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POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION
% U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM
3501 NEW YORK AVE. NE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

PBA NEWSLETTER:

Published by the Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc. (PBAI), a non-profit organization, in the interests of its affiliate member clubs and societies.

CIRCULATION:

Over 400 internationally on a monthly basis.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

PBA membership includes 12 monthly Newsletters covered by part of the annual membership dues. Corresponding membership: \$6.50 for 12 monthly Newsletters. Make checks payable to Potomac Bonsai Association and mail to M. Hersh, 102 Devon Ct. Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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ADVERTISEMENTS and/or ARTICLES: send to the editor.

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Secretary: Julie Walker; Treasurer: Molly Hersh

POTOMAC
BONSAI
ASSOCIATION

Vol 18 No 6 June 1988

Newsletter

ISSN 0160-9521



**PAST
DUES ARE DUE !!!**
**THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE
UNLESS YOU PAID UP**

(Members: Pay your local club treasurer)
(Corresponding members: Please send \$6.50 to
M. Hersh, 102 Devon Ct., Silver Spring, MD 20910)

(Note: As promised last Fall, those persons who were members of PBA and had paid full registration to attend the 1987 PBA Annual Symposium, will be given free membership in PBA for 1988. Your local club treasurer will be provided a list of those qualifying for that.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4 June Saturday

BALTIMORE (301) 235-5336: Loch Raven Branch, Baltimore County Public Library, 1046 Taylor Ave. from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. New member workshop for all who joined PBA between June '86 and May '88. They should make plans to attend this FREE workshop sponsored by the Potomac Bonsai Association (lecture, book, and starter tree to each attendee.) See details in this issue.

June Outdoor workshops at members homes, bring trees for advice, and to work on. Information on those will be passed along.

6 June Saturday

NATIONAL ARBORETUM from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Introductory Workshop for Beginners. This workshop will be offered on a one-time only basis to new members. See the May 1988 PBA Newsletter for details.

11 and 12 June Saturday and Sunday

ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, Smithsonian Institution. A lecture and demonstration of TRADITIONAL CHINESE FLOWER ARRANGING will be given on the above dates starting at 1:30 p.m. in the Concourse of the S. Dillon Ripley International Center, Ripley Center Lecture Hall. Enter through the kiosk at 1100 Jefferson Drive, S.W. This is being sponsored by the members of the Foundation for Traditional Flower Arranging, sponsored by the National Museum of History in Taipei. Reservations required: call (202) 357-4886. There will also be a display of Chinese flower arranging in the Concourse from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

11 June Saturday

NORTHERN VIRGINIA (703) 591-0864: 10:00 a.m. General Workshop Day at the home of John Simpson, 3617 Ridgeway Terrace, Lake Barcroft. You can plan to stay until 2:00 p.m. so bring a lunch if you wish, - liquid refreshments will be provided. This will be outdoors so - bring trees to work on, - especially the beginners who attended the 4 June Beginner's Workshop at the Arboretum bring their starter trees; a card-table and chair if you can; and all the items you may need such as tools, wire, soil, pot, etc. In case the weather is threatening, telephone (703) 256-4615.

11 June Saturday

NATIONAL ARBORETUM at 10:30 a.m. Lawrence Lee, Curator of the Asian Collections, will lead a walk through the Garden Club of America planting featuring many superb shade loving plants and the Arboretum's newly landscaped Asian Valley where he will point out and discuss some of the interesting trees and shrubs as well as herbaceous plants from China, Japan, and Korea found in this picturesque landscaped planting. Mr. Lee will also discuss the ongoing development of China Road which will feature plants collected on recent plant collecting expeditions to The Peoples Republic of China. The walk will last approximately one hour and will begin promptly from the parking area adjacent to the GCA Planting (by number 41 on map).

14 June Tuesday

NATIONAL ARBORETUM 1:00 p.m. BONSAI REFINEMENT WORKSHOP. Robert Dreschler, Curator of the National Collection, will conduct a Bonsai Refinement Workshop in which he will assist individuals in repotting or refinement of their own bonsai plants, according to seasonal requirements. Participants must bring their own bonsai plants, bonsai tools, wire, container and soil if repotting is planned. The Arboretum will provide no supplies or equipment. Advance registration is required, and enrollment will be limited to five (5) persons. To register, please phone the Education Department at 475-4857. A fee of \$12.00 sent in advance to the Education Department, will be charged. A reduced fee of \$10.00 will be charged to FONA members. All checks should be made out to Friends of the National Arboretum and sent to the Arboretum Education Department, 3501 New York Avenue, N.E. Washington, DC 20002. Bonsai Refinement Workshops will be held on the second Tuesday of each month. PREREQUISITE: A BEGINNING BONSAI CLASS.

18 June Saturday

KIYOMIZU (301) 423-8230 Again in June the club will make their second annual trip to the McColloughs. This will take place on this date. The club will take pot luck in a picnic. There will be boating, swimming and perhaps another demo by Chuck. This was a great day for those who attended last year and it is expected to be repeated this year. Arrive by noon. At this meeting, the activities for the next 6 months will be planned.

18 June Saturday

WASHINGTON (202)583-2676: National Arboretum at 2:00 p.m.
For new members,- bring trees from the 4 June Beginner's Workshop.
This will also be a meeting to plan the program for the coming year.

25 June Saturday

WOLF TRAP NURSERY and GREENHOUSE (703) 759-4244: 11:00 a.m. to noon - lecture demonstration followed by 1-1/2 hours of general questions and answers. Topic: HANDLING SUMMER PROBLEMS. Due to limited space, phone reservations are advised. Topic and date are subject to change.

A number of the clubs will not be holding formal meetings during the summer months.

PLEASE SEND YOUR FALL SCHEDULES TO THE EDITOR ASAP ! ! !

The clubs which have not indicated any meetings for July can be contacted as follows:

Baltimore - (301) 235-5336
Brookside- (301) 381-6549
Bowie - Jim Sullivan - Work 496-5195, Home 262-9633
Kiyomizu - (301) 423-8230
Mei-Wa Penjing Society (301) 390-6687
Washington - (202) 583-2676

9 July Saturday

NORTHERN VIRGINIA (703) 591-0864 Green Spring Horticulture Center at 10:00 a.m. NATIVE TREES - Lecture/demonstration on trees that are available for the collector in this area.

11 July Tuesday

NATIONAL ARBORETUM at 1:00 p.m.m TREE VIDEOS. Two videos, TREES: HOW TO KNOW THEM and TREES AND THEIR CARE. In the Administration Building Classroom.

30 July Saturday

WOLF TRAP NURSERY and GREENHOUSE (703) 759-4244: 11:00 a.m. to noon - lecture demonstration followed by 1 1/2 hours of general questions and answers. Topic: PLANNING FOR YOUR BONSAI'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. Due to limited space, phone reservations are advised. Topic and date are subject to change.

NOTE: ANY CLUB MEMBER CAN ATTEND ANY PBA MEMBER CLUB'S MEETING.

CHALLENGE GRANT

An anonymous donor has given the National Bonsai Foundation a challenge. Funds raised by the Foundation during the months of May and June 1988 will be matched dollar for dollar up to a top of \$117,000. The Foundations has already raised approximately \$325,000 towards a goal of \$500,000 for constructing the John Y. Naka Pavilion for North American bonsai. The challenge grant, if achieved, will provide sufficient funds to start construction this year.

If you have not contributed, this is the time to do so--each dollar sent now will be worth two dollars. Join the Committee of Thousands--your membership will be worth two thousand dollars! If you have already made a contribution, another one now will help. Please send checks to:

The National Bonsai Foundation
P.O. Box 32377
Washington, D.C. 20007

Bill Merritt

- Note: 1. Contributions to the National Bonsai Foundation are tax deductible.
2. It behooves all of us to put forth some effort to help get the John Y. Naka Pavilion underway. As people interested in bonsai, we have much to gain having such a bonsai pavilion at the National Arboretum.

PBA SPRING AUCTION

The PBA Auction at the The Behnke Nurseries was the most successful yet. Gross receipts totaled \$6,882.00-- the PBA share will amount to \$1,032.30 (less certain costs). A major part of this success was due to the auction of trees and an antique pot donated by Jane and Shields Henley. Receipts from the Henley collection amounted to \$3,485.00. The Henleys have generously contributed \$2,962.25 to the National Bonsai Foundation and \$522.75 to PBA.

We wish to thank all those who helped make the auction such a success. The Behnke Nurseries were most cooperative in letting us use their facilities and advertising the auction. We are indebted to the Henleys for donating their collection. Specially appreciated were efforts of Julian Adams from Lynchburg who made all of the arrangements with the Henleys and who trucked the collection up from Newport News in time for the auction on Saturday morning.

Bill Merritt

* * * * *

The letter on the facing page was forwarded by Bill Merritt with this note:-

Jules:

Hope you can find room for this letter in a forthcoming Newsletter.

A lot of people helped - this is the only way I know to let them know they were appreciated

- Thanks -
Bill

VISTA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

1400 M Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 429-1700
Telex: 440237
Cable: VISTAHI WASHINGTONDC

Executive Office

May 2, 1988

Mr. Howard Herrington, President
Northern Virginia Bonsai Society
5207 Kings Park Drive
Springfield, VA 22151

Dear Mr. Herrington:

The management and staff of the Vista International Hotel wish to thank all the members of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society who helped make our "OMATSURI"-- Japanese Festival-- one of the most successful events we have presented in Washington.

Your display of bonsai during our Japanese dinners and the exhibit of trees in the lobby on April 16 and 17 were magnificent. We are mindful of the time and effort required to prepare the trees, to coordinate their exhibition, and for members to be present on the weekend during the bonsai display.

Along with the decorations from the Japan America Society, the bonsai trees added a feeling of elegance to our lobby that will always be felt whenever we reminisce the exciting events of our "OMATSURI".

Please extend our sincere appreciation to all those in the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society who helped make this an exceptional occasion.

Very truly yours,



Cindy Estis
Executive Assistant Manager

CE:bb

BOOK REVIEW

The Bonsai Book of Practical Facts

A collection of brass tacks, tips and briefings for novices and seasoned growers.

TITLE: The Bonsai Book of Practical Facts

AUTHOR: Jerome Meyer

PUBLISHER: The Purchase Publishing Co., Main P.O. Box 569,
Purchase, NY 10577; Tel: (914) 939-8775.

DESCRIPTION: A collection of brass tacks, tips and briefings
for novices and seasoned growers.

PRICE: \$15.95

BINDING: Hard cover

SIZE: 8" x 10", 128 pages, 78,000 words, 52 photographs (B/W)

BACK MATTER: References, Index

ISBN: 87-92241

PUBLICATION DATE: May 1, 1988

A copy of the above book, as you can see is "hot off the presses", arrived via Express Mail at my doorstep just as I was in the initial stages of putting together the June issue of the PBA Newsletter. The timing couldn't have been better, and after casually opening the book for a quick look-see I found myself completely captivated by the book's contents. Like the title the "common man" (whom President Herbert Hoover said that he had yet to meet), I consider myself at best among the "common bonsaiists". Although the book is intended to be of interest and value to both seasoned and novices in bonsai, as someone twixt those two extremes, I find that its contents address all my areas of concern relative to bonsai with direct, no-nonsense write-ups.

As the author phrases it; "This book is not intended to be a technical treatise on bonsai care and styling but, rather, a reference of fugitive ideas, which, like the will-o'-the-wisp, occasionally come to mind and, just as quickly depart. Capturing and documenting those facts results in this book. Some "Facts" have been derived from oral sources at bonsai meetings,

lectures, seminars and symposia as well as comments from teachers and friends. Others were drawn from personal experience and some techniques described herein have never been explored before."

The Contents by chapter are: 1. The Evolution of Bonsai, 2. The Bonsai Mystique, 3. The Birth of a Bonsai, 4. Potting Soils, 5. Trimming - Pruning - Pinching, 6. Species Specifics, 7. The Wiring Ritual, 8. Containers, 9. Moss and Lichen, 10. The Watering Dilemma, 11. Fertilizing, 12. Winter Protection, 13. Pest Control, 14. Indoor Bonsai, 15. Displaying Bonsai, 16. Collecting Bonsai, Epilogue, References, Index. It is obvious that the coverage is comprehensive.

Under the chapter 4. Potting Soils, here's a sample of the contents - the section titled "How roots work. Roots take up moisture in the form of "vapor," not free water. It isn't the thick, woody roots that perform this function, but the capillary or hair roots or fibrous roots as they are also called. They are the fine roots at the very tips of thicker roots-root hairs of almost microscopic single cells.

"Vapor which surrounds these roots, is a mixture of water and air. Vapor is water in the gaseous state. If the soil becomes sodden with free water and there is no vapor for the capillary roots to absorb- even after gravity has pulled away as much free water as possible- the capillary rootlets cannot respond, or they respond so ineffectually that the plant goes into stress.

"Eventually the capillary roots will falter. There will be a gradual decline of foliage which will not be restored until the capillary roots resume their function in the presence of vapor rather than free water.

"There are thousands of these capillary rootlets in any pot of soil, and as the capillary rootlets extend, growth above takes place. As each capillary rootlet encounters a soil opening that contains vapor, the rootlet goes on to explore another tiny pocket. The rootlets absorb this vapor by another of nature's forces called osmosis. As the rootlet grows longer, it sends out more capillaries and these, in turn, explore for more vapor and the process continues until a root "mass" is created and the plant flourishes.

"These capillary rootlets need the alternating period of moisture in the form of vapor and partial dryness. The extremes are soil that is sodden and soil that is bone dry.

This alternate environment of wetness and partial dryness enables the plant to respond with growth. If there is too much wetness, the rootlets will smother; if there is too much dryness, the capillaries will dry out and cease to function. The plant will stress again until new rootlets can be replenished.

"In a word, the only water supply available for effective absorption by plant roots is capillary water held around soil particles after the gravitational water has drained away."

Other sections of the Potting Soils chapter are titled: The soil obsession, Mechanics of plant growth, Nature's draining mechanism; Soil Construction including The basic mix, Particle size is the answer, How to establish drainage, Mechanics of good soil construction, Acquiring screens, How to use the screens, Using a screen roller, Optional screening methods; Soil Additives including Garden soil, Synthetic components, Humus, Sands; Soil Specifications covering Soil meshes, Soil mixes, Second-hand soil, Synthetic mixes and fertilizing, Synthetic soil mix advantages, How to adjust for moisture-retention, Climatic influence on potting soils, Soil variations, Soil deception, Strange soil environment, Screening rules and regulations, The interface problem, Different soils, same pot, Clogged drain holes, Restoring settled surface soil, Loam vs. synthetic media, Avoiding deadly mistakes, Soil sterilization, Drainage dilemma, Compaction study, Crusty soil, When to use fine soil, Correcting poor drainage, Drainage and watering and Planning ahead. As the above list of subjects indicates, the coverage on any of the Chapter subject areas is quite complete.

The author Jerry Meyer has had approximately twenty publications on bonsai, he was the editor of "The Bonsai Bulletin" and "Yama Ki Newsletter." He is the past president of both The Bonsai Society of Greater New York and the Men's Garden Club of Westchester, NY. He is a founder and past president of the Yama Ki Bonsai Society, Stamford, CT. He is a bonsai instructor at the the Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford, CT, and the Inter-Village Continuing Education Series, Irvington High School, Irvington, NY.

Perhaps it is the way the book is written, certainly it is because of the different way from other bonsai books that the material is handled, - the many pointers, that made me not want to put the book down. I strongly recommend that this book be a part of any bonsai person's library.

Jules Koetsch

MEI-WA PENJING SOCIETY

Akey Hung who started the Bowie Bonsai Club, has done it again. This time it is the Mei-Wa Penjing Society. Mei-Wa translates from the Chinese as Chinese-American. At the last PBA Board of Directors' meeting, it was unanimously agreed to accept the Mei-Wa Penjing Society into PBA.

How the Mei-Wa Penjing Society got started is an interesting tale, and here's how Akey relayed it to the editor last Saturday over the telephone. After the untimely death of Akey's wife, Akey took on the responsibility of escorting his daughters on Sundays to the Chinese Language School, the Mei-Hwa School, which was held at the White Oak Intermediate School. The Sunday afternoon classes ran between 2 and 4 hours which raised the question of what to do with the parents while waiting for the classes to end. Tai-Chi helped pass part of time but one hour of Tai-Chi usually is sufficient.

Well, what does any man with a passion for bonsai or in this case, penjing, do? It's obvious - he organizes a club. The Mei-Wa Penjing Society was founded in 1985 and meet when the Chinese language school meets which means every Sunday except during the winter months of December, January and February. Since the school year ends on June 5th, meetings during the summer months are held for special occasions such as when one lady showed the club how to dwarf chrysanthemums. In the spring the club usually has a field trip, - they have had 3 field trips in the past.

The Mei-Wa Penjing Society has been meeting since 1985 and Akey did a little bit of coaxing to get the members to agree to join PBA.

It is a distinct honor to welcome the Mei-Wa Penjing Society into PBA, - its current members is about 17 and it seems to keep growing. Akey believes that this is the first Chinese-American penjing club in the United States. If any readers know of any other Chinese -American penjing clubs, please let us know for I'm certain Akey would like to contact them.

ARE YOU BUGGED ?

It's "bug-time" again,- it always happens about this time of year and always after the new growth has appeared and there is that short-lived period of visual ecstasy before the enemy attacks and either makes the foliage look like swiss cheese or removes it completely. The following is a review of what appears to be on the "most wanted" list of criminal insects at this writing:

1. Pillbugs and sowbugs.
2. Slugs and snails.
3. Aphids or plant lice.
4. Gypsy moths.
5. Japanese beetles.
6. Spider mites.

Pillbugs and sowbugs: These are a common occurrence among outdoor bonsai. Pillbugs and sow bugs are those dark brown, 0.6 inch long crustaceans that one finds hiding under bonsai pots. They also have a habit of establishing a home on slab plantings and among rocks on saikei providing they can get up into those areas. Usually, with a bonsai pot they cannot navigate the sides of the pot and will settle for living beneath it. In that case they will probably not get into the pot as long as the drainage holes have screens over them.

Danger: pillbugs and sowbugs eat the tender roots of the bonsai.

Protection: Since pillbugs and sowbugs are land dwelling crustaceans, the only way in which they can get under or into your bonsai is from the ground. Hence the best remedy is to isolate the legs of the table or stand on which the bonsai rests by placing a 3-inch band of Tanglefoot (trade-name) around the legs. This sticky substance will prevent the bugs from crawling up the legs of the stands. Tanglefoot must be renewed when it has lost its stickiness.

Slugs and snails: These night marauders also come up from the ground to return to the ground or under the bonsai pot come daybreak.

Evidence: Slugs and snails eat holes in the leaves and leave slimy trails as daytime evidence of their nighttime presence.

Protection: The same as for pillbugs and sowbugs, - see above.

Aphids or plant lice: Aphids are visible along with flies on a plant. They are noticeable this year for the first time in large numbers on my bonsai. The nymphs are about 0.2 inches and the adults are up to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch with a coloration ranging from green to brown to black. In abundance, aphids may cause leaves to curl or may stunt a plant's growth and stall its production of flowers or fruit. Eventually the plant may die.

In a typical life cycle for aphids living in this climate, the winter is passed in the egg stage, glued to the stem or other parts of the bonsai. Nymphs that hatch next spring grow rapidly to become wingless stem mothers. These stem mothers give birth to young, holding the eggs inside their bodies until they hatch. Within about a week these aphids produce young in a similar manner. More than a dozen generations can then appear in a short time to form feeding clusters on plants if not attended to. At intervals some or all of the young develop wings and migrate to other plants, starting new colonies.. In some species the winged stages settle on the same species of plants while others always settle on different kinds of plants. In the autumn the females lay the fertilized eggs that overwinter to hatch the next spring.

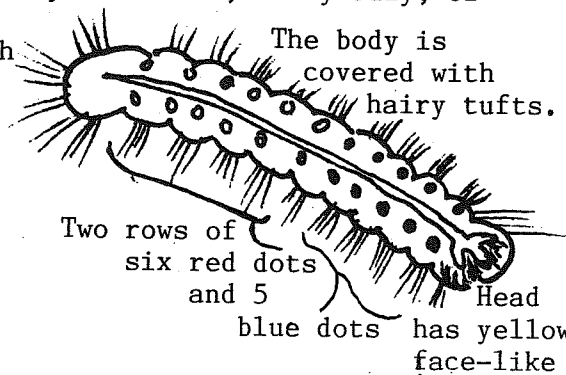
Protection: The following pesticides are listed for controlling or eradicating aphids: Cygon, Malathion, Derol, Diazin, Spectracide, and Safer (the insecticidal soap).

Gypsy moths: Edmund L. Castillo of the Washington Bonsai Club first drew the Newsletter readers' attention to the ominous threat of the gypsy moth. (See the March and April 1982 issues of the PBA Newsletter.) He noted that in the spring of 1982 the gypsy moth may be, for the first time, a threat in the Washington area. Six years later, we in this area have by now been exposed to the ever widening spread of these moths. Aerial spraying has been resorted to in and around the D.C. area. In Fairfax County the chemical Dimlin has been used. Its effect on small plants such as bonsai is unknown as well as what may happen to the ecology and health of humans in these areas. Dimilin is supposed to be effective for up to 90 days. Ecologists may recommend that instead of Dimilin that Bacillus thuringiensis(Bt) be used which however has an effective life of only a few days as compared to Dimilin's 90 days but does not have the environmental unknowns of the latter.

(See the article "Gypsy Moth Overkill - What happens to the Dimilin residue when the leaves fall?", The Washington Post Section B8 of May 15, 1988.)

According to the U.S. Government Printing Office's circular 1977 O-244-750, "the gypsy moth goes through four stages of development - egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (cocoon), and moth. It has one generation a year, overwintering in egg masses attached to trees, stones, walls, logs and other outdoor objects." (I've found them on the bricks of my house, - neighbors found them inside a garden hose cart reel, other hiding places include doghouses, under decks and porches, and under the ground cover - ivy. In fact they can be found most everywhere.) The egg masses are about the size of a quarter to half dollar with an irregular outline caused by the buff or yellowish colored puffs that may give it a thickness of about 1/4 inch in the center. The buff or yellowish color of the egg mass is due to the covering by the female moth's abdomen hairs which seals in up to 1,000 tiny pearl like eggs.

Eggs begin hatching in late April or early May. Most of them have long since now hatched and one's first evidence of the havoc to come are thin, wiggly caterpillars about 1/4 inch in length and 1/32 in. in width (bonsai caterpillars). These varmints continue to grow in size to reach monstrous proportions by late June, early July, of 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches in length. In the larger sizes one can distinguish them from tent caterpillars by the rows of blue and red dots on the gypsy moth caterpillars' backs. See the accompanying sketch. The caterpillars in the latter stage before spinning a cocoon, do descend from the trees during the daytime on silken strands to, it is believed, escape from daytime predators. Since the gypsy moth was imported from abroad in hopes of making a superior silk-spinning caterpillar but did not succeed, - the fact that they descend on silk threads and hide from predators makes sense. However, the fact that they do descend from



The body is covered with hairy tufts.
Two rows of six red dots and 5 blue dots
Head has yellow face-like pattern which
Adult Gypsy Moth Caterpillar into yellow stripe down the back.

the trees offers one possibility for eradicating the caterpillars which will be explained below. But don't tell the caterpillars that there are no predator birds in this country who savor gypsy moth caterpillars as part of their diets.

After entering a cocoon in late June, early July, the moths emerge from their dark brown pupal cases in 10 to 14 days. Males have dark-brown forewings and 1 1/2 inch wingspread. Female moths are white with a wing-spread of about 2-inches. Their flight resembles the walk of a drunken sailor.

The moths do not feed but only mate and lay eggs between July and September.

Danger: Gypsy moth caterpillars prefer hardwoods such as oak, apple, alder, aspen, basswood, hawthorn, willow, and gray and river birch. This is evident around my house where the caterpillars are not too numerous as yet and have chosen for starters the oak trees and the chestnuts. With large infestations of gypsy moths, they become less selective in choosing their food and browse on birches, beech (some have been nibbling on my buna - Japanese beech), cherry, black gum, hemlock, hickory, hornbeam, larch, maple, pine, sassafras, and spruce. Species not favored by the gypsy moth include ash, balsam fir, butternut, black walnut, catalpa, red cedar, dogwood, holly, locust, sycamore, and tulip poplar.

According to Ed Castillo, "A single gypsy moth could defoliate a good-sized bonsai collection in a few hours. The leafy trees might regenerate. The needle trees, - pines, spruce, hemlock, certainly would die."

Protection: This seems to be a series of seasonal chores.

During the fall and winter months scrape the egg masses and collect them in a container containing chlorox, alcohol or ammonia or burn them in your fireplace. Do not scrap the egg masses and let them fall onto the ground or try to crush them between your fingers. The tiny eggs are like little stones and will still hatch in the spring.

Spring - caterpillar stage - insure that the caterpillars cannot contact your bonsai. First and foremost place the bonsai so that they do not lie under or near trees, -especially those attractive to the gypsy moths. The caterpillars can come down on their silken threads and land on your bonsai or even be blown by the wind to contact your bonsai. Next, one should consider using some substance like Tanglefoot to prevent any caterpillars

from climbing up the legs of the bonsai stands. The Tanglefoot should be renewed as needed. Bonide, Orthene (a biodegradable systemic) and Sevin are insecticides to be used to combat the gypsy moths.

Summer - the moths do not feed so the only countermeasure is to try and kill them when you see them.

REMEMBER - THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST INSECTS AND DISEASE IS A HEALTHY TREE!

Japanese beetles: As soon as the threat from gypsy moths is over, the second wave hits the beachhead in the form of Japanese beetles. The grubs have prior to emerging from the soil, been feeding on roots in the ground, - mainly on grass roots. (Now I know why I have it in for lawns - all the energy and money spent on fertilizer, weed killer, pesticides, lawn mowers (fuel and repair bills not to say the original cost for said item) plus the problem of getting rid of the clippings put lawns in my category of things I could do without, - especially as a breeding ground for Japanese beetles.)

Danger: Japanese beetles attack the foliage of many types of deciduous trees but for the trees with needles they have no appetite. They swarm on plants and one of my pleasures is to catch two copulating and give them the coup de grace. The beetles skeletonize the leaves leaving the plant very unsightly if not barely surviving. I think everyone knows what a Japanese beetle looks like, - at least they are not night marauders like the gypsy moths and slugs and snails, - you can find them on your bonsai in the daytime.

Protection: Unfortunately no pesticides are effective against the adult Japanese beetles. They are such clumsy fliers that one can fill a large mouthed can partially full with water and place it under a leaf so that the beetles can be flicked off into the can to eventually die a torturous death by drowning (hee-hee). However, the above procedure does not prevent any damage being done to the leaves. The only foolproof protection is to use a screen covering or netting. Don't get beetle traps since they do more to attract more beetles to the area of the trap than they destroy.

Spider mites: Spider mites are for the most part, the unseen enemy, - the only evidence that they may be present on the

bonsai are the tell-tale webbing or strands that give these mites their name plus a stippling of the leaves, followed by a dulling or yellowing of the foliage and often leaf drop. A close examination of the leaf axils will reveal the tell-tale webbing and many species of spider mites spin a fine web containing their eggs and shed skin on the undersurfaces of leaves. When bonsai are receiving their daily spraying to provide the needed humidity, water droplets will cling to the spider mites' webs making them clearly visible. Another way of detecting the presence of spider mites is to rub the leaf between one's fingers. Since the spider mites feed on the undersurfaces of the leaves, the fingers should detect a grainy feeling on the undersides of the leaves. Lastly one can use a magnifying glass to detect the presence of spider mites or shake a leaf or branch over a piece of white paper and the mites will fall onto the paper and reveal themselves as tiny spots.

Apparently the spider mite along with the aphid lays an over-wintering type of egg which will hatch when the temperature and other conditions are right in the spring. The following table as well as some of the information in this part about spider mites was adapted from the article "A Plague Upon Those Spider Mites" by Margery Craig; ABSTRACTS Vol. 9, No. 5, November 1981; published by ABS.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THREE SPIDER MITES		Cyclamen Mite	Broad Mite	Two-spotted Mite
Optimal Growth At	Temp. °F	60	70-80	70-80
	Humidity %	80-90	high	low
Life span, weeks		4	4	3-4
No. of eggs laid		100+	100	100
Hatch in days		3-7	3	3-7
Larvae move		Slowly	Rapidly	
Life cycle, weeks		4-6	1	2 or less

Danger: Once the spider mite population grows to a certain amount the bonsai begins to lose its strength and the spider mites really take over then to cause the irreversible dying of the bonsai.

Protection: A review of the above table indicates that some spider mites thrive under humid conditions which there is much of during the summer months in the Washington, D.C., area. This fact then puts a dent in the statement that spider mites thrive in hot, dry weather, - hot yes, dry? Also since there are a batch of eggs that over-winter, does using lime-sulfur or Dormant oil in the winter really destroy the eggs? Personal experience indicates that it seems impossible to completely eliminate spider mites from my bonsai, especially since they reproduce at a rate much faster than rabbits. Furthermore I've a feeling that more than one type of spider mite from the numerous variety that do exist are on my bonsai so that when an attack of insecticide disseminates one there is another type in reserve to take over.

In view of all the above, one is left with the discouraging prospect of "is there any way out?" I've used the old standby, Kelthane (now banned from public use), but I think the Kelthane did more to weaken and kill the tree directly than have a killing effect on the mites. Of course there is the added prospect that if the spider mites reproduce every day during their few weeks of life, does one have to spray every day for a month? Right now I'm stocking up on Safer Insecticidal Soap in anticipation of launching on just that sort of daily spraying routine. A less severe alternative is to wash off the bonsai with a drenching water spray applied with as much force as the bonsai will tolerate. Persons who have household plants also use the technique of wrapping the pot and soil in the pot so that it won't fall out when the plant is inverted and immersed in lukewarm water for about 30 minutes. In Japanese bonsai nurseries, one may find that the bonsai are doused with a fine spray of water around 3:00 p.m. when the sun is not strong enough to burn the leaves. In fact the insecticides should be administered under similar conditions with early morning being a possible alternate time.

The article "Spider Mites" by Charles Staines which appeared in the PBA Newsletter Vol. 9 No. 8 August 1979, stated that: "In this area there are three common species of spider mites: the

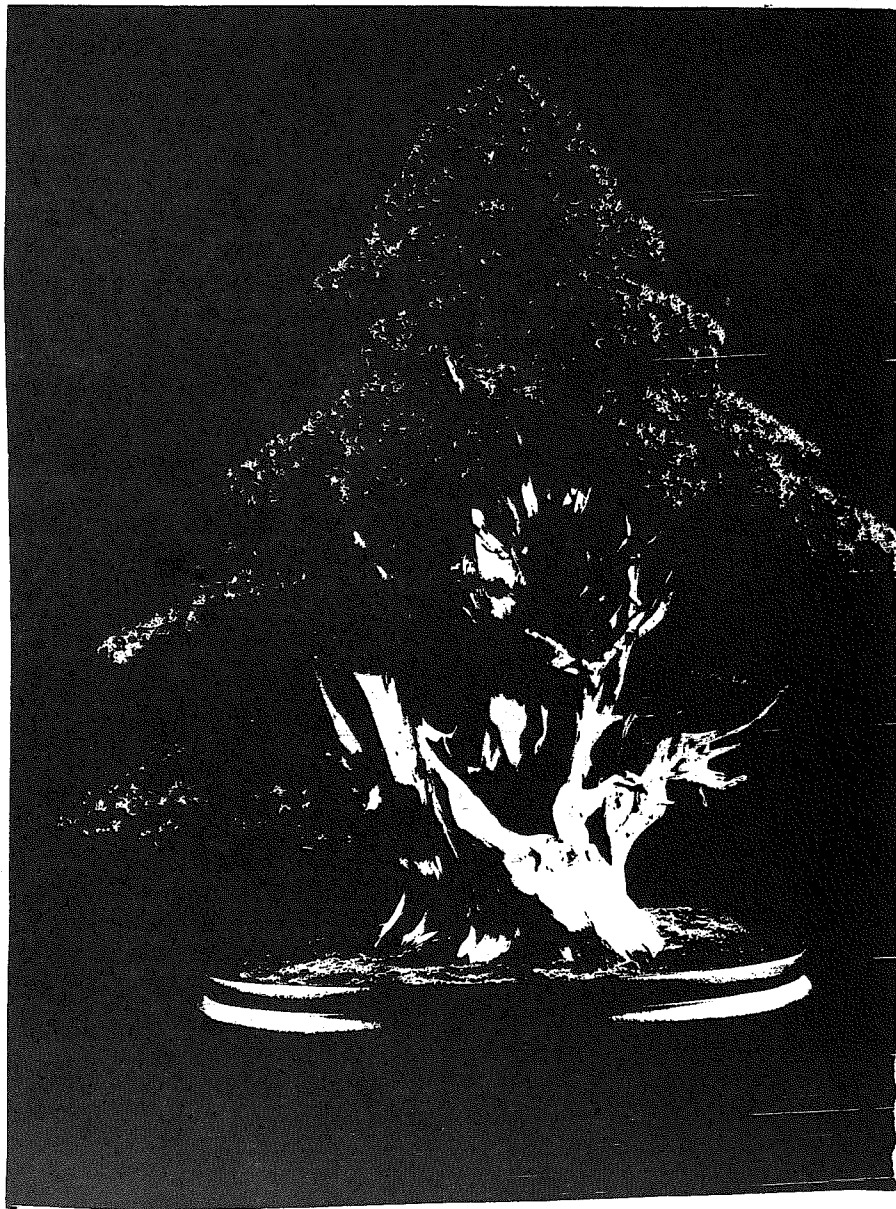
two-spotted mite (Tetranychus urticae) - yellowish body color with two reddish spots; the Southern red spider mite (Oligonychus ilicis) - red body color; and the spruce spider mite (O. ununguis) - dark green to black in body color. The southern red and the two-spotted mites attack most deciduous plants while the spruce spider mite attacks most conifers." So you see, - nothing is safe!

Postscript: If anyone has any comments or can throw further light on any of the above areas of insect control, please let us know, - thoughts and comments will be published in the Newsletter as they come in. Otherwise my only advice to protect against insect attacks is to:

1. Do not position the bonsai if at all possible, under or near trees so that insects can drop or be blown onto the bonsai from the nearby trees.
2. Isolate the legs of the benches so that slugs, snails, and caterpillars won't crawl up and get to the bonsai.
3. For spider mites and aphids use Safer insecticidal soap and/or daily rinses with water.
4. For Japanese beetles use a netting over the deciduous plants.
5. KEEP THE BONSAI AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE!

In one of the previous Newsletters, Dennis Hamel, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, member of NoVaBonSoc, suggested the use of an organic spray made by boiling hot peppers in water. The resulting broth, when cooled and sprayed on the plants is "too hot" for the wee stomachs of the insects to handle. I am sorry to say I have not tried this approach, but I'm about ready to give it a whirl. I have the hot pepper but I don't know how long to boil it. Perhaps the best check is a taste test. If you don't get a Newsletter for July, you'll know what happened.

Jules Koetsch



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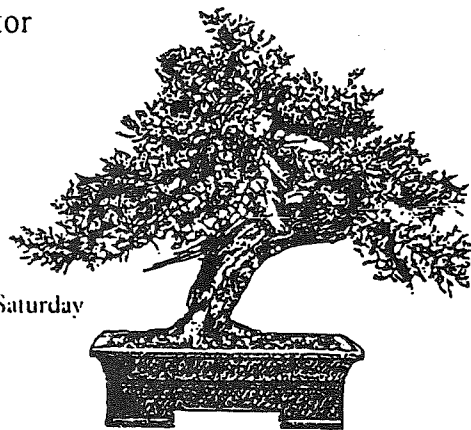
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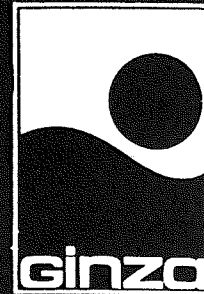
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