200 miles in a norther(ly) direction from Toronto is an area of "instant bonsai" unlike anything you'll ever find in a nursery can. The trees are perfectly proportioned, need little pruning and average 75 years old each. Among some very likely candidates I found a real gem.

Unlike Washington, D.C., northern Ontario is COLD in April and the evergreens still have their winter bronze color. The station wagon was too full to pile my prize on top of the heap and hope to preserve the beautiful jin on my tree intact for the trip home, hence I elected to carry it on my lap. While I will not profess (or maybe not publically admit) to being hot blooded, effect of carrying this tree (a Thuja occidentalis or eastern white cedar) was that contact of the root ball with my warm little body speeded up the change from winter bronze to spring green on my tree's foliage. I collected another cedar which rode in the "heap" in the back of the wagon, hence I have a "control tree." Within 24 hours my pampered prize was noticeably greener than its companion, even though it was still several days away from being potted. The moral of all this is that warmth applied to the roots would seem to give a decided impetuous toward recovery even to a tree ripped out of its accustomed home and transported 800 miles south to a climate to which it is totally unaccustomed. Both trees are now fully green, but my special one continues to advance at a greater rate.

--- Mary Holmes

BONSAI AUCTION

The PBA Annual Auction will be held again this year at Behnke's Nursery on May 31. As in previous years, auctioneer will be Jim Newton, spelled by Chuck Bird when Jim's voice gives out. The auction will start at 10:00 a.m., but those wishing to have items for sale are asked to have them there by 9:00 a.m. for registration. We will again have an auction table and a consignment table. Items valued at \$5.00 or less are to be registered at the consignment table and larger items at the auction table. Please have information ready about the trees you wish to sell (species and variety, age, time-in-training, and any other pertinent information to help the auctioneer promote the item). It's a great chance to "unload" the trees in which you have lost interest, pick up new and interesting specimens, and a lot of fun. See you at the auction! (Behnke's is reached via I495 - Washington Beltway - north on US Route #1 about 1½ miles, or from Baltimore, south on US #1 about 5 miles below Laurel).

PBA will charge a 15% commission for all items sold.