

# PBA Clippings

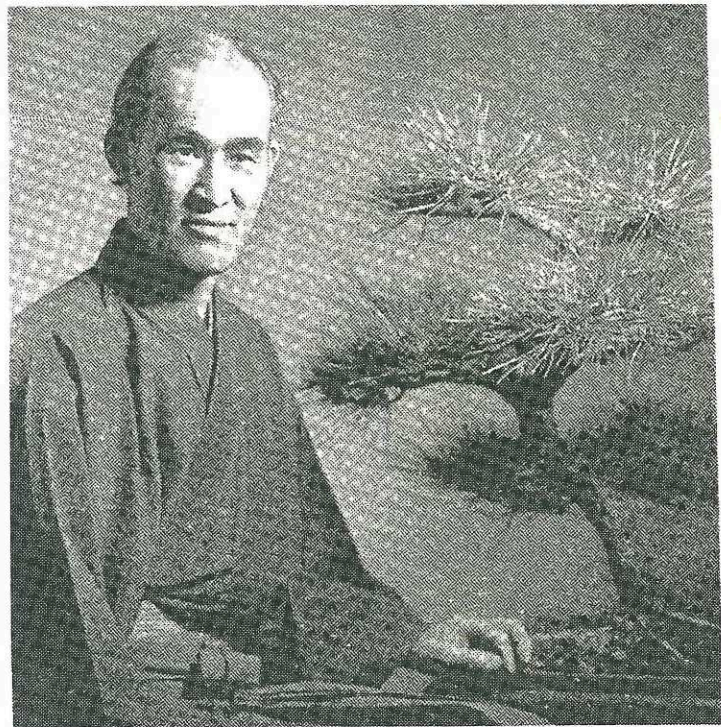
NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION



**Yuji Yoshimura** Please note this article was written in 1994.

Yuji Yoshimura, called Mr. Y by many of his students, is a revered artist, scholar and teacher who has had the dream of sharing with the world the love of bonsai and the ways of its creation. Over the years he has often been called the father of western bonsai. He has taught classical bonsai to thousands of enthusiasts worldwide, but primarily in the United States. Many of his students have gone on to be teachers and leaders in the field.

One of his major contributions is his famous book, "The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes; Their Creation, Care and Enjoyment," which he coauthored with Giovanna Halford in Tokyo in 1957. It is currently in its 39th printing and is still referred to as the "bonsai bible." The section on "Training, Classification of Styles and Methods" has been carefully studied by countless bonsaiists for over 40 years. At the time of its initial printing, it received rave reviews in Japan. Quoting from The Japan Times, October 6, 1957: "This book is a practical guide, showing how to make and care for dwarf trees. Yuji Yoshimura is well-known even among foreign lovers of bonsai. His



grandfather was a noted garden designer, and his father an expert bonsai maker. He added modern scientific knowledge to the artistic techniques he learned from his grandfather and father. A very valuable appendix is added, which includes the use and descriptions of tools and equipments; analysis of soils for bonsai; data on bonsai plants; and English and scientific names; as well as Japanese-Chinese

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VOLUME 28 NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 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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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.

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**EDITORIAL by Jules Koetsch****YUJI YOSHIMURA**

Yuji Yoshimura, a pioneer in bringing the art of bonsai out from under a cloak of oriental mystique and enlightening the western world, has passed away. People all over the western world owe Yuji Yoshimura an immeasurable debt of gratitude for going against the prevailing thinking among bonsai masters in Japan in 1952 - that westerners could never master the art of creating bonsai. In that year he began teaching westerners in his family's Kofu-en Bonsai Nursery on the outskirts of Tokyo.

He and Giovanna M. Halford co-authored a book first printed in 1957 which has since become the bible for anyone interested in pursuing the art of bonsai. One facet of their book, "The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes," for which I am forever grateful is the Appendix 3, BASIC DATA ON BONSAI PLANTS. It lists 340 species of plants suitable for bonsai. No other bonsai text to my knowledge lists so many species. Along with each plant, the following information is given: the common Japanese names in English along with the Chinese-Japanese characters and their English pronunciations, the common English names, the scientific names, the type of plant such as vine or shrub, etc., the styles for which the plant is best suited, the way the plant can be propagated for bonsai, when and how often to pot, when to wire, and pointers on trimming or pruning. I've found the Japanese to English conversions for the plants invaluable in translating bonsai articles from the Japanese. For each plant there is a "Note" which describes where the plant should be positioned, such as in full sun or partial shade, how often to water, and so forth. I'm always impressed by the amount of information compressed in that appendix and the amount of research, knowledge and experience which went into creating the appendix.

I first saw Yuji when he conducted a lecture/demonstration at a Bill Valavanis get-together in the late 1970's. He did his usual masterful job of creating a 9-tree forest planting of Hinoki cypress on a large tray. I was lucky enough to win it in the raffle, but my luck did not hold out. I was still a neophyte in bonsai, and even with the help of Cliff Pottberg, none of the trees survived.

At first the demise of the Hinokis was blamed on the summer potting. In the post-mortem, it was discovered that the roots had been balled up in muck to permit easy maintenance of the trees in upright positions when adjusting their placement on the large tray. It is a procedure that is followed by some creators of forest plantings. Since according to Yuji's Appendix 3, Hinoki cypress can be potted anytime, I've ruled out summertime planting as the cause for the trees' demise. This led me to conclude that the roots did not like being water-logged in the muck. I avoid using muck to ball the roots when doing a forest planting, and instead try to keep the plants upright by putting potting soil on the roots to steady the trees. At any rate, I did end up with a nice tray for another forest planting; but I later broke the tray. I mended it using "PC-7" to glue the pieces

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## Calendar of Events

### February

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

### March

**Northern Virginia Bonsai Society**  
Saturday 14  
9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Matching Bonsai pots to  
a tree and design style.  
10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Design-oriented  
fertilization techniques by Michael  
Persiano.

**Brookside Bonsai Society**  
Thursday 19  
7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. TREE CRITIQUING  
EVENING. At N. Chevy Chase Rec.  
Center  
Friday 20  
7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Speaker: Robert  
Mahler.

ARTIST CIRCLE. Robert, the curator of  
Brooklyn Botanical Gardens will critique  
individuals trees for further refinement.  
Limit 4 people. \$35 Call 301-229-5483  
for registration.  
Sat 21 9 a.m. to 12 noon Speaker:  
Robert Mahler. TREE REFINEMENT  
WORKSHOP. Bring your trees for  
refinement.  
Fee: \$25, Limited to 10 people  
and maximum of 5 trees per person .  
\$35. Call 301-229-5483 for registration.

**Richmond Bonsai Society**  
Monday 23  
7 p.m. Demonstration and lecture by  
Arthur Skolnik at the Imperial Plaza  
Saturday 28  
Time TBA Maple Workshop/ Demon-  
stration at Bruce Stonemans home.  
(contact RBS for add'l info)

**Northern Virginia Bonsai Society**  
Saturday 14  
9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Crab apple Design by  
Richard Meszler. Crab apple workshop  
from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Brookside Bonsai Society**  
Thur. 19  
7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. AUCTION Auction  
at North Chevy Chase Rec Center. The  
auction will begin at 7:15 p.m. 20% of  
the sales proceeds will benefit BBS and  
the rest to the owner.  
Sun. 22  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bill Spencer -  
Collecting trip at Ned's Woods.

**Richmond Bonsai Society**  
Friday-Sunday 20-22  
The Home Show- Display and recruiting  
new members. Contact RBS for add'l  
info  
Saturday 21  
10 am -1 pm Shimpaku Workshop/Demo  
at the Imperial Plaza. Lead by Gardens  
Unlimited. Limited to 10, \$60.

Please remember to submit 1998  
calendars to Doug French as soon as  
available. Everyone enjoys seeing other  
clubs activities. Thank you for your  
cooperation. Also include any major  
future events as soon as possible for the  
upcoming events.

## 1998 Upcoming Events

### April:

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society: On the 18th and 19th Roy Nagatoshi will be in town for Workshops. Call Chuck Croft (703) 978-6841

SPRING BONSAI FESTIVAL  
APRIL 24, 25, & 26

### May:

NVBS: On the 9th Jim Barrett from California will Lecture/Demo on Japanese Black Pine. There will be a workshop to follow. This will be held at the National Wildlife Federation. Call Chuck Croft 703-978-6841 for more information.

"American Fantasy" is the title of the 5-1/2 foot long bonkei (tray landscape) created by Mr. Yuji Yoshimura at IBC Atlanta, 1981. He was assisted in the demonstration by Mrs. Marion Gyllenswan and Mrs. Phyllis Wishnick. The entire program was coordinated by Edwin C. Symmes, Jr. All accompanying photographs are by Edwin C. Symmes, Jr. The "American Fantasy" was created in three parts: "The Welcoming Shore;" "The Verdant Hills;" and "The Rugged Mountains." It was created by Mr. Yoshimura as a tribute to the country that has supported his efforts in teaching and creating bonsai for over two decades.

Some bonsai enthusiasts may want to use the term "saikei" for this creation by Mr. Yoshimura. However, this term is not appropriate for his creation. There are two main reasons why saikei is not the proper term. The first is that "saikei" is a word coined by Mr. Toshio Kawamoto. In his definition of it he says, "The difference between bonsai and saikei is that bonsai is made up of a single tree in a pot, generally old, refined, and elegant; whereas with saikei, there may be one, two, or many trees planted in a pot with rocks, mountains, rivers and lakes. The trees are generally young, vigorous and healthy." The term "bonkei" means "a tray landscape." Therefore, Mr. Kawamoto's terminology does not apply to this design because some of the material is relatively old, and the design itself is obviously refined. Even though the landscape does contain symbolic mountains, rivers and lakes, these also fit the precise definition of "bonkei." The above article, along with the permission to print it, were generously made available by Mr. Yuji Yoshimura through Symmes Systems of Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Yoshimura has long been recognized as an outstanding bonsai master, and by many in this

## American Fantasy by Yuji Yoshimura



# 1 The tray landscape created by Mr. Yoshimura depicts a cross section of the American landscape. Starting on the left with the high mountain waterfall as a source, the water then runs through a rocky mountain gorge. As it enters the second tray, it flows around a hill and into a pond before continuing out through the flatter landscape. The water continues past a hardwood area in the third tray, into a swampy area with bald cypress, and then into the sea.



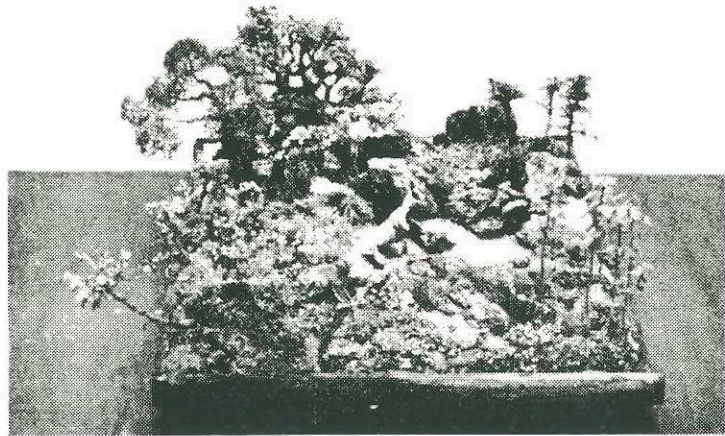
#2. "The Rugged Mountains" tray is 2-1/2 ft. by 2 ft. across, of marine plywood with solid edge construction. All edges have been sculptured by burning and wire brushing. All wood surfaces have been preserved with Cuprinol for maximum life. The white waterfall was created with aqua epoxy. Plant materials used: Main vertical rock planting - Procumbens juniper, dwarf Sawara cypress, Kingsville boxwood, dwarf azalea, dwarf cranberry, and many ground cover plants such as bean fern, golden fern, mosses and lichens. Medium rock: multiple trunk Sargent juniper clinging to a rock with a single trunk Sargent juniper on the back side. Buttonwood driftwood planting in front, right - double-flowering white Serissa and Procumbens juniper. Presentation time: 25 minutes.

country as without peer. He was a speaker at the 8th Annual PBA Symposium held on 16-17 October, 1982.

Secondly, even if Mr. Yoshimura's creation fit all of the above considerations for the saikei definition, it would still be a bonkei because "Saikei" is the registered trade name belonging to Mr. Kawamoto. Therefore, only someone licensed by Mr. Kawamoto to prepare "Saikei" may use that term for their creations. As we have seen here, all tray landscapes are "bonkei." Some schools of bonkei have developed their own trade names for their products which are still bonkei.

The entire program was completed in 1-1/2 hours. Every aspect of the program was carefully chosen to heighten the dramatic effect. The program opened in a totally dark auditorium. A spotlight, focused on Mr. Yoshimura, began with a soft glow and became brighter as the music "Theme from 2001" built to a crescendo. The entire presentation was created in this spotlight. Other music was used for effect as needed: "The Welcoming Shore" featured excerpts from Walter Carlos' "Sonic Seasonings." "The Verdant Hills" were built to the sounds from Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite." "The Rugged Mountains" contained electronically created music by Walter Carlos, which gave thunderstorm and rain effects, as well as "In the Hall of the Mountain King," also from the "Peer Gynt Suite." Mr. Yoshimura and assistants were dressed in totally black gowns. Indeed, the entire program was created to heighten the appreciation of beauty in bonsai and related arts.

Bonsai-Saikei, The Japanese Miniature Trees, Gardens, and Landscapes, Toshi Kawamoto and Joseph P. Kurihara, 1963, Nippon Saikei Company, Tokyo, Page 352. Ken Kyusha's New Pocket Japanese-English Dictionary, Page 60, Copyright 1981, Symmes Systems, Atlanta, Georgia 30306.



#3. "The Verdant Hills" tray: 2-1/2 ft by 2 ft. across. All of the stones used in these creations were individually carved from feather rock to fit the scene by Mr. Yoshimura. It is light weight, carves easily (be sure to wear goggles) and holds water in its many small pockets for the plants. The root-over-rock style planting that dominates this scene has been trained for 12 years from Sargent juniper, single-flowering white Serissa, and dwarf Pieris. Other main plants - dwarf Needle juniper, trained 12 years from a cutting, Procumbens juniper, trained 5 years from a cutting, dwarf Cryptomeria and Trident maple seedlings. Ground cover material: Sedum, dwarf Saxifraga, dwarf Veronica, dwarf violet, dwarf mint, golden fern, dwarf horsetail, and mosses, lichens and grasses to add color and textural variety to the landscape. Presentation time: 20 minutes.



#4. "The Welcoming Shore" tray: 2-1/2 ft. by 1-1/2 ft. across. Main species used are Trident maple and Bald Cypress. Ground covers used are the same as in #3, plus dwarf Acorus. All of the plants in the entire landscape were grown in containers. Mr. Yoshimura removed them from the containers, pruned and wired them before beginning the program. Although the program took a total of under two hours, the preparation had begun more than two years ago for this particular landscape; and many of the plants in it have been under bonsai cultivation and training for five to ten years. Presentation time: 45 minutes.

## HINTS ON COLLECTING by Shari Sharafi, BBS Educational V.P.

This article is to share my experience with first-time collectors who may find these basic instructions helpful before heading out there. More experienced collectors are encouraged to send additional notes to this newsletter to further complement the materials presented here. Each year's spring is the sign of new life and for some of us is the time to go back to Ned's Woods to find and collect that very special tree which has been waiting for us patiently all winter. We prepare mentally in advance; we arrange and rearrange our schedules; dream about that hollow-trunk mountain laurel, that informal upright beech, and that amazing forest planting of hornbeams. Finally, on that awesome sunny April Sunday, we head to Ned's Woods. As usual, we meet up with Bill Spencer or Fred Mies in the parking lot of the nearby shopping plaza. When the sun is nice and warm (or close to it), we drive in an unbreakable chain of automobiles toward our destination. After driving through a fairly nice looking subdivision, we arrive at Ned's Woods. We park in the back of the neighborhood, gather our gear, and head into the woods. As usual, guided by Bill or Fred, we get our ten minute tree identification crash course, and then collectively we head deeper into the woods.

Some trees such as mountain laurel are easy to identify, but deciduous trees without leaves such as beech, hornbeam, maple, oak, native azaleas, blueberry, and a few others become trickier to identify while they don't have any leaves. But after a few questions, it gets simpler

and you tend not to miss clues as much. I once collected a maple I thought was a beech, and a beech I thought was a maple. It is somehow immaterial what species it is, as long as it looks good. I never regret making the effort to attend this event even if I return home empty handed. However, I have always managed to find at least three to five very special trees each time I go there.

Before I get into details about collecting, I wish to thank Bill Spencer and Fred Mies for their continuous involvement in this effort and their willingness to share their wealth of knowledge and limited time with everyone. In addition, I'd like to send a special thanks to Mr. Ned (whom I had the pleasure of meeting a few years ago) for his contributions to all our collections.

During the first years I went to Ned's Woods, I kept forgetting which tools and supplies to take with me for collecting. When I started to remember what to bring along, it was too much to carry in my hands. So I purchased a "little red wagon" like most little boys have. It is a beauty and pulling it beats the heck out of hand carrying everything up and down the hills. Sometimes I think that I have gone too far with everything that I take along, but just about everything I take comes in handy. **BELOW** are listed some items you may wish to consider carrying when you go on a serious collecting trip. If you plan to collect only pencil-size seedlings for a forest planting, you won't need as much equipment. For collecting a 2" calliper mountain laurel or beech, you will need most of the

equipment I have listed.

**TOOLS:** SHOVEL (HEAVY DUTY ONE IF YOU WANT A GOOD SIZE TRUNK), HAND-AND LONG-HANDLE PRUNERS, SAW, PRUNING SCISSORS, REGULAR SCISSORS, BURLAP, PLASTIC BAGS (5-GALLON TRASH BAGS AND GROCERY STORE BAGS), TWINE, COLORED TAGS, PERMANENT MARKING PEN.

**CLOTHING:** BOOTS, DRESS IN LAYERS (WARM CLOTHING FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE DAY, T-SHIRT FOR THE DIGGING PART), RAIN PROTECTION GEAR (I DON'T EVER REMEMBER A RAINY COLLECTING DAY.), WORKING GLOVES, SUNGLASSES, AND A HAT.

**FOOD/ MISC.:** LOTS OF WATER AND SOMETHING TO EAT LIKE CANDY BARS, SANDWICHES, FRUITS. A LITTLE WAGON OR WHEEL BARROW (IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON REALLY LARGE THINGS), 5-GALLON SPRAYER FILLED WITH WATER (IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO BARE ROOT RIGHT THERE), CAMERA, CELL PHONE.

**Basic Rules:** Stay with the crowd, do not collect on the main dirt road. Go in at least 20 feet from the main dirt road, refill holes with dirt and leaves, and repack well. Don't create an erosion problem by (a) removing lots of trees (close together) from a sharp slope, or (b) by removing moss from slopes. Before you get too anxious and start collecting the first or second tree you see, take time to scout the area. See

## Collecting

if you can identify the plant material around you. You will learn to tell the difference between maple, native azalea, beech, and hornbeams by the textures of their barks, and more importantly by the shapes of their new buds. It helps to put a color tag (like orange) with your name on a tree if you don't want to collect it immediately, and you want to come back to it later that day.

When collecting, try to look at the bottom two to three feet of the tree, since you will be removing all the foliage. Take a good look at the roots and trunk, remove as much loam as you can (at least 10 inches) from the base. This will allow you to see the lower part of the trunk and make the final decision that it is the right tree for you. Before you start digging, remove all the foliage and unwanted branches. Avoid digging trees that are right at the base (or just very close the roots) of big trees. This type of digging is just exhausting and you don't end up with much of a rootball. Don't try to use your shovel as a lever to up-root trees, most often the tree will win the battle; and most shovels will break when confronting good caliber trees. So far, I have returned one Craftsman shovel for free replacement at the local Sears store. Try to cut all the roots by pushing the shovel as deep as you can push it under the rootball. Amazingly, most often the tree will put out many more than enough buds to produce future branches. Removing the unwanted branches and trunk parts before digging allows you to maneuver around the tree with less swaying of the trunk, and prevents breaking of the roots. If you have a water

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## January Monthly Care Tips

Just a little over a month and we'll be scrambling to get the bonsai out of Winter storage and in place for their Spring-Fall sojourn.

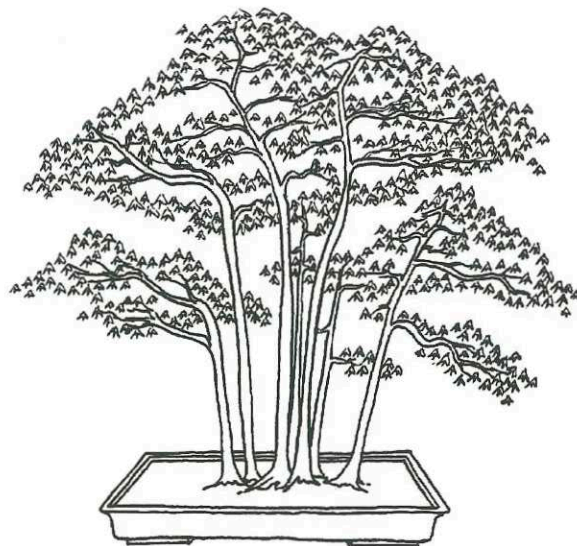
Watering and pruning tips from January still apply.

Ginkgo - good month to prune branches.

Start a log. Make a list of trees to be repotted and when.

Check soil supply and mix batches as appropriate.

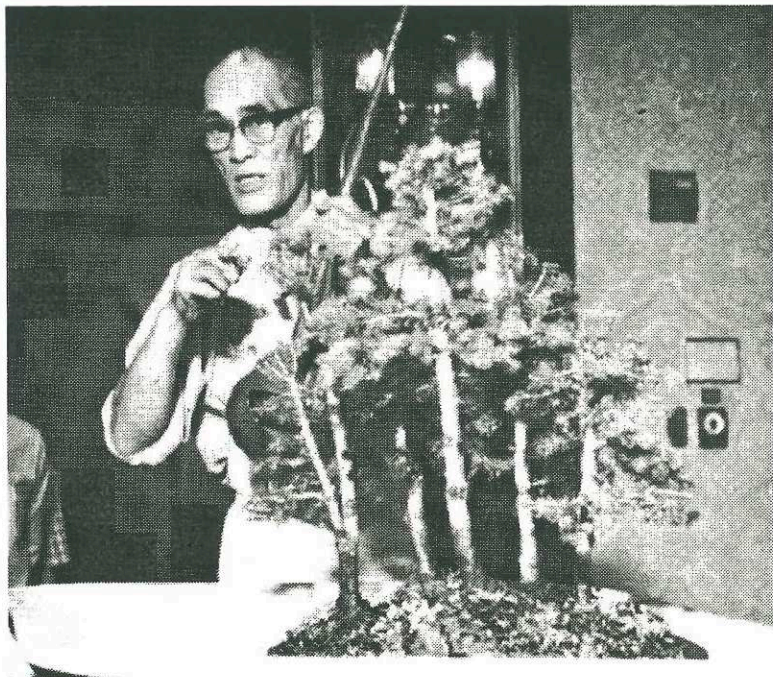
Time to think about fertilizers. If you like the idea of using paste or fertilizer balls, now's the time to get the bloodmeal, cottonseed meal, and bonemeal. John Naka's recommended mix in his book, "Bonsai Techniques," is a good one to follow: 1 part bloodmeal to 2 parts cottonseed meal. One part bonemeal can be added for the flowering bonsai. The bonemeal is the component that makes the balls reek until they dry. Hence, Winter is a good time to do this (so that when they're drying outdoors the odor akin to s—t is not causing neighbors to openly rebel against you). They can be placed in the cups of an egg carton for approximately two weeks to dry. Users should remove and replace the balls after one month so they do not decompose and cause root rot. The nutrients in the balls are usually pretty well exhausted by one month's time. Fresh fertilizer made the same size as the dried balls can be placed on the surface of the bonsai pots, but understand you have to fight the odor - that is, if you've added bonemeal. I like to use the dried balls, but it's a matter of finding the time for the process, and then there's the problem of getting them to stick together. You are on your own here- -some success has been had using beaten egg white or Elmer's glue as a binder.



## Forests by Yuji Yoshimura from 1982 PBA Symposium

Mr. Yoshimura's chosen topic was forest planting. On the left he is shown describing the third key point in creating a forest planting, the three key points being having a focal point, the creation of path for eye-movement, and adjusting the arrangement to accommodate or fit together with the number of trees. Mr. Yoshimura looked at about 40 trees to select the right shapes for the two plantings. Mr. Yoshimura termed "Incomplete Forest" as you are looking at the front. The descriptor refers to the fact there is an open space WHERE TO THE FRONT OF the forest. The mass of trees are to your right and are not distributed throughout the tray as in the "Complete Forest." Of interest is the use of the large tub to soak the dry soil. (Of late, I've switched from dunking my pots in a tub of water after repotting to just watering them with a watering can that puts out a fine spray. Two or three waterings spaced 5 to 10 minutes apart are sufficient. Each watering is stopped when water flows from the holes in the bottom of the pot.) Note the number of twin-trunk trees Mr. Yoshimura used in the plantings; and that the trunks split close to the soil level. This avoids an undesirable reverse taper appearing further up the trunk. Note, also, that the tallest trees are in forefront and the overall shape is triangular.

Photos by Howard Clark





## Yuji, continued from page 1

names of commonly used bonsai trees. The book, in short, is the first practical and complete book on the art of bonsai." And from the English Mainichi, October 5, 1957: "Most visitors to Japan are attracted to bonsai, dwarfed trees in pots, and they ask a dozen mortifying questions. . . mortifying, that is, to those of us who cannot answer them. Here is a book with all the answers. No book should be judged by its cover alone, but if we were to judge this by its cover, we could say it is the most beautiful we have seen in 10 years." "For foreigners returning to Europe or America, there are many words of practical wisdom. Instead of trying to take any bonsai with you, it may be better to know how to find them in your own mountains, pot and repot, train and care for them. They may have a longer future if not so long a past."

In addition to the "bible," Mr. Y has written numerous scholarly articles in both Japanese and English. Additionally, the following three books are to his credit: "Bonsai Masterpieces, English edition, coauthored with Samuel Beech in 1972 (Sanseido Shinko-Sha Tokyo, Japan); "Commemorative Album - The Muriel Leeds Collection," 1977, published by Yoshimura Bonsai Company, Inc.; "The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation; Suiseki and Its Use With Bonsai," coauthored with Vincent Covello in 1984, published by Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont, Tokyo, Japan.

Mr. Y was born in Tokyo in 1921, the second of one dozen children. His grandfather was a samurai and a renowned garden designer. During the Meiji Period (1867-1912) the creation of gardens and of bonsai was much encouraged by the ruling class. Mr. Y's father, Toshiji Yoshimura, was a leader in the Japanese bonsai world and a founder of the Nippon Bonsai Society. He was the owner of the Kofu-en Bonsai Nursery (The Garden of Fragrant Breezes) in Kamimerguro, a suburb of Tokyo. The eldest son died when he was a few years old so Yuji was destined to carry on the family tradition. His training in the care of bonsai began at the age of three! He studied the related traditional art forms of flower arrangement, Japanese watercolor painting, and tea ceremony. Next, he attended Tokyo Horticultural School where he studied bonsai, bonkei (tray landscape), and garden art. Upon graduation, he returned to Kofu-en Bonsai Nursery. His horticultural career was interrupted by five years in the army as a cavalryman. Upon his return, he assumed operation of Kofu-en Nursery and became active in the Japan Young Mens Bonsai Association. In addition, he continued his grandfather's work in landscape gardening.

In 1952 he was invited to speak to a group of British Embassy persons in Tokyo. He also conducted a 10-day bonsai exhibit in a major department store with daily "how to create your own bonsai"

demonstrations. These first-time happenings generated excitement, and Yuji found satisfaction in sharing this revered art. He was encouraged to offer a "Laboratory Lecture Course" for non-Japanese persons at Kofu-en. At this same period, Mr. Y made the acquaintance of Alfred Koehn, a German agricultural diplomat who had spent years in East Sumatra on a tobacco plantation. Mr. Koehn had become fascinated by the arts of Asia; Chinese brush painting, Japanese flower arranging, garden design, et cetera. In 1951 he attended the Nippon Bonsai Association Exhibit at the Tokyo Art Museum. "Mr. Yuji Yoshimura ....went with me from exhibit to exhibit giving detailed information on the trees' names, botanical peculiarities, heights, ages, the pots they were planted in, whether Japanese or Chinese, the stands they were displayed on, and the names of the exhibitors. The sincere interest shown by me, a foreigner, as well as my desire to make this unique art form better known to foreigners, led Mr. Yoshimura to the suggestion of our collaboration in giving bonsai lectures and demonstrations." And so a serendipitous relationship was established. The classes were held at Kofu-en and were very successful. Over 500 English-speaking persons profited from this opportunity to study bonsai, an art heretofore shrouded in mystery. Alfred Koehn acted as interpreter and also wrote a pamphlet for the students called "Notes on Bonsai" under Yuji's di-

## Yuji, continued from previous page

rection which was the forerunner for the great book, "The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes." The coauthor of the bible was Giovanna M. Halford, wife of the Educational Attache, British Embassy, a student in the first series of classes.

Meanwhile, in the United States, interest in the arts of Asia, particularly the horticultural arts, was growing. In 1958 Dr. George Avery, director of the prestigious Brooklyn Botanic Garden, heard from Dr. John Creech about the pioneering work Yuji Yoshimura was doing in Tokyo exposing non-Japanese-speaking persons to the art of bonsai. He offered Mr. Y a fellowship to come and teach at the Garden. Mr. Y accepted and came to New York, bringing many plants and containers with him. At this time, he also taught at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. In 1959 he established the Yoshimura Bonsai Company in Westchester County, New York. In 1961 he began teaching Classical Bonsai at the New York Botanical Garden and does so to this day (1994). The classes held at his Center have become legend with several students attending for over 25 years. One such student exclaimed, "Mr. Y has added a glorious dimension to my life." Another student said, "Mr. Y touches a tree and magically it becomes a thing of beauty - his sense of design is exquisite." Mr. Y has

been particularly closely involved with the Yama Ki Bonsai Society of New York. Dorothy Etkins, Secretary of Yama Ki writes: "To the Yama Ki Bonsai Society, Mr. Yoshimura is not only a mentor and teacher, but its cornerstone. His unique talents, expertise in technique, artistry, and creativity continually provide the society a strong focus as well as a vision to the future. Mr. Yoshimura is a vast storehouse of knowledge for now and for future generations of bonsai enthusiasts. There is no equal in ability. His subtle refinements, in addition to his vast knowledge, has made us, the members of Yama Ki, extremely fortunate having him as our personal teacher."

Over the years, Mr. Y has traveled extensively in the United States, India, Australia and Hong Kong. His lectures are renowned for dramatic staging and wit. He has actively encouraged the growth of bonsai clubs, organizations, and publications. In addition, he has found time to create several Japanese gardens. In 1932 he received the Certificate of Merit from the National Landscape Association for a Japanese garden at the home of Dr. James Hester, President of the New York Botanic Garden. Having lived in the United States for over 35 years, Mr. Y has observed the differences between eastern and western cultures as reflected in attitudes toward the arts. He believes that any

art form, be it music, painting, or bonsai, changes with time. He is currently attempting to conceptualize the art of bonsai as it exists in the world today.

See "Modern Bonsai" published by International Bonsai. In 1973 Yuji went to Washington, D.C., to do a demonstration sponsored by the Potomac Bonsai Association which was attended by Dr. John Creech, the newly appointed director of the National Arboretum. Afterward, they had dinner while Yuji spoke of the dream of "a place to which American bonsaiists could give their treasures knowing that the trees would be cared for and viewed by visitors for years to come." And so the idea of having a permanent exhibit of bonsai in the nation's capital was born. First came the gift of 53 bonsai and six viewing stones presented as a bicentennial gift to the people of the United States. Next came the development of the National Bonsai Foundation, which was responsible for appropriately housing 56 examples of American bonsai donated by artists from different regions of the United States. As part of the bonsai complex, the Yoshimura Study Center was funded in honor of Yuji Yoshimura by his many friends and students. The space is the heart of the bonsai complex. The goal of Yuji Yoshimura's life has been to bring bonsai into the modern world. He has been eminently successful.

## Collecting, continued from page 7

mister, you can remove as much soil as you want from the root ball, either with a hook or by shaking the tree. My favorite method is to hold the trunk at its base with one hand and the bottom of the root ball with the palm of the other hand, carry your specimen to a large tree, and gently hit it against the large tree a few times. Amazingly, all the soil just crumbles and falls to the ground. Then you can pull out all roots that don't belong to the tree, and decide if you did a good job of getting enough roots. At this point, if you really don't like what you are getting or you feel that you didn't get enough roots, just replant the tree in the same hole, and consider it as the next year's catch. Otherwise, mist the root ball, repack it with leaves and loam, wrap it with burlap, mist the burlap, put it in a plastic bag, and tie it well. If you don't have a water mister, then skip the bare rooting part and save that for later, when you get home.

Needless to say, you will be carrying a lot of extra weight. If you don't want to drag the tree around with you, then put it in the shade until you finish collecting

*ITALICS* but remember where you are leaving it. Often you see people near the end of the day wandering around and looking for their collected material or that special bog iron rock they found and leaned by the side of some tree. Most often when you get home you will be exhausted, hungry, and wondering if and why you did what you did. Just relax, put the trees in a container of water (and you may want to add

some SUPERthrive).

According to Fred Mies, he has left them in a SUPERthrive and water solution for as long as three days after collecting. Therefore, don't rush. You can come back to it in a day or two. When you get back to it, remove all the leftover soil by dipping the tree in and out of the water a few times. A high-pressure garden hose sprayer can be helpful in removing forest soil. Make sure you remove all the soil that you brought from the forest with you. Then repot in a well-drained oversized plastic container with lots of drainage holes. A well-drained soil mix for these trees would contain lots of granite grits, sharp sand, and lots of organic matter. I have not had any luck with planting collected mountain laurels in my yard. They seem to die a slow death, but they thrive quite well in the soil mix and container. Leave the roots alone for at least three years for mountain laurels, and at least two years for deciduous trees. You may leave it in the same container for that period, but meanwhile you can work on the branches. For a while, the tree acts as if it is a dead stick; however, in about six weeks for deciduous trees (and about eight weeks for the mountain laurels), you will notice small buds appearing from the Nebari (lowest exposed 6 inches of trunk) areas. As the days pass, more buds appear near the root crown and up the trunk. Start being selective with the buds. Remove the ones that are not needed for the style of bonsai you wish to create. Leave a few where you'd like to have branches

so if one or two die back, you have saved some with which to work. Especially with mountain laurels, one should remove the extra buds. I left all the buds on one of my trees. The buds started at the bottom and continuously appeared upward of about 12 inches. Then, somehow the tree ran out of energy, and the remaining 12 inches didn't get any more buds. On trees where I quickly remove unwanted buds, new buds develop all the way to the top of the tree.

Start shaping branches as the buds grow outward. With collected maples, the growth is impressive and branches thicken very fast so be careful with the wire marks. The first year with maples, let the branches grow outward horizontally, wire them, and pinch back as necessary. With collected maples, don't worry about the leaf sizes. You will notice that they are huge during the first year. Leave them alone for the first year, but starting the second year, you can defoliate your tree in mid-June. The second set of leaves will be a lot smaller tends to stay on the tree longer in the fall. With my collected beech, I have defoliated them but the second set was just as large as the first set. Now I prefer to follow Dan Chiplus's recommendation which is to cut the leaves in half in a diagonal line. Their edges brown a bit, but the trees look a lot better, and people don't even notice the cuts. With mountain laurel, the size of the leaves is fine, and you only need to worry about the branches since they tend to be brittle when they are young

## Collecting, continued from previous page

and harden when they get woody. I am still looking for some good advice on how to deal with them, and so far I haven't gotten any flowers out of them. My longest living collected tree was collected three years ago.

With hornbeams, the leaf sizes are just fine, but the trick is to keep them alive. They seem to be the most fragile of all. With all your collected material, try to be patient. Allow the collected trees at least two to three years in their training containers. However, check the maples and beeches after the second year since they do put out more roots than mountain laurels and hornbeams

Fred Mies has a good theory on collecting. He will collect only trees that satisfy all of the following three rules. First: Only collect the tree if it is better than what you have at home. Second: Collect if you don't have that specie at home. Third: Collect if the tree is worth the effort. Please remember that all of the above information and quotes from others are only my interpretation and not how others may practice regularly. Therefore, I encourage you to try collecting, ask questions from more experienced members, and have fun.

This year we are planning to go collecting on Sunday, March 22

(check PBA Clippings to verify the date) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. As usual, we will meet at the shopping plaza and we will have the first departure at 10 a.m. (early birds), and the second departure at 12 noon. All participants are encouraged to head back by 2 p.m. since our guides will stick around till the last car leaves and they will be anxious to get home before dark. As usual, please respect the neighborhood.

Directions: From 495 Washington Beltway take route 50 West for 10 miles (toward Annapolis). Exit at Route 3 North (toward Baltimore). At about three miles turn RIGHT onto Route 450 East. Meet at the Patuxent Shopping Center (might have been renamed), which is directly on your right after turning onto Route 450 East.

Have a safe and happy collecting trip and hope to see you there.

[Editor's Note: The Japanese place much emphasis on a bonsai tree's roots. They must be thick or strong to give the impression of good Nebari. Nebari translates literally as "stickiness" or "perseverance" and gives the impression that tree is very old and well anchored. John Naka's book, "Bonsai Techniques, Pt 1," says the following which

is pertinent to collecting a tree: "Rootage: (NEBARI) remove any branches, shoots, dead branches, leaves, high growing roots, and trash from the base of the trunk. Next, starting from the base of the trunk, remove the soil gently. Ignore the hairy roots and look for good sized roots to expose. If there are no good sized roots, keep the hairy roots for future rootage."

The tree gets its nourishment from the small and hairy roots. It is best to leave a sufficient amount of small and hairy roots so that if they are concentrated at the ends of thick roots and the roots are much longer than desired for planting in a pot. Sometimes the bulk of the hairy roots are concentrated at the ends of the heavy roots. If the overall rootage is too big for a container, trim 1/8-1/4 off the very ends of the heavy roots. This will preclude the roots growing longer and force regrowth of hairy roots. When the amount of hairy roots that have grown back is sufficient, the heavy roots can be trimmed back to fit the container. A taproot can be removed if there is a sufficient amount of hairy roots growing near the soil surface. Often, the bulk of the hairy roots may be found on a very deep taproot. It is best to leave such trees alone.]

# Pruning Tips continued from last month

## Japanese Gray Bark Elm, Prune after Buds Appear and Stop after leaves fall

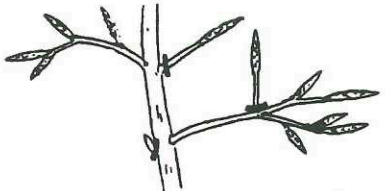


Remove vertically rising branches and unwanted buds. Lengths of branches can be removed until just after the leaves have fallen.

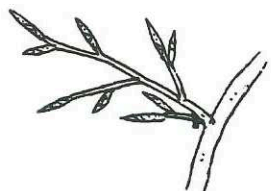
In the diagram on the left the unwanted branch and bud are marked with heavy dark line. The diagram on the right shows the vertical branch.



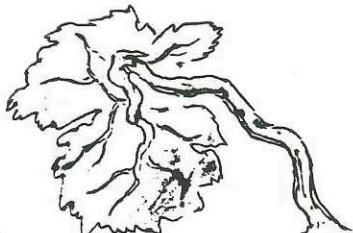
## Beech and Hornbeam Prune after Buds Appear and Stop after leaves fall



Immediately after the leaves fall, the final pruning can take place to remove branches growing in the wrong direction as well as buds emanating from spots where branches are not wanted. The diagrams to the left and the right demonstrate where to cut with dark lines.

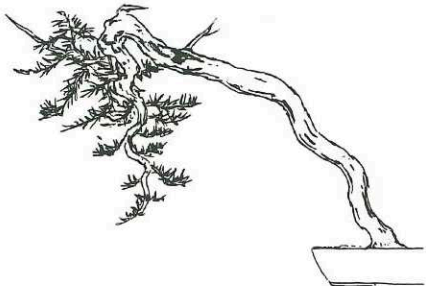


## Needle Juniper Prune from November thru March



The top sections give a feeling of mingled branches piled up on one another. The congestion is alleviated by pruning branches.

After deciding on the entire shape and before pruning, discretely select branches to be jinned. Firmly maintain the overall balance of the tree.



## Editorial, continued from page 2

together. (See the August '96 issue of PBA Clippings for the details.)

Hence, I'm sorry to say that I do not own a bonsai that Yuji Yoshimura created. However, we can see Yuji's artistry among the bonsai in the American Collection at the Museum of the Art of Bonsai and Penjing at the U.S. National Arboretum. One only has to look at the nameplates to find 10 to 11 trees labeled as being from the Muriel R. Leeds Collection. Those trees were selected and donated by her from the more than 50 trees in her collection. The remaining trees were auctioned off in March of 1987 at the National Arboretum with proceeds benefitting the American Bonsai Pavilion. All the trees were created under the tutelage of Mr. Yoshimura during the 25 years Mrs. Leeds was a member of the Yoshimura School of Bonsai in Briarcliff Manor, New York, N.Y.

They all bear Mr. Yoshimura's touch.

**THE YOSHIMURA NAME IS ON THE PLANT'S NAME-PLATE. THE PLANT IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD.**

Those of us who own the book, "Yoshimura School of Bonsai COMMEMORATIVE ALBUM, The Muriel R. Leeds Collection," by Yuji Yoshimura, have in Yuji's own words, "This will be the first book in the history of bonsai to show year by year changes of individual bonsai for over 10 years." The book was printed as a limited edition of 500 copies in 1977. Anyone lucky enough to own a copy knows that the book contains many interesting bits of information on the culture of most of the species of plants frequently used for creating bonsai.

Most of this issue of PBA Clippings is devoted to highlighting Yuji Yoshimura's life as a bonsai

master. His legacy is monumental - his three books, the many who received tutelage at his Yoshimura School of Bonsai (many of whom have passed on to us what Yuji taught them), the many bonsai he helped to create, and his lecture/demonstrations where some of us have gleaned some of his vast knowledge of and experience in the art of creating bonsai.

**YUJI YOSHIMURA** - Master bonsai grower Yuji Yoshimura, a master bonsai grower who taught and nurtured the classical Japanese art in the United States, died at the age of 76, on Dec. 24 at Medway Country Manor in Medway, Mass. The cause was cancer, said William N. Valavanis, a friend and fellow bonsai fancier in Rochester. He was a resident of Norfolk, Mass.

### Matsu-Momiji Nursery



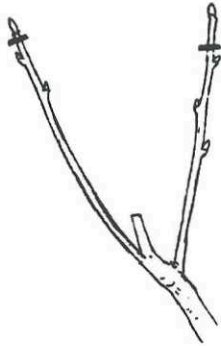
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*Japanese Black Pine*  
by Steve Pilacik

# Pruning, continued from page 13

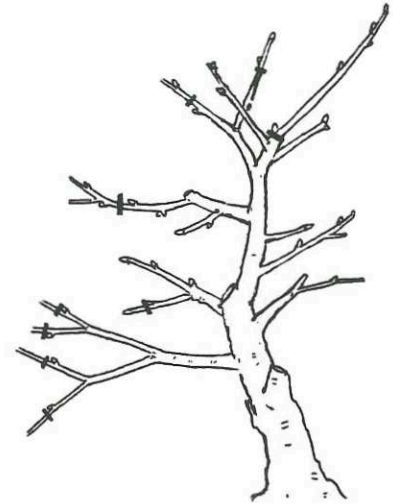
## UME (Japanese Flowering Apricot) Prune immediately after flowering



Immediately after the flowers die, prune back as to remove the tip of the branch just before a bud.

Shape the tree at this time.

Consider that in the October through December time frame flower and leaf buds will appear on the unwanted lengths of branches, precedence should be given to pruning those parts immediately after flowers fade.



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