

POTOMAC
BONSAI
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

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Bonsai Tools and Techniques By: Jules Koetsch

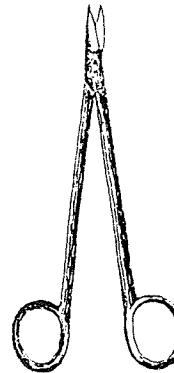
This is the second in a three part series on Japanese bonsai tools and techniques.

SCISSORS FOR CUTTING LEAVES/SPROUTS

PURPOSES FOR USING

A scissor with a small size blade of less than 3 centimeters (1 1/4 inches) is employed for cutting sprouts and on Japanese maples (momiji), trident maples (kaide), Japanese gray bark elm (keyaki) and the like - it is used for leaf cutting.

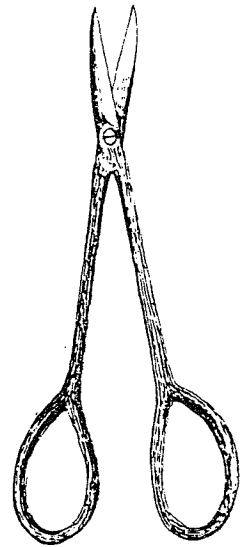
Besides the above, it is important except for leaf cutting, that the scissor should be



Sprout cutting
scissor



Leaf cutting
scissor



Grape scissor

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

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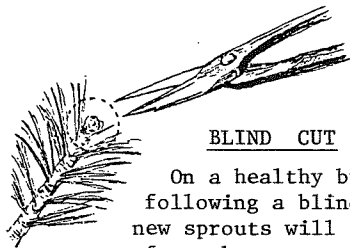
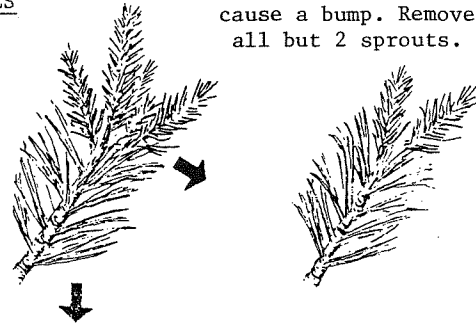
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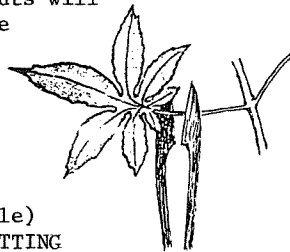
USES

Too many sprouts will cause a bump. Remove all but 2 sprouts.



BLIND CUT

On a healthy branch, following a blind cut new sprouts will grow from the cut.

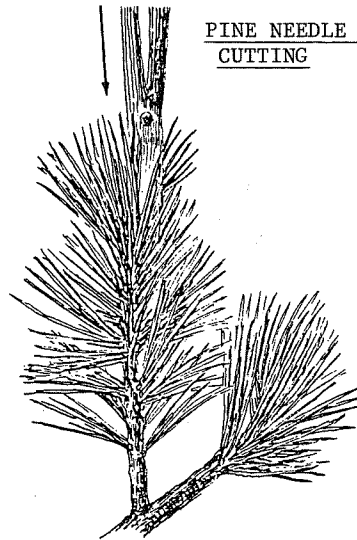


MOMIJI (maple)
LEAF CUTTING

pointed so that they can be moved through a blind area before opening the scissors.

A scissor used for cutting the needles of pines is distinguished from one used for leaf-cutting on deciduous trees (leaf-cutting scissors) but the former can be used for both purposes.

PINE NEEDLE CUTTING



Pine needle pruning - enter with scissors parallel to the new branch so that the branch wont be injured when cutting needles.

BRANCH AND ROOT CUTTERS

PURPOSES FOR USING

These scissors have a distinctive feature in that the blades are shaped to give a scooped-out cut and are sturdy enough to be employed in cutting thick branches and thick roots even on hardwood trees.

For cutting dead branches at right angles on hardwood trees such as Japanese apricot (ume) and Japanese hawthorn (sanzushi) where the opening of the branch cutter is limited by its stop and cannot be opened far enough, a root cutter can be a suitable substitute.

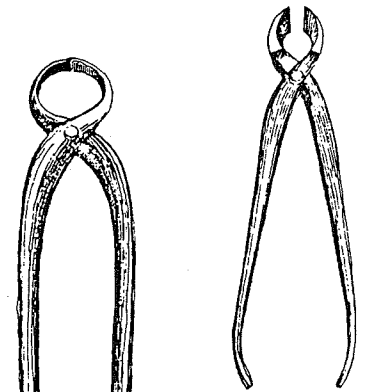
The root cutter can conveniently select thick roots for cutting from those in a tangle of roots. The branch cutters are shaped so that they cut into the bark of the trunk and leave a scooped-out area.

BRANCH CUTTERS - USAGE

Medium and small branches are removed in stages,- first the branch is cut with a pruning scissor thereby leaving a stub.

The branch cutter is then used to make the finishing cut,- a hollow cut into the trunk.

Fully open the branch cutter prior to making the cut and as soon as there is a feeling of restraint to the edges, apply pressure to scoop out enough of the trunk. If the trunk is not scooped out, the space cannot heal shut without creating a bump.



Branch Cutter

Root Cutter

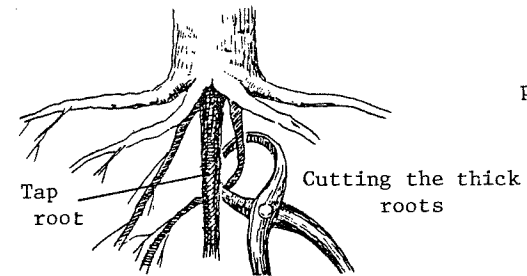
Outside of blade

USE

First cut with pruning scissors

Next cut the stub using the branch cutter.

Coat the cut with india ink or the like.



WIRE CUTTER AND WIRE REMOVERS - INTENDED USES

INTENDED USES

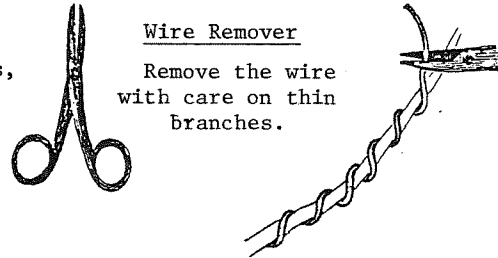
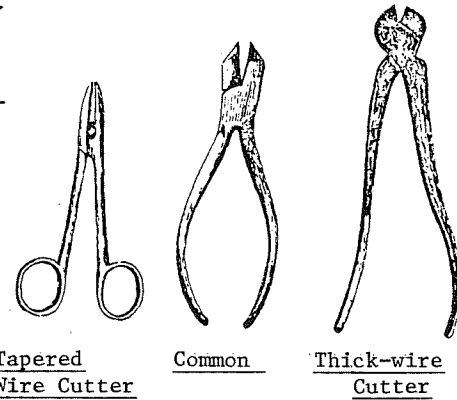
The use of wire is indispensable in correcting or training a bonsai and one is apt to use a scissor for cutting wire. However, since that practise will damage the blades of the scissor and also possibly the tree, one should positively use a wire cutter.

The general practise without fail is to cut the length of the wire prior to wiring the trunk or branch. Cut the excess wire length after wiring so that the remaining wire lies next to the bark.

In the space of a number of months, due to wind and rain, not only will the wire have lost its new look but it will have hardened and probably cut into the bark in a number of places. To prevent wounding the bark, the wire should be removed in due time.

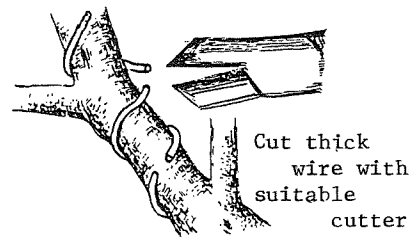
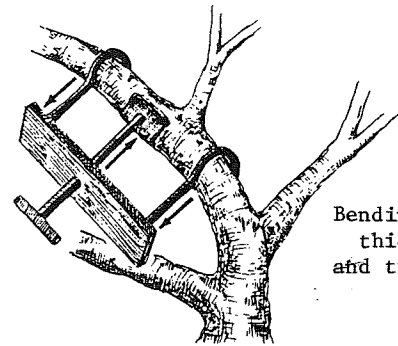
There are two types of wire cutters, those for thick wire and those for thin wire.

The wire remover type is used as shown in the diagram, for thin branches and the thin ends of branches in order not to cut through the thin branches.



LEVER JACKS (JIYATSUKI) INTENDED USAGE Lever jacks are used to correct trunks and branches on large and medium size bonsai but are almost never used on small bonsai and bonsai with thin branches and trunks.

Lever jacks can be used on all species of trees. The lever jacks are used on thick branches and trunks to adjust them by bending them to conform

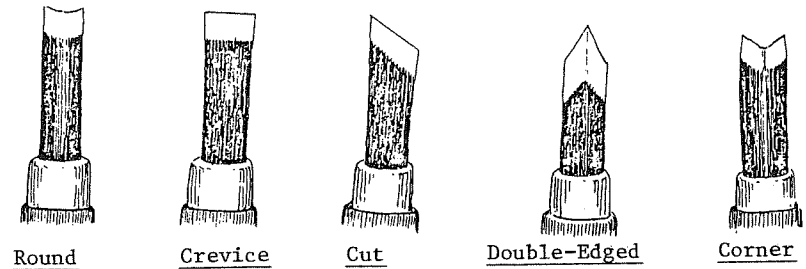


to the desired patterns and to their physical limits.

In order to make a bend with the desired result, do not make the mistake of trying to do it with one application but if necessary in a series of applications to different positions. Lever jacks are more likely to wound the bark than wire and should be used where injury to the bark is not likely.

CARVING TOOLS, CHISELS, KNIVES

Chisels



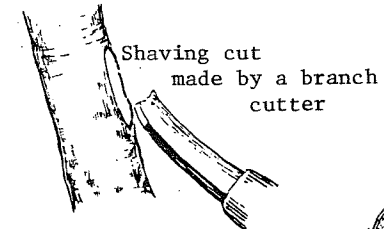
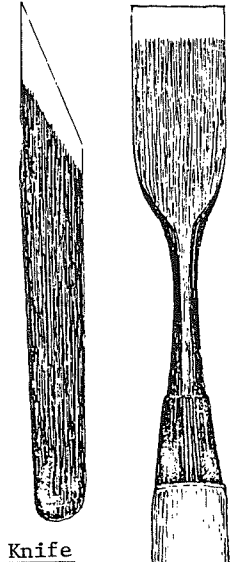
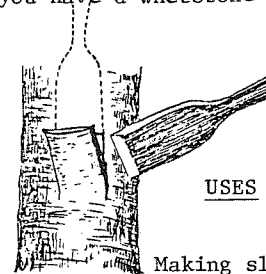
VARIETY AND USES

At some period in time anyone, even elementary school pupils, has become very familiar with carving tools and knives. In bonsai work, different tools are used to achieve desired results through shaving and carving to create jin and shari and also to separate or divide roots, trunks, and branches.

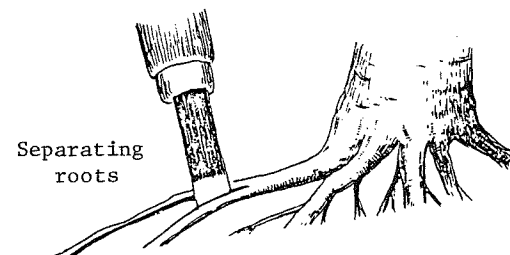
There are a diverse number of large and small knives, double-edged chisels and the like, since the length and shape of the blade are functions of the cut to be made.

Do not use a chisel to cut into thick branches or thick roots or for whittling unless you have a whetstone and can keep it sharp.

Without exception a knife is used to whittle and smooth cuts made by a saw or scissor. A knife is indispensable for making cuttings and plucking sprouts.



Chisel



TREE BRIDGE - HOW TO MAKE IT/USES

The use of a tree bridge is often neglected in deference to the use of wire which may prove to be awkward if one is spreading the fork between thick branches and the like. Please use this technique where possible, since it is simplicity personified.

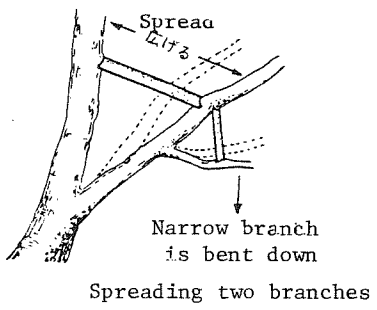
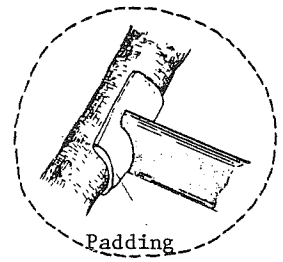
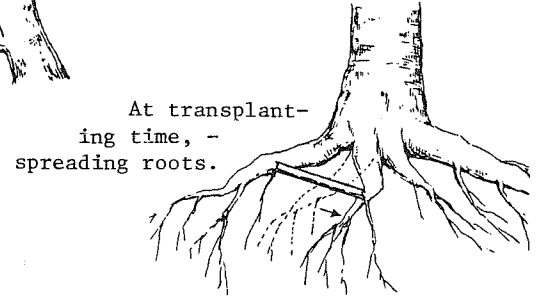
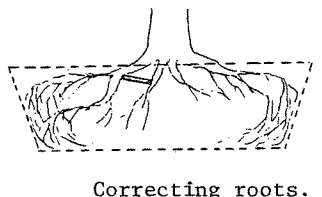
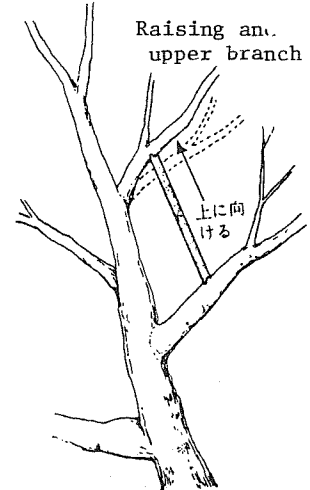
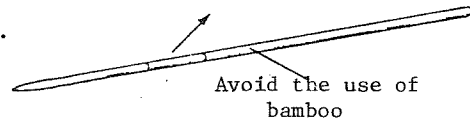
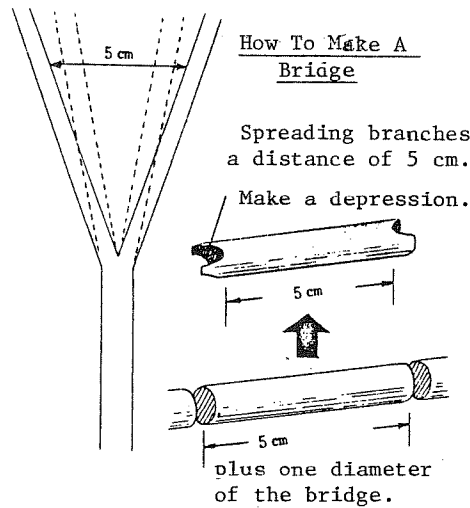
The use of a bridge is justifiable for fruit trees and the like and where the anticipated small size impression made by the bridge is justifiable.

The tree bridge is useful on young trees of the crab-apple (hime ringo) and Japanese apricot (ume) varieties and the like where it necessary to open up the natural shape of the tree.

The diagrams indicate the extent to which the bridge can be used.

Make the bridge, - avoiding the use of bamboo as the material, to the proper length and provide a depression at each end.

It is prudent to place some padding at each end of the bridge so the force exerted by the bridge will not wound the tree.



TWO BONSAI STOLEN

IN CLOSTER, N.J.
APX. OCT 1, '83

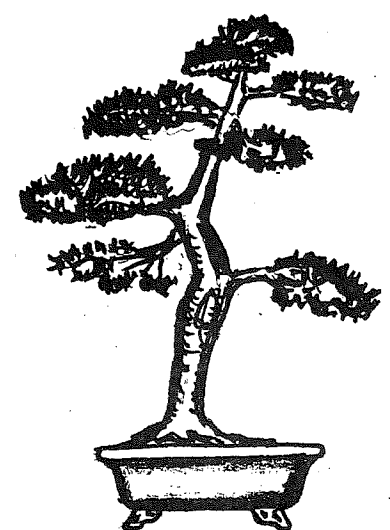
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DWARF MUGHO PINE
TWIN TRUNK- TRAINED 20+ YRS
OVERALL HGT: APX. 2' - 4".
CONTAINER: BROWN, UNGLAZED,
RECTANGULAR - ROUNDED EDGES,
FUTA-SUJI STYLE (DOUBLE BAND),
APROX. 18 INCHES WIDE.



DWARF SCOTH PINE
VERY SHORT TIGHT NEEDLES - BLUE GREEN,
OVERALL HGT. APX 2'-8" TRAINED 16+ YRS.
CONTAINER: DARK BLUE GLAZE,
MANY BLUE SHADES + WHITE STREAKS,
RECTANGULAR - ROUNDED EDGES,
SUMI-IRI STYLE - CLOUD FEET -
APX 15"-16" WIDE - 60 TO 80 YRS OLD.



Sometimes Elegant Wisteria Must Be Coaxed to Flower

By ERIC ROSENTHAL

Of all garden flowers that have come from the Orient, wisteria is perhaps the most elegant. From the middle of this month to the end, Chinese and Japanese varieties display breathtaking chains of purple, lilac, pink or white blossoms. A sweet perfume complements their delicate beauty perfectly.

Actually the vines are rugged and grow vigorously. When trained on a building for support, they attain heights of 25 to 30 feet and more. Famed for longevity, the massive, woody trunks become marvelously twisted with age.

Now for the bad news. Wisterias are the original wallflowers. They are so shy, grafted vines may be 10 to 15 years old before blossoming. Some wisterias are worse than late-bloomers; they are never-bloomers.

Here are some reasons. One myth to dispose of right away. Wisteria does not need a mate of the opposite sex to flower. Its flowers are bisexual.

First: Since flower buds form in autumn, they may be winterkilled in extremely cold locations. Gardeners who live in southern Canada are known to take down wisteria vines in fall and cover them with soil or hay to protect the buds.

Second: Shade. Established vines grow but do not bloom in shade. Little can be done to correct this because wisteria transplants poorly unless container-grown. The options are to accept the vines' flowerless fate or to discard the plants.

Third: Rich soil loaded with nitrogen leads to stem and leaf growth, but a dearth of blooms. Adding nitrogen fertilizer only makes things worse. Instead, apply superphosphate to spur flowering. The rule of thumb is one-half pound of superphosphate for each inch of trunk diameter.

To get superphosphate to the roots, circle the plant with an 18 to 24-inch deep trench and sprinkle in the chemical. Dig the trench one-foot away from the trunk for every inch of trunk diameter. This is a chore, but it accomplishes a second purpose: root pruning. Combined with judicious stem pruning in summer and winter, spring root pruning can coax reluctant wisterias into bloom within two years.

Fourth: Pruning. How to do above-ground pruning depends upon the state of the plant. A neglected and overgrown vine should be reduced to a framework of healthy, well-placed branches in winter. Probably, more wood will be removed than will remain. Come spring, do not fertilize.

After the vine is nicely proportioned and reinvigorated, prune less drastically. In summer, trim back new shoots by about one-half. Do the same in winter. When the plant finally flowers, snip away enough new shoots after blooms fade to keep the vine from running rampant.

In winter, eliminate excess growth by cutting new shoots to within five or six buds of the original branch. Flower buds appear plump and pointed. Also, remove any weak or deadwood. The virtue of patience must never be lost on wisteria. Sad to say, some vines flower when they are good and ready, despite the best known treatments.

Of the 10 known species, Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) and Japanese wisteria (*W. floribunda*) reign as overwhelming favorites of American gardeners. The Chinese species is the most popular. Its blossoms burst open all at once before the foliage appears. Vines can overflow with dozens of clusters seven to 14-inches long.

Blossoms of the hardier Japanese wisteria open progressively from cluster base to tip and create a more ethereal quality. These clusters frequently grow to 18 inches in length.

Eric Rosenthal is a freelance writer.

When not in flower, a clue to each type's identity is the direction of the vine's twining. Chinese wisteria always twines from left to right; Japanese from right to left. Train the vines in the correct direction and they will climb more quickly.

Leaflets of the feather-shaped foliage of Chinese wisteria are fewer but larger than those of the Japanese vine. In autumn, leaves of the Japanese species turn yellow; the Chinese type exhibits no fall color. Both kinds bear long and velvety pealike seed pods from summer into winter.

Japanese wisteria, violet in the species form, comes in differently colored varieties. *Rosea* sports fragrant pale pink flowers tinged with purple. *Longissima* produces long, light pink flower clusters; *Longissima alba* has similar clusters in white. The longest hang from red-violet *Macrobotrys*. Other lovely Japanese varieties are white *Shiro Noda*; violet *Geisha* and pink-white *Kuchi Beni*. *Issai* is a deep violet variety.

Professional plantsmen suggest that a third vine, a hybrid cross between Chinese and Japanese often is mis-identified and actually may be more common than either of its illustrious parents. Called *Formosa wisteria*, this one retains flowers and leaves from its Chinese heritage and fragrance and clockwise twining from Japanese genes. Blossoms of true Chinese wisteria have little or no scent so fragrant types sold as Chinese probably are *Formosa*.

Compact clusters of Chinese and *Formosa wisterias* feature the classic blue-violet color. Two Chinese varieties, *Jako* and *Alba*, are white.

Wisteria vines seem to be made for draping over fences, arbors, pergolas and porches. They can even grow upon mature, sturdy trees, but could strangle younger trees. Wooden trellises are too fragile for wisteria. Instead, build sturdy wire supports especially where the vines are to cover a building.

For a brick wall, insert screw eyes into mortar joints. Use long screw eyes to permit extra growing spaces between the wire and wall. Then connect the hardware with galvanized wire stretched taut.

Where a climbing vine is inappropriate, gardeners can create a free-standing "tree-form" or standard wisteria. Such a plant is initially staked to support it while in training. Top-pruning year after year forces the trunk to develop a treelike form.

Terrace and patio gardeners grow wisterias in containers, either as climbers or standards. Possibly because roots are restricted, pot-grown wisterias often bloom profusely. Water and fertilize more regularly than vines planted in ground.

Nurserymen experienced with wisterias sometimes sell clones of vines that have flowered quickly in the past. If a nursery offers plants already in bloom, grab them.

Getting a new wisteria off to a healthy start is simple. Give it sun and shelter from strong winds. Improve heavy clay soil drainage by mixing in peat moss and enrich extremely sandy soil with leafmold. Plant each vine about one-foot from its support. Attach young branches as they grow and take care to twine them in their natural direction. Water wisteria well the first season, then keep the faith. ☐

The above is some information on how to get wisteria to bloom.

Where?

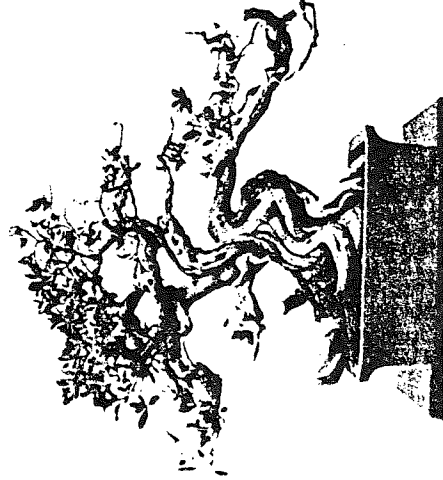
At the U.S. National Arboretum!

The unique collection of Japanese bonsai — the remarkable bicentennial gift from the people of Japan — attracts thousands of visitors annually.

A juxtaposition of Japanese and American bonsai will provide a study in similarities and differences that will be stimulating from both the artistic and the horticultural points of view.

"All the world comes to Washington"

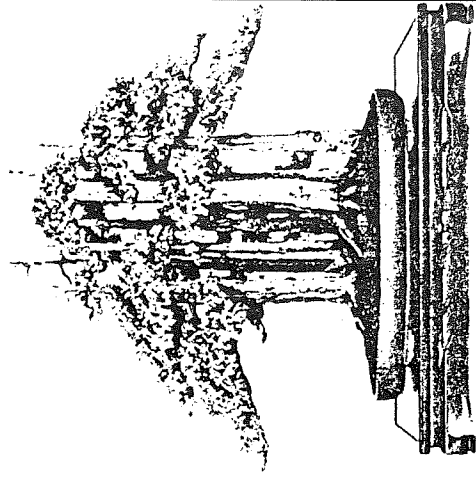
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A NATIONAL HOME FOR AMERICAN BONSAI

Who?



The National Bonsai Foundation Inc. was organized by a group of bonsai enthusiasts in response to public interest in developing a permanent national display area primarily for outstanding American bonsai and also for specimens of special interest from other parts of the world. The Foundation, a non-profit organization, is spearheading the drive to design, build and operate an American Bonsai Pavilion at the U.S. National Arboretum. The Arboretum is enthusiastically cooperating with the Foundation.

How?

11

Why?

Interest in the art of bonsai has grown tremendously in the United States and in other parts of the world. It is no longer strictly an oriental art form. While the techniques are universal, adaptations by different cultures in different climates show fascinating variations.

Superb bonsai are being created in America using native plant materials trained to express native habitats and manners of growth.

Some of these masterpieces should be gathered together in a permanent display for inspiration, study and delight.

With money, of course!
And just as important, with ideas, encouragement, and energetic cooperation of every bonsai enthusiast and every bonsai club in the United States.

Questions? Write to The National Bonsai Foundation, U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

Ready to help? Fill out the form, send it with your ideas and your check made out to The National Bonsai Foundation to the above address.

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AMERICAN HORTICULTURIST

Why We Get Autumn Color

Have you ever wondered what makes the leaves on the trees turn bright colors in the fall? What brings on the autumnal blaze of glory? Internal chemistry, you may say, brought on by the change of seasons. But that doesn't really answer the question. How do the red maples, somber green throughout the growing season, turn a blazing crimson? How do the giant sugar maples glow yellow, orange or scarlet? And how do the aspens, which clothe our western mountains, turn into a sea of gold?

First, as everyone knows, non-evergreen trees drop their leaves each fall. Evergreens drop theirs, too, but not all at once. All season long they are green, the result of the presence of a complex and not yet fully understood material called chlorophyll within the leaves. We know chlorophyll takes hydrogen from the water brought up to it from the roots and combines it with the carbon from the carbon dioxide in the air to make starch and then soluble sugars, which feed the plant.

When fall comes and the days become shorter and the nights cooler, a layer of corky material, called an abscission or cutting-off layer, gradually forms across the point where the leaf stem is attached to the twig. As this layer grows it gradually cuts off the supply of cell sap going into the leaf. Consequently, the manufacture of chlorophyll gradually ceases and what chlorophyll is present slowly deteriorates.

The chlorophyll masks or hides the presence of other materials in the leaves. When chlorophyll disappears, however, these other substances show through. One is carotene, the same substance that gives the color to butter, carrots and the



Illustration by Elizabeth Ayella

yolks of eggs. Another is xanthophyll. These chemicals become the source of the yellows and oranges found in the leaves. Another substance is anthocyanin, which is not

merely a pigment but is believed by many to be a sugar dissolved in the sap, and which, if the sap is distinctly acid, turns the leaves a bright red; if less so and bordering more on the alkaline side, the leaves turn purplish. The third color, brown, is not a color in the same sense at all but the result of fading in yellow and orange foliage and, likely, the presence of tannins. In those cases where the leaves remain green until they drop, it is because their abscission layer permits the passage of some sap, and chlorophyll manufacture continues almost until the leaves fall off.

Why are the colors so much more intense in some seasons than others, especially the reds? This is the result of the weather. Bright, sunny days encourage the manufacture of sugars—and anthocyanins—and cool nights (under 45°F) prevent their proper dispersal throughout the plant. This is the reason why trees growing in low places or "cold pockets" are often better colored than those growing on the sides or tops of hills. Access to the sun is the reason why one side of a tree may be better colored than another. It has also been found that pin oaks heavily fed with nitrogen developed deeper reds than those that were not fed.

This explanation is a somewhat simplified version of what takes place each year, with some modifications due to weather, altitude, moisture supply and species of tree. This last factor is especially important. Some areas, such as most of Europe, fail to have the brilliant autumns we do in the Eastern United States because the right species of trees do not grow there.

—Edwin F. Steffek

November and December Schedule

Key:

- B - Buy tree
- C - Cut-off leaves
- D - Leaves fall off
- F - Fertilize
- I - Use insecticide
- HS - Half a day shade
- OB - Open branches
- ON - Remove old needles
- PB - Prune branches
- PS - Prune sprouts
- R - Repot
- RW - Remove wire
- Sp - Spray foliage
- V - Best viewing time
- W1 - Return to once a day watering
- W2 - Water 2 times per day
- W3 - Water 3 times per day
- Wi - Wire

- G - Put in a greenhouse or under shelter
- W1* - Water but mainly mist
- 2W - Water every other day

CONIFERS	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	DECIDUOUS	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Cypress			Beech, white	I, PB, Wi	I, PB, WI, Wi
Hinoki	Wi	I, Wi	Elm, Chinese	PB	G, I
Sawara	Wi	I	Ginkgo	- - - -	G, I, PB
Hemlock	V	I	Hackberry	PB, Wi	G, I
Juniper			Ivy, Boston	- - - -	G, I
Needle	- - - -	I, W1*	Hornbeam	Red leaves	I, PB, Wi, WI
Shimpaku	R, Wi	I, Wi	Maple		
Larch	PB, RW	I	Japanese	PB, Wi,	G, I, PB, Wi, WI
Pine: Black	ON, R, WI, Wi	I, ON, Wi	Red' leaves		
Corkbark	ON, R, WI, Wi	I, R	Trident	Wi, Red	G, I, PB, Wi, WI
Red	F, ON, R, WI, Wi	I, Wi	leaves		
White	ON, PB, PS, Wi	I, PB, PS, Wi, WI	Weeping willow	- - - -	G, I, PB, Wi, WI
Spruce	PB, PS, R, WI, Wi	G			
Yew	Wi	I	FRUIT BEARING		
FLOWERING			Cotoneaster	I, Red leaves	G
Andromeda	- - - -	G	Gardenia	PB	G
Apple, crab	Wi	G, I, 2W	Holly	PB	G, 2W
Apricot	Wi	G, I	Ilex, dwarf	PB	G, 2W
Japanese			Pomegranite	Remove leaves	G, PB
Azalea	RW, WI	G, I,	Pyracantha	- - - -	G, I, PB, 2W
Cherry	- - - -	G, I, 2W			
Forsythia	- - - -	G, I, PB			
Quince	2W	G, I, 2W			
Tea, bohea	I	G			
Winter jasmine	F	G, I, WI to 2W			
Wisteria	I	G			

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10 November ANNAPOLIS (301) 263-3995: Annapolis Library on West Street
Thursday at 7:30 p.m. How to train black pines based on translations from the latest Japanese journals and some hands-on experience by Jules Koetsch. Technique is applicable to two-needle pines, especially the locally collectible pinus virginiana.

12 November NORTHERN VIRGINIA (703) 256-4615: Green Spring Farm Park
Saturday Horticultural Center, 4601 Green Spring Road, Annandale behind (Jerry's Ford on Little River Turnpike). A member of the staff will give a lecture on Japanese gardens and their relationship to bonsai. The meeting will conclude with members offering comments and answering questions on Winter care for bonsai. Members who have bonsai showing Fall color are encouraged to bring them to the meeting. Microfoam for Winter protection will be available (on sale) for those interested in Winter protecting their plants using this wrap-around the pot technique. Meeting starts at 10:00 a.m.

13 November BOWIE (301) 262-8578: Bowie Community Center at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday Styling workshop with Joyce Pelletier, - bring your own plant material, wire, tools, etc. Winterizing will be discussed.

19 November WASHINGTON (202) 583-2676: National Arboretum at 2:00 p.m.
Saturday Winterizing and seed collection.
NO MEETING IN DECEMBER ! ! !

19 November BROOKSIDE (301) 593-4681: Argyle Community Center. Starting
Saturday at 10:00 a.m. DORIS FRONING lecture/demonstration. ALL members are urged to attend this expert's informative visit. Subject of the lecture/demonstration will be name. Please plan now to attend this special event. Following the lecture/demonstration, there will be a workshop at approximately 1:00 p.m. As the workshop will be limited to eleven participants, please make your reservations now by calling Bill Spencer at (301) 593-4681. Participants are strongly urged to supply their own plant material. However, for those without material, a limited amount will be made available. Fee for the workshop will be \$15.00 per person. There will be a \$3.00 fee to observe. This is a unique opportunity. Don't pass it up!!

20 November BALTIMORE (301) 669-1847: Cylburn Nature Center at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday BBC meeting will be on collecting trees for bonsai, - slides from collecting trips will show trees in nature and methods for digging and balling them. Dreams for next year will be discussed. Bring problem trees for design by committee. There will also be a panel discussion on Winterizing Bonsai.

4 December KIYOMIZU (301) 423-8230: NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER ! ! !
Sunday Potluck Christmas dinner in a member's house. Members will be notified concerning all particulars.

8 December ANNAPOLIS (301) 263-3995: Annapolis Library on West Street
Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Bring indoor bonsai for discussion on care and styling.

11 December BOWIE (301) 262-8578: Bowie Community Center at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday Slides by Fred Mies on Japan and Japanese bonsai. Bring inexpensive gifts for a Christmas grab-bag.

18 December BALTIMORE (301) 669-1847: Cylburn Nature Center at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday BBC holiday fun fest - a covered dish dinner - a chance to share bonsai stories and have a good time with your fellow club members. A guest speaker will provide the afternoon's entertainment. The hospitality committee will be in touch with everyone as soon as plans are finalized.

Calendar Continued

22 December BROOKSIDE CHRISTMAS PARTY (301) 593-4681: Argyle Community
Thursday Center 7:30 p.m. As last year there will be first class refreshments. There will also be a bonsai grab-bag so plan now for bringing a modest gift.

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