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POTOMAC
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ASSOCIATION
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UME by J.Y. Haga



UME (梅)

Attending bonsai meetings last fall, I was surprised to note that almost every member was worrying about putting away their bonsai trees in a protected place and bidding a good-bye to them until spring. What about Japanese Black Pines? Aren't they nice to view in winter? How about the soil in the pot if it is kept frozen for a week and may result in "green death"? Why wait till Spring to reclaim your bonsai? Would you like to view some bonsai with flowers during winter?

In the winter of 1980, we thought people's interest in bonsai would decrease. To our surprise, we sold more bonsai in January and February than the spring season. Again in January 1981, we are receiving phone calls and visitors who are interested in buying bonsais. Well, well, well! We have decided to provide some bonsai for Christmas 1981 and the Winter of 1982. The evergreens are always on the top of our list. But, let us see what else is good in mid Winter? The answer is obvious. Japanese plum (Prunus mume) or ume! Japanese love ume flowers and their faint fragrance. They use it in the design on kimonos, tea cups and pots, family crests, etc. There are many cultivated

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species and subspecies of ume for ornamental purposes: Double petals, Kohbai sho, Bungo sho, Nishiki sho, etc. For bonsai, they say that the wild type "yabai sho" ume is the best and the yabai sho ume from Yamanashi Prefecture is one of the best. Yamanashi Prefecture is located behind Mt. Fuji, situated on the Japan Alps mountain range with five lakes made by the volcanic activity of Mt. Fuji in ancient time.

My paternal grandfather was born there. His father was a Chinese style herb doctor working for the Governor of Tokugawa Government in the town of Kofu. With the Meiji restoration, the Tokugawa Government tumbled. The Governor of Kofu lost his job and my great grandfather became unemployed. My grandfather left home as a youth and moved to Mountain View, California. He had done many things, some socially acceptable and others not. He passed on when I was very young. The only thing I know of him, was told to me over and over by my family and relatives. When I went to see him for the last time, he told me not to depend on money which I could invest or deposit in the bank, instead, invest my money within myself. Get an education or a trade for they will never leave me. Unfortunately, I don't remember any of this. If he was still alive, we would have a big argument on this subject! However, he was the man who went through that great depression, so I understand.

When I visited my grandfather's village, almost all the farm houses had grape lattices and ume trees in their yards. A middle aged lady who was supposed to be a cousin of mine, but so many times removed, took me around the village and introduced me to the fillagers as a granddaughter of Umekichi-san (who came from America and was a lady scientist). Everywhere we went I saw bountiful ume fruits on the trees. People pickled these fruits with salt and made red, sour "umeboshi" pickles or soaked the fruits in Shochu (yam distilled alcohol) and let the mixture stand for a year. This is called "umeshu" or plum wine but this wine is much stronger in alcohol content than that of most other wines. The people in the village (especially housewives) believe that the plum wine works as a remedy for all sickness. In the winter, it will keep you warm and in the summer, it will keep you from heat exhaustion. When Umekichi's granddaughter and her American friend visited the village houses, they were always offered green tea and pickled nappa (Chinese cabbage). The nappa was sliced in pieces about two inches long. The lady of the house usually would sprinkle soy sauce on it and with a pair of chopsticks, she would pick up a pickle and would offer it to me. Since we did not have any paper towels, napkins, or dishes, I was not sure if she intended to mouth feed me or what. Mrs. So-many-times-removed advised me to extend the palm of my hand. When I did so, the lady of the house placed the soy sauce dipped, pickled nappa on my palm. I did not like that sour pickle (must eat it directly from my palm) and my stomach was full with tea and pickles from previous visits. But it was a treat to see these old ume trees with lichen growing on their gracefully shaped trunks. The lady of the house mumbled something like "...well, they say it is a medicine.", and brought out a brown jar. She emptied out the left over tea from everyone's cup and poured some amber liquid from the jar. Sometimes, pickled ume fruits came out of the jar and dropped into a tea cup. The lady picked the fruit up with chopsticks and put it back in the jar by saying, "mistake" in English. (I would like to remind the

readers that the ladies of the village usually did not even drink sake or beer because it is not nice for women to drink.) That plum wine was very strong. I felt like I was drinking gin or vodka straight. Yet the ladies of the village enjoyed the drink and chatted away, Umekichi-san did this and that. The plum wine that we can buy in our liquor stores do not have thatshall I say "zest". When I was in the University of Utah, I soaked some plums in 95% alcohol. Some people enjoyed nibbling the pickled plum but the liquid did not taste quite right!

Not until I started writing this article, did I realize that my grandfather's first name is Ume-Kichi or "Plum-fortune". It is rare even in Japan for a man to have a flower related name. I do not know the history of his name, but how appropriate it is for a man from Yamanashi Prefecture to bear the name of Ume! I recalled the small grave in which Umekichi's bones sleep with the bones of his Japanese and American wives. He may be a very lucky man and his life might have been more fulfilling than mine. Suddenly I thought, how lucky a man he was, and I was jealous of him. It was he who gave me my middle name, Yuri, Lily in Japanese, but a man's name in Russian!

Ume is one of the prohibited trees for import to this country, even as a bonsai. Therefore, the Ume available in this country most likely have come here before the banning of its import, or were smuggled in, or came by means of Canadian nurseries. Therefore, Ume is scarce and is not as popular as pines in this area. Some Ume which I saw in the Christmas and New Year season in Japan, were force-bloomed in a green house. Ume usually bloom in mid February to mid March. Unless you do not intend to keep it after blooming season or you know what you are doing, it is rather hard to maintain a healthy tree after the blooming season. But that does not mean, one should not have Ume in one's Bonsai collection, and it is not for someone who has a large variety and number of bonsai and can hardly keep up with their seasonal care. For those with few bonsai in their collection, it is nice to add a few Ume bonsai to the bonsai collection and go deep into its horticulture.

Culture:

During the Winter season, water the Ume bonsai once every two to three days during a sunny late morning. Make sure that no water droplets are left on the tree by evening. When the buds begin to grow, we must increase the frequency of watering and misting of the buds. You may take Ume to a cool place indoors during the blooming season, but be sure to mist well daily to keep off the dry air and dust in the house.

Ume bonsai is to enjoy the flowers but not its fruit. Therefore, after the flowering season, remove the complete flower structure including pistil and calyx. Be careful not to injure the new buds. You might think it is cute to have one or two fruit on the tree, but I want you to realize that this is a bonsai tree which grows under very limited conditions and you are not making "plum wine"! Place the tree in a location with a southern exposure, water and mist daily. The next program on the Ume list is pruning after the flowering season which will fall in the middle of February. Make sure that the buds are large enough to be visible before pruning. We count two buds from the base of the branch and snip off the branch above the second bud. If for esthetic reasons you want to extend a certain branch longer,

then you may cut at the place much longer than the second bud. If some thick, powerful branches are found in undesirable places (especially the upper part), cut them off after the first bud. Scratch off sucker buds at the base. The key word here is to aim at the overall balance.

Then, we will have to repot the tree between mid February to the vernal equinox in March. (The Japanese like equinox, rain season, and the bon holiday. Many activities are aimed at these special days as targets.) If your tree is very old, you may skip repotting every year and do it every other year. In repotting, leave out about 50% of the soil around the root. As in the case of branch pruning, cut off the powerful roots. With a chopstick, pry out the hair roots from the rump of the root-soil complex. The new soil is four parts silt-removed red top soil, three parts black soil, two parts humus soil and one part regular terra green or number one granite grits. In planting, the tree should be soft packed to the limit that the tree can still stand without falling. Dip the pot in a water bath and mist after repotting. Ten days after repotting, you can start fertilizing with woy bean husk cake fertilizer (replace with a new one once in a while) April through October (Note: The July fertilization should be early in the month and August is omitted.) You may supplement with dilute liquid fertilizer such as hyponix 1-2 times per month too. Place the tree in a sunny location and water well. Let the new buds and branches grow as much as they can except those branches forming undesirable shapes. Then cut these off at the first node or at the base. Twice (May and June) we prune the overgrowing tips of the branches.

To obtain a good flowering result, we will have to give special care during August when flower buds are forming. Remove all the cake fertilizer from the pot. You may water as usual in the morning, but cut off the afternoon watering. The tip of the leaves may curl from the shortage of water but do not worry about it. We want to stop further leaf growth so that all the effort of the tree is going to the flower bud formation. If the wilting is so severe, then water in the afternoon. If the leaves are too wilted, the tree may lose their leaves. Then new smaller leaves will come out. This is good for the maple bonsai but not for ume bonsai. However, if you want to increase the branches, remove buds in August at the expense of flowers in the following winter. This new leaf growth is detrimental to the flower bud forming effort. Try not to let the buds grow any more. The tree may become bushy with many leaves. Be sure to inspect frequently for pesty insects and fungus and spray as soon as they appear on the scene.

Wiring is done in May on the soft branches. Do not use a bare wire, rather use plastic coated, electric wire or cotton coated wire (we carry them) to correct the overextended this year's growth. The esthetic value is solely placed in the shape of the trunk and major branches of the ume. Inspect frequently that the wire is not cutting into the branches. Some people will remove all the blower buds in the fall every four to five years in order to give a rest and recuperation to the tree.

You may cut down the volume of water after the leaves fall off in the fall. We will leave the tree in an outside location (protected from the wind) until mid December and take the tree into a shelter such as a cold frame, basement, porch, etc.

To make the flowering bonsai, bloom, requires special techniques. It is more difficult and requires more time and care. The flowering is the result of your year round care. Thus, the reward is also tremendous.

---Umekichi's Granddaughter---

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NOTE: We at Shoen Bonsai and Japanese Garden, obtained about ten various types of ume bonsai recently. They are very expensive but this is just a beginning. We are excited to see the flower buds become larger every day. We hope to make them available in 1982. We are thinking of organizing a "Friends of Ume" Club and actively guide the ume fanciers in the ume's bonsai culture. We will welcome your response to the ume bonsai. Write to us in C/O the shop address (see advertisement in this issue).

PROPAGATION BY CUTTINGS

The following articles on rooting of cuttings is an attempt to pull together information from a number of sources. Propagating plants from cuttings or from grafted material, has a common goal - assurance as to what the resulting plant growth will be, which cannot be guaranteed for plants started from seed. However, grafts bear the scar where the grafted union has taken place which is considered objectionable in a bonsai. Cuttings require no base stock on which to graft and are a good way to make use of what has been pruned off a bonsai when you're styling it.

The March 1980 issue of New Orleans Bonsai included the pamphlet "How to Root Tree Cuttings" by Dr. Robert C. Hare, Southern Forest Experiment Station, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of the pamphlet, except for some additional information, is reproduced on the following page.

The "How to Root Tree Cuttings" page is followed by three pages from the New Orleans Bonsai March 1980 issue with the following commentary: "The table, 'Suggested Times for Cuttings' is taken from an article entitled 'Propagating Woody Plants from Cuttings', which appeared in the April 1979 issue of 'Ornamentals South'. The article was written by Carl Whitcomb, Associate Professor of Horticulture at Oklahoma State University.

"Notice the far right column in the table, Suggested Auxin Concentration and the accompanying footnote. IBA stands for Indole Butyric Acid, which is the principal active ingredient in commercial rooting preparations such as Rootone and Hormodin. The suggested concentrations (3-30 thousand ppm) are much higher than we normally encounter. (Rootone is only 570 ppm IBA.) Those interested in mixing their own rooting agent should refer to Dr. Hare's pamphlet, 'How to Root Tree Cuttings' mentioned above.

"'Ornamentals South' is a very young magazine, now in only its second year. It is directed primarily at commercial nurserymen, but its excellent articles on propagation, planting media, fertilization, disease control, etc., make it very useful to anyone involved in plant cultivation and propagation. Those interested may write to Publications South, Inc., P.O. Box 13449, 50 Plassamour Dr., N.E. Atlanta, GA, 30324. I would like to thank the publisher Rebecca H. Johnson for kind permission to reprint."

An essential requirement for cuttings to root, is to expose them to a moist atmosphere. A while ago Mary Holmes relinquished an abandoned fish tank to Mary Alice Wells who used it to root boxwood cuttings. Pete Jones (Northern Virginia Bonsai Society), in the concluding article of the following series, describes how he expanded on Mary Alice's technique. He has succeeded in establishing cuttings, which within three weeks have roots of one to two inches in length.

The Key: Girdle Before Cutting

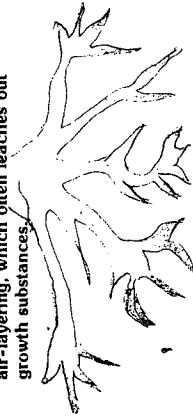
Rooting of plant cuttings is nothing new to horticulturists. They have been doing it for years to propagate improved genetic strains of food crops and flowers. But trees don't cooperate like flowers and crops. Few tree species will root from cuttings under normal circumstances.

Now, however, a new technique is available for forest geneticists — and home gardeners as well — to propagate trees directly from cuttings. It works with both pines and hardwoods, and the tools needed are available to anyone at small cost.

Key to the process is girdling the shoot a month or two before cutting. This prevents translocation of sugars out of the shoot via the inner bark. Food reserves therefore accumulate above the girdle where they cause callus tissue and root primordia (appearing as small bumps) to form.

No expensive growth chamber is needed with these techniques. Success can be achieved under ordinary greenhouse conditions. And if no greenhouse is available, more simple expedients can be used. It's all outlined in this folder.

This new system is similar to air-layering for plant propagation — up to a point. Both improve rooting but, under this new system, the cutting is removed to an optimal environment once callus is formed. This promotes rapid rooting and eliminates the problem of dried-out cuttings. It also eliminates use of damp moss, used with air-layering, which often leaches out growth substances.



Follow These 10 Steps for Success

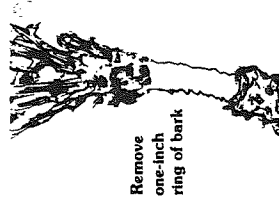
Note: For best results, girdle hardwoods in the spring when leaves have expanded fully. Girdle pines in mid-summer. Girdle many more cuttings than you'll need, so only the ones showing root primordia can be selected for rooting. For rooting stock, select branches well exposed to the sun in the lower part of the tree.

Remove all foliage from a two-inch section of stem, about six to eight inches below the terminal bud.

With a pocket knife, remove a one-inch ring of bark down to the wood in the debilitated section.

Apply a slurry of rooting powder to the upper portion of the girdle (closest to the terminal bud) with a camel's hair brush. See page for slurry formula, or use commercial powder containing 0.8 percent IBA such as Hormodin 3.

Wrap wound with plastic film followed by aluminum foil.



Remove one-inch ring of bark

Leave intact for six weeks for hardwoods, eight weeks for pine. Then sever cuttings below the girdle and transport to greenhouse in plastic bags. Immerse cuttings in water to freshen. In case of oak trees, girdles should be examined at four and five weeks. If callus has formed, cuttings should be taken at this time, because oaks tend to overcallus. This inhibits rooting.



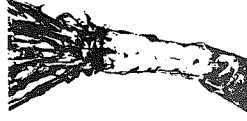
Apply slurry to upper portion of girdle

Remove the plastic film and foil. This is the time to select the most promising stock. Choose the ones with bumps (root primordia) on the callus, as these will root faster than those without the root beginnings. While holding the cuttings under water, reclip the cutting at the upper end of the girdle.

Moisten the cutting base with water, or preferably 50 percent ethanol, and dip the base into talc containing powdered sucrose and caplan (10 percent each for pines, 20-5 for hardwoods). The ethanol wets the stem better than water does. It also reduces objectionable wetting of the rooting powder.

Insert the cutting base two to three inches deep into a rooting medium composed of equal parts of fresh perlite and vermiculite, using a spacing of 4 x 4 inches. Medium should be sifted beforehand with 10-mesh screen to remove the fines, which inhibit aeration. In cool weather, electric heating cable can be used to maintain 75-78 degrees in the medium.

From this point, the need is to allow cuttings to root under humid conditions. One way is to apply intermittent mist in a greenhouse. This is best controlled by a Geiger Mist-A-Matic system, which operates by evaporation of water from a screen. By properly adjusting the counterweight and the position of the screen at the edge of the



Wrap with plastic film and foil

Choose cuttings with primordia (small bumps) on callus



bed, mist will be applied only when necessary to maintain a film of moisture on the cuttings. Overwatering is detrimental because it keeps the medium saturated, preventing free diffusion of oxygen, and it tends to leach nutrients from the cuttings. For the same reason, oil-burner type nozzles are preferable to the Florida-type impact nozzles, which give a coarser spray with more runoff into the medium.

When roots have developed, usually in one to three months, transplant into containers. Then gradually reduce the watering regime and fertilize weekly with diluted 20-20-20 fertilizer until root system is well established.

No greenhouse facilities? Root the cuttings directly in perforated-bottom quart milk cartons filled with the rooting medium. Water thoroughly and cover the entire plant with polyethylene to establish humid conditions. Keep out of direct sunlight but in bright light. After the cutting has rooted, tear off the bottom of the carton and plant the cutting in the paper carton to deteriorate.

PROPAGATION BY CUTTINGS

by Genie Paul
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South Coast Bonsai Association

Cuttings are parts of living plants cut and treated to generate roots and become new plants. They make especially good bonsai. Cuttings are made from side shoots of vigorous, healthy plants and may come from many different species. Those adaptable for bonsai use are, to name a few: azalea, pomegranate, cypress, olive, juniper, spruce, willow, maple, zelkova, elm, cotoneaster, pyracantha, boxwood, ginkgo, plum, and chrysanthemum. Pines are not recommended for this technique. Read "Bonsai For Beginners" by H. J. Larkin for more complete list of plants suitable for cuttings.

Cuttings may be made three times a year: in spring, when new buds appear; June or July, when further new buds appear; or in September or October.

Procedures and Techniques:

1. Cut woody or sucker branches 2 to 5 inches long with at least 3 buds. Remove all leaves except for a few at the end of the branch. Cut more stems than needed, as not all will take. A cutting may have one, two, or several branches.
2. Immediately after cutting, put them in a container of lukewarm water to which a small amount of sugar has been added. Leave in sugar for an hour to invigorate the branches.
3. Re-cut the end of the stem at a 45-degree angle just below the bottom node. (Fig. 1)

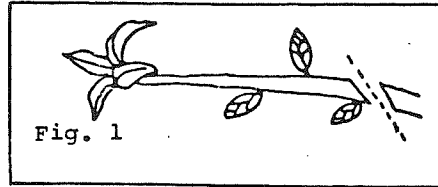


Fig. 1

4. Prepare a wooden box 3" deep with clean sand and peat moss. Wet soil thoroughly and make holes 1" deep and 2" apart, being sure that drainage is good.
5. Dip wet end of cutting in hormone-fungicide powder (Rootone F) and set cutting in hole with at least 2 nodes below surface. The cutting may be set upright or at an angle. If at an angle be sure the cut side is down. Firm soil around cuttings.
6. Protect from sun for 10 days or more, then keep in partial shade for several months. A cutting may take a year before it is ready to train and pot. Keep soil moist but not wet and mist leaves often.
7. After 3 months apply weak fertilizer twice a month.
8. Some plants (azalea, cotoneaster, pyracantha) grow better when the cutting has a "heel" or a part of the main branch left on. Remove a small portion of the older branch with a sharp knife at the base of the cutting. (Fig. 2)

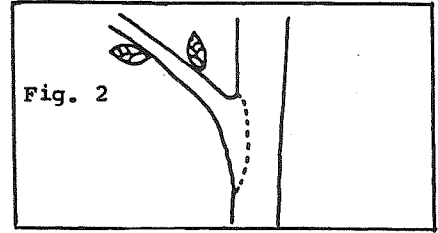


Fig. 2

9. A thick-stemmed cutting should be tapered at the end to provide more surface for root growth. (Fig. 3)

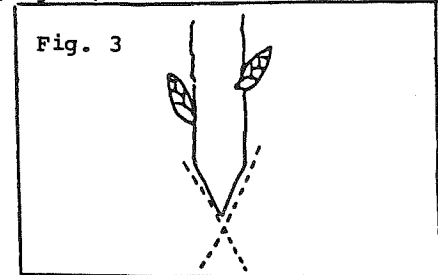


Fig. 3

SUGGESTED TIMES FOR TAKING CUTTINGS

(Each "X" represents approximately the first or last half of a month.)

	SUGGESTED TIMES FOR TAKING CUTTINGS												Rooting Time (Weeks)	Suggested Auxin Concentration ¹
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		
Broadleaf Evergreens														
Abelia grandiflora						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		4-6	8
Berberis mentorensis									XX	XX	XX	X	2-3	8
Berberis julianae									XX	XX	XX		6-8	8
Buxus spp.									XX	XX	XX		6-8	8
Cleyera japonica									XX	X			6-8	8
Elaeagnus pungens								XX	XX	XX	XX		6-8	8
Euonymus fortunei	XX	XX	XX		X	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	3-4	3
Euonymus japonica	XX					XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	5-6	3
Euonymus kiautschovica						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		5-7	3
Gelsemium sempervirens									XX	XX	XX		6-7	3
Ilex cornuta						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		7-8	8
Ilex crenata						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		6-8	8
Ilex opaca					XX								6-8	8
Ilex fosteri								XX	XX				9-11	8
Ilex vomitoria						XX	XX	XX					10-12	8
Ilex 'Nellie Stevens'	XX					XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		7-8	3
Ilex aquifolium						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX			7-8	8
Lonicera japonica	XX					XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		4-5	3
Mahonia spp.								XX	XX	XX	X		7-8	3
Nandina domestica								XX	XX	X			7-8	8
Osmanthus spp.								XX	XX	X			7-8	8
Photinia spp.						X	XX	XX	X				8-10	8
Pyracantha spp.								XX	XX	XX			7-8	8
Viburnum rhytidophyllum									XX				7-8	8
Yucca spp. (root cuttings)	XX							XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	10-14	
Ligustrum japonicum						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		7-8	3
Ligustrum vicaryi						XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		3-4	3
Prunus laurocerasu 'Zabeliana'	XX							XX	XX	XX	XX		6-8	3
Coniferous Evergreens														
Chamaecyparis nootkatensis								XX	XX	XX	XX		10-12	16
Cupressus sempervirens								XX	XX				12-16	16
Juniperus chinensis														
Juniperus spreaders	X							XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	8-10	8
J. c. Torulosa								XX	XX	XX	X		12-16	16

TABLE Continued

(Each "X" represents approximately the first or last half of a month.)

	SUGGESTED TIMES FOR TAKING CUTTINGS												Rooting Time (weeks)	Suggested Auxin Concentration ¹
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		
Juniperus														
Juniperus horizontalis	XX												8-9	8
J. procumbens								XX	XX	XX	XX	X	8-9	8
J. conferta									XX	XX	XX	XX	8-9	8
Taxus spp.													10-14	16
Thuja occidentalis 'Woodward'	XX									XX	XX	XX	7-9	8
Deciduous Trees - Softwood														
Acer palmatum						X	XX	X					6-8	16
Cornus florida						X	XX	X					6-8	16
Euonymus bungeana						X	XX	XX					6-8	8
Ilex decidua						XX	XX	XX	X				6-7	8
Magnolia soulangeana						X	XX						5-6	16
Magnolia stellata						X	XX						5-6	16
Prunus sargentii & others						X	XX	XX					4-6	8
Pyrus calleryana & 'Bradford'						XX	XX						5-6	16
Platanus occidentalis						X	XX	X			XX		4-5	16
Sapindus drummondii						X	XX	XX					5-6	16
Ulmus parvifolia						XX	XX	XX					4-5	30
Morus alba 'Fruitless'						X	XX	X					3-4	8
Maclura pomifera 'Pawhuska'						X	XX						3-4	8
Deciduous Shrubs														
Berberis thunbergii								X	XX	XX			6-8	8
Chaenomeles spp. (root cuttings)						X	XX	X					10-12	
Euonymus alata						XX	XX	X					5-7	8
Forsythia spp.						X	XX	XX					4-5	3
Lagerstroemia indica						XX	XX	XX	(non flowering shoots)				3-5	0
Ligustrum spp.						X	XX	XX					4-5	3
Spiraea (sp. fl.)						XX	XX						4-6	3
Spiraea (sum. fl.)						X	XX	X					5-7	3
Syringa spp.						XX	X						5-7	16
Viburnum spp.						XX	XX						4-8	8
Weigela spp.						X	XX						4-6	8
Punica graminata								X	XX	X			3-4	3

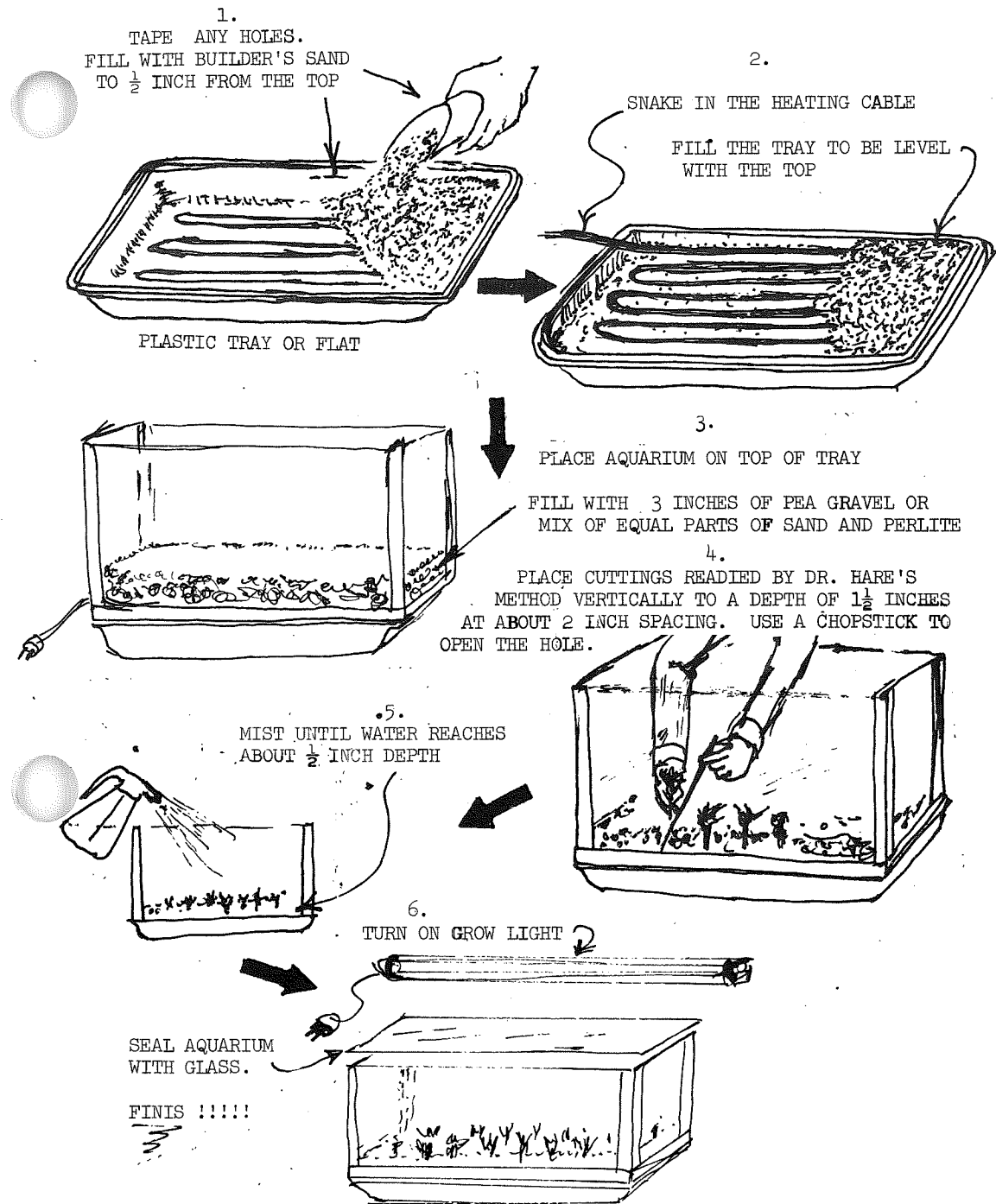
¹Level of IBA in parts per million (ppm) as a talc preparation (3=3,000 ppm; 8=8,000; 16= 16,000 ppm.)

Starting Cuttings In Aquariums

While attending one of Cliff Pottbergs workshops last fall, he told us how he had been successful in rooting JUNIPERUS PROCUMBENS NANA and BUXUS MICROPHYLLA COMPACTA. Since I had tried to root cuttings for years without success, I had given up and was now engrossed in air laying. Cliff's explanation of how the cuttings are prepared and handled seemed easy enough, so I decided to try once more. While helping Mary Weaver style a PROCUMBENS NANA, he said that the branches he had removed would root very easily. All you have to do is put them in a container with a lid and some water. Of course your will need something to keep the cuttings from contacting the water directly. I asked what substance should or could be used? Since Cliff knew that I was curious, he asked me to try different methods. Since I had nothing to loose, I thought I would give it a try. Mary Weaver was kind enough to share with me some of the branches that had been removed. Arriving home, I took a five gallon plastic bucket that I had,--filled it with two inches of pea gravel and one half inch of water. Trying to be smart, I inserted the cuttings in the gravel thinking that more air could reach the area where I wanted roots to develop. I placed the lid on the bucket rubbed my hands together with a grin, and thought success at last. This was in October and I began reading up on cuttings and air laying. GOOD GRIEF! October is cool, low humidity, shorter days. ARRK! I was doomed. Then came a Mellingers catalog and I read through their Greenhouse recommendations. AHHA, bottom heat, high humidity, light, the works, cost too high. There must be a cheaper way I figured. Now then, here are my ingredients for a reasonable greenhouse: For bottom heat, a twelve foot heating cable cost \$8.99. Next, a container so you can watch the progress. I had two ten gallon aquariums which I used. Two plastic seedling flats, the same size as the aquariums. I filled the flats with sand and burried the cable and thermostat one half inch, then placed the aquariums on the flats. At this point, I began to think a little clearer, so I decided to use two inches of pea gravel in one aquarium and two and one half inches of sand and perlite (50% each) in the other aquarium. Having completed my set up two weeks before Christmas, I began looking for cuttings of all kinds. The PROCUMBENS NANA and the BUXUS MICROPHYLLA from the plastic bucket were the first cuttings to go into the aquariums. I put these cuttings into the pea gravel aquarium. Since they had been without light for so long I thought they might be KAPUTT. Much to my surprise, they looked strong and healthy, and had began to callous. I dusted the cuttings with Hormex #30, using a camels hair brush before inserting them into the pea gravel. After all cuttings are inserted, I used a mister to spray about one half inch of water into the aquariums. I used an old piece of glass, cut to the size of the aquarium, for a top.

For a light source, I set a two foot grow light on top of the glass. Once a week I check the heat and humidity. So far a constant 78 degree heat and 85% humidity has been maintained without any work on my part. Every two weeks I lightly mist with water. The PROCUMBENS NANA have developed roots, the ACER PALMETUM and ULMES PARVIFOLIA HOKKAIDO have popped leaves and callouses quite well. I AM ONE HAPPY FELLOW

---Pete Jones---



NURSERY (\$HOPPING

While collecting is probably the best way of obtaining good, mature bonsai material, my brand of nursery hopping can produce surprising results.

Large, well-stocked nurseries offer a good selection of stock for the "instant bonsai" of demonstrations, but it is not usually this kind of material I am seeking. What I look for, then, is a smaller, less kempt looking nursery - the kind of place where back areas have been allowed to become overgrown and unattended, material has likely been there for years, and the nursery-man may not even know what's there in the way of plants. Most of these places will let you wander around and look to your heart's content, though they may think you slightly mad.

What one might find in these areas could range from "oddities" which didn't sell well some years ago and were dumped there to make room for better-selling plants, to stock which had been placed there for growing-on and subsequently forgotten until they had become too overgrown and leggy to be given space in the more public part of the nursery.

Like collecting, you may spend several hours looking at trees and not find anything really worth the effort. Like collecting, though, you may also run into a goldmine of material. For those who live several hours away from the nearest collecting area, it is a good compromise to the run-of-the-mill nursery stock.

The danger with purchasing this type of material is that it has usually been neglected for some time and may even be in poor condition. Stock which has been dumped there because it was unsaleable will likely still be in pots, with roots growing out of the drainage holes and into the ground. The roots in the pots are apt to be worse than root-bound, they will probably also be coiled. If the trees were originally balled and burlaped, the chances of a better root system are increased, though it may take some time to bring the roots down.

If you find a piece of material that you think is potentially good, approach the nursery-man. State your purpose and that you would be interested in taking the material off his hands if he'll give you a good price. A hint at your knowledge of the condition and saleability of the trees and an offer to do your own digging may lend weight to your argument if you need it, but don't push the point. If he won't budge on price and you've decided you simply must have that tree, insist on a full guarantee and let his employees do the digging. If you can't come to an agreement, thank him and leave. Often, though, he is glad to get rid of this unwanted stock, particularly if it is not a popular item, and you may be urged to take more than you actually want once he knows your purpose. I had one nursery-man offer to let me go on a backlot and just take whatever I wanted. Unfortunately, there wasn't too much there that I did want.

Another good source of older nursery material is the nursery which is going out of business. They will be selling off all their stock, usually at auction, and this will include the "backlot" stuff you are looking for. Watch the garden pages and classified ad sections of the newspapers for notice of these sales. Often the kind and size of material you want is not what others attending the sale do and you may get it for a song.

Although I don't have the pleasure of a tramp in the woods with this type of "collecting," I also don't have to carry a lot of equipment around on my back. Nor do I have a long walk back to the car with a heavy, awkward root ball. Material obtained this way is just as chancey as collected stock and needs at least as much care once I get it home. If I've found a nice piece of material, though, the reward of seeing it grow and develop makes up for the fun I missed in a day out in the country.

--- Mary Holmes
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SNIPS and Slips

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THINGS

A couple of years ago Dr. David Andrews gave me a tip for developing the gorgeous buttressed, spreading root system we see on trident maples - mound up soil around the trunk, completely covering roots. One and a half summers of this procedure has not yet produced the apron of roots seen on old Japanese trees, but there has been noticeable progress toward this goal on my tridents in just this short time.

Wandering around the Potomac area and noticing the lovely buttressed and "run-together" roots of our old native beeches reminds me of those trident maples. It occurs to me to wonder if the same effect could not be achieved on bonsai beeches using the same method. Has anyone ever tried it? I have a couple of candidates in my collection I certainly intend to experiment on. The beech is a lovely tree and to be able to produce the gorgeously buttressed roots on a bonsai would be pure heaven.

GOING NATIVE

Part of being human is having the urge to possess the impossible, to make the difficult work and make it seem easy. This applies also to owning bonsai and I think all of us have the urge at some time to possess the exotic trees, be they the nearly impossible tropicals (like buttonwood) or the alpiners (like alpine fir). Many "marginals" can be coped with successfully, but trees from a very different climate from ours can be a challenge - and then become a real headache. Special care can end up to be both costly and time-consuming, and, unless one hits the right formula, such trees often don't thrive well and aren't much pleasure. I find myself less and less avidly coveting the Florida and southern California beauties and more and more appreciating what will grow on my own "back 40." That doesn't mean I won't drive 600 miles to dig up a great tree, but I'll select a larch or an arborvita that will thrive in Maryland over an alpine fir that won't tolerate a Washington summer.

Having a bit of a taste for the exotic myself, I am on the horns of a dilemma because of a collected alpine hemlock that is being held for me in Washington State. The tree is very old and very beautiful and I have switched back and forth several times between deciding to bring it out here and take a chance, and deciding to leave it out there where I know it will survive. The jury is still out on that verdict, but I sure wish it lived around here.

HALLELUJAH MONTH

Believe it or not, February is Hallelujah Month. It begins in the dark ages, but a few warm days and noisy birds remind us spring will get here and it's time to start gearing up. Except for an unusually long winter, collecting can usually start by the end of the month. For some who can resist anything but temptation, it can start even earlier (I succumbed on January 24th this year and collected a Virginia pine). February is the month to hope, to dream, to plan and scheme - before the panic starts in March!

A HEALING THOUGHT

How many times have you gone to medicine cabinet for a bandade and found nothing but those tiny ones that cover about one square centimeter and won't stay on anyway? And how many times have you wired a heavy branch and found one or two "pressure points" where you know the wire will cut into the branch and leave a scar? This suggestion won't put large-sized bandages in your medicine cabinet, but it will bring you a use for those useless ones and help solve the wiring problem.

Cut the sticky tabs off the bandades, leaving just the padded part, gently manouver the branch so there's just enough space between it and the wire, and slip the pad in. It's not beautiful, but it works beautifully, and as the wire "ages," gets dirty and becomes less noticable, so will the bandade.

STICK-EM UP

Often in designing a multiple-trunked tree or a forest planting a brace is needed to get one of the trees angled more properly for a graceful composition. This is usually accomplished by using a stick, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, propped between the trunk of the tree whose position you want to change and the trunk of a larger tree. I have discovered that using a branch-cutter to cut the stick to proper length is better than using pruning shears. The concave cut made by the branch-cutter fits over the trunk and is less apt to slip or pop out than if the stick were cut straight. The concave cut will also distribute the pressure more evenly over a wider space to both trunks because of its shape and is less likely to cause damage to the bark and create a scar.

HUMATE

Cliff Pottberg has told me of a new product called Humate which can be used as a soil additive the way we now use Terragreen or Turface. It is made up of Florida peat which is dried into brick form and then crushed or grated to whatever size is wanted. Though it is organic material it does not lose its shape and break down through successive waterings, will hold some amount of water and release it once direct watering has stopped, but is unlike Michigan peat which can hold too much water, causing root rot, or, once it has dried, become nearly impossible to get wet again. Cliff says he uses up to 50% Humate in his soil mix and likes it better than anything he has found so far. MPT plans to have Humate available for us in the near future,

FLORIDA'S GAIN IS OUR LOSS

It's now official what's been rumored for the last couple of years - the Pottbergs are moving to Florida, may even be gone by the time you read this. It's been in the works for some time, but now plans are reality. Although they plan to come back to PBA territory for regular visits, and although Arschel will continue the now "Washington Branch" of MPT, it will not be the same and we will miss a good tracher and good friends. Bon Chance, Cliff and Tory!

Mary Holmes

QUESTION: I have been reading all the English written bonsai books which are available to me. I consider myself well-informed on bonsai culture in theory but I lack the practical experience and knowledge. All these books are very confusing. The more I read, the more confused I got. For example, composition of soil, watering frequency, fertilizing time, repotting time, etc., on the same specimen are widely different. I do not know which one to follow. Can you help?

ANSWER: When I was in the electron microscopy business, I used to tell students and technicians that there are 3 ways of doing things: the right way, the wrong way, and Haga's way. Haga's way is included in the right way, what about your way?

There are various differences between district, climate, type of soil, yearly percipitation, varieties within particular species of tree, personal habit of the author, etc. I presume that any author whose book is translated into English, should be a well experienced master in the bonsai field. Therefore, the technique works alright with the individual author. It is his way and his way is included in the right way. In reading their books, do not knitpick the unimportant things. I am sure that the differences are very small. Besides, you may be missing the fine print in the book. The techniques may be all different for the young seedling, mature tree, healthy tree, unhealthy tree, etc. For example, the techniques of watering. My suggestion is to separate each species of tree individually one by one. Make a list of everything on this subject from your book collection and find a common denominator when analyzing the list and choose the method which is most suitable for the location, climate of your bonsai shelf and your life style. If the author tells you why he is doing it in such a way, compare it with your environment. Do not clog up your methods with all the fancy tricks for they may not be applicable in your case. I will not assure you that it will work at first. But from experience, you will gradually develop and invent your way which works the best for you. Just one caution, when you develop your way, do not confuse other beginners.

---J. Y. Haga---

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Naka's Saksuki Book

Last spring many of you expressed an interest in purchasing John Naka's new book on Satsuki azalea at a group rate of \$11 each. It has been decided by the Board that rather than ordering the books and then collectin from everyone, that we ask you to pay for the books prior to their purchase. Please complete the order form below and return to Vicki Ballantyne before March 1. Books when they are received will be distribu ed to you through your individual club.

Vicki Ballantyne, Treasurer
538 West Street
Severna Park, Maryland 21146

I am enclosing a check in the amount of \$ _____ (made payable to Potomac Bonsai Association) for the purchase of _____ Satsuski azalea book(s) by Joh Naka.

(Name) _____

(Address) _____

(Phone) _____ (Club affiliation) _____

Upcoming Bonsai Events (That We Know Of)

UPCOMING BONSAI EVENTS (that we know of)

Philadelphia Flower Show: 1st week in March. One of the best flower and bonsai shows on the East Coast.

Florafest II Plant and Garden Show: March 26-29 at the U.S. Botanic Garden. PBA will join area garden clubs and organizations for a flower and bonsai exhibit.

PBA Annual Show and Annual Meeting: April 25-26 at the U.S. National Arboretum. The PBA Annual Show will take place in the auditorium of the Administration Building of the National Arboretum Saturday and Sunday. The Annual Meeting will be held there Saturday night. Two subcommittees are being formed and volunteers are needed to plan, assemble and man the exhibits. Call Dave Dambowic (703) 323-8749.

ABS Symposium: June 4-7 in Boulder, Colorado. American Bonsai Society annual symspoiium. Details and registration forms will be in subsequent PBA Newsletter.

BCI Convention: July 9-12 in Atlanta, Georgia. Bonsai Clubs International annual convention. Details and registration forms will be in subsequent PBA Newsletter.

Bonsai Symposium: September 12-13 at the Holiday Inn-Airport, Rochester, N.Y. International Bonsai will host a symposium on fruiting bonsai. Guest speakers will include: Chase Rosade, Marion Gyllenswan, Dr. David Andrews, Jerry Stowell, Keith Scott, Doris Fronig, Bill Valavanis, etc. Details and registrations forms we hope to have for you in subsequent PBA Newsletter.

PBA SYMPOSIUM: October 24-25 at the Bethesda Marriott Hotel. Put it on your calendar NOW! Loads of meeting, bazaar and exhibit space this year. Room rates will be \$49 per day single or double occupancy. Our theme this year is maples, particularly Trident maples. Two workshops are possible this year. Much, much more to follow in latter Newsletters.

ABS Symposium: June 24-27 1982. The ABS '82 Symposium will be held at the University of Maryland Adult Education Center. Dates are firm and confirmed. The program is underway and we are planning lots of exciting and unusual events for this big event. There will be, of course, more information later in the PBA Newsletter, but if you would like to help plan and make this the best ABS Symspoiium ever call Harvey Everett (301) 933-0483 or Mary Holmes (301) 721-1309.

CLUB CALENDAR

February 14 Annual Soil and Mud Slinging Meeting. 10:00 a.m. Gulf Branch
Saturday Nature Center. This year all items will be at cost. Soooo ... bring containers or bags for soil components and fertilizers to take home your loot. We will have agriform tablets (14-4-6), osmacote time-release plant food (14-14-14), dried bloodmeal, bonemeal, cottonseed meal, milorganite (6-3-0), chicken grit, Terragreen, and leaf mold. Discussion will cover soil mixes and fertilizers. There will be a demonstration of a soil testing kit. If possible, pHydron papers for checking soil pH may also be on sale. NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY

February 17 Soil Mixing and General Information Swap. 7:30 p.m. St. Margaret's
Tuesday Church. Let's get ready for the busy spring potting season and prepare our soil mixes together. Members will sift and share their soil ingredients. Bill Merritt, from Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, will come to tell us what he uses and how it's done. If possible, we'll also make fertilizer balls. If you'd like to share soil ingredients at a nominal fee, try to call Jackie Dorsett, 263-3995, in advance. Bring strong plastic bags or pails. Remember meeting nights are the third Tuesday of the month. ANNAPOLIS

February 19 The National Collection; Soils, Fertilizers, Car. 7:30 p.m. Main
Thursday Building, National Audubon Society. Bob Drchsler, curator, National Bonsai Collection will be guest speaker. If you have ever seen the collection, you know Bob is doing something right. Come learn his secrets!! Raffle. Tree-on-the-Month: Winter-flowering bonsai. Special treat, if time permits we will visit a nearby local member's collection of flowering trees after the meeting. BROOKSIDE

February 21 Preparation for spring styling workshop. 2:00 p.m. National
Saturday Arboretum. Also slides of western trees, with tape commentary and additional commentary by Joyce Pelletier. WASHINGTON

No Report From:

Baltimore
 Kiyomizu

For Information call:

Dave Bogash 922-9310
 Chuck Bird 292-3160

If you plan to attend a club meeting other than your own it is recommended that you call to conform it. These programs are planned well in advance of the mailing of the Newsletter and sometimes must be changed. Also, if road conditions appear hazardous they might be cancelled at the last minute. Contacts are as follows:

Annapolis

Jackie Dorsett
 (301) 263-3995

Baltimore

Dave Bogash
 (301) 922-9310

Brookside

Fred Mies
 (301) 299-6194

Kiyomizu

Chuck Bird
 (301) 292-3167

Northern Virginia

Pete Jones
 (703) 521-0674

Washington

Dorothy Miller
 (202) 583-2676

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