

June 1997

# PBA Clippings

NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION



**See Repotting a  
National Collection  
tree on page 8**

**Spending the day  
with an American  
Treasure on page 6**



<b>IN THIS ISSUE</b>	
Presidents Message	2
Calender of Events	3
Editorial	4
Care Tips	4
Naka Visit	6
Tree Horoscope	7
Repotting National Tree	8
Sensei	12



VOLUME 27 NUMBER 5 & 6, MAY/JUNE 1997

The PBA Clippings (ISSN 0160-9521) is published by the Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc. (PBA), a nonprofit organization, in the interests of its affiliate member clubs and societies. Copyright 1996 PBA.

**Subscriptions:**

PBA Member Clubs/Societies : Annual subscription is included in the membership dues paid to the PBA Club or Society of your choice. Telephone numbers of points of contact for information about any member club or society and its annual dues, are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

**Non-Member Subscriptions:**

Individuals residing within the Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia or Richmond metropolitan areas are encouraged to become members of a club to receive the newsletter. Annual subscription for 12 issues of the PBA Clippings only is US \$15.00 (US \$35 for International Mail) which should be made payable to the Potomac Bonsai Association and sent to Judy Wise, 1259 4th St., SW, Washington, DC 20024.

**Advertising Rates :**

Monthly rates: 1/6 page, \$15.00; 1/3 page, \$30.00; 1/2 page, \$45.00; full-page, \$90.00. 10% discount for 6 consecutive months prepaid, 20% discount for 12 consecutive months prepaid. Direct inquiries/payment (make checks payable to Potomac Bonsai Association) to: Jerry Antel, Jr. 6409 Middleburg Lane, Bethesda, MD 20817, (301) 320-5251. Send ad copy to editor at address listed below for articles.

Please send ad copy/articles to the editor: J. F. Koetsch, 6709 Caneel Ct., Springfield, VA 22152; (703) 569-9378.

**PBA Officers:**

President	Jack Wells
1st Vice-President	Andrew Cook
Educ. Vice-President	Chris Cochrane
Secretary	Julie Walker
Treasurer	Jerry Antel, Jr.
Membership	Judy Wise (202) 554-3045
Newsletter Editor	Jules Koetsch

**PBA Clippings staff:**

Editor	Jules Koetsch (703) 569-9378
Assoc. Ed./Art Dir.	Beth Potratz (703) 255-9386
	Email: Bonsaist.aol.com
Type Editor	Betty Yeapanis
Advertising Editor	Jerry Antel, Jr. (301) 320-5251
Sensei Sam	Steve Pilacik Rt 2 Box 147D Hurricane, WV 22526
Calender Coord	Doug French (703) 502-9426
	Email: Dfrench200.aol.com

## President's Farewell Message by Joe Gutierrez

As I reflect on my past two years' service as your president, several obligations come to mind. First is to express my gratitude to all of the members of the Potomac Bonsai Association for the trust and confidence you bestowed upon me in electing me your president for this past term. My deepest 'thanks' goes to the officers and members of the board for their great spirit of cooperation and for their very unselfish devotion to promoting the aims of our Association. I have appreciated their counsel and advice, as well as their friendship and camaraderie. It is this great spirit of teamwork that I believe is a hallmark of our organization. Your board and your officers are people in whom we can all be very proud for their unstinting generosity in sharing their time, and their expertise for everyone's benefit. I am very proud to be a member of this organization which I first joined back in the early 1970's.

Next, I would like to pay particular homage to the members of my "home" club, the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society. They have been most supportive and have given me constant encouragement these past two years. Indeed, they have been my bonsai family for all these many years that I have been active in organized bonsai.

We now have elected a new set of officers to continue the work of our organization. We need to pledge them our support in every way we can. They are an enthusiastic, able and capable group, and they are our friends and colleagues in this wonderful art and hobby we share. We need to continue our educational programs, and to support the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum and the National Arboretum as best we can. We need to continue to improve our own skills and share our knowledge with fellow members though our ever-expanding and ever-improving Spring Show and our Fall Symposium.

And so it is with a grateful and humble heart that I once again thank you all for the wonderful support you have shown me, and which I am sure you will continue to show our next group of officers. Again, thank you all very much from the bottom of my heart!

## Calendar of Events

### May

### June

Meeting location and club contact number for additional information is as listed unless otherwise noted in calendar listing. A member of any one club is eligible to participate in any PBA or PBA member club event.

- Baltimore Bonsai Club  
Cylburn Arboretum, Baltimore, MD.  
3rd Sunday, 1 PM  
(410) 668-1868
- Bowie Bonsai Club  
Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD  
Last Monday, 7 PM  
(301) 350-3586  
(202) 667-1016
- Brookside Bonsai Society  
North Chevy Chase Recreation Center,  
Chevy Chase, MD  
3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM  
(301) 365-7621
- Chesapeake Bonsai Society  
Call for meeting time and location  
(410) 263-2748
- Greater Philadelphia Bonsai Society  
Pennypack Watershed, Willow Grove,  
PA  
4th Thursday, eve.  
(215) 663-1678
- Kiyomizu Bonsai Club  
Clearwater Nature Center, Clinton, MD  
4th Sunday, 2 PM  
(301) 839-2471
- Lancaster Bonsai Society  
Manheim Twp. Park, Stauffer Mansion  
Lancaster, PA  
2nd Thursday, 7 PM  
(717) 872-5941
- Mei-Hwa Penjing Society  
(Chinese language spoken)  
Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD  
2nd Sunday, 1 PM  
(301) 390-6687
- Northern Virginia Bonsai Society  
Greenspring Horticultural Center,  
Annandale, VA  
2nd Saturday, 10 AM  
(703) 575-5616
- Rappahanock Bonsai Society  
Call for meeting time and location  
(540) 775-4912
- Richmond Bonsai Society  
Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Ave.,  
Richmond, VA  
4th Monday, 7 PM  
(804) 527-4000 Ext. 4621
- Washington Bonsai Club  
U. S. National Arboretum, Washington,  
D.C.  
3rd Saturday, 2 PM  
(202) 543-7433

Organizations sponsoring regular events of interest to PBA members:

U.S. Botanical Gardens  
(202) 226-4082

U.S. National Arboretum  
(202) 245-2726

#### Lancaster Bonsai Society

Thursday 8  
7 pm Spring Mini Symposium - Demonstration by Howard McNeal. Rock planting workshop.

#### Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

Saturday 10  
9 am Chrysanthemum Bonsai - Dave Garvin 10 am Hands-on styling by group - Pete Jones

#### Brookside Bonsai Society

Sunday 11  
10 am Bonsai Show at McCrillis Garden.  
Thursday 15  
7 pm Chrysanthemum Bonsai with Dave Garvin

#### Baltimore Bonsai Club

Sunday 18  
1 pm Pines: White, Black and Scrub.  
Lancaster Bonsai Society

#### Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

Sunday 25  
2 pm Azalea Workshop - Bring plants and materials.

#### PBA Auction at Behnke's Nursery

Saturday 24  
9 am Auction trees are submitted.  
10 am - 12 pm Trees are auctioned.

**Please submit your club's new schedule as soon as available to Doug French at [Dfrench200.aol.com](mailto:Dfrench200.aol.com) or (703) 502 - 9426. Thank you for your cooperation.**

#### Baltimore Bonsai Club

Sunday 22  
1 pm Workshop: Bring material to work on. (Location to be announced)

#### Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

Saturday 7  
9 am Bring your own plant for critique and discussion.  
10 am Featherstone Carving - Bill Merritt  
12-4 pm Featherstone carving workshop - Bill Merritt

#### Lancaster Bonsai Society

Thursday 12  
7 pm Bonsai Garden Tour

#### Brookside Bonsai Society

Thursday 19  
7 pm Raft Style Bonsai with Janet Lanman. Workshop to follow.  
Saturday 21  
9 am Workshops for Raft Style Bonsai and Chrysanthemum Bonsai with Janet Lanman and Dave Garvin.

#### Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

Sunday 22  
2 pm Open workshop and discussion.

Some of you may have noticed that this issue is slightly larger and is covering two months. Our staff has been very busy with some technology change-over. At the yearly meeting, we requested and were unanimously granted this bit of leeway to get back on schedule.

We expect to back on our regular monthly schedule with the July issue.

## May/June Monthly Care Tips

### May Tips

By now the chances of there being any frost has well passed and indoor plants can be safely moved outdoors.

**Pruning:** Heavy pruning, that is pruning of established branches that are unwanted, should have been done. Sprout pruning is the order of the day to keep the new growth from becoming too leggy. Sprout prune Hinoki cypress, Sawara or blue moss cypress, hemlock, juniper, larch, spruce and yew, hackberry, beech, weeping willow, Andromeda, Japanese apricot, and azaleas. For azaleas, one should do it after flowering to get the full benefit of the flowers. New growth of Japanese maples can also be removed or cut back.

**Repotting:** Hinoki cypress, pines, and junipers (except for Shimpaku ) can be done in the early part of the month. Azaleas can be repotted after they flower

towards the end of May.

**Wiring:** Always check the wiring to see that it is not digging into the bark of the bonsai. Wiring can be done on Hinoki cypress, junipers, black pine, crabapple, and Japanese apricot.

**Fertilizing:** Fertilizing routine should have been started last month. Continue for all plants.

**Watering:** Be certain to check the plants on a daily basis to ascertain that they have adequate water. If the soil mix and location of the plants is correct the bonsai should require watering once per day. The preferred time is in the morning up to about 10:00 am. Avoid very late in the afternoon waterings, - after 5:00 pm. as the plants will not assimilate as much water as they would earlier in the day since they are entering their periods of rest. The latent water can lead to root rot.

### June Tips

Pruning or pinching of

sprouts of new growth should be done on conifers, i.e.: Hinoki cypress, Blue moss or Boulevard cypress, junipers, larch and yew, black pine: cut off weak sprouts around June 25th - see June '93 issue of *PBA Clippings*. Deciduous trees which still have new growth can be pruned back. Weeping willow can be pruned and wired. Crabapple can be pruned and wired. May need watering twice daily. Azalea and Andromeda: wire new, young growth before it ages and stiffens to prevent breaking branches when bending.

**Watering:** in general watch out for extreme dry spells. Watch for insects and diseases and use the appropriate countermeasures. Hosing down the plants in the late afternoon when the sun isn't so strong will wash off insects and any feces left by the insects which can become festering points for plant diseases.

---

## Editorial by Jules Koetsch

Lately I've been giving more thought to the pH of my bonsai. pH, along with too much salt in the soil, are two items of recent concern for me. Jack Eden, author of the "Garden of Eden" column which once appeared in The Washington Post and now is in local Journal paper, told the PBA Annual Symposium over 20 years ago that "If the pH isn't

within the preferred range for a specific plant, that plant will develop 'lockjaw.'" In other words, the plant won't take in all the nutrients essential for its well-being and growth! The plant then starts to show signs of diminishing vigor and growth, and in some 3 years goes to bonsai heaven. How many times has that happened

to me. I hate to mention.

Hence, I launched on an effort to try to do something about pH. The first step, naturally, was to measure the pH of the soils in my bonsai pots. I used one of those pH meters sold in places like the local hardware stores. I was most interested in finding out what the pHs were in my latest soil mixes - a blend of Grani-



## EDITORIAL, continued

Grit (marble chips), perlite, and peat moss or pine bark mulch. Readings ranged between pH 6.5 and 7.0. The pH of the soil could be further corrected by adding something like aluminum sulfate crystals to the soil to make it more acidic (lower the pH). Likewise, horticultural hydrated lime powder can be added to the soil to make it more alkaline (raising the pH).

The above seems all well and good, but further thinking about the situation led me to the following enigma. What happens if the bonsai likes to live in soil with its preferred pH of between 6.0 and 7.0, and it is fed a liquid fertilizer that has a pH out of that range (either above 7.0 or below 6.0)? Wouldn't it be a better situation all around if the pH of the liquid fertilizer fell within the plant's pH preference range? That thought was reinforced by seeing fliers for the Dyna-Gro Corporation's products (one item "pH Up" and another obviously "pH Down"). A telephone call to Dyna-Gro yielded the following information: Their liquid fertilizers are in the pH ranges for the plants they are designed to nourish. (I checked one of their fertilizer solutions, and it registered a pH of 6.5, well within the preferred pH range for most plants.) The reason they market "pH Up" and "pH Down" is so that water in which the fertilizer is to be mixed can have its pH raised or lowered when it drasti-

cally exceeds tolerable pH values. In some parts of the country, the pH of the fresh water supply can exceed pH 8.0, while in some areas where rainwater may be collected for watering plants, the acidity level of the rainwater may bring the pH below 6.0. The conclusion from all of that (as I see it) is that the liquid fertilizer solution should be in the preferred pH ranges of the plants being fertilized.

I tried measuring the pH of the liquid fertilizer solutions which I intend to use on my bonsai—fish emulsion fertilizer and powdered seaweed in water whose pH is 7. After fiddling around for a number of hours, it seemed that I could not replicate pH readings using the pH meter mentioned above. This spurred me into ordering a more expensive pH meter during the telephone call to Dyna-Gro. I'll try again when the new pH meter arrives. Based on my shaky results, the fish emulsion solution, after sitting for a while, seemed to give a pH 7.0 reading. The seaweed/water solution gave readings of a pH between 7.5 and 8.0. The complete mix (fish emulsion/seaweed/water) gave inconsistent readings somewhere above pH 7.0. Allowing crystals of aluminum sulfate to dissolve in the latter solution did seem to bring down the pH value.

Maybe all of the above is just a lot of needless fussing. Most people, when asked what

they do to check and correct for pH, usually pass it off lightly or have made modifications to their potting soils to bring them within the preferred ranges of pH for their bonsai. One can use an easy out by fertilizing with inorganic fertilizers such as Mir-Acid or Miracle-Gro, which probably when in solution produce the desired pH for the plants listed on the labels. In addition, my pH Preference Table shows Hinoki cypress with a pH range between 5.0 and 6.0, and azaleas between 4.5 and 5.0, which are below the commonly found range between pH 6.0 and 7.0 for most plants. Then there's the hornbeam whose pH can be between 6.0 and 8.0.

I'm going to wait for my new pH meter to arrive. Then I'll test my fish emulsion/seaweed/water fertilizer solutions for pH and try to raise or lower it to be within the pH ranges of my bonsai. I'll probably have to make two fertilizer solutions - one for plants that like pHs around 6.5, and another for those who like pHs below 6.0. Incidentally, my pH Preference Table lists the pH for Japanese maples to be between 6.0 and 8.0.

Someone once said that ignorance leads to some interesting arguments. I should follow Warren Hill's advice on soils to the Brookside Bonsai Society. It is well worth your while to take a course on soils.

## MY MORNING WITH JOHN NAKA

*On Thursday, March 20, 1997 at the welcoming banquet of the 40th anniversary convention of The California Bonsai Society, I presented greetings and congratulations from PBA and read the following document:*

On May 10, 1992, The National Endowment for the Arts declared John Naka a national treasure. The award was to be presented on September 22, 1992, and somehow I managed to get invited to the ceremony. What follows is really what happen to me on that morning.

September 22 dawned grey and ugly in Baltimore. I awoke at 7 am. to realize I had overslept. I would get my son to school on time, but I could not get to Washington in time for the ceremony. While taking my son to school, I made a decision. I had blocked this time to help honor my SENSEI and friend, and, by God, I would in my own way.

I returned home, dressed, and drove to the National Arboretum. As I passed the gate of the Naka Pavilion, I saw that Goshin was not there. It had gone to the ceremony so that folks who did not know what John was all about could see. The hand of John was evident everywhere you looked. I stopped to see the California junipers and said a silent prayer of thanks that Bob Drechsler and his staff had found ways to help those wonderful specimens survive our local environment. (I was to find out later that we had lost one.) While standing there, I remembered a lecture given by John long ago, illustrated with slides about collecting California junipers, and a more recent story about an axe and the root of a juniper that refused to be collected.

Visiting the Pomegranate and the Blue Atlas Cedar donated from the Naka Collection caused me to remember the first time I met John in person. I was a fairly new bonsai hobbyist in 1974 when I was assigned to work in San Francisco. While I was preparing to leave, some of my new bonsai friends told me, "Be sure to see John Naka while you're in California." My response was, "The man does not know me, he won't give me the time of day." Boy, was I wrong. When preparing to make a trip down the California coast, I called John to ask if I could visit. Much to my surprise he said yes. I arrived on Wednesday evening to find that John was not at home but

*Continued on page 15*

## Celtic Tree Horrorscope by Jules Koetsch

This edition of the Celtic Tree Horoscopes completes the horoscope for one year. Those from the singular dates of June 24th (Birch) and December 22nd (Beech) are also included in this edition.

### HORNBEAM

Jun. 4 - 13 and Dec. 2 - 11

1986: The hornbeam person, even into old age a person of cool beauty. You have a high regard for outward appearance and always demonstrate good taste. You attempt to shape your life to be as pleasant as possible. Your rational and disciplined mode of living often veils your true desires. Thus you seek warmth, a sensitive partner, applause, admiration and recognition. The inability to realize your dreams of love rarely leave you with happy feelings. You often choose a lover to love again. On the other hand the companion of the hornbeam person is often distrustful for fear of being cheated on. You avoid hasty decisions. Your exaggerated regard of a sense of duty frequently weigh heavily on your private life.

1997: One who is born in the timespan of June 4-13 is shown to be one that always has a lively interest in what life brings. For that reason they pursue the interchange of ideas with as many people as possible. It is no surprise that they will seek out

and associate with a very motley cross section of society. Unfortunately, Hornbeam people any of their evaluations as to what is good and what is bad. Still their inborn nature to not take life as tragedy helps them to assign no great weight to negative experiences. Also in times during their lives when they are alone or unlucky, it has been shown that they quickly find a happy way out. In other words, after a grave episode in one's life, a return to a daily routine can be done quickly.

The December Hornbeams are somewhat complicated, and accordingly have difficulty in expressing themselves. There's no need to worry, in return the subconscious in many cases provides rather excellent solutions to problems.

Love is outwardly guarded after the stages of early youth for both June and December Hornbeams. One never knows too precisely the number and the names of those in love. Ardent intimacy blooms and is pursued in one's mind.

### FIG TREE

June 14 -23 and Dec. 12 -21

1987: The fig tree person is a strong, self-willed personality, completely and wholly independent in his or her judgement and ready to suppress every contradiction. You want to always be surrounded by admiring people

and are especially comfortable and safe in your family circle. You are outwardly kind to children and animals. However, in love, you are rather fickle which frequently results in complications, sorrow, and many times even suffering. You are full of fun and secretly confess to being lazy and liking comforts. Nevertheless, in life you stand squarely on your two feet and skillfully and purposefully make plans. Your talents and intelligence are almost always of a practical nature. Whatever you tackle, you tackle with hands and feet.

1997: The Fig person is an intensely troubled individual when trying to find ways and means to solve problems arising in family life or in one's vocation or profession or in the marriage partnership. The June Fig person first goes along with what in his or her eyes is reality. The December Fig person is tied to what he or she decides based on a conceived representation of a situation.

The entire ego of both the June and December Fig persons remains free and independent. One has his or her own standards and lives in self imposed limits that considerations for those who come in contact with a Fig tree person. Troubles are not easily accepted but persons with the Fig sign are fair and within certain limits generous.

*Continued on page 13*

## REPOTTING A NATIONAL COLLECTION TREE by Jules Koetsch

The calendar of events in January's PBA Clippings listed for 2:00 pm., Sunday, 26 January, the following, "Dan Chiplis on the care and feeding of the National Collection." The subject piqued my interest, and without any "must" events to attend (as scheduled by my social director), I went. I found, on arrival, that the subject would be repotting. Why the topic differed from our calendar, I didn't bother to find out. Since this is the time of year one should brush up on techniques, I found the repotting demonstration quite useful. I had a chance to pick up a few new wrinkles and thought it would be a good idea to describe how the experts did the repotting so that you, the reader, can compare the process against your own.

Dan chose a Pomegranate whose new growth was about to burst forth. The "before" version was quite similar to the finished product (Photo 1). In any repotting operation the first step is to check the pot bottom to determine if any tie-down wire is in place. You may have forgotten to remove it in the past and the wire may have remained camouflaged by soil on top of the pot. Clip the tie-down wires. Gently and slightly rock the tree in the pot. If the root-soil mass has not compacted against the side of the pot, the bonsai will lift right out of the pot. If not, drive a very flat blade between

the walls of the pot and the edges of the soil and work the blade around the edges of the soil similar to cutting out a cake from it's pan. Dan uses the tool with a hook-shaped end pictured in the lower right corner of Photo 1. Photo 2 shows Dan Chiplis removing a thin portion of the top soil while Warren Hill is bringing the sides in about a half-inch or so. To remove soil, a heavy, stout chopstick is the tool of choice. Any three-pronged rake or the like is rejected for this use because the rake can tear away the finer roots. The chopstick is prodded into the soil so that the soil loosens and breaks away without any heavy scraping action. It is always best to remove a thin layer of the soil on the surface of the root-soil mass because it is that upper layer of soil wherein salts are most likely to have collected over time. Remember, salts are a big "No-No" for the health of the plant. Any roots sticking out are trimmed back to the newly desired edges of the root-soil mass.

After the top and sides of the root-soil mass have been reduced, the bottom is tackled. Check the area directly under the trunk of the bonsai. Salts have a habit of collecting under the trunk and this area is often an indicator of existing or impending trouble such as root rot. Sniff the area and if there is a foul odor, something is rotten in there. Re-

move the rotted section. Also, if the area under the trunk is dry, the plant is not being properly watered.

Photo 3 shows the bonsai ready for repotting. Comparing Photo 3 against Photo 2, you can see how much of the root-soil mass was removed.

Dan noted that there was no need to do any "wedging" to the root-soil mass. Wedging is a process whereby a somewhat pie-shaped portion of the root-soil mass is removed. The process is illustrated in Yuji Yoshimur's book. My contention is that if root system is not solidly compacted in the sense of a root-bound plant, wedging is not called for. If wedging is to be done, no more than two pie-shaped wedges should be removed; and these should be as diametrically opposite as possible. Repotting the bonsai was the next step. Before putting the tree into the pot, the pot had to be readied. It was washed and new pieces of plastic needlepoint canvas screens were wired in place over the drainage holes. Years ago, we used galvanized hardware screen to cover the drainage holes. The Japanese marketed little squares of plastic mesh for the screening holes in the bottoms of bonsai pots. Then someone discovered plastic needlepoint canvas and it is now in vogue. It can easily be cut to any size you wish. One argument

*Continued on page 10*





PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5

## Repotting a tree, continued from page 8

for using the plastic is that it will not corrode, break, or clog the openings. Well, it seems to me that if you repot as often as you should, the wire screen can be replaced before any of those problems can occur. The advantage, as I see it, to using the hardware screen is that the open area per square inch of mesh is more than that obtained with the plastic material, thereby affording less blockage of the drainage hole. But I'll convert to using the plastic when I'm out of hardware screen.

The next step would be to put one or more tie-down wires through the drainage holes so that the bonsai does not shift when moved or get blown over by a breeze. In the subject repotting, this was not done. The root-soil mass was sufficiently large and flat enough so that the tree would remain in the desired upright position when all the soil had been added to the pot. Also, the bonsai was not being placed where it would be subject to any wind. I'm always forgetting to put in tie-down wires. However, if you forget, and if the tree is not steady in the pot after all the soil has been added, you can put the wires around the outside of the pot to anchor it.

The security system wire was also placed in the bottom of the pot before the next step - spreading a thin layer of the potting soil mix over the bottom of the pot about 1/4 to 1 inch thick. Note that particles larger than in

the potting mix were not used as a drainage layer before the thin layer of potting soil was spread. The idea of a drainage layer wherein larger sized particles separate the bottom of the pot from the root-soil mass has been advocated in Japanese bonsai books. This practice creates a "perched water layer," referring to the fact that when watering, the water tends to stay in the finer-sized soil particles and not go through the larger sized drainage layer. Obviously, it is one way to retain water in the pot. Among the arguments against a drainage layer are: with a drainage layer water tends to flow to the edges of the pot to escape thus leaving the center sparsely watered; also the root system will not grow into the large spaces in the drainage layer thereby depriving the plant of additional rootage especially in a very shallow pot or tray.

After the thin layer of potting soil was spread over the pot bottom, some soil was added to form a mound in about the place in the pot where the bottom of the trunk would rest. The bonsai was then positioned in the pot slightly to one side and to the rear of the pot center and tilted slightly forward. The soil-root mass was turned slightly left and right as it was pushed down, helping to fill the space under the root mass with potting soil. If the plant sinks too low during the process, lift it out, add some soil, and repeat the previous actions. If it's too high, remove some soil.

Warren noted that if the pot is deep, the top of the soil should be no higher than the lip of the pot. The only time it is aesthetically appropriate for the soil mass to mound higher than the container rim is in the case of a thin pot or tray.

The potting soil mix employed was about 35% peat-moss, and 65% of a mix of granite chips, bark, and perlite. A future article will be more specific relative to amounts of those ingredients to use in a soil mix. The mix was also moist and should crumble after being squeezed in one's hand just like good loam. The old notion that the soil mix should be dry was predicated on the argument that the dry particles would fill up the voids in the root mass more readily and completely than a moist mix which might compact and leave air pockets. I followed that line of reasoning for a long time, but I'm changing to the moist soil approach. The justification for using the moist mix is that it will not sap moisture out of the thin roots, drying them out before they are watered.

The position of the tree in the pot should be checked before adding the remainder of the potting soil (Photo 4). Warren backed off a distance to view the bonsai from the front and make any minor adjustments left to right, front to back, tilted forward more or less. Warren mentioned that after viewing the bonsai placement from a distance, a

## Repotting, continued

good step is to turn around and view it in a mirror. If it doesn't still look good, then adjust the position accordingly.

Photo 5 shows the last of the potting soil being added to the container. Warren used a single chopstick and Dan used the one-handed two chopstick (one thin, one thicker) technique. Warren made a point that you should not neglect to compact the edge of the soil next to the pot rim. By so doing, water does not run out readily as it would if the soil were higher than the rim. If it is not done, the pot looks too full.

To complete the composition and enhance its charm, some clumps of moss were added in a random yet aesthetically effective pattern on the surface of the soil. Before placing the clumps of moss on the soil surface, the clumps were placed in a shallow dish of water to moisten their undersides. Warren noted that

the placement of clumps of moss interspaced with bare ground is more interesting than a solid covering of moss. If you decide in favor of completely covering the surface of the soil with moss, it is best to fit small clumps of moss together so that water can get through the interstices between each clump. If the moss forms a complete skin over the top of the soil, it may shed water like a raincover, and little if any water will enter the soil.

The final question concerned what to do about the step after repotting—watering of the bonsai. Should something like Superthrive which purportedly contains vitamin B be used? Warren said that he is hesitant about using Superthrive because no where on the containers is there a listing of the ingredients. Warren uses a liquid solution of 2 tablespoons superphosphate in 5 gallons of water. However, he

has not found a source for this product other than in California.

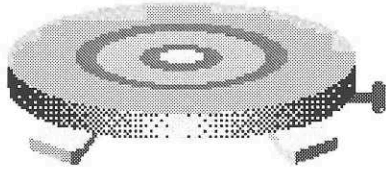
Warren mentioned that he preferred to water the bonsai from the top rather than immersing the pot in a pan of water. He feels that this method pushes unwanted matter such as salts back into soil which then build up to more dangerous levels, and that top-watering can wash them out of the pot.

There was one interesting aside. Warren said that the Japanese usually take a mature plant and drive wedges into the base of the plant to make individual trunks with roots. In Photo 3, you can see the dark, bare wood spot at the bottom rear of the trunk where the bark is missing because of that technique.

A very sincere thank you goes to Sue Kohler of the Washington Bonsai Club for the photographs.

Missing from Spring Show at National Arboretum: small black mountain stone in fitted, carved wooden base, approx. 3" long by 1" high. Any info, please call Chris Yeapanis, (703) 591-0864 AFTER 11:00 a.m.





## Sensei Sam

It's May and I can't remember a milder winter. My trees look like they have come through the season without much difficulty. I wintered my trees in a free-standing barn equipped with a wood burning stove. The temperature dropped to a low of about minus six degrees. The heat (wood-stove and kerosene heater) were run only during the coldest stretch of the winter. So in the last week of February, my Trident maples had begun to grow. I was extremely pleased that one of my more tender trees survived without any dieback. However, since it sprouted so early in the year, I had to protect it from frost and give it more light. This was the only winter I'll have these problems since I've ordered two 30- by 72-foot

polyhouses for protection next winter.

I've had a question on salt deposits on bonsai containers - try soaking in distilled water for a few days to leech out the salts.

Well, I just returned from another successful PBA Spring Show. It's great to see the improvement in the quality of show trees from year to year. The knowledge of Americans is truly growing from year to year.

The Arboretum and its trees looked great. The weather couldn't have been lovelier on Saturday. What a compliment to the trees.

We wish Warren Hill, the curator of the bonsai collection the best of luck. In Warren's hands lies the responsibility to continue the tradition of having our collection flourish. We all know that Warren is capable of

that job.

Finally, a sad note. We all know the responsibilities of bonsai vendors to be honest and above board in their dealings with the public. Well, in the closing of Bonsai Associates, we lost one of the finest bonsai shops in the country. It may not have had the largest inventory, but it had Arschel Morell—Arschel, a man who lives and loves bonsai. So, people when you can, support the good vendors. And to you, Arschel, good luck in your teaching and lecturing. We will miss your shop.

Sensei Sam

Editor's Note: The lovely Arschel may now be found on an "as arranged" basis at Black Pines Bonsai Nursery.



## Horoscope, continued from page 7

Every event creates a lust for life drawn from both the bright and shady sides. But one's evaluation of life is so high that one compensates for every one of life's troubles.

A total denial or rejection is not looked upon as the end of one's life. The Fig person always comprehends critical situations, and there is no Fig person who one day doesn't discover a way out. To the Fig person, which remedy or method selected to resolve a critical situation is of no concern as long as the end justifies the means. However, the remedy or method selected may not be the best one, but it will do the job.

A love affair is viewed as a never-ending arrangement. Incredible charm is present if the Fig person appears shy or coy in the eyes of the expected partner. The blending of love and affection that is conceived in the Fig person's mind is without difficulty met in reality.

### BIRCH

June 24

1988: The birch person has a sympathetic and friendly appearance. You impress others as being lively, attractive, and elegant, and have a slender and beautiful figure. Your companions are extremely pleasant since you are unpretentious, free from being overbearing and snobbish, and detest all that is vulgar and base. You like the natural life but

you can also adapt easily to other situations in life. If perhaps your ambitions are not particularly decided, you can work as a fierce warrior. Your above average intelligence together with your large imaginative powers make for a lot of creative activities. The love life of the birch is not especially passionate, consequently you are settled in love and true and you do everything in a thoughtful way designed to make your partner happy.

1997: This day symbolically signifies the time when earth's nearest neighbor, the moon, exerts its strongest influence. The rapid change of phases within one passage of the moon around the earth will not occur again for a whole year. Hence, the change will remain in place for a whole year. Similarly, the temperament of Birch people is such as to consider changes once made as permanent.

Tempers change quickly and one must keep them under control. Stop being childish. An exceptionally strong bond to family and home is clear as day.

Under the protective sign of the Birch tree, the Birch person arrives with a sensible attitude concerning the world. In later years, the strong ties to family and also in one's association with friends or specific, closely connected colleagues is noticeable. It is evident that the Birch person stresses a deeply seated bond with the persons in his or her

circle of associates. They are in turn looked upon to help in deciding what is right to do and thus instinctively are a source of protection.

Emotional impressions, sympathy, and antipathy are the releases for all that was done in the past. Therefore it is self-evident that the love of tradition takes precedence over anything else. There are many artists among the Birch people because imagination is a birthright given to everyone born on 24 June and it remains with them from that day forward.

In the real world, money is the number one subject and apprehension about the future is never excluded from one's thoughts. In the realm of finance, imagination is coupled with an uncommonly harsh temper which nevertheless make it feasible to obtain real, substantial results.

In the realm of love as one views the past, there are recorded more plus than minus points for the Birch person. Emotions can often be too powerful; and it is good that they do not remained hidden but come out in a boisterous outburst. Lovesickness can be omnipresent. This does not mean that the Birch person spends the time in hypothetical love.

OLIVE  
Sep. 23

1986: The olive tree person likes the sunlight of popularity,

the warmth therefrom brings your true feelings to blossom forth. It is your nature to be rational and even-tempered but not aggressive or authoritative. It matters not to you if other persons are or are not tolerant and reserved. Your serene mind, your quiet character, your standing up for justice, and your restraint of your feelings help you to understand situations of your fellows and take interest in them. In love you appear free from jealousy and tolerate the freedom of your partners. Your regulated life-form is not without weaknesses and a resignation to being confounded. You are intelligent, can withdraw inwardly, love books, and find that you like the company of intelligent people.

1997: This tree symbol, the Olive, marks the first day of autumn and the equinox. Harvest begins for the last time during the year. The earth's atmospheric elements show themselves to be most energetic at this time. This is decisively reflected in the Olive people in that they are energetic. You have the faculty to quickly survey critical or complicated situations and arrive at the sole practical solution. You have a good sense of orderliness that is comparable to a perfectly functioning universe. All that equates to your compulsion that everything must fit together.

You are the very person who is naturally gifted, and it is a matter of course that is not obvious to others. That is not obvi-

ous to others does not concern the Olive people.

All is not perfect concerning the manners and abilities of Olive people. Untechnical, exaggerated universal forces bring about a gap between just being so-so or being brilliant, and the very rational manner of Olive people prohibits from the outset any fussing over that.

In the realm of love matters, the Olive person exhibits a relaxed approach. The way you exhibit your love and how you appreciate love are the stimuli that light up your love life.

#### BEECH Dec. 22

1988: The beech person is beautiful and noble, very considerate of others, and remains even into old age, fit and in form. You are a materialist. You plan and realize daring projects, and your life is outstandingly organized. Nevertheless, you are capable by all means of noble and deep feelings. You aspire to wealth and happiness, wish for everything that you must have, and love comfort. You are well-suited for a position of leadership. You enter into no unnecessary risks and are exceptionally economical. In love matters you do not mark them directly with fantasies but also apply here the sensible approach. In later years be prepared to risk an affair or an adventure. Otherwise you are ever a family person, and spend your

free time with your family.

1997: December 22 is the day, so to say, that the winter sun turns around. That strong image is accordingly reflected in the people born under the Beech tree symbol in that they have special talents and mannerisms.

Indeed for the above reasons one says that the Beech people affect a very ambitious but reserved attitude. That ambition grows just as the sunlight grows from day to day after December 22 and is not restrained. As an end to achieving one's goals one is realistic enough to be satisfied with small steps. It is of little importance to the beech person if they are not admired for what others are admired. Expressions of friendliness are very reserved at first but the friendliness grows stronger with time.

You are so inspired by success that you sense a freedom from all worldly cares. It does not matter if success was attained through one's own doings or by close contact with others.

With tenacity and perseverance you arduously master your fate and destiny. Love whether it be man or woman is serious business. With Beech people, love is a sincere undertaking. Beeches are not like those people who trifle with love. Children born under this tree sign are said to create an easy, calm atmosphere about them accompanied by cheerful, hearty, spontaneous laughter.

was expected shortly. Alice, however, invited me in, offered me tea, and sat to talk with me. John soon arrived, greeted me warmly and replaced my tea with a beer. We then went outside to see "THE TREES." I was overwhelmed. I had seen pictures of his trees, but the living trees were like nothing else I had ever seen. After visiting for a while, he invited me to observe his Thursday night workshop the next evening. That was an experience I will never forget.

Sitting there at the Arboretum in the quiet of the morning, listening to the geese in the distance and hearing the creaking and groaning of the sun-warmed redwood beams, I recalled other times I had spent with John in workshops, at conventions, and most notably in Japan in 1989. Such a warm and giving person,

he is now being recognized the world over as the leading teacher of this gentle art called bonsai. Congratulations, John. We always knew you were a treasure and now everyone knows. May your bonsai live forever.

I looked at my watch and realized it was 12:30 pm. I had not seen John get his award as originally planned, but I had spent my morning with him. By this time, Goshin was in back in its place of honor. While standing before it, listening to the wind whisper through the overhead, I thought again of that warm wonderful man, John Yoshio Naka.

P.S. In my haste to be on time for this visit with John, I had put on two different shoes and he never noticed.

God bless you John, and thanks for all you have given us.

Arschel Morell March  
20,1997

## Matsu-Momiji Nursery



Maples - Pines -  
- Nursery Stock -  
Pots -Tools -  
- Bonsai Lectures  
- Demonstrations

Bonsai Catalog  
Route 2, Box 147D  
Hurricane, WVA 25526  
304-562-9666

*Japanese Black Pine*  
by Steve Pilacik

# POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Welcome! We conduct a Spring Show and a Fall Symposium as well as other events. PBA is made up of the clubs listed to the right. Join one club and be eligible to attend any club's meeting, in addition to receiving *PBA Clippings* monthly. Residents of Annapolis and Baltimore, MD; Lancaster and Philadelphia, PA; Rappahanock, Richmond, Northern VA and the Washington, DC metropolitan areas are expected to join a club to receive all membership benefits including *PBA Clippings*.

**To become a member, call the contact person of the nearest club for current rates and where to send this application and dues. (Please make check payable to the club joined.)**

**Individuals residing beyond commuting distance of a club are invited to subscribe to PBA Clippings.** For a subscription only (does not include participation in club events), complete application and mail with a check payable to PBA for US \$15.00 (US \$35.00 for an international subscription) to: Judy Wise, 1259 4th St., SW, Washington, DC, 20024. For additional information, please call Judy Wise: (202) 554-3045.

*Regular meeting times and places are listed. Meeting times and locations are subject to change. Call first! Events are listed monthly in the Calendar section of PBA Clippings.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Club Membership<br>(Includes <i>PBA Clippings</i> )         | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>PBA Clippings</i> , Subscription Only, US \$15<br>(does not include club activities)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Club Membership<br>(Includes one copy of <i>PBA Clippings</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>PBA Clippings</i> , International Subscription, US \$35<br>(does not include club activities) |
- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Bonsai Club     | <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Philadelphia Bonsai Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Virginia Bonsai Society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowie Bonsai Club         | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiyomizu Bonsai Club                | <input type="checkbox"/> Rappahanock Bonsai Society       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brookside Bonsai Club     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lancaster Bonsai Society            | <input type="checkbox"/> Richmond Bonsai Society          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chesapeake Bonsai Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Mei-Hwa Penjing Society             | <input type="checkbox"/> Washington Bonsai Club           |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ +4 \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Office: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

- BALTIMORE BONSAI CLUB**  
Cylburn Arboretum, Baltimore, MD  
3rd Sunday, 1 PM  
Elaine Kendall, (410) 426-5421
- BOWIE BONSAI CLUB**  
Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD  
Last Monday, 7 PM  
Terry Adkins, (301) 350-3586
- BROOKSIDE BONSAI SOCIETY**  
North Chevy Chase Recreation Center, Chevy Chase, MD  
3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM  
Jerry Antel, (301) 320-5251
- CHESAPEAKE BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Call for meeting time and location  
Marc Jartman, (410) 263-2748
- GREATER PHILADELPHIA BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Penypack Watershed, Willow Grove, PA  
4th Thursday, eve.  
Larry Chiger, (215) 663-1678
- KIYOMIZU BONSAI CLUB**  
Clearwater Nature Center, Clinton, MD  
4th Sunday, 2 PM  
Eddie Wilson, (301) 839-2471
- LANCASTER BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Manheim Twp. Park, Stauffer Mansion  
Lancaster, PA  
2nd Thursday, 7 PM  
Cindy Kamide, (717) 738-3957
- MEI-HWA PENJING SOCIETY**  
(Chinese language spoken)  
Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD  
2nd Sunday, 1 PM  
Akey Hung, (301) 390-6687
- NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Greenspring Horticultural Center, Annandale, VA  
2nd Saturday, 10 AM  
Chuck Croft 703) 978-6841
- RAPPAHANOCK BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Call for time and meeting location  
Todd Stewart, (540) 775-4912
- RICHMOND BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Ave., Richmond, VA  
4th Monday, 7 PM  
Jim Ford, (804) 527-4000, ext 4621
- WASHINGTON BONSAI CLUB**  
U. S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.  
3rd Saturday, 2 PM  
Julie Walker, (202) 547-8497

Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc.  
c/o U.S. National Arboretum  
3501 New York Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MERRIFIELD, VA  
PERMIT NO. 659