

POTOMAC
BONSAI
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

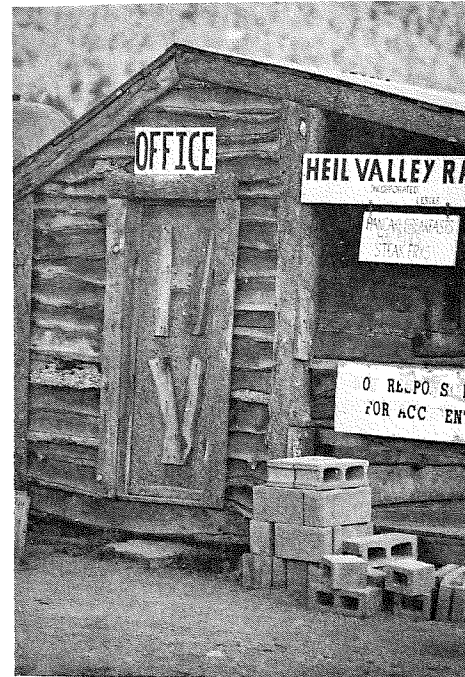
ISSN 0160-9521



Collecting In Colorado

Heil Valley Ranch

One of the best collecting spots in the United States for pines is a ranch on the front range of the Rocky Mountains near Boulder, Colorado -- specifically, the Heil Valley Ranch. The Ranch's calling card reads as follows:



HAYRIDES, HORSEBACK RIDING
PANCAKE BREAKFASTS
STEAK FRIES, OVERNIGHT CAMPING
PHONE 303-444-0238
EVENINGS
303-442-4678
JAMESTOWN STAR ROUTE
BOULDER, CO 80302

Although there is no mention of tree collecting, the proprietors of the Ranch will also let you engage in this pleasant pastime for the reasonable fee of \$5 per tree collected. Just call them up and tell them when you will be coming. They will gladly give you directions.

It is an unbelievable place with a virtually unlimited supply of high quality Ponderosa pines. As I recall, the Ranch owns or leases over 8,000 acres, extending from an elevation of about 7,500 feet to about 10,000 feet. In four days during the last of May this year, Dan Robinson, Chase Rosade

much of it mountainous terrain, extending from an elevation of about 7,500 feet to about 10,000 feet. In four days during the last of May this year, Dan Robinson, Chase Rosade

PBA Newsletter: Published by the Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc., a non-profit organization, in the interests of its affiliate member clubs and societies.
Circulation: Over 300 internationally on a monthly basis.
Corresponding membership: \$6.50 for 12 monthly PBA Newsletters.
PBA Membership includes 12 monthly PBA Newsletters, covered by part of annual membership dues.

For corresponding membership: Contact M. Hersh, 102 Devon Ct., Silver Spring, MD 20910 - make check payable to Potomac Bonsai Association

President: Bill Merritt (703) 536-4052
Editors: Jules F. Koetsch (703) 569-9378
Mary Holmes (301) 721-1309

Snips and Slips Editor: Mary Holmes (301) 721-1309
Science Director: Ray Buck (301) 345-4919

Subscription & Circulation: Molly Hersh & Josephine Finneyfrock (301) 589-3725

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

Mr. Harold W. Merritt
5451 N. 22nd Street
Arlington, Va. 22205

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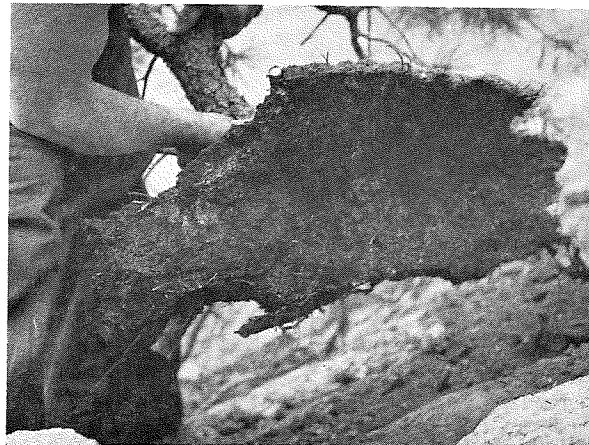
and I collected 36 of these great pines, and almost all of them were found on the Heil Ranch. Dan had first been introduced to the Heil Ranch last year when he was a guest lecturer at the ABS Symposium in Boulder. Those who attended the Symposium will recall that the Ranch was the site of the very successful collecting trip organized by the Denver Bonsai Club. Dan, who has collected all over the West and loves the Ponderosa more than any other tree, says that the Heil Ranch is the best place he has ever seen.

Chase, also an avid collector, certainly agreed, and at the end of the trip even felt a little guilty about the quantity and quality of all of those little trees he was taking back East with him. He will probably admit that a little effort was involved, but even so the payoff seemed too great. I am sure that he would be happy to show them to you the next time you visit his bonsai studio in New Hope. After a few years of training, they will be masterpieces.

The Boulder area has been known as a choice collecting area for many years, going back to when the Japanese began settling in Denver and discovered the great bonsai material in the Colorado Rockies.



Almost too many options



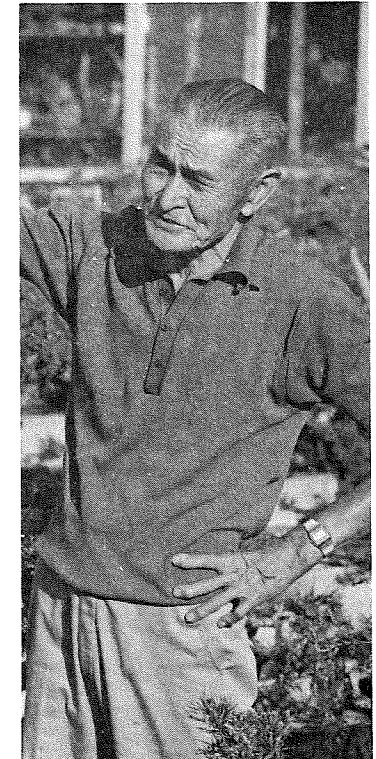
A perfect root pad

Bob Kataoka, a gentle Japanese bonsai master in his 70's, has a spectacular collection of native American pines and junipers. The area in which Mr. Kataoka used to collect was closed some years ago by the Forest Service but, hearing him talk about his old hunting grounds, the Heil Ranch seems to be a very similar place.

The Denver bonsai group is a very warm and generous bunch, whose trees reflect the abundance of collectible material in the area. Our hosts during our visit, Larry Jackle and Dick Meleney, clearly love the Colorado mountains and I can understand why: the natural beauty of these mountains is astonishing (without even considering the presence of naturally dwarfed trees). Although the older Japanese bonsai growers may have stopped collecting when their favorite spot was closed, the younger generation has sought access to new areas.



One of Mr. Kataoka's pines in his garden



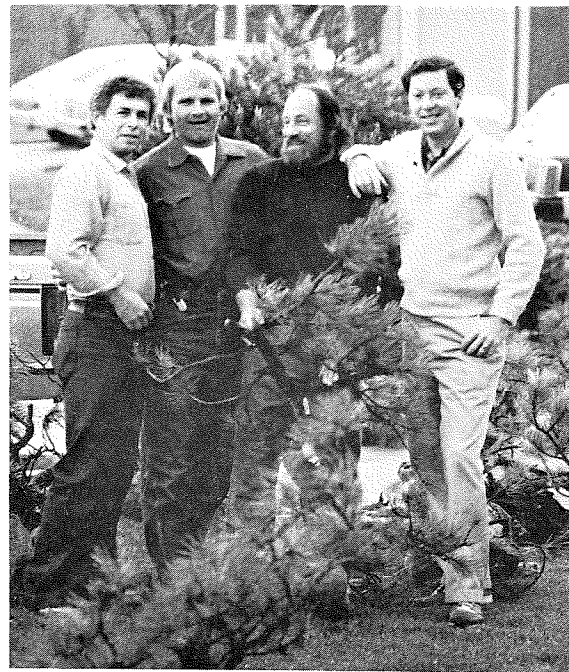
Mr. Kataoka talking about collecting

Toward the end of our visit Dan and Chase put on a workshop for the Denver Club and its members brought their bonsai to be critiqued and styled. I do not recall a nursery-grown tree -- everything was collected material with large trunks and great potential. Mr. Kataoka was there, enjoying himself watching Dan and Chase help the Club members style their bonsai. As their work progressed and the trees got better and better, Mr. Kataoka looked happier and happier.

Mr. Kataoka also seemed interested in seeing the trees he had heard we had collected during our visit and, as the workshop ended, we led him out to Dan's truck to have a look. His eyes lit up as he felt the bases of the trunks and heard that they had been extracted from rock pockets with a full root pad. He was obviously delighted to see that fabulous stunted trees were still available in the nearby mountains. Finally, with a glint in his eye as if he had rediscovered a secret he had thought to be long lost, he turned to Larry Jackel and said, "The next time you go collecting in the mountains, I'd like to go with you!"



Loading up the Scout

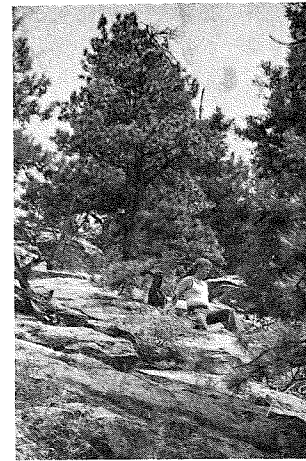


Dan, Larry, Chase and Felix

The One That Got Away (Until Next Year)

Sometimes you will find an "impossible" tree growing out of a crack in the rocks. Generally, these are appreciated and then passed by. But on a rare occasion, you will run into an impossible tree that is too good to leave behind and there will be an irresistible urge to find a way to get it out.

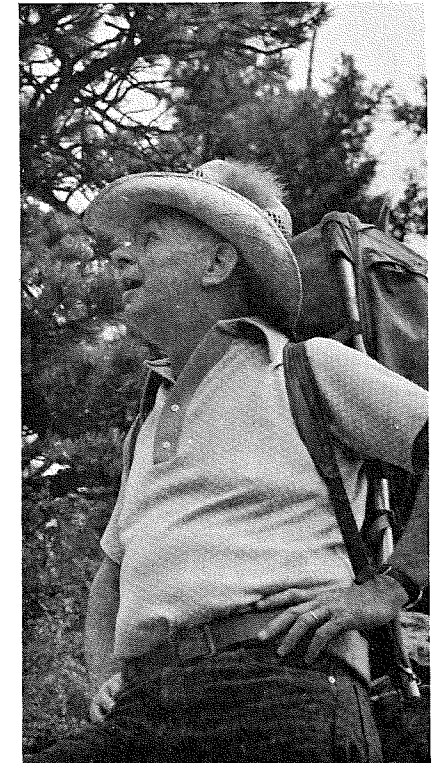
During our recent visit to Colorado this happened to Chase the first day out when he found a beautiful cascading Ponderosa pine growing out of the top of a large granite rock. Dan climbed back down to the truck and retrieved a heavy-duty crowbar and a small jack. At first, neither seemed



Dan relocates it



Quite a trunk

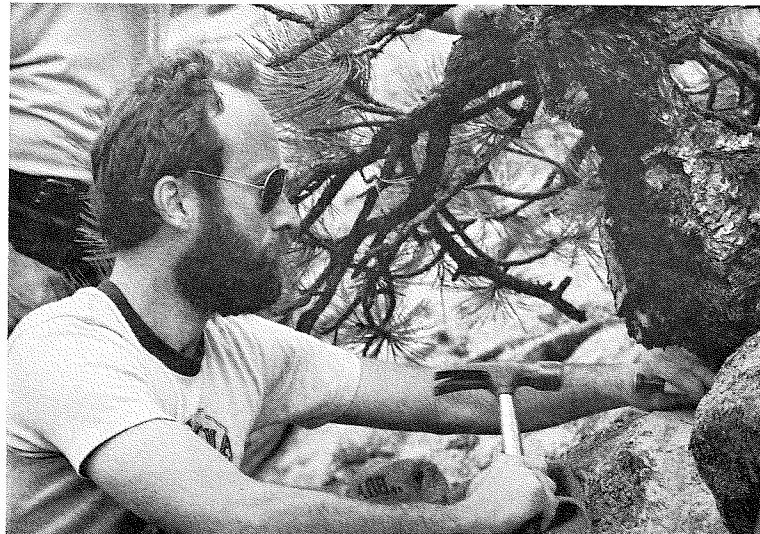


Dick looks on

to help -- the crowbar bent, and the jack just flaked off layers of the rock without widening the crack. However, after more than an hour of hard work, persistence paid off and the crack had been opened enough to break the tree free, happily leaving intact what appeared to be a sufficient quantity of fibrous roots for the tree to survive.

The next day was my turn. After an exhausting day of climbing, I was on my way back down to the base of the mountain when I stumbled upon a Ponderosa pine with an enormous trunk and amazing taper. There seemed to be no way to get it out since it was growing on the top of a huge boulder with its roots disappearing into a much thinner crack than the one Chase had been faced with the day before. In any case, I was bone-tired and figured that I might be seeing things.

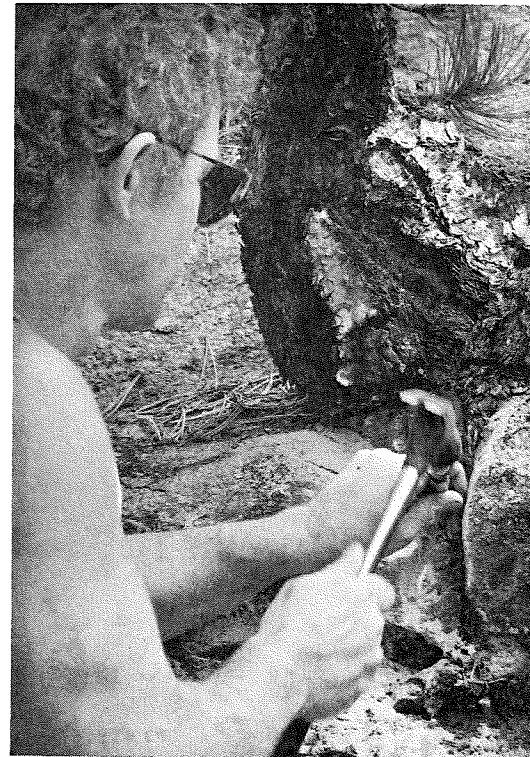
When I reached the vehicles most of the rest of our party were already there, resting from the day's climb. I tried to explain what I had found but got very little enthusiasm for attacking the vertical slope again on what everyone thought was probably a wild goose chase. However, Dan, Chase, and Dennis Rush of the Denver Club agreed to follow me back up the mountain to look at the tree. We collected the heavy tools and headed back up.



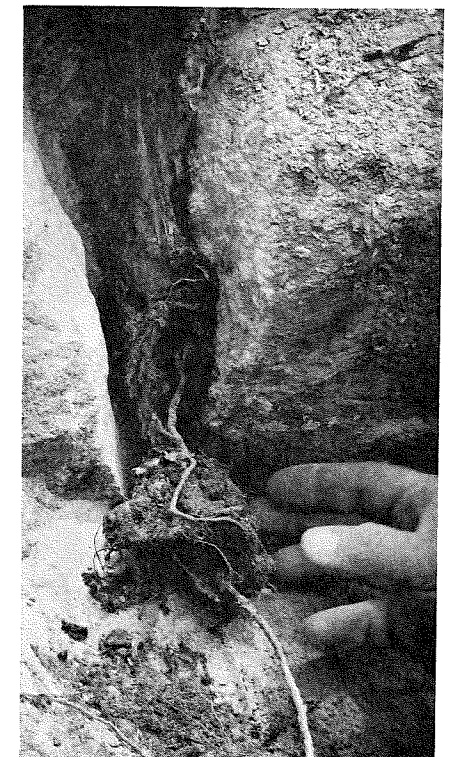
Dennis takes a turn with hammer and chisel

It took us a little while but with Dan's instinct for good trees we managed to relocate the huge boulder and the massive stunted tree. All instantly agreed that the tree was truly amazing, but probably impossible to extract alive. Nonetheless, it seemed worth a little effort so, for over an hour, we took turns hammering away at the rock, trying to widen the existing crack so that we could free the roots. The tools at hand were obviously too crude for the job and so we decided to suspend the project until we could obtain proper equipment.

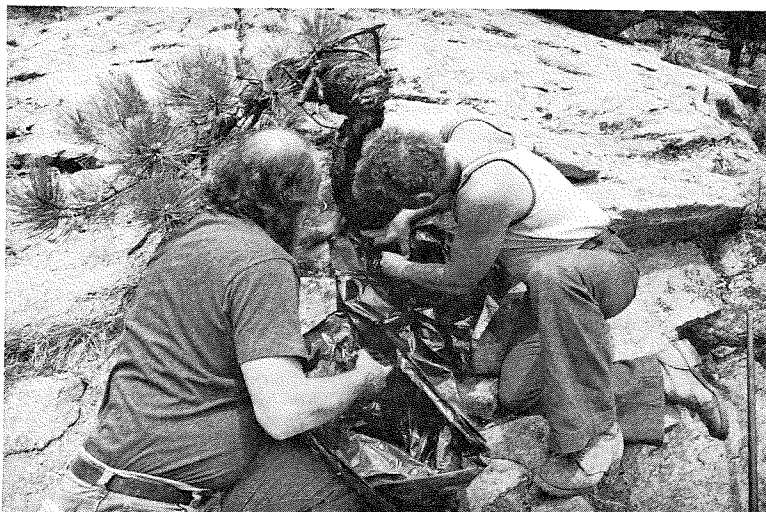
Back in Denver we acquired a chisel, hammer, gloves, sphagnum moss and black plastic bags. Based on our first encounter with the boulder encasing the roots of the tree, we knew that it would be necessary to apply Dan's root enhancement technique. This would involve exposing sufficient feeder roots by chipping away more of the rock and then enclosing the feeder roots in wet sphagnum moss and wrapping the area in black plastic.



Dan widens the crack further



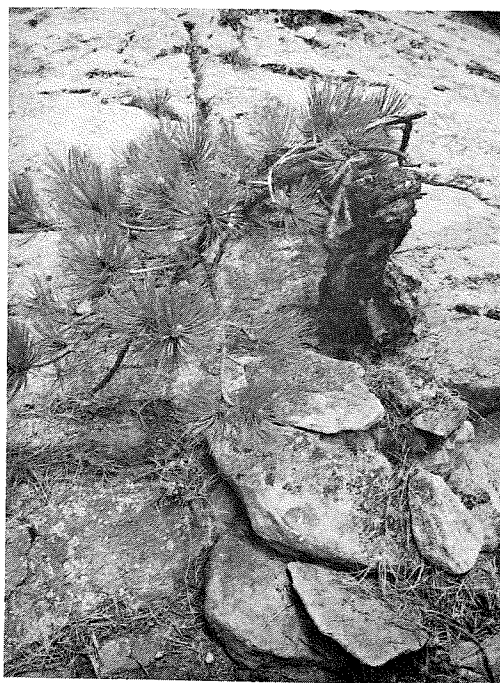
The exposed roots



Packing the exposed roots with sphagnum moss

On the morning of our last collecting day we returned to the tree. Each of us took turns with the hammer and chisel and, after several hours of work, we had exposed enough of the root area to apply the sphagnum moss and black plastic wrap. We then placed rocks over the wrap to try to keep the animals from gnawing into the plastic and drying out the sphagnum moss.

Dennis Rush was kind enough to volunteer to check the sphagnum moss occasionally over the summer months to assure that it remains moist. Then, next spring it may be possible to resume the extraction process. If sufficient root activity has occurred in the sphagnum moss in the meantime, it will hopefully be



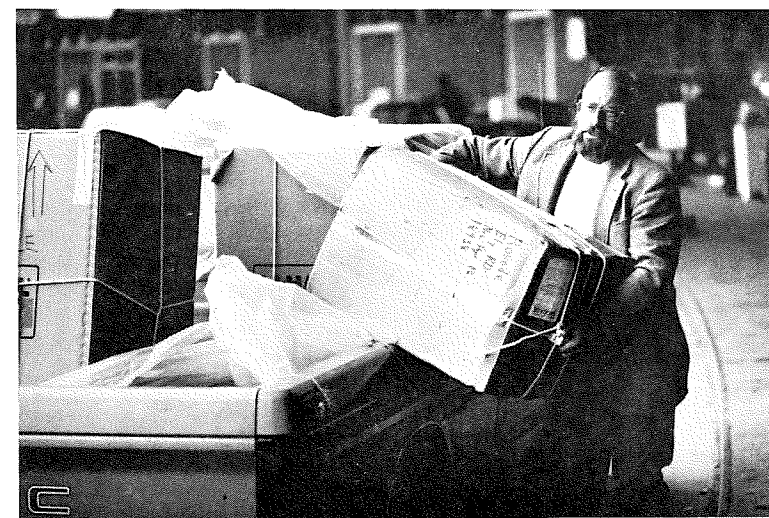
After the operation

possible to cut all other roots and rely on the enhanced root area as the tree's life support system. The tree can then be pulled out of the rock and, along with the root enhanced area, placed in a wooden box.

Return Home

Since Chase and I were flying home, we bought some U-Haul moving boxes and packed them with the trees we had collected. Then, the big question was whether the airlines would be willing to accept the boxes as excess baggage (which costs only a few dollars per box). We tried not to look too sheepish at the check-in counter and, happily, the airlines took the boxes as excess baggage. The trees are now in our respective gardens -- and, as far as I can tell, growing!

Felix B. Laughlin



Chase at the Airport

Confessions Of A Cowgirl

You think you've seen most everything,
Are really in the know,
Though the sneaky feeling still persists
That you've a long, long way to go.

I'm used to cutting trees down
To stump, then let them grow.
New buds pop out, a leader forms,
And so, and so, and so.

So the day that I approached that hill
Little could I then surmise
I'd be taking more back with me
Than a hoped-for bonsai prize.

How I got there in the first place
Is not so plain to see.
The relationship is tangled,
As families tend to be.

Suffice to say I was there
Mid dwarfed trees by the score.
Those who'd been before me
Had not two legs but four.

I knew in about two seconds
I'd acquired a new snobbery.
I never would settle, ever again
For less than a cow-browsed tree.

A five inch trunk on a two foot tree -
Just one right after the other.
The soil is rich, due to you-know-what.
Oh joy! Oh heavens! Oh brother!

It's no easy task, believe me,
To select an old twisted branch out,
But the tree's survival depends upon it,
So some had to go, without doubt.

It's been raining for just about weeks on end.
I've NEVER been so muddy.
The ground is soft, and weighs a ton.
Everything I touch is crudy.

But it's finally coming loose now.
The roots are free and clear.
Mother Nature made it, the cows have shaped it,
New where do I go from here?!

Mary Holmes

Bad Day At Bonsai Rock Or Symposium Sniffles

Those of us who have been involved in bonsai more than five minutes know that there are sometimes problems in keeping trees alive. While I am not a wholehearted subscriber to Murphy's Law, things do go wrong and that is what happened to the beech that Peter Adams was to have styled at the PBA Symposium. It turned-up its toes recently and died - very suddenly and in a matter of a few days.

Hindsight is usually 20 - 20, and we can always think of the things we should have or might have done (but didn't). Now I need to digress a bit and describe the state of this tree shortly before its demise. Picture yourself a gatepost (or stump, or some large, upright object) so completely covered with ivy that you could not see what was under it, even upon close examination. Well that's what this tree looked like - a huge mound of beech leaves instead a huge mound of ivy. What had been short, dense branches early this Spring suddenly grew into a mass profusion of branches obscuring anything under the surface. So why did it die? Well, autopsies on trees are a bit difficult when death is sudden, but there are several possibilities. First of all you can speculate that the reduced root system was unable to cope with the profuse growth; that the tree ran out of its stored energy and the roots couldn't handle it. Maybe, but would this have caused the whole tree to die all at once, suddenly, or would the roots have selectively fed certain branches, allowing others to die? Trees will do that but usually slowly. And it's usually the branches you want to keep that get selected out. (That's Mary's Law and I believe in it implicitly.) Also, since the tree grew vigorously for several months, wouldn't the leaves have fed the roots, which in turn would have grown and fed the leaves?

Secondly, there's the possibility that while the tree's custodian was out of town for a few days, the surrogate custodian did not adequately ^{water} the tree. Trees growing that fast need a lot of water and this one was potted in a course soil-mixture to promote root growth. This kind of soil drains fast and does not hold water as well as a fine mixture.

The bottom line (as they say) to all this speculation still leaves us with the indisputable fact that the tree is dead. Le roi es mort! Vive (l'otre) roi!

So where do we go from here? Well there are several candidates for the throne already, and the Symposium committee will make the selection. This may not happen for a couple of months, so you will have to check this space monthly to find out what it will be. We wont leave you in the dark, because one mystery tree per symposium is enough.

And speaking of mystery trees, I promised you last month that you intrepids would be able to find a clue to that mystery tree in the June issue. I hope you didn't find it, because it wasn't there. I have been reassured, however, that it will be there this month. If it still isn't there, call Jules (his number is on the back). He wont know either but he'll appreciate knowing you read the Newsletter from cover to cover looking for it.

But back to the Fagus deadus and its replacement. I'll stick to my opinion that every tree to be worked on and raffled at the Symposium will be worth the \$ 20.00 or so apiece that you will spend for raffle tickets. Do come, so that my winning of any or all of the trees will be that much more enjoyable because of the tremendous competition.

Mary Holmes

Post Script

Fagus has some very much alive cousins waiting for your pruners and shovels on the collecting trip following the Symposium. Fred Mies and I have tagged a number of these already for you, along with some hornbeams and red maples.

SNIPS and SLIPS

Fred Mies came up with this idea. If you have a cascade that doesn't like to grow upside down, or perhaps a lower branch that seems a little weak, place a pan of water under the branch that's having trouble. The added moisture and reflected light will help that branch to recover.

1983 Spring PBA Auction

The 1983 PBA Spring Auction at Behnke's Nursery on May 28 was a very profitable day for PBA, sellers, and buyers alike. Approximately 75 people were in attendance and during the day 122 items were sold for a total amount of \$2,230.75. PBA realized a profit of \$331.72 from these sales, after expenses.

Everything from pots and rocks to pre bonsai and completely styled bonsai were on sale. Many fine trees went for very reasonable prices and some at very surprising prices! Some new members were even signed up!

Special thanks goes to Behnke's Nursery for providing the space that made this event possible. Also special thanks to those who worked and made the auction run so smoothly. Dave Garvin and Bill Merritt did a fine job as our auctioneers. They were assisted by Bill Spencer as recorder and spotters, Jack Wells and Ralph Benson. Consignment sales were handled by Jay Spencer and Mary Alice Wells and Godfrey Trammell as cashier. Thanks also to those who participated by bringing in items for sale and to everyone who showed your support for PBA by attending.

July and August Schedule

Key:

C - Cut-off leaves
F - Fertilize
FS - Full sun
I - Use Insecticide

OB - Open branches
PB - Prune branches
PS - Prune sprouts
R - Repot
RW - Remove wire

Sp - Spray foliage
W2 - Water two times per day
W3 - Water three times per day
Wi - Wire

CONIFERS		July	August	DECIDUOUS		July	August
Cypress, hinoki	PS, Wi		F, PS, Wi	Beech, white	F, HS, PB		Wi
sawara	PS, Wi		F, R, Wi	Elm, chinese	F, PB, PS		F, PB, PS
Hemlock	- -		F, OB		RW		
Juniper, needle	F, Sp, W3		F	Ginkgo	F, PB, RW		F, PB
Shimpaku	PS, R, Sp		Sp, Wi	Hackberry	F, I, PB, RW		F, I
Larch	- -		F, R	Ivy, Boston	F, I, PB		F, I, PB
Pine, black	PS, Wi		F, W3	Hornbeam	F, I, RW		F, PB, PS
corkbark	PS, Wi		F	Maple, Japanese	HS, C, PB,		F, PB, PS
red	- -		Wi		Wi, W3		
white	I		F, PB, Wi	Trident	C, F, PB, W3,		C, F, PB, RW
Spruce	W3		F, Wi		Wi		
Yew	I		F, I, PB, Wi	Weeping willow	F, I, PB, Wi		F, I, PB, RW
<u>FLOWERING</u>				<u>FRUIT BEARING</u>			
Andromeda	F		- -	Cotoneaster	F, I, PS		I, RW
Apple, crab	W3		- -	Gardenia	F, I, PS		F, I, RW
Apricot, Japan.	I, W3		RW	Holly	F, I, HS, PB,		F, FS, W3
Azalea	F, I, W3		I		PS, RW, W3		
Cherry	I, W3		- -	Ilex, dwarf	F, I, HS, RW		FS
Forsythia	F, I		F, I	Pomegranite	F, I		F, I, PB, RW
Quince	F, I, W3		- -	Pyracantha	F, I, PB, W3		I, RW, W2
Tea, bohea	F, HS		RW				
Winter jasmine	F, I, W3		I				
Wisteria	F, I, PB		F, I				

NOTE !! Where FS appears indicating taking the bonsai from half-a-day shade to full sun FS, do this in the last week of August

Editor's note: the August schedule is shown so that clubs can plan their August meetings around the events. The points to be made are that in my opinion every meeting should have part or all of it concerned with hands-on workshops and experienced members are encouraged to bring bonsai to demonstrate to the newer, less-experienced members the techniques. Older members can help the less experienced members work on their trees.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

REMINDER TO ALL PBA AFFILIATED CLUBS:

A list of 1983-1984 current paid-up members should be sent to Molly Hersh, 102 Devon Court, Silver Spring, MD. 20901; PBA pro-rata dues to Godfrey Trammel, 1122 Clark Ave., Waldorf, MD. 20601.

9 July NORTHERN VIRGINIA, (301) 569-9378: **NEW MEETING PLACE!!!** Dolly Madison Branch, Fairfax County Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. Directions: From the Beltway - Exit to Route 123 North to McLean. Go through 4 lights to Old Dominion Dr (Charlie's Place is on the corner). Turn right and then left onto Ingleside Dr (first cross street after leaving Old Dominion). Go one block to the library. From GW Parkway - exit on Rte 123 South, go through 4 lights to Ingleside Dr. and turn right to library. Subject will be AIR LAYERING and Pete Jones will demonstrate. Bring trees for air-layering. Workshop will follow. Bring trees and equipment to do tasks outlined on the Jul schedule. Meeting starts at 10:00 a.m.

14 July ANNAPOLIS, (301) 263-3995: 7:30 p.m. at the Annapolis Library on Thursday West Street. Workshop with emphasis on indoor material or junipers. People with older bonsai are encouraged to bring all kinds of trees for exchange of ideas - for second part of program.

Note: No meeting in August.

30 July BROOKSIDE, (301) 593-4681: 12 Noon, special tour of Janet Lanman's Saturday collection and picnic, bring your own lunch. Don't forget to bring your bathing suits as our hostess has made available her pool. Directions: 9120 Burdette Rd, Bethesda, Md. Get off 495 at River Road toward Washington. **RAPIDLY GET INTO LEFT LANE!!!** Turn left onto Burdette Rd. Go approximately one mile across Bradley Boulevard and up a slight hill. 9120 Burdette Road will be on your left.

10 July BOWIE, (301) 262-8578: Tree identification field-trip to the Sunday National Arboretum. Bowie members meet to car-pool in the Bowie Community Center Parking Lot at 1:30 p.m. Others wishing to meet at the Arboretum be at the Arboretum Administration Building at 2:00 p.m.

24 July KIYOMIZU, (301) 423-8230: Guided tour of 3 nurseries in the area. Sunday Get acquainted with the nurseries and what they stock. Rendezvous at Joan Stephen's home at 2:00 p.m.

For information on the Baltimore Club telephone (301) 669-1847

The Washington Club will not meet in August or July, - meetings will resume in September



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Hot Stuff

Dennis Hamel (pronounced Ha mel), one of our speakers for the Symposium and a PBA member, is the source of this one. Since I'm not a great fan of chemical warfare of any kind, have a dog, neighborhood cats, and various wildlife in my yard, I'm especially reluctant to use chemical pesticides. Dennis gave me a formula for keeping pesties off my trees by making the trees impalatable rather than poisonous. He has some long name beginning with a "T" for it, but I call it pepper slurry.

Chop up several hot peppers and boil them in water for a while; let cool, then strain, retaining the liquid. Spray your trees with that. It does not harm them, even if you would get third degree burns all the way down should you be foolish enough to drink the stuff. The only thing it doesn't seem to affect, he says, is white flies. Repeat as you see the beasties coming back.