

POTOMAC  
**BONSAI**  
ASSOCIATION  
**Newsletter**

ISSN 0160-9521



**UME - JAPANESE FLOWERING APRICOT**  
by **Katōtokudan** (Formal Upright,  
Slanting Styles)

Translated by **Jules Koetsch**



EDITOR'S NOTE: The species referred to in the following article is Japanese flowering apricot or prunus mume which is more often planted for ornamental purposes than for its fruit. This species is native to China and Japan and is a very prolific flowering fragrant. The fruits are about 1 inch in diameter and yellow or greenish in color. Prunus mume is hardy to Zone 6 which includes the Washington D.C. area.

Once the January flowering ume has been purchased, the method for transforming it into a bonsai which will bloom with fragrant blossoms every January is described in what follows.

PURCHASE OF POTTED PLANT AND RULES FOR REMODELING IT

Pointers for Purchasing Potted Plants The current (1976) market value is about 3000 to 5000 yen, (roughly \$12.00 to \$20.00). In all probability the tree is best purchased during the period between December 20th to 31st.

Take care in selecting a tree with good bonsai potential, - one with a minimum diameter of about 5cm (2 inches). Since the plant is to be repotted in February, make certain that the plant is free of scale and other insects or evidence thereof. Also if one wishes to follow these instructions, do not purchase a tree that does not satisfy the requirements for a straight or slanting trunk.

POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION  
c/o National Arboretum  
24th & R Sts. NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002

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Send articles (in longhand, typewritten, in Japanese, cassette recording, etc.) to: J. F. Koetsch, 6709 Caneel Ct., Springfield, VA 22152 (703) 569-9378.

Drying Up of Buds and Blossoms. Having purchased the plant, do not place the plant in a location that is too dry, otherwise the flower buds will dry-up and there will be fewer blooms. Hence the sensible thing to do is to move it indoors to a location where high humidity can be maintained. It is singly important from an environmental standpoint not to allow the topsoil to dry-out, -hence do not fail to water once every 2 days so that water flows from the hole in the bottom of the pot.

Flowering, Removing Spent Blossoms: Depending on the species of ume selected, blossoms will pop out as early as the beginning of January and then begin to dry-up. The atmosphere will be filled with the fragrance from the blossoms.

As soon as the blossoms have died, remove them. This will avert any fruit formation which will draw down on the energy in the tree. Also at this time immediately prune the tree. Please carefully study the illustrations.

Pruning Technique: After blooming, plan to severely prune the tree. Accordingly prune the latest growth so that one to two nodes remain. New foliage will appear and change the shape of the tree until blossom time in the next year. Therefore the pruning will provide the foundation for the tree's appearance over the period of a year. Branches need not be pruned if their length will enhance the tree's appearance. As soon as the pruning has been completed the plant should be planted in a bonsai pot.

Planting In a Bonsai Pot: The occasion for planting the tree in a bonsai pot is immediately after the pruning which generally is done in the February 10th to 20th timeframe.

Preparation includes employing a glazed bonsai pot of shallow depth. The color of the pot should harmonize with the color of the blossoms, - choices include-red clay colored pots with white ume blossoms or as an alternate choice varied blue coloring, white colored pots with ume that has a crimson color. Place a layer of red clay pellets in the bottom of the pot to enhance drainage. On top of that, insert a small quantity of the potting mix consisting of either 7 parts of red clay and 3 parts of deer bog soil or 6 parts of red clay, 2 parts of paulownia tree sand and 2 parts of leaf mold.

Next after the tree has been pruned, remove it from the pot and remove all the soil from the roots. Once the roots are free, trim away 1/2 of root system.

After the above consolidation of the root system, position the tip ends of roots so that they are spread apart in the pot. Concentrate on inserting the mix so that no voids exist. After planting the tree in the pot, the pre-positioned vinyl-covered wire is then twisted to bind the root system to the pot so that the tree will not break free. Water the planting until it flows from the holes in the bottom of the pot, then place it in a greenhouse or indoors and continue with the management.

#### MANAGEMENT FROM APRIL UNTIL AUGUST

Method of Applying Fertilizer Between April 1st and 10th remove the plant from the greenhouse or the indoors and place it outdoors on a shelf in a sunny place. At the same time apply fertilizer. The allotment consists of 2 Kneaded rapeseed balls each about the size of the tip of a thumb. Following that, apply the same amount-2 fertilizer balls, between April 20th to 30th, again between May 10th and 20th, then between June 1st to 10th. Fertilizer is applied until the start of the rainy season (which begins in late June in central Japan), and if it is not applied consistent with the above schedule, the flower buds will be inferior. Of course during the above interval, watering should be done whenever the topsoil appears to be drying out.

Applying Wire and Sprout Plucking Wiring to the new twigs is applied between May 10th and 20th and the amount to be wired depends on whether or not the tip ends of the new twigs will be plucked.

The copper wire is wrapped with paper before the wiring begins. On all new twigs apply wire so that it covers a twig length containing at least 8 leaves. See the illustration on how to do it. Bend the wired twigs down to lie in the same direction as the main branches. At his time of the year because the new twigs are still soft, they should be bent immediately. Later remove the wire just before it eats into the twigs.

Next the tips ends of the twigs beyond the 8 leaves are plucked. Only pluck the end of all the twigs with sprouts. By plucking the sprouts, the plant's energy will be conserved for creating new buds and sprouts. To develop the style without any radical change in the shape remove only 2 to 3 leaves of the growth beyond the 8 leaves. One does not pluck leaves if one wishes to alter the overall appearance of the tree, and the tree's energy will then be expended evenly in growth throughout the tree. By not plucking the leaves, no additional buds will sprout on the already present growth. Plucking encourages new sprouts to appear and more blossoms to bud out on the existing twigs.

However, definitely terminate the sprout plucking after the May 10th to 20th timeframe. During June, buds will sprout until the energy of the tree has been exhausted. These buds will bloom in the following year and then disappear.

Sprouts: Sprout plucking was to have been terminated after May 10th to 20th. However sprouts may emerge between June 1st to 20th and any unwanted ones should be plucked.

Fertilizer Allotment: From June 10th to 20th to August 20th to 31st please do not fertilize.

Red Ume Species - Half-a-Day Shade: For the red ume species, provide one-half-a-day shade from July 1st to 10th to August 20th to 31st. If this is not done, the leaves will quickly fall-off.

#### FROM SEPTEMBER TO INSERTING IN A GREENHOUSE

Applying Fertilizer: Between October 1st and 10th fertilize with 2 Kneaded rapeseed fertilizer balls to give the plant energy to pass through the winter. Also for a tree with many young branches, apply 2 Kneaded rapeseed fertilizer balls between December 1st and 10th. Fertilizing is done to help the young branches grow.

Unwanted Branch Lengths-Cutting Of: Unwanted branch length can be removed during the period of November 10th to 20th. However, careful thought should be given as to obtaining or maintaining an overall balance in the shape of the tree when buds blossom for viewing.

Inserting In A Greenhouse - December: Between December 1st to 20th, when the plant has been exposed to 2 or 3 frosts, bring the plant into a greenhouse (or indoors in a cool, humid place, next to a window. Mist 2 to 3 times a day especially while dormant. Do not let the plant dry out which would be the case if it were not removed to a shelter so that the soil will not freeze.

In Mid - Winter if the misting is not done, the tree will react adversely and the buds will not burst out in a fragrant display.

Water the topsoil during the day so that the topsoil does not dry out.

#### SECOND YEAR AND AFTERWARDS

From January into February of the second year one can enjoy the display of blossoms either in the greenhouse or in its indoor location. Pluck the expended blossoms and immediately replot the plant.

Having done the above, place the plant outdoors on a shelf in a sunny location between April 1st to 20th. Follow the same management schedule as for the first year.

The management in the 3rd year and for the following years is the same as for the first and second year. However, for a young tree, repot every year. For an old tree, repot every other year.

UME or JAPANESE FLOWERING APRICOT

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

December Purchase the sapling tree while it is dormant.  
 20 - 31 Do not let the soil dry-out.  
 Put the Place it in a sheltered spot and provide proper care.

FIRST YEAR

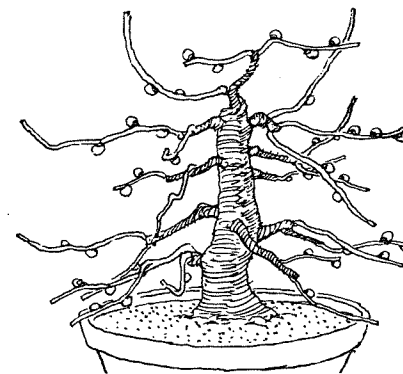
January Flowering occurs.  
 February Remove spent blossoms.  
 10 - 20 Prune  
 Place in a bonsai pot  
 Keep indoors or in a greenhouse and provide proper care.  
 April Place outdoors on a shelf in full-sun.  
 1 - 10 Water sufficiently.  
 Fertilize.  
 April Fertilize  
 20 - 30  
 May Wire.  
 10 - 20 Pluck sprouts.  
 Fertilize.  
 June Fertilize.  
 1 - 10 Buds begin to sprout.  
 June Buds no longer sprout.  
 20 - 30  
 July to August Provide 1/2 day shade for the scarlet plum variety.  
 1 - 10 20 - 31  
 October Fertilize.  
 1 - 10  
 November Cut branches to desired lengths.  
 10 - 20  
 December Fertilize a young tree.  
 1 - 10  
 December After exposure to 2 or 3 frosts remove the plant indoors  
 10 - 20 or into a greenhouse.

In the years after the first year repeat the operations as scheduled above. However, for an immature tree - repot every year; for an old tree - repot every second year.

UME

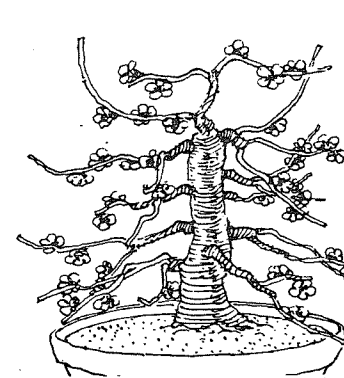
FIRST YEAR

PROCURE SAPLING TREE December 20 - 31



The sapling's trunk diameter should be a minimum of 5 cm. (2inches). Do not fail to repot at this time. Insure that there is no insect damage (scale). Purchase a sapling with a shape that you can begin to style.

FLOWERING, REMOVING SPENT BLOSSOMS February 10 - 20



Pluck

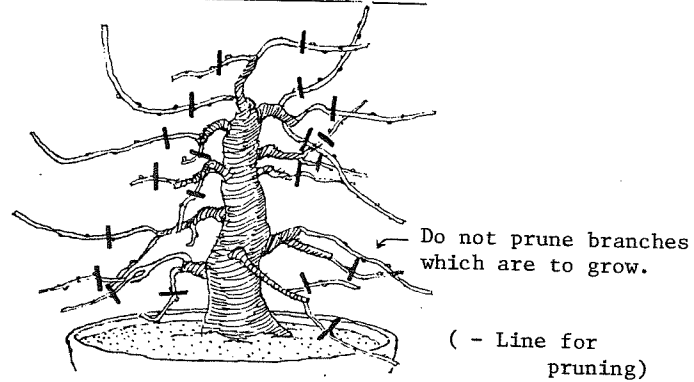
Remove Spent Blossoms

Winter protection involves either placing the plant in a cold frame or indoors in a cool, humid, sunny location. Limit the watering to once every 2 days. After blossoming, remove the faded blossoms as shown above.

FIRST YEAR (Continued)

PRUNING February 10 - 20

Pruning



The initial pruning is done to establish the basic tree shape from those pruned branches, growth will develop into other branches during the first year. Prune branches so that at least no less than 1 to 2 nodes remain.

After pruning, new sprouts will emerge and the foliage growth will be luxuriant.

Results of the Pruning



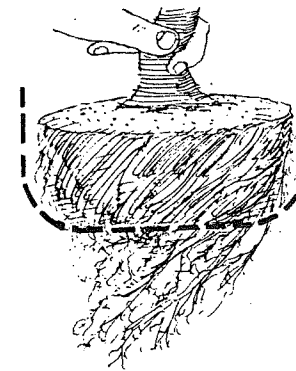
The above illustration shows the tree after pruning. Having removed the branches, the root system must be reduced which is accomplished by immediately repotting the tree. Begin by taking the tree from the pot and removing all of the soil.

FIRST YEAR (Continued)

PLACING IN A BONSAI POT February 10 - 20

Trimming of Roots

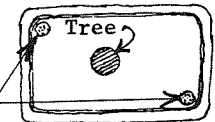
Remove 1/2 of the roots



Holding the plant in the left hand, use chopsticks to remove the old soil by skilfully loosening it and letting it fall away. Remove or cut-away no more than 1/2 of the existing rootage.

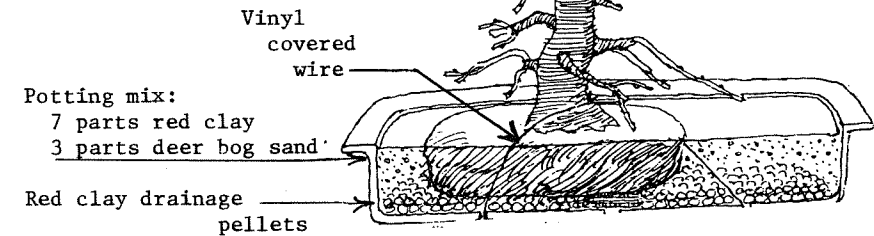
FERTILIZING April 1 to 10

Balls of rapeseed fertilizer



Potted Plant

Bonsai Pot (Top view)

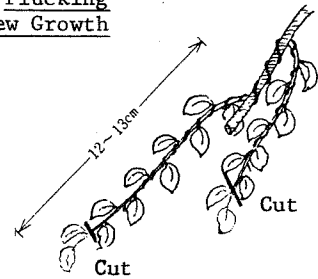


Plant in a glazed, shallow-depth bonsai pot. In selecting the pot consideration should be given to the color of the pot harmonizing with the color of the blossoms. Study the illustration to do the potting. After potting the tree, water it so that water flows from the holes in the bottom of the pot. Then place the plant in a greenhouse or indoors and provide proper care.

FIRST YEAR (Continued)

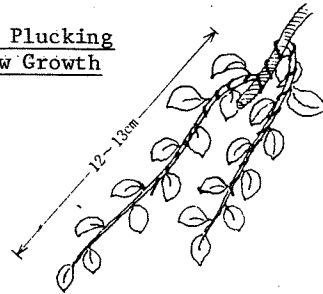
PLUCKING SPROUTS May 10 - 20

Plucking  
New Growth



Just after wiring, remove any segments or tip ends of the branches with 2 to 3 leaves attached extending beyond the wired branch with 8 leaf segments.

Not Plucking  
New Growth



If the growth on healthy branches is not cut, the branches will grow longer. However, fewer flower buds will appear.

REMOVING UNWANTED LENGTHS OF BRANCHES November 10 - 20

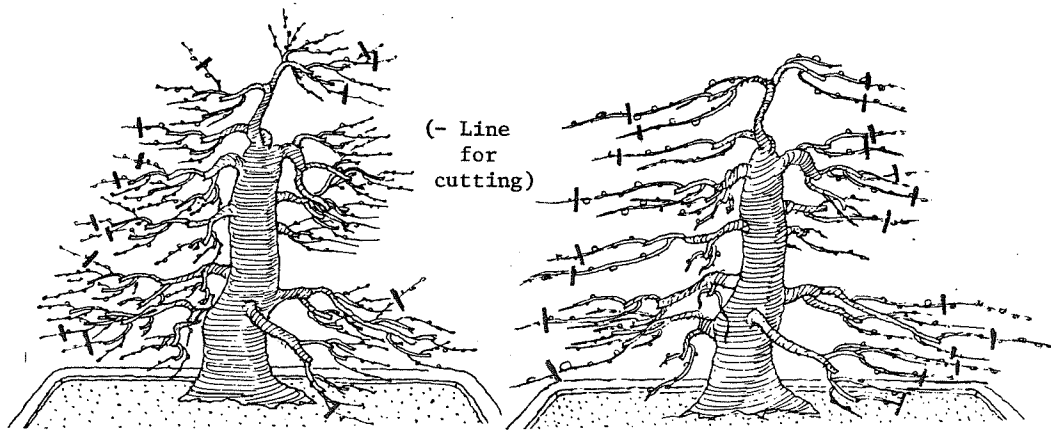


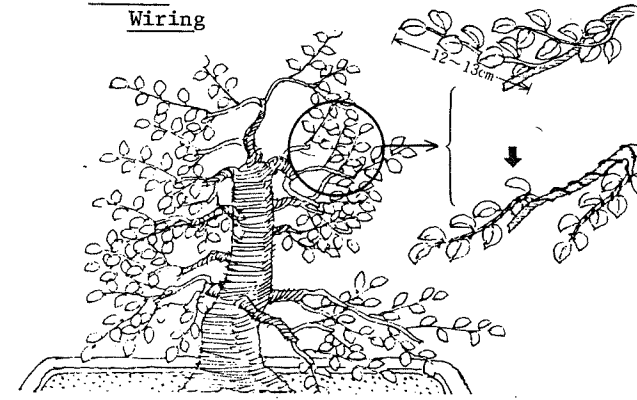
Illustration of Branch Shortening On Tree Which Was Plucked In May 1 - 10. Study the above to understand what branches are to be removed so that a balance is achieved between the amount of blossoms one wishes to see and the branch structure of the tree. In other words, if one wishes to see blossoms, do not overprune.

Illustration of Branch Shortening On Tree Which Was Not Plucked In May 1 - 10. The purpose in not-plucking branches is to thicken the trunk and branches. At this time (Nov. 10-20) prune the branches so that the overall tree shape is balanced. Of course, cut any branches which interfere with other branches.

FIRST YEAR (Continued)

WIRING May 10 - 20

Before  
Wiring

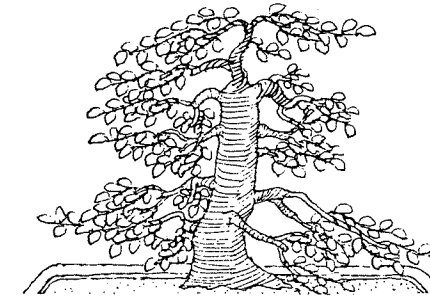


Before Wiring

After Wiring

In the period between May 10th and 20th the new sprouts will have grown to 12 to 13 cm (4 7/8 to 5 1/4 inches) and all of these new twigs will have to be wired. Use paper-wrapped copper wire and make the turns of the wire such that they pass between the 8 leaf axils and wire no further. (This will enable one to remove the additional growth if this is desired.)

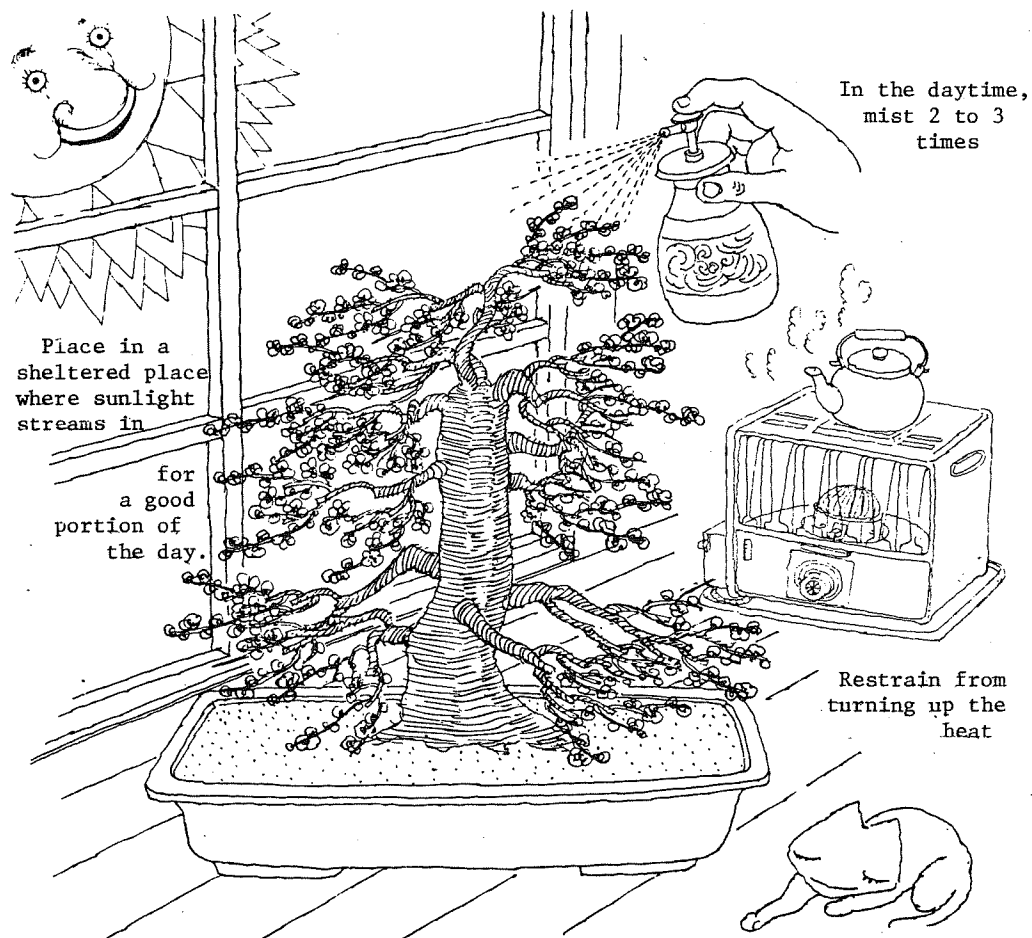
Results of the Wiring



Having wired the twigs, bend all of the twigs down from their upright positions to parallel the main branches. Because the twigs are new, they are easy to bend.

MANAGEMENT DURING THE WINTER SEASON

FLOWERING - RESULTS OF PLACING IN A SHELTERED LOCATION



Place in a sheltered place where sunlight streams in

for a good portion of the day.

In the daytime, mist 2 to 3 times

Restrain from turning up the heat

Between December 1st and 20th after the tree has had 2 to 3 exposures to frost, place the tree in a greenhouse or indoors. Choose a place where the sun shines in most of the day and heating is kept to a minimal. Water so that the topsoil will not dry-out. To maintain the proper humidity, mist the entire plant 2 to 3 times daily.

# WINTERIZING TIPS

by Bill Merritt

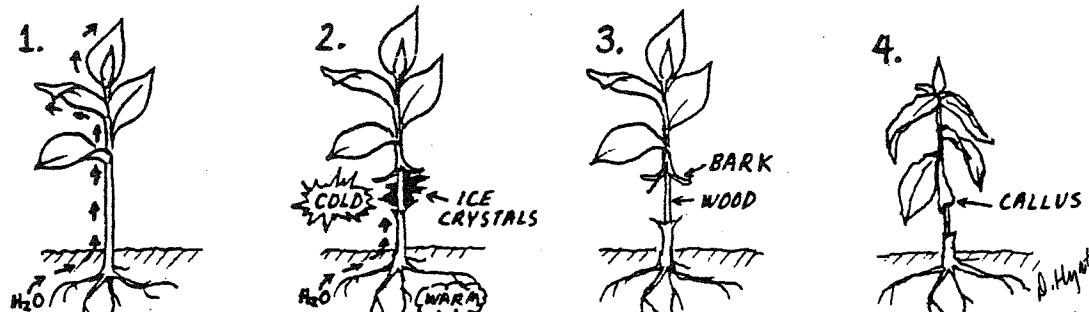
### THINGS NOT TO DO:

Do not fertilize in the fall. High fertilizer levels encourage late growth and make plants more susceptible to winter injury since dormancy is inhibited.

Do not make small plastic "greenhouses" that will catch the winter sun. Plants will warm up during the day, but will still freeze during the night. Wide temperature fluctuations cause far more harm than sustained cold. Covering with a single thickness of burlap with adequate air circulation underneath is much better than covering with plastic.

Do not encourage early spring growth. Late spring freezes cause bark split in plants that have broken dormancy. Flower buds of early blooming varieties are often "caught" before they have a chance

### What Is Bark Split ?



1. Rooted cutting is not dormant. Moisture flows from roots to leaves.

2. Cold Weather hits at top but roots are still warm. Water flows upward but rapidly freezes, splitting bark away from wood.

3. After ice crystals melt, bark is still separated from woody stem tissues.

4. Since roots and leaves are not connected by live bark, the cutting gradually dies. Heavy callus tissue is often visible at site of injury.

### THINGS TO DO:

Protect plants from winter wind and sun. New plants are especially prone to the drying effects of winter.

Mulch after the ground is cold and plants are dormant. Heavy mulching while the ground is warm can encourage bark split if the temperature suddenly turns cold. (See diagram on bark split)

During the first winter, rooted cuttings and small plants are best protected with a cold frame. If a cold frame is not available, a sheltered spot on the north side of the house next to the foundation

will do, especially if protected from wind and sun by foundation plantings. Window wells make great mini cold frames.

Sink container plants in soil whenever possible. Research has shown that root systems are not as hardy as stem tissues, and exposed container plants can suffer severe injury if the soil temperature falls too low. The following data points out the problem.

Azalea variety	Plant hardiness*	Root hardiness**
1. Hinodegiri	0° F	+15° F
2. Hino Crimson	-5° F	+19° F
3. Prunifolium	-5° F	+20° F
4. Gibraltar	-20° F	+10° F
5. Schlippenbachii	-20° F	+15° F

\* Hybrids and Hybridizers, Livingston and West, Harrowood Press, 1978.

\*\* "Winter Injury to Container Plants", Francis R. Govin, University of Maryland Extension Service, 1976.

If containers cannot be buried, at least cluster them together and mulch the area heavily.

## LOGO CONTEST

The Potomac Bonsai Association is changing its logo! To what, you say? Well, that hasn't been decided yet because it's up to YOU. We're having a logo contest, complete with a winning prize and piles of glory.

Here's how it works: Entries will be accepted 'til March 15, 1983. They should be submitted on standard-sized paper (8 1/2 x 11), done in black and white. All entries will then be published in the April PBA Newsletter, so that you will have time to study them before you have to vote. The originals will then be displayed at the PBA Annual Show at the National Arboretum April 21-24, where you will have a chance to cast your vote for the one you like best. The winner will be announced at the PBA annual meeting, Saturday April 23rd.

And the prize? One complete registration to the PBA Symposium October 15-16, 1983.

Who is eligible to enter? EVERYONE! PBA members, friends, family, subscribers, anyone who would like to. Enter as many drawings as you would like to. Get your artistic non-bonsai friends to enter. If they win and don't want to come to the Symposium, maybe they'll give you their registration. Or maybe they'll come, become interested in bonsai, and then you'll have another interest to share with them.

Remember: entries should be submitted in black and white on 8 1/2 x 11 sheets, and will be accepted until March 15. They should be sent to:

Mary Holmes  
1676 Walleye Drive  
Crofton, Maryland 21114

Bus Trip to Philadelphia Flower Show: Saturday, 12 March 1983  
8:30 a.m.\* to about 12:00 p.m.

The Largest and most prestigious flower show in the U.S. is presented each spring in Philadelphia, by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Among the many attractions are a display of trees by the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society. Also Chase Rosade and Lynn Porter present frequent demonstrations at the Rosade Bonsai Studio exhibit. Come join this Second PBA sponsored bus trip and enjoy an early breath of spring.

- Itinerary:
- o Leave Washington, 8:30 a.m.
  - o Leave Baltimore, 9:30 a.m.
  - o Brief stop for bag or light lunch
  - o Arrive Philadelphia Civic Center, 1:00 p.m.
  - o Participants fare for themselves for dinner at various facilities at or near the show.
  - o Leave show about 8:30 p.m.
  - o Arrive Baltimore about 11:00 p.m.
  - o Arrive Washington about 12:00 p.m.

Transportation  
and Admission: PBA Members \$16.00  
Non-Members \$26.00

Registration: Forty-seven (47) seats are available on first come basis, with preference to dues-paying members. Make checks payable to Potomac Bonsai Association, and send to Fred Mies, 11712 Smoketree Road, Rockville, MD 20854. Include address and telephone number.

\*Washington Pickup: At Hillendale Shopping Center, adjacent to Zayre's Department Store, 10121 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring. This is about 200 yards north of New Hampshire Avenue exit of Washington Beltway (495). Bus leaves promptly at 8:30 a.m..

\*Baltimore Pickup: Anne Arundel Animal Hospital at 4800 Gov. Richey Highway (Rt. 2). About 1-1/2 miles north of Rt. 2 exit Baltimore Beltway (695). Bus leaves promptly at 9:30 a.m..

\* \* \* \* \*

P.B.A. NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS FOR 1983 - 1984: The P.B.A. Nominating Committee presents the following slate for offices in 1983 - 84. Elections will be held at the Annual P.B.A. Meeting on April 24th following the 1983 P.B.A. Spring Show at the National Arboretum.

H. William Merritt . . . . .President  
Felix B. Laughlin. . . . .First Vice President  
Frederick H. Mies. . . . .Educational Vice President  
Godfrey E. Trammell, Jr . . . . .Treasurer  
Julie Walker . . . . .Secretary

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

8 January: 10:00 a.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center. During the first half Saturday of the meeting, Juli Haga will give a talk on traditional Japanese soil mixtures. In the second part of the meeting, soil ingredients including Terra-green, Gran-I-Grits, and Metro-Mix will be available for purchase. Leaf-mold for those who want it, will be free.  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA (703) 356-2697

9 January: 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Bowie Community Center. Bill Merritt Sunday will talk on bonsai styling.  
BOWIE BONSAI CLUB (301) 390-6687

13 January: 7:30 p.m. - Annapolis Library on West St. To the members Thursday of the Annapolis Club and especially to Jackie Dorsett, the editor offers his sincerest apology for losing the program in the mayhem of the Season. Please telephone Jackie for details on the meeting.  
ANNAPOLIS (301) 263-3995

15 January: 2:00 p.m. - National Arboretum. "AN EYE TOWARD STYLING": Saturday critiquing trees from slides shown by Ed Castillo.  
WASHINGTON (202) 583-2676

20 January: 7:30 p.m. Audubon Naturalist Society in the Carriage House Thursday (first building you come to after entering the driveway). The topic will be soils and mixing. A modest amount will be sold in small quantities primarily to new members.  
BROOKSIDE BONSAI (301) 871-8440

23 January: 2:00 p.m. Chuck Bird's house. Meeting is to plan 1983 club Sunday program. All members are urged to attend so that the program will be one that the members want.  
KIYOMIZU (301) 423-8230

BALTIMORE - contact (301) 669-1487 for information about the January meeting.

17 February Thursday 7:30 p.m.. Special BROOKSIDE-NORTHERN VIRGINIA Joint Meeting.

A lecture by visiting bonsai artist, William Valavanis of Rochester, N.Y., is being sponsored by the two clubs. As anyone who has attended recent PBA Symposia knows, Bill is an exceptionally gifted lecturer and teacher. This program will be devoted to pine trees - certainly the most aristocratic and challenging of all bonsai material. Bill will present a slide show covering the classification, care, training and styling of pines, and conclude with a demonstration of various training techniques. The meeting will be held at Woodsend, the National Audubon Society, 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase, MD. More specific directions for the NOVA members will be given in next months calendar.



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