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POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
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PBA NEWSLETTER

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TREE OF THE MONTH

HORNBEAM UPDATE

by Mary Holmes



In a previous article I discussed the desirability of and the ease in collecting American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), its powerfully muscled and buttressed trunk, graceful branches and the delightful way it has of providing feeder roots right at the base for easy transplanting. It's time now for an update on this most cooperative and beautiful of trees for bonsai.

I have collected hornbeam now for a number of years and of the several I have lost, most have been lost through my own ignorance or stupidity with soil mixtures. Hornbeams like plenty of water even when they are put in the ground to develop. They will not, however, tolerate a soggy soil. I lost three good trees in one season to a potting mixture which held and would not release water. The roots rotted and my identification of the source of the trouble came too late to save them. A well drained soil mixture made up largely of jumbo Terra Green is much better, but still not the ideal combination. The tree will grow and the roots certainly won't rot, but a finer soil is better. For some reason the courser soil produces longer internodes on the tree, larger leaves and a lighter, less healthy looking green in the foliage. More frequent watering does not seem to compensate for the water-holding properties of the finer soil. A 3-3-2 combination of regular Terra Green, course builders sand and peat humus is the best combination I have found so far.

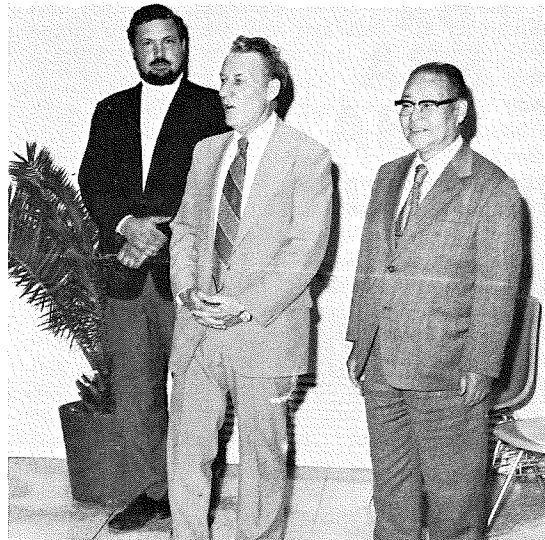
While I don't recommend beating it with a hammer, a hornbeam will take a lot of abuse at collecting time or once it's been established in a container. In other words, you can whack the hell out of it. I have a well established one collected a couple of years ago that I decided was too tall, so I took six inches off the original trunk this spring and left only three branches, the highest about two inches below the cut. The cut I sealed with my favorite Elmer's Glue just as if it were newly collected, then sat back to prune the remaining branches as they grew and wait to see what happened with the top. It took a couple of months after the foliage was out, but then I began to notice sap "bubbling up" between the bark and the hardwood. Logically enough it started at the lowest point of the cut and worked its way up. Since it had nowhere else to go, it fed the adventitious buds along the cut and the buds began to grow. I soon had to select those I wanted to keep and remove the rest.

This method also worked for me with a newly collected tree. It refused to bud higher on the trunk but was perfectly willing to do so near the base. I decided to let it. After all, I had everything to gain if it worked and the tree was worthless if it didn't. It worked. In doing so I made a couple of discoveries, though. First was that the sprout at the base would only en-

Dr. John L. Creech

GOOD LUCK ON YOUR RETIREMENT

Dr. John L. Creech retired on 8 August 1980 as Director of the National Arboretum having held that position since 1975. The time and the man coincided with the fulfillment of what Dr. Creech will be best remembered by U.S. bonsaiists, - the establishment of the U.S. National Bonsai Collection. Sometime between 1973 and 1974 in compliance with a Federal Government request that various Federal Departments conceive a list of suggested gifts from foreign nations in honor of the U.S. 1976 Bicentennial, the suggested gift of bonsai from the Japanese Nation was accepted. This suggestion had been formulating in the minds of the Japanese since around 1970, - a gift of plant material analogous to the gift of cherry trees for the 1876 U.S. Centennial.



Dr. Creech flanked by Cliff Pottberg and Mr. Nobukichi Koide of the Nippon Bonsai Association at the PBA reception for the members of the Association, April 1979.

Japanese bonsai. On September 27, 1974 the detailed plans were agreed upon.

Dr. Creech and his chief horticulturist, Sylvester "Skip" March, went to Tokyo in March 1975 and formal acceptance of the 53 bonsai plants was at the Otami Hotel in Tokyo on 20 March 1975. The bonsai plants ranged from 60 to 350 years old. The initial plan called for 50 bonsai, one for every State, which were to be donated by private parties. However, the Japanese Royal Family learned of the plans and donated three plants which is why the Collection now numbers 53 bonsai. Funds provided by a semi-official agency known as the Japan Foundation were used to buy the remainder of the 50 bonsai not contributed by private parties.

Dr. Creech was ideally matched for the task at hand, He picks up foreign languages readily and can get by in Japanese. Orientals, especially those friendly with plants, hold Dr. Creech's reputation as a plant explorer in high esteem. His quest for decorative plants has taken him to Japan three times, to the Soviet Union twice, and once each to Nepal, Taiwan, and Yugoslavia. He is widely known by plant seekers everywhere. Dr. Creech is featured in the June 1980 Smithsonian magazine, page 129, article "Meet the men who risked their lives to find new plants". The article mentions Dr. Creech's role in developing the now popular Bradford pear.

In May 1973 the Nippon Bonsai Association received a letter from the U.S. National Arboretum that for the Bicentennial, the Arboretum would like to exhibit and retain on permanent display

The Nippon Bonsai Association have a movie with a Japanese sound track which recounts the incidents leading up to the final departure by air from Japan. With the sound track suppressed, Dr. Creech narrated what was happening on the screen. Dr. Creech mentioned that after an arduous journey from the East Coast to Japan, that his Japanese hosts would not let him rest until he had seen the bonsai which were on public display in Tokyo. This was his first comprehensive view of the entire collection. At that time he did not comprehend the magnitude of the operation for he had budgeted, before he left the old country, \$25,000 to cover the shipping of those small bonsai only "eight to ten inches" tall at the most. With each subsequent visit to the site where the bonsai were being prepared for shipment to the U.S.A., the size of the cargo grew as each plant was individually crated. The result was that Dr. Creech finally gave up sending back to the home-office, requests for increases in the initial \$25,000. He signed the bill of lading whatever it cost. Creech and March flew in the cargo plane which airlifted the trees in their especially-built wooden crates, featuring shock absorbing materials, to California.

Two smaller cargo planes finished the trip from California to the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. The crates were shipped by truck to the quarantine in Glen Dale, Maryland, as soon as they were pulled from the aircraft. The entire trip took just 24 hours from the time the bonsai left their native land on April 1, 1975.

On 8 July 1976 the bonsai were moved to the National Arboretum to be on view during the dedication ceremonies on 9 July 1976. The list of participating dignitaries included Dr. Henry Kissinger, U.S. Secretary of State; Nobukichi Koide, Nippon Bonsai Association Board Chairman; Fumihiko Togo, Japanese Ambassador to the USA; Kensuke Kono, Speaker of the Japanese Diet; and Earl Butz, Secretary of Agriculture.

The beautiful bonsai in the U.S. National Bonsai Collection stand as a fitting monument to much that Dr. Creech stands for - a common bond and understanding between peoples through plants of the world. We hope that someday Dr. Creech will put together the entire story of the step-by-step evolution of the Collection. It would be most welcome.

Dr. Creech will be sorely missed in the horticultural world and, in particular by our bonsai community. It is his interest and care which has added so immeasurably to bonsai and we can only wish him a long and very happy retirement.

SNIPS and SLIPS

FOOLING A FIG

During my trip to the Hawaii Convention I saw many gorgeous banyans in Honolulu. These trees had masses of aerial roots both supporting the trunk and supporting the heavy branches several yards from the trunk. A shopping "mall" on the main drag of Waikiki Beach is centered around such a huge banyan tree, with even a small shop in a "treehouse" up in the branches.

The logo for IBC '80 was a lovely banyan tree with many aerial roots, but I noticed in my travels that not all banyans I saw had developed in this manner. Although of the same species (*Ficus retusa*), some had it and some

didn't. The difference, I was told, was in the amount of moisture the tree receives, not so much in the soil but in the surrounding atmosphere. Walking under one of these fantastic trees, the aerial roots-to-be are perfectly plain, growing down from trunk or branch, complete with white tip - a genuine, honest-to-goodness, down-to-earth (literally) root. No wonder it needed moisture.

I'd be interested to know if anyone has experimented with providing a LOT of moisture to a fig in order to promote aerial roots, and, if they did, how did the experiment turn out? What did (or didn't) work? Comments, please.

MIRACLE MEDICINE?

We have been carefully taught (and with good reason) never to feed a newly potted or a sick tree. The roots, in distress of one kind or another, simply can't handle fertilizer and the fertilizer will burn the roots and likely kill the tree.

I picked up a product called START on the west coast recently, thinking to myself that the ingredients looked much the same as our beloved Superthrive. That started the thought process. It's not OK to use fertilizer at repotting time, but it's OK to use Superthrive, in fact recommended. If it's not OK to use fertilizer on a sick tree, is it OK to use Superthrive (or something like it)? Apparently so, from my calculations. I had several trees at home whose coloring I was not very satisfied with. While not exactly sick, they certainly weren't the picture of health. Cautious feedings with several different products had not helped. A good watering with Start (made by Liquinox of Orange, California) had dramatic results. Foliage greened up and, by the end of the week, growth had started again. They're not out of the woods yet, but on their way.

BARKING UP A WRONG TREE

All of us worry about trunk taper and thickening up small branches and all of us have probably heard somewhere along the line that wiggling a branch back and forth can help speed up the thickening process. What happens is that the cambium gets loosened and bruised when the branch is so abused and a kind of scar tissue is formed in the healing process which makes the limb bulkier at that point than it was before. This is easy enough to do on a smallish branch which is fairly limber, but is easy to accomplish on a heavy trunk also, says Dan Robinson. Instead of trying to move the trunk back and forth (a near impossibility to do easily on anything over 3/4 inch thick) use a pair of plyers to "crush" the trunk or branch. It has the same effect as flexing it. If the bark is easily damaged or you want to protect beautifully rough bark use an old rag between the plyers and the trunk. Though I've never gotten a clear-cut answer as to what part of the season is best to try this trick, my own guess would be mid summer. Doing it in the spring could adversely effect budding out. In the fall the tree may not have a chance to recover before dormancy and the limb or the entire tree could be lost during the winter. Mid summer is the time when maximum cambium growth takes place and the tree increases in diameter. It's probably the best time to fiddle with it.

OF INTEREST

If you can beg, borrow or steal a copy of the June 1980 issue of Smithsonian, there is an excellent article by Dennis Farney entitled Meet the Men Who Risked Their Lives to Find New Plants. The article tells about the Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) and other plant materials not native to this country and how they came to be here. The Plant Hunters include our own Dr. John Creech, who has just retired, Frank Meyer (the Meyer lemon), and David Fairchild (thirty kinds of Japanese flowering cherry trees) et al. Exciting reading if you can find a copy.

--- Arschel Morell

PLAY MISTY FOR ME

We have probably all heard of the inadvisability of watering our trees in the heat of the day, especially if the foliage gets wet. Beads of water on a maple leaf can act like a prism, concentrating the sun's rays to burn dead spots in the leaves. Dan Robinson has come with another theory which has far more damaging implications regarding the health of the whole plant than just some spotty leaves.

The stomata on a plant's leaves act like pores, regulating the amount of moisture given off by the plant. When the weather is hot and sunny the "pores" close to retain moisture in the plant. When it is cool or rainy out the pores open to release this moisture and oxygen. If it is hot and sunny out and the plant is watered it is tricked into thinking that conditions are ideal for opening the stomata and getting rid of stored moisture and waste products. Once the watering has ceased the "ideal conditions" disappear quickly, leaving the tree with open stomata that are still giving off moisture that should be retained. Though these pores will close again fairly quickly, some dehydration will occur and continuing this practice will put severe strain on the plant.

WHY NOT ME

I've heard of all the adages
About collected trees.
How everyone will lose some,
But, Lord, let mine live, please.

There're memories tied up with them
Of people, places too.
They're more than just good bonsai
And dead stumps just won't do.

I worked so hard to get them,
Took every care I should.
Can't I be the exception?
Oh please, just say I could.

It's hard to wait and see
Under such circumstances.
Which ones will live and which ones won't.
Just what are each one's chances?

But if they all cannot survive
I'll try to understand.
Just let me learn from my mistakes
And I'll go try again.

--- Mary Holmes

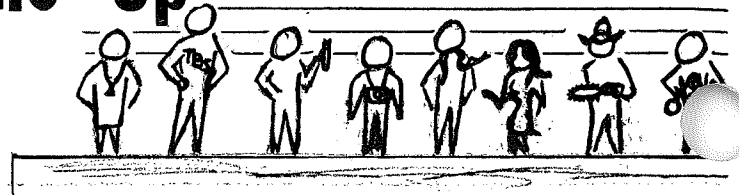
POTTBERG Announces Study Workshops

Cliff Pottberg announces the formation of his fall workshops. They will be conducted on Sundays from noon to 4 pm at Croton Hill Farm. The cost is \$15 per person per session and reservations are requested as Cliff prefers to work with 8-9 persons per session. Participants must bring their own material. Though "themes" are set up for each session, they are only suggestions rather than rules. Bring more plant material than you think you can work on in one session (you'll be surprised).

September 7	Open workshop
14	Cascade
October 5	Open (conifer accent)
15	Rock planting
26	Group planting
November 9	Open

For further information and reservations call Cliff Pottberg at (301) 366-8844.

SYMPOSIUM Line-Up



DR. DAVID ANDREWS

A founding member of both Bonsai Society of Greater New York and the American Bonsai Society, David Andrews has served on the board of directors of American Bonsai Society and Bonsai Clubs International, is a past-president of Greater New York and is currently on its board. He began his bonsai career in 1951 when he took a beginning course at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden while attending Columbia Medical School. Now a successful and well-known orthopedic surgeon, his interest in and enthusiasm for bonsai has never lessened and his considerable talent only increased. Dr. Andrews has shared his talent with the bonsai community often and is internationally known as an exciting and lively lecturer. He was a headliner at the first combined ABS/BCI Bonsai Congress in Kansas City in 1972 and has appeared as a headliner at numerous national and international conventions since. He is a familiar and welcome friend of PBA.

It is difficult to point to a particular aspect of bonsai at which Dr. David Andrews excels because he excels at all of them. His rock and rock slab plantings are spectacular, his styling imaginative and powerful, his collecting exploits legendary, etc., etc., and he possess the rare capability of being able to impart some of his knowledge to a bonsai audience. He will do a lecture/demonstration of grafting techniques at the Symposium.

1



Mug Shots on File

1. Dr. David Andrews
2. Norman Haddrick
3. Dan Robinson
4. Richard Meszler

2



8

3



4



9

NORMAN HADDRICK

Norman Haddrick joined the Toronto Bonsai Society more than ten years ago after having seen a show put on by the club. Being severely bitten by the bonsai bug, he read every book he could get his hands on while traveling on business and plunged into the hands-on of bonsai with enthusiasm.

Norman has served as vice-president and then president of the Toronto Bonsai Society, has, until recently, edited their Journal for a number of years and is still very active in the club. He has served on the American Bonsai Society board of directors and is currently third vice-president of Bonsai Clubs International. Although he is probably better known at present for his beautiful bonsai art work he deserves to be equally known for his real-live creations. He has lectured in the Toronto area for several years and was instrumental in the formation of a bonsai organization in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Norman will participate in the Three-ring Circus styling a Scotch pine.

DR. EDWARD HACSKEYLO

Dr. Hacskeylo is with the U.D. Department of Agriculture at the Beltsville Experiment Station and is one of the foremost experts on mycorrhiza in the country. The importance of mycorrhiza in silvaculture has only been appreciated in the last few years and Dr. Hacskeylo has been one of the leaders in the research. He has coordinated research with other experiment stations in the U.S. and the Caribbean and been a participant in various national and international conferences on the subject.

His lecture on the "friendly fungus" at the 1979 Symposium was of a general nature: identification and functions of mycorrhiza. This year he will gear his lecture specifically toward mycorrhiza as it affects bonsai.

HOWARD CLARK

Howard Clark's affiliation with bonsai came in 1975 after attending the PBA annual show. He joined the Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club and has been an active and productive member ever since.

His beginnings with photography came about 15 years ago "when my daughter was born and I decided it was time to get a camera." Since then Howard has become active in the Gaithersburg Camera Club and produced several tape/slide shows both for the camera club and for his church. He is currently working on a tape/slide show for the BCI Slide Program. In 1979 he produced a photo album for the Brookside Club of members' bonsai and has lectured at BGB and other affiliate PBA clubs on photographing bonsai. It was Howard who was the photo-journalist for the 1978 PBA Symposium and he will act in that capacity again this year as well as doing his own program on photographing bonsai.

DR. RICHARD MESZLER

A PBAer familiar to most everyone, Richard Meszler became interested in bonsai as a graduate student in Louisville, Kentucky in 1967 and began study on his own starting with the Sunset bonsai book. Two years later he moved to New York City for a postdoctoral fellowship and studied with Yuji Yoshimura from 1969 to 1971 before moving to Baltimore and PBA. There he was the founding president of the Baltimore Bonsai Club from 1972-74. He has also served PBA as educational vice-president (1974-75), first vice-president (1975-76), and president (1976-78). He was president at the time of the BCI Convention in Washington in 1976.

Cautiously welcomed on any collecting trip (Richard is a herpetologist and has a dubious habit of collecting rattlesnakes as well as dwarfed trees) he has a well-deserved reputation of being an inveterate collector. He has conducted innumerable lectures, demonstrations and workshops on bonsai for PBA affiliate clubs, Ikebana International (Washington, D.C. chapter), the Maryland Academy of Sciences, etc. and exhibits actively at the PBA Annual Show as well as within his own Baltimore area.

Richard will participate with Lynn Porter and Norman Haddrick in the Three-ring Circus, styling a Scotch pine.

LYNN PORTER

Although a familiar face at PBA, Lynn Porter has never "soloed" for us before. Hailing from the Philadelphia area she is Chase Rosade's assistant at the Rosade Bonsai Studio and has assisted him at previous PBA Symposia.

A graduate of the Barns Foundation Horticultural School, she has been involved with bonsai for about 12 years. She has traveled in Japan and was there last fall with the bonsai tour led by Bill Valavanis. She has a sizeable bonsai collection and is frequently an exhibitor in the bonsai display at the Philadelphia Flower and Garden Show. Lynn is also interested and proficient in Sumi painting.

Lynn will participate in the Three-ring Circus styling a Scotch pine.

DAN ROBINSON

Dan got his start in bonsai in 1957 while attending the University of Washington, Seattle in the School of Forestry. He worked part-time with his uncle in landscaping and went with him to collect specimens for planting. His first collected tree for bonsai was a vine maple. In Korea in 1963 Dan collected several red pines but brought back only one. He did bring back seeds, though, and now has red pines 16 years old. His real collecting of large dwarfs began in 1968-69 and met with little success until he adapted the Japanese idea of root pruning in the ground in succeeding years for ultimate lifting. Taking the process one step farther, he developed a technique of root-layering on large trees which enables him to take these trees in a single season.

Dan Robinson has lectured in the Washington/Oregon area for a number of years and came on to the national scene as a headliner in 1978 at the Portland BCI convention. He was also featured at the New York BCI/ABS convention in 1979. He has also lectured in the Los Angeles area and will be featured at the Golden State Federation convention in Sacramento this fall. Dan will style an old collected lodgepole pine using some very unusual techniques.

BILL VALAVANIS

A graduate of the State University of New York at Farmingdale, Bill Valavanis took an advanced degree in ornamental horticulture at Cornell University where he now teaches part-time. He has studied in Japan in 1970-71 with such bonsai masters as Murata, Komura and Kawamoto. He has also studied with Yuji Yoshimura in New York and taught with him for a number of years.

Bill resides in Rochester, New York where is the proprietor of the International Bonsai Arboretum where he also teaches and holds workshops. His Arboretum has bonsai stock and finished material as well as tools for sale and will be participating in the Symposium bazaar area. Bill is nationally known on the bonsai circuit and has participated in several national and international conventions. He has served on the boards of both Greater New York Bonsai Society and the American Bonsai Society. He is the author of numerous articles and several books on bonsai and currently publishes International Bonsai, a periodic magazine.

Bill is widely known for experimentation and work with Japanese maple cultivars and with pines. His program will be on the identification and propagation of pines.

THE SCHEDULE

<u>SATURDAY</u> 8:00-9:15 am	Registration
9:15-10:30	Dr. Edward HacsKaylo. Mycorrhiza as it specifically relates to Bonsai. Slide program and lecture.
10:30-10:50	Break
10:50-12:20	Bill Valavanis. Identification, propagation and training of pines. Slide program and lecture.
12:20-1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30-3:00	Dr. David Andrews. Grafting pines. Slide program, lecture/demonstration.
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-5:15	3-Ring Circus: Norman Haddrick, Lynn Porter, Dr. Richard Meszler. Simultaneous demonstration styling Scotch pine. Trees to be raffled following demonstration.
6:30-11:30	Cash bar - open throughout banquet.
8:00	Banquet - to be followed by entertainment on the piano by Bill Merritt and Milton Kidd.
<u>SUNDAY</u> 9:00-10:00 am	Howard Clark. Photographing Bonsai. Slide program and lecture.
10:00-10:20	Break
10:20-12:20	Dan Robinson. Styling of old collected lodgepole pine. Lecture/demonstration. Tree to be raffled following demonstration.
12:20-1:20	Lunch
1:30-4:30	Workshop with Dan Robinson or collecting trip. (Optional)

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PRICE !!!

Mr. S. Sasaki, Japanese Embassy gardener for over 14 years is returning to Japan.

His bonsai will be on display and are for sale. Please phone for information.

Subscriptions to a new quarterly magazine, Bonsai Sekai, are available. It will contain 24 pages with 8 pages in color. Subscription for 4 issues is \$14.00.

Medium and Small sizes of chicken grit and terra-green are available in 5 and 10 pound bags.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, I missed another one, national convention that is, and a good time was had by all I hear. Well, there's always ABS in Michigan in August, PBA in September, and BCI next year in Atlanta. What, dare I include PBA'S Symposium with all those bigges? Yes, by —all— means, as I see the plans shaping up I have a feeling of bigness coming on. The potential is there. This year's chairman and his committees are moving full steam ahead and have planned fantastic programs centered on the care, feeding and styling of the elusive Pine. Our symposium have grown over the years and even competition from the Pope did not keep last year from being successful in a program sense and at the boxoffice to a degree. This year the calendar is clear, the competition is elsewhere, so plan to be there. Don't let me say I told you so when someone tells you how great the 1980 PBA Symposium was.

Arschel
Arschel

BEGINNERS BONSAI COURSES

PBA/BROOKSIDE: PBA members can sign up for a beginners course with Cliff Pottberg scheduled to begin on Saturday October 18, 1980. There will be a total of five 3-hour sessions with four commencing on consecutive Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. (The time and place of the fifth session is to be determined at a later date.) Classes will be given at the Gatehouse, National Audubon Society Headquarters, 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase, Maryland. The location is that of the meeting site of the Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club and is just a short distance from the Connecticut Ave. exit off the I495 Beltway.

All members of PBA are welcome and encouraged to register. The class is limited to 15 students, so please register as soon as possible. The cost will not exceed \$40.00 per person plus \$20.00 per student for supplies which the students retain. Contact Fred Mies (301)299-6194 evenings and weekends for information and registration.

NATIONAL ARBORETUM/JIM NEWTON: Bonsai course E-Horticulture 120 "Introduction to Bonsai;" will be conducted by Jim Newton at the National Arboretum on Saturday September 27, October 4, 11, 18 and 25. Times are 10 am to 12:30 pm. Contact (202)472-9279 weekdays for information/registration.

