

# PBA Clippings

NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION




## Season's Greetings from Peter Bauer of Canada

This is a post card from Peter Bauer who was a Brookside Bonsai Society member and moved to Canada. This is a photo of one of his pines. The tree is really in a pot. He took the tree to the shore in the neighborhood and set it onto some driftwood. He wished all a Happy New Year and all the Best.....

## AN INVITATION TO CVBS SYMPOSIUM by Lee Mairs, NVBS

The Central VA Bonsai Society (Julian Adams is the mainstay of this group.) will have Bill Valvanis 27 and 28 February. Friday night individual 20-minute sessions with Bill to critique your tree, Saturday morning lecture/demo, followed by Saturday afternoon workshop using Chinese quince. Workshop participants have a choice of 5-7 year old trees potted in plastic bonsai pots, or smaller plants in 1-gallon nursery containers. I attended

the CVBS symposium last year and for \$50 ended up with a wonderful beech forest and Bill Valvanis' attention for a lot of time. This was one of my best bonsai investments - almost as good as Peter Jones' beginner's class! Julian will try to arrange places to stay with "fellow bonsai nuts." I'm planning on attending. Anybody want to join me for the miserably long drive?

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VOLUME 28 NUMBER 1, DECEMBER 1998

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.

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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.

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## EDITORIAL by Jules Koetsch

Now that 1997 has wound down, I think it's appropriate to start 1998 by thanking one and all for whatever part they've played in bringing about the 1997 issues of *PBA Clippings*. First, I thank all of those who took the time to submit articles since obviously without the articles there would have been no 1997 *PBA Clippings*. Articles are ever welcomed. Write-ups on what speakers have presented at club meetings make good articles. Even though what may have been covered at a meeting may seem for the most part old hat to some old timers, it still should be of interest to others in that what they know has withstood the test of time. Then, there are the members who are just beginners and such information is always new. Also, members who have worked or researched in the field may introduce new ideas or techniques at the club meetings which would make good articles. In fact, there are a number of sources for articles for *PBA Clippings* and a person does not need a fancy computer or even a typewriter to submit an article - pen and ink on paper is always acceptable.

Second, a very sincere thanks goes to every member of the *PBA Clippings* staff: Beth Potratz who has spent many hours as Associate Editor/Art Director with PBA's computer assembling the articles in each issue so that we can read an artistic and neatly prepared finished product; Betty Yeapanis, who as Type Editor has played devil's advocate showing me my mistakes when she forged the *Clippings'* articles into proper English grammar and understandable sentences; Judith Wise who has played a sort of jack of all trades assisting in proofreading and straightening out the content, and also getting the issues ready for mailing.

Doug French has been the one who has been rounding up the happenings for the Calendar of Events section - obviously if you don't send your club events to Doug, they won't appear in *Clippings*. Putting your club's program of events into *Clippings* does two things - first there are members of other clubs who may be interested in attending your club's events, and more importantly, it gives other clubs insight into what events they may like to program. Ideally, every club should have most if not all of their program schedule for a calendar year mapped out and sent to Doug prior to January 1.

Steve Pilacik who has for the most part been carrying the Sensei Sam column of *Clippings* single-handedly. For those who may not remember, Sensei Sam was created as a place where bonsai questions could be submitted by readers with the promise that Sensei Sam would somehow or other come up with answers. Perhaps many of the members find that their bonsai questions are answered at club meetings. If such be the case, and even though a question may seem amateurish, the question and answer may still be of help to others. Send it in and share it with the rest of us. I have a question for Sensei Sam: "Where can I find an authoritative source of plant pHs - especially pHs for those species used for bonsai."

Lastly, there's Jerry Antel, Jr. who has two tasks he undertakes in behalf of *PBA Clippings*. As the *Clippings'* Advertising Editor, he has

Continued on page 11



## Calendar of Events

### January

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

### February

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society  
Saturday 10  
Tool Care with Bill Merritt, Warren Hill  
on Taxonomy.

Please remember to submit 1998  
calendars to Doug French as soon as  
available. Everyone enjoys seeing other  
clubs activities. Thank you for your  
cooperation.

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society  
Saturday 14  
9:00 am. Match Bonsai to pot and  
Design style.  
10:00 am Design-Oriented Fertilization  
by Michael Persiano.

## January Monthly Care Tips

Now that Winter has us fully in its grip, and the bonsai have been bedded down, are they napping or not? There are some who feel that conifers, especially the pines, don't sleep that soundly and don't mind an occasional weak solution of fertilizer. You're on your own with that one. The paramount thing to do is keep an eye on whether or not the bonsai are not drying out from lack of watering. Believe it or not there have been people naive enough to put their plants in winter storage and think that they will survive with no further attention until Spring breaks through. It's hard to get geared up to go out to the poly-house or the outside area where the bonsai are wintering when the weather is cold. It still should be an every day affair. One caution to observe when storing bonsai in a poly-house, glass-house, or cold frame - the surface of the soil in the pot may appear damp but the sub-soil may be dry. This is due to the fact that the moisture in the enclosure settles on top of the soil camouflaging what the conditions are inside the pot. Good for moss but not the plant. By the

way, have you removed all the moss from the surfaces of the soil? Remember, leaving it in place will invite root rot.

Watering needs: Conifers and deciduous plants may need water every day. Flowering bonsai such as crab apple, crepe myrtle, forsythia, quince and fruit bearing plants such as holly may only need water every other day. Needle junipers and sub-alpine fir can be misted every day.

Pruning: No you haven't escaped this task. This is a good time to refine your deciduous trees since the leaves are not obscuring the branches. **PRUNE ALL MAPLES BEFORE MARCH** otherwise you will have to wait 2 months. If pruned in the above interval when the sap is flowing, a maple may literally "bleed to death." White pines can have branches removed during this month. Black pines can have their 2 year or older needles removed, and needles on the ends of sprouts can be reduced in number to 2 or 3 fascicles or needle pairs for the upper section, 5 to 7 for the mid-section and 9 to 11 for the lower section of the pine.



## Tropical Bonsai Care by Margaret Lewis, NVBS

*Foreword: Many thanks go to Margaret Lewis for the following comprehensive description on how to care for tropical bonsai. The care of "tropical" (sometimes termed "indoor") bonsai is often not covered in the preponderance of bonsai texts wherein "outdoor" bonsai is the only theme. Margaret has been growing tropical bonsai for many years and has a superb collection. She has gleaned the following information from lecture/demonstrations, the literature, and her own experiences.*

I will try to cover the care for tropical bonsai for a whole year, starting with the Fall when plants are brought inside. When the night temperature is predicted to drop to 55°F, I bring the buttonwoods and bucidias inside. And at 50°F, I bring all the other tropicals inside. As long as a day's temperature is above the minimum 55°F or 50°F limits for the respective plants, I put those plants outside, bringing them in when the temperature falls below those limits. However, before bringing the plants indoors, one must gauge when the temperatures may reach the critical values cited above so that some other actions can be taken. It is very important to acclimate them to the lower light found indoors by taking the plants out of the sun and putting them into partial shade for 7 to 10 days before bringing them indoors. Then, a week before the final move indoors, I always drench the soil with a solution of Benomyl (1 & 1/2 teaspoons per gallon of water) in order to remove any fungus in the soil. Three days later, drench the soil with a solution of Sevin (1 teaspoon per gallon of wa-

ter) for any insects in the soil. Also, spray with an insecticide. I use Schultz Instant (Water Based) which is made with botanical pyrethrum\* for house plants.

**Once the plants are inside the most important requirements are high light, high temperature, and high humidity.** Almost all types of heating systems are notorious for drying out the air in a house. To enhance the humidity, do the following: Take a shallow tray slightly larger than the pot and spread a thin layer of pebbles over the tray.

Next, just cover the rocks with water so that upper surfaces of the pebbles are slightly exposed but still show signs of being wet with films of moisture. Thus, a larger evaporative area is provided to the water. Do not have the pot resting in the tray so that the drainage holes are resting in the water in the tray. After a while, some fungus may appear in the tray. This can be eliminated by washing the stones and tray with a mild solution of bleach and water, and rinsing very well with water. (Editors note: As a replacement for those troublesome, heavy pebbles, some of us are using the light deflector grids (called Egg Crate) intended for use with florescent light fixtures. You may easily cut the grid to fit the trays you now use. These grids make winter care less worrisome regarding proper soil moisture and humidity.)

It takes a couple of weeks for plants to adjust to the indoor environment, so I check the soil each day and water as needed. The type of soil, pot size, amount of humidity in the house, the amount of water different plant species may require

on a day to day basis and air circulation are determining factors in how often you will water. Don't let them dry out, or keep the soil too soggy inviting root rot! Avoid placing plants so that they are in the line-of-fire, so to speak, of air blown from a fan or the heated air coming out of a furnace duct. **One of the most important things to do is to water with warm water!** I test the temperature of the water just as one tests the temperature of the milk in a baby bottle - neither hot nor cold when dropped on one's arm. **NOTE! Water at room temperature is too cold.**

Because of the number of tropical plants I have, and the available locations in my house, one finds them residing in differently lighted locations - some in windows and some under fluorescent lights. In October of 1995 the government made manufacturers replace the 40 watt cool fluorescent light. The recommended replacement is the S 40 Universal Home Light which is still 40 watts. I use one cool and one warm bulb in each light as this covers the whole light spectrum. The lights are on a timer and I burn them 16 hours a day. The intensity is greater at the center of a fluorescent light tube and weaker at the ends, so arrange plants with this in mind. Place the plant 3-4 inches from the light. The fluorescent tubes should be replaced each year even though they look as bright as the day you put them in because in one year's time the light's intensity has markedly dropped.

Trees needing the most light are: buttonwood, jade, acacia, Bu-



## Tropical Care, continued from previous page

cida, Brazilian rain tree, Texas ebony, bougainvillea, rosemary, lantana, and tamarind.

Partial or Filtered Light: fukien tea, ficus species, Malpighia, arboricola, powder puff, bald cypress, bamboos, and Jaboticaba. Of these, Arboricola and Ficus Green Isle and Ficus benjaminia can tolerate the lowest light conditions.

I have trees in the south, west, and east windows with no drawn curtains between the plants and the window panes. Since glass cuts 30% of the light coming through, those requiring the most light are under florescent lights.

When the plants are inside, there is always a problem with insects since a plant may very likely be under stress. It is when a plant is under stress that they are most vulnerable to attacks by insects and diseases, so be alert to any signs of their presence and spray or treat the plants right away. Aphids, spider mites, and scale are the insects with which I have problems.

Aphids are easy to see. They can be black, brown, cream, or green, and can usually be found on the new growth or on flowers, stalks and leaves. Shoots and young leaves curl, turn yellow and may die. Plant parts may be covered with a sticky secretion. Wash with a hard spray of cold water, or if they persist, cover the soil and spray with an insecticide.

Evidence of spider mites would be dull leaves, loss of leaves, or very thin webs on the plant when viewed under a bright light. They are very tiny. Take a piece of white paper, put it under a branch. Strike the branch firmly and then look at the paper under a strong light with

a magnifying glass. If there are spider mites, you will see tiny spots moving. Wash with a hard spray of water, and if they persist, cover the soil and use a miticide. Spider mites are hard to get rid of and you must check every 4-5 days to see if they are still present and make another application of the miticide. Some people have alternated between different brands of miticide reasoning that what component wasn't in the previous miticide but in the next miticide will finish the job.

Three to four years ago I used a Dexol systemic insecticide added to my soil when repotting. It worked for a while, but I didn't know that it needed to be reapplied. This year, instead of Dexol, I used a Dragon brand product named Duraban, a soil insecticide containing DiSyston (a systemic houseplant insect control). I add Duraban to my soil mix, and it takes 5 days to get into the root system and up the tree. Repeat every 6 weeks as needed. It is sprinkled on top of the soil, then worked into the soil and watered in very well.

As a backup to the systemic insecticide if insects appear, I spray with Schultz-Instant house and garden insect spray (yellow sprayer bottle from grocery stores) made with Pyrethrum (derived from chrysanthemum flowers). It is water based so it is safe for buttonwoods. Another product for all tropicals is Raid House and Garden bug killer also made with Pyrethrum (green can). Sevin spray or powder are okay as scale insecticides but those only kill the crawlers and not the adults. The adults form a wax covering which sprays don't penetrate.

I have always used rubbing alcohol and a Q-tip for adult scale but several people including Dot Martin have covered the plant with a spray of water and alcohol with no apparent harm to the plant. The spray works really well on buttonwoods. I used the alcohol/water spray in '97 and it has worked with no apparent bad effects.

Fungus is the other problem besides insect infestation with which one must deal. Banrot, Benomyl, and also Daconil systemic fungicides can be used on all plants.

In the winter, if a plant soil becomes sour or fails to take up the usual amount of water, drench the soil with a fungicide. I usually do this once just or be on the safe side. **Don't let plants touch each other so that insects and/or fungi won't spread.**

Fertilizer: NEVER fertilize a dry plant. The soil should be damp. I make use of each of the following fertilizers: fish emulsion, seaweed, Peters 20-20-20, Miracle Grow, and Miracid for acid loving plants. When the plants are outdoors, I alternate the fertilizers applying a different one every 2 weeks, and they are mixed at one-half the strengths shown on their respective labels. If an indoor strength is given on the label, use that. By using the different fertilizers sequentially, micro and macro nutrients not found in one brand of fertilizer may be supplied by another. I also sprinkle Osmocote on plants in accordance with the amounts shown the label. Osmocote only works if the temperature is above 70°F. I use fish emulsion a lot because it is organic and weak in strength (5-1-1). I don't fertilize during the

*Continued on page 10*



## Pruning Methods

The aims of pruning bonsai is an indispensable and fundamentally natural technique for the maintenance management of the bonsai.

Bonsai is directed toward working with trees and shrubs that start out as raw materials which have essentially followed a natural growth pattern that is responsive to the surrounding environment. In so doing, the trees and shrubs put out many branches which in time are naturally weeded out. Through pruning, the natural process that takes some hundreds of years is compressed in a few score years to yield bonsai emerging with magnificent shapes of elegant simplicity.

The raw materials for bonsai possess strong points, which although they may vary from tree to tree, should be promoted as the trees develop so that their appearances are ones of admiration as they mature. The raw material which grows to a large size in nature can be easily restrained in a pot to a size one can enjoy. To avoid any grief or disappointment, one must restrain the tree's growth from elongating on a continual basis and thus improve the characteristics of the tree.

Even after the tree has matured into a finished bonsai, one cannot avoid the task of pruning the bonsai each year. Although in general the aim of pruning is to adjust the shape of the tree by cutting the large and small branches, the time of the year to do the pruning depends on the species of the tree and its particular growth pattern in time.

### **Sprout Cutting Remarks**

Sprout cutting is still not an old technique. As a rule it is con-

ducted mainly on black pine and red pine, rarely on corkbark pine or Nishikigi matsu, and very rarely on white pine. In the Spring, the sprouts are cut at their bases, and new leaves will emerge again.

The consequences of sprout cutting are that the leaves will be shorter and there will be delicate small branches, and by thinning out the leaves, the amount of energy flowing into a branch can be regulated so that the energy flow throughout the tree can be adjusted to suit.

### **Concerns Before Doing Sprout Cutting**

Before doing any sprout cutting, the health and energy of the tree should be satisfactory. Namely, the tree should be vigorous as a result of having been planted in soil with proper drainage, having been properly watered and fertilized, and been exposed to the right amount of sunshine and air movement.

In the Autumn as the leaves thin out, the energy in the sprouts begins to leave. Since extensive growth takes place in the Spring, the usual time to do sprout cutting is in the June-July time frame. At that time, the energy in the sprouts allows one to change the lengths of twigs and leaves and rearrange the distribution of energy to the branches and leaves.

### **Sprout Cutting Time Frame.**

A large bonsai can have large leaves and small bonsai should have small leaves during the time periods when they are best viewed. That is to say the leaves should be in proportion to the size of the tree. In

some cases, having reached their full extension by October, leaves may even be as much as 4 inches in length.

By selecting the proper time for sprout cutting, the leaf lengths can be controlled since the energy that accumulates in the ends of branches is now diverted elsewhere. Then the ever increasingly larger leaves that occur under uncontrolled conditions at the ends of branches can be reduced.

### **Pruning Unwanted Branches**

Bonsai are always developing. Of the many branches that develop, as a rule, it is not easy to distinguish the needed branches from the unneeded branches and frequently pruning is not done properly. On occasion, one removes a developing branch which is unnecessary. Having mentioned the above, it must be noted that if a number of years go by in which pruning has not been diligently done, the tree gains an undesirable appearance and the unwanted branches hinder the development of the wanted branches. The fact is that one should prune when the time is right and not avoid it.

### **Pruning Long Useless Branches**

A branch can increase in length to look clumsy in a short period of time; or injury may make the length of the branch unattractive.

These long or unwanted, useless branches develop in an early stage if pruning is not carried out. Where adequate pruning is not done, the foliage forms a mantle covering the smaller branches below, and the small branches die, thus destroying the tree's shape. Also, the impres-



sion that some have is that pruning is a big bother.

### **Pruning Taboo Branches**

People of antiquity considered taboo branches as those which did not fit in with the others and were not physiologically consistent with the remainder of the tree.

Bar branches are found on a comparatively few old trees in nature.

Wheel branches are found in the natural growth patterns of some trees. Where bar or wheel branches exist to obtain a singular, strong branch, the number can be reduced to one branch at that common location on the trunk.

Vertical branches not only start to overpower the more horizontal branch from which they grow and weaken the latter, but they also destroy the style of the tree. Branches growing downward (drooping) are out of place from a physiological standpoint, and they are out of balance with the other branches.

A crossing branch is one that crosses over other branches. One might consider that the crossing branch is nice enough to leave if the branch can be straightened. However, in so doing, the branch will probably be too long.

A trunk intercepting branch is one that emanates from the front of the bonsai's trunk or crosses it. This branch prevents the fullest view of the trunk which is most aesthetically desirable. In addition to the above, parallel branches may exist and one then chooses the better branch to remain and removes the less desirable one. It is advisable to prune the taboo branches in the early stages of

their development, which enhances the beauty of the tree.

### **Pruning of Conifer Bonsai**

The pruning operation is the major influence on the appearance and shape of the tree, its branches, and height of trunk. Consequently, knowledge as to what and when to prune is essential to success in creating a bonsai.

Even on the small trees cover the cuts with a sealant where thick branches have been removed. In the early periods of recovery, the trees should be provided some shelter. Also, in time, if the top portion of the tree has not been pruned, the top may be made into a jin to add to the attractiveness of the tree.

Pruning of the entire tree is done from November through March 31. Between March 20-31 or thereafter, the new growth is pruned to 1/3 its length. Pruning, if performed in the Autumn and the humid weather has passed, will destroy the balance in the amount of water pumped up from the roots and cause withering and dying.

March and thereafter - new sprouts are emerging and one need not be afraid of pruning them. This is the time conifers do their most vigorous growing and one must be careful of the sap flowing out of the cuts and try to check it.

### **Pruning of Deciduous Trees**

In general, the most plausible time to prune deciduous trees is in the spring which usually coincides with the time one is most likely to procure them. The pruning of numerous branches and roots at this time will not be harmful to a healthy

tree since it will convalesce satisfactorily and the recovery will be quick. However, one should take the precautions to protect the larger cut ends by using cut-paste or some other type of sealant.

Once the tree has been pruned, there won't be a need to prune the thick branches very often. Do not prune the smaller branches which one wants to grow longer. One prunes maples between December and the time before the buds sprout, so that the sap will not run from the cuts to the extent that the trees will deteriorate from the loss of energy and even die.

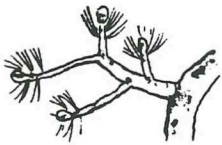
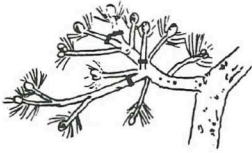
### **Pruning of Flowering Trees**

One must be discreet in when to prune flowering bonsai since one does not want to prune away flower buds. Hence one must heed the times when the flowers bloom for different species of trees or shrubs. In practice even a small amount of pruning is not done before the flowers have finished blooming. Furthermore, one is disappointed if the blossoms do not cover the entire tree. Therefore, pruning is based on the blooming times of the species in question as indicated below so that no one will be disappointed.

For example: camellias and associated species bloom in May to June so pruning takes place after the blossoms have opened and begin to fade. Satsuki azaleas bloom in May through August. Pruning is done after the blooms begin to fade.

Pyracantha, winter jasmine, Japanese junberry and the like are pruned during July and August up until the time the blossoms develop in August through September.

## METHOD of PRUNING BLACK PINE and WHITE PINE Do Only From November thru March



### PRUNING MINGLED BRANCHES

After deciding on the overall shape on each prune the mingled branchlets as well as side branches.

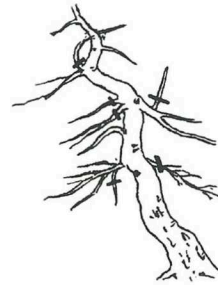
The was pruned at the marks shown in the diagram above.

### UNWANTED LONG BRANCHES

Having decided on the overall shape, the unusually long branches and even the trunk are pruned to suitable length. The diagram below shows where the long branch is removed



### PRUNING TABOO BRANCHES



Arrange to cut all taboo branches to enhance the appearance of the bonsai. Prune all parallel, twisted, upward, downward, and bar branches as shown in the diagram above, cutting at the marks.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The National Arboretum needs volunteer gardeners to work during daytime hours, Monday through Fridays in the gardens and plant collections. We are also looking for help with data recording in our pressed plant collections and in our administrative offices. Weekend positions are available for tram guides, interpretive docents, visitor information specialists, and gardeners in the youth garden. Gardener training begins February 24. Applications are being accepted through January 27. Call (202) 245-4565 for an application.



*This is an e-mail received by Peter Jones from his daughter. This is just a sample:*

*Hello Dad,*

*I know that you don't like jokes and such. I think you will probably want to share this with some of the bonsai folks. Perhaps it could make it into a news letter.*

***All I Need To Know About Life I learned From Trees***

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE ROOTS.

IN TODAY'S COMPLEX WORLD, IT PAYS TO BRANCH OUT.

DON'T PINE AWAY OVER OLD FLAMES.

IF YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN SOMETHING, DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO OUT ON A LIMB.

BE FLEXIBLE SO YOU DON'T BREAK WHEN A HARSH WIND BLOWS.

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SHED YOUR OLD BARK IN ORDER TO GROW.

IF YOU WANT TO MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS, KEEP A LOG. TO BE POLITICALLY CORRECT, DON'T WEAR FIRS.

GROW WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED. IT'S PERFECTLY OKAY TO BE A LATE BLOOMER. AVOID PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO CUT YOU DOWN.

GET ALL SPRUCED UP WHEN YOU HAVE A HOT DATE.

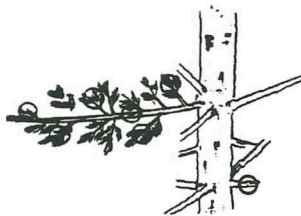
IF THE PARTY GETS BORING, JUST LEAF.

YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR TRUE COLORS AS YOU APPROACH THE AUTUMN OF YOUR LIFE.

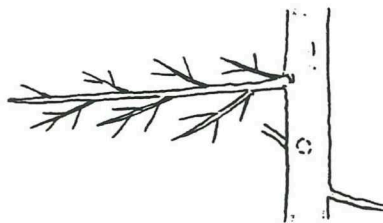
IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO BE HONEST THAN POPLAR.

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

## EZO SPRUCE PRUNING METHODS - Prune Only from November thru March



BEFORE



AFTER

There are many mingled, bar, and wheel branches along with many small branches on a spruce. The circles on the before pruning indicate those to be removed. In the AFTER pruning sketch, the needles have been omitted to show the alternate spacing of the branches that remain. **DO NOT REMOVE THE NEEDLES FROM THE BRANCHES!!**

## SHIMPAKU PRUNING METHOD



BEFORE



AFTER

Shaping to the outline of the bonsai you want. Remove branches and jin others to achieve the desired shape.



## Tropicals, continued from page 5

month of January. Plants need a rest during the winter months of December, January, and February so less water and fertilizer are required. In the winter months, I feed every 3 weeks instead of every 2 weeks as when they are outdoors.

**DO NOT LET ANYTHING GET DRY!** During the winter months, all tropicals need less water compared to when they are outside and vigorously growing. Do not let them dry out, but be careful that the soil does not become waterlogged.

Trimming and pruning are done all year leaving any major work for Summer. Be sure you prune as well as pinch buds so the plants stay compact, especially buttonwoods. You don't want to get long shoots or branches because the leaves further back on a branch will drop. When you pinch the terminal buds, you force the secondary buds to develop, thus giving you more branching. Hence, it's important to not let your plants overgrow.

Don't use aluminum wire in an acid soil as tie-down wires; or insert it in the soil to pin anything in place because phytotoxic salts of aluminum develop which will kill a plant's roots.

Plants that are indoors need to be turned a 1/4 turn each week just as when they are outside, so all parts get equal amounts of light.

Usually in May the temperatures are warm enough for the plants to be returned to the outside. Check night temperatures and don't put outside any plants not hardy down to 50°F until the night temperature is consistently above 50°F. Similarly, for those less hardy with

a 55°F minimum outdoor temperature. When plants are returned to the outdoors, a period of acclimation must be followed similar to the one for bringing them inside. An interval of 2 weeks is needed wherein the periods of exposure to the sun and outdoor temperatures are slowly increased to terminate with round the clock exposure.

All tropicals should be repotted in hot weather when the night temperatures are not below 70°F. Do a soil drench with a fungicide 3-4 days before repotting and let the soil dry a little before doing the repotting, just as you do with all bonsai. My soil mix consists of one part Turface, one part lava rock or coarse sand, and one part pine bark mulch to which is added one part fine pine bark. For the buttonwoods and bucidias (and other plants which need an alkaline soil), I use 3 parts of my soilmix and 1 part sifted oyster shells (purchased at Southern States). After repotting, I soak the pot in a solution of water and SUPERthrive and put the plant in the shade for a week, then half-shade for a few days, and finally full sun. If any plant wilts or looks bad or drops leaves, I bag it in clear plastic for higher humidity. Some holes are made in the plastic to permit some air circulation. Leave the plant under the plastic bag until it appears to have recovered its vigor. I always mist all repotted trees 2-3 times a day, more if needed. It is best to repot tropicals in early July so they can recover from the shock and start growing before coming inside.

Plants and Special Requirements:

If you need to lower the pH of the soil for acid-loving plants, periodically place a slurry of freshly brewed, cooled coffee grounds on top of the soil.

**Ficus:** Likes a highly acid soil with a pH ranging between 5 and 6. Peters fertilizer has an undesirably high amount of salts which are not good for the plant. Use fish emulsion fertilizer mixed in water which also has coffee grounds in it, thus making the solution more acidic and, in turn, enhancing blooms.

**Buttonwood and Bucidas:** Lots of water and high humidity. Lots of light and a warm soil temperature.

**Rosemary:** No root work during the growing season. Night temperatures should be above 55°F. Don't comb the roots when repotting. It likes good drainage and won't tolerate wet feet. It likes full sun.

**Serissa:** It is prone to have problems if it becomes root bound. If it is watered in that condition, it develops fungal problems and death is imminent.

**Fukien Tea:** Both the large and small leaf varieties suffer leaf drop and twig die back if allowed to dry out. On the other hand, too much water causes fungus to develop. A need for root pruning is evidenced by sluggish growth but use moderation. NEVER use Diazinon near fukien tea.

**Gardenias:** Like a cool temperatures 65°F to 70°F during the day and 60°F at night, a high humidity, soil - moist but not soggy and bright, full sunlight. Buds and leaves drop if the temperature is too



## Tropicals

high; or the humidity too low; or if there is not enough light.

**Natal Plum:** Likes full sun to bloom. In the house it will bloom if the temperature is above 65°F and there is moderate light. Keep constantly moist but not wet.

**Ficus:** Needs strong light for compact growth and small leaves.

The reason I enjoy tropicals is that they are fun and nice to work on, especially inside during the winter.

\***Pyrethrum** insecticidal sprays and dusts are made from the dried and powdered heads of the *Chrysanthemum coccineum* (painted daisy or lady). Pyrethrum insecticide is rather expensive, but it is not harmful to plants, and is regarded as the least toxic to man and animals of all insecticides. It is effective against a large number of soft-bodied insects that attack plants, man, and animals.

Sometimes pyrethrum is mixed with a sesame oil byproduct, with a substance called sarinin that occurs in the bark of the southern prickly ash tree, or with other plant extracts that enhance its effectiveness. But it is also mixed commercially with many other compounds, some of which may be quite toxic. Pyrethrum can be obtained pure only from veterinarians or pet shops. It kills pests by rapidly paralyzing them, but it has little residual effect and must be applied directly to the insects.

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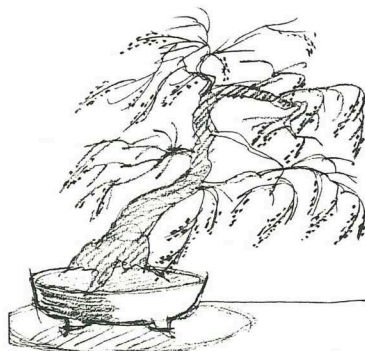
Bonsai Catalog

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*Japanese Black Pine*  
by Steve Pilacik



D'84

## Editorial, continued from page 2

waged campaigns to round up advertisers to run ads in *Clippings*. As PBA Treasurer, he has paid the bills for printing and mailing each month's issue of *PBA Clippings*.

Beth and I have had visions of relying on a backload of articles so that we might be able to get a jump on each month's issue of *Clippings* and perhaps beat mailing a month's issue, more frequently than not, well past its date of issue. As a way around this, I've been borrowing articles that appeared in other bonsai societies' newsletters as you may have noticed in the article acknowledgments. *Clippings* has an exchange policy with other newsletters. It would be nice if future issues of *Clippings* could contain more articles written by PBA members. So dust off your pencils, pens, typewriters. Send in articles even in longhand on backs of envelopes like Lincoln's Gettysburg address was supposed to have been written in its final form on the railroad car going to the dedication ceremony. [Note from Jules' underlings: Please don't take this last suggestion too seriously.]

Lastly, there is a need to replace Beth Potratz as Associate Editor/Art Director of *PBA Clippings*. Here's an opportunity for some willing person to practice skills or learn how to do desk-top editing. Any interested party, please get in touch with Beth at (703) 255-9386 or me at (703) 569-9378. **Time is short.** PBA officers are asked to mention the need to their members.

In conclusion, a hearty thanks goes to all of the members of PBA for supporting *PBA Clippings* and well meant wishes that every member's bonsai turn out to be masterpieces during 1988.



# 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.*

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- BALTIMORE BONSAI CLUB**  
Cylburn Arboretum, Baltimore, MD  
3rd Sunday, 1 PM  
Arschel Morell (410) 744 - 6478
- 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  
Tom Snow (410) 923-2783
- GREATER PHILADELPHIA BONSAI SOCIETY**  
Pennypack Watershed, Willow Grove, PA  
4th Thursday, eve  
Larry Chiger, (215) 663-1678
- KIYOMIZU BONSAI CLUB**  
Clearwater Nature Center, Clinton, MD  
4th Sunday, 2 PM  
Essie 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  
Chris Cochrane, (804) 353- 6674
- WASHINGTON BONSAI CLUB**  
U. S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.  
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Julie Walker, (202) 547-8497

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