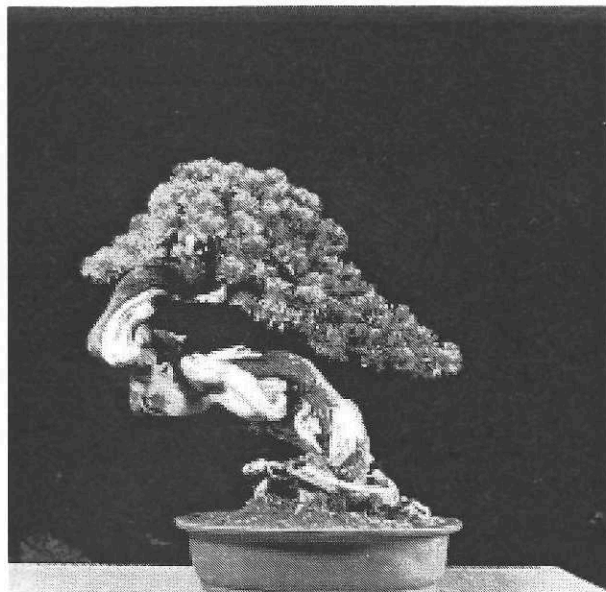


PBA Clippings

NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

Volume 30, Number 2
February 2001

Y2K GRAND PRIZE



MOUNTAIN PINE, PIUS NOTTER, Switzerland



Y2K FIRST RUNNER-UP



CALLISTEMON, CHIN-YAO, PENG, Taiwan

Co-sponsored by Japan Bonsai Exhibition, TAIKANTEN

Sponsor: JAL World Bonsai Contest '00 Secretariat

Support: Japan Bonsai Growers Cooperative

Cooperation: Nippon Bonsai Association

Assistance: Japan Airlines

Y2K RUNNER-UP PRIZE

**OLEA TREE,
ANGEL MOTA,
Spain**



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Editorial by Jules Koetsch

This is the first week in January when I'm writing this. The hubbub of the holidays has gone, but according to the weather people the "unseasonably" cold weather may very well continue. We could use a protective layer of snow to insulate the bonsai in the ground and also drip some moisture to the soil in the bonsai pots when the air temperature and sun warm things up. This is the first time in a number of years that I've dug some bonsai into the ground since there was no room in the polyhouse. Wouldn't you know it also is shaping up to be one of the coldest in a number of years. Hope the plants pop out new growth in the spring.

With the bonsai still tucked in their beds for a long winter nap, there is time to ruminate about things to do. Perhaps you're well organized and have your bonsai soils mixed and ready to go, your extra pots all cleaned, and your bonsai tools all cleaned and sharpened where required.

If you are like me, you may have accumulated a number of empty bonsai pots over the years. As in my case, some empty pots may be sad reminders of bonsai gone to the great bonsai garden in the sky. However, those empty pots should act as incentives to fill them with newly created bonsai. Then again, some of your bonsai may have outgrown their containers. You should, where feasible, repot a bonsai in one of these empty pots. If not, a new pot is in order. In other words changing a bonsai's pot every now and then is the way to go. John Naka always suggests that changing a bonsai's pot is like a woman putting on a new dress - she looks more interesting. If you do not have a suitable pot, think about getting one at the PBA spring show or the PBA auction. As for cleaning pots, use a rust eraser (fine texture) to take off the stains on unglazed pots and the insides of glazed pots, but not on the glazed area. Vinegar is another possible stain remover. As they age, glazed pots may acquire a patina - showing that they are old. Hence you may elect not to remove any of the patina from the glazed part of the pot.

As for sharpening, I've never even mastered the art of sharpening a knife blade to a keen razor's edge. I ran across an article on sharpening bonsai tools appearing in a 1979 issue of a Japanese bonsai magazine. I'm out of practice in translating Japanese to English and hopefully by the next issue of *Clippings* I'll be able to pass along some information on how the Japanese sharpen and care for their bonsai tools.

One way to pass one's wintry days or nights is to log-on to the Internet and browse the sites featuring bonsai. Maybe some readers without access to the Internet at home have utilized computers at their public libraries to search out bonsai sites for information? I was given a year on the Internet as a Christmas present one year ago. After fumbling around for a year as a neophyte (first time) trying to find my way around (after all, I'm not 12 years old anymore) I can spend endless hours navigating through the seemingly endless number of sites that feature bonsai. Looking through the February 2000 issue of *Billboard*, Newsletter of The Bonsai Society of Upstate New York, I found a list of 12 More Interesting Bonsai Sites. So I tried a few, and also some others. Here's some of what I found:

<http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/> is the site of the National Bonsai Foundation and one you should not miss. Gives much information about the National Penjing and Bonsai Museum. Also has info on stolen trees and suiseki.

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Dojo/9381/> has among other items an article on mugho pine for bonsai and a *Stolen Bonsai Register*. The latter offers anyone the opportunity to send in a picture and description of one's stolen bonsai.

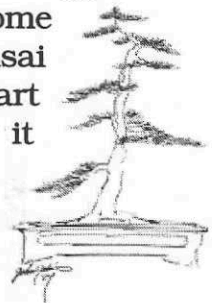
<http://www.softcom.net/users/dziemann/links.html> has a place for anyone to show his bonsai creation along with a write-up about the bonsai. Good site to check on what species others are using for bonsai, different bonsai styles and pertinent growing suggestions. If a reader wishes to make any inquiries about one of the bonsai, they can be made to the contributor's e-mail address which is also provided..

<http://members.aol.com/IASNOB/index.html> features an article describing how Kimura bends branches that are as much as 2 inches thick. Also lists other bonsai Internet sites sponsored by bonsai personages such as Chase Rosade and Ernie Kuo.

<http://www.rosadebonsai.com/> shows among other items photos of the studio's displays at the Philadelphia Flower Show. Gives some ideas on how to display bonsai at the forthcoming Washington Home and Garden Show.

<http://multimedia.lycos.com/search.asp> is a search engine where can enter the word *bonsai* and then go to the bonsai site you select.

Perhaps the readers could send in the addresses of Internet sites they have found worth revisiting or maybe even visiting once. With all of the bonsai activities planned for next spring there will be much to do. PBA members will have to groom their bonsai, not only for their own club's show, but also for showing at the Washington Garden and Home Show and perhaps also for the annual PBA spring show at the National Arboretum. The PBA Annual Spring Show will be part of the Asian Arts Festival 27-29 April commemorating the opening of the National Bonsai & Penjing museum in 1976. The program appears in this issue of *Clippings*. More details will appear in *Clippings* as they become available. Groom your bonsai to look their best and take part in the these activities - it should be a ball.



Nag,Nag,Nag: Have you sent your JYN potensai tree rendering to Jack Billet yet? Time waits for no bonsaiist. Here it is winter, your slow season. Go now and search through your piles. You know you meant to do it ages ago. (Find instructions for submission in *PBA Clippings*, October 2000, p. 3.)



Calendar of Events *compiled by Arschel Morell (BBC)*

Send your club's input to Arschel by e- ajmorellsr@hotmail.com or snail mail to:
9 Six Notches Court, Baltimore, MD 21228

February

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

3 11:00 am Demonstration of repotting of large Deciduous bonsai

17 10:00 am Collecting trip of local native trees, bring tools for digging, etc. (weather permitting - call ahead)

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society - **NEW very convenient meeting place. Call contact listed on back page.**

10 9:00 a.m. Tree Discussion Workshop
10:00 Tree of the Month Questions
Session: Bring in Your Trees.

Brookside Bonsai Society

15 7:15 pm Warren Hill will be talking about the pruning of pines.

Washington Bonsai Club

17 2:00 pm Styling workshop. Members bring own trees

Baltimore Bonsai Club

18 1:00 pm Winter silhouettes. All members should bring trees showing winter attire. Bring trees or other bonsai-related items to work on. This is a good time to prune deciduous trees before they waken.

Bowie Bonsai Club

26 7:00 pm Unusual techniques

March

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

3 11:00 am styling and repotting of a Shimpaku juniper. Workshop includes tree from selected nursery stock, pot, and instruction.

17 11:00 am Japanese white birch group planting workshop includes trees, pot, and instruction Workshop space is limited, call 540 .775.4912 to register.

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

10 9:00 am Trees from Past Workshops:
Bring in Your trees.

10:00 Preparing for a Show: Warren Hill.

Brookside Bonsai Society

15 7:15 Stanley Chinn will be the guest speaker - subject: Penjing history and art.

Washington Bonsai Club

17 2:00 pm Jack Sustic will be showing ongoing work with the National Collection.

Baltimore Bonsai Club

18 1:00 pm Program to be announced.

Bowie Bonsai Club

26 7:00 pm Refinement workshop (getting ready for the Spring Show)

NO MEETING DATES OR PROGRAMS REPORTED

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

Lancaster Bonsai Club

COME ON FOLKS, LET US KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE.

Non-PBA Functions

Potomac Viewing Stone Group Meeting

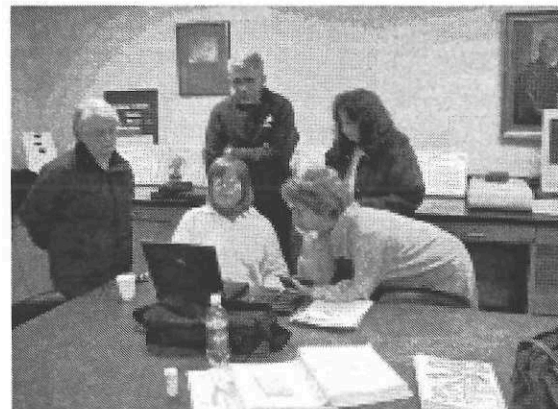
4 March 1-4 pm Yoshimura Center - Member stones critiqued/selected for PBA Spring Show. Visitors welcomed.

USNA Full Moon Walk

8 February 7:00 pm-9:00 pm


9 March 7:00 pm - 9:00pm

Enter through R Street gate for this magical hike through moonlit gardens. At special stops, your guide shares selected Arboretum and horticultural facts. Let your senses come alive as you see with natural light and listen for night sounds, perhaps even our resident owls. Wear good walking shoes and dress for weather, as this is a 5-mile, mildly strenuous hike. Fee: \$ 7 (FONA \$6) Canceled in severe weather. No rain date. Registration required.



*Photo by Chris Yeapanis
yes, he got a better camera*

Judy Wise, Jim Hughes, Arlene Polinsky (site designer), Betty Yeapanis, and Carole Roelofs and Yuji take an advance look at the nearly finished PBA WEB SITE. GET READY!

YO ! Have you volunteered to help Ed Suarez yet?! 29 March - 1 April, Washington Home and Garden Show, e.j.suarez@worldnet.att.net or (540) 937-3205  See p. 9.

Container Drainage an excerpt from

Plant Production in Containers by Carl Whitcomb

When the proper aeration, water-holding capacity and water management conditions exist, root growth is very rapid and continues to the bottom of the container. In addition, root hairs develop rapidly on some species (not all species develop root hairs). Likewise, when the growth medium becomes compacted, or aeration is reduced for some other reason, the root hairs are the first to die, reflecting the less favorable conditions.

Container depth is the only aspect of container design that influences drainage. The deeper the container, the taller the drainage column, thus the greater amount of growth medium in the upper portion of the container that is well drained. Container depth relative to a particular growth medium can be excessive, thus leaving the plant without sufficient water reservoir in the mix to support plant growth between waterings.

Drain holes do not control drainage from a container. The texture and porosity of the growth medium and the depth of the container control drainage (assuming there is some opening in the bottom).

Container and Bench Color. High temperatures in containers are frequently blamed for poor growth of containerized plants during summer. Media in black containers exposed to the direct sunlight may reach temperatures in excess of 120° during mid-summer.

Studies have shown that light colored containers reduce the temperature of the growth medium.

Inspection of root development in containers exposed to direct afternoon sun reveals few, if any, roots on the sunny side of the container, at the same time roots on the shaded side are healthy

Drainage and aeration. More plants are killed by excess water and poor drainage in containers than any other single factor.


However, when it comes to describing why the over-watering/drainage complex is responsible, it is somewhat difficult to explain.

When plants are watered excessively, or the mix has few large pores, the amount of oxygen diffusing into the plant root system is decreased. The amount of carbon dioxide, on the other hand is increased since carbon dioxide comes from living roots.

Bacteria and fungi in the mix. There is evidence to suggest that the carbon dioxide content alone, if it reaches too high a level, can be toxic and cause deterioration of roots of plants in containers. If the growth medium in the container, "the soil," is made up of materials which create very small pores or air spaces, the growth medium will retain large quantities of water. On the other hand, if the growth medium is a mixture of materials which have some large pores or air spaces, the container is going to retain much less water.

Because the column of growth medium is not continuous as soil in the field, the water collects or accumulates where the mix stops, that is, at the bottom of the container. This restriction of downward flow of water occurs in containers with no bottom or wire bottoms as well since the column is broken. Therefore the more shallow the container, the less growth medium in the top of the container that is well drained and suitable for good root growth. Likewise, the deeper the container, the more suitable for root growth. Therefore, the more shallow the container, the more porous the growth medium must be. Likewise, the deeper the container, the smaller the pores can be, with reasonable limits.

So from this we can see how container size & depth, its location and more importantly, the soil mix, directly impact the plant's ability to maintain water, temperature, and healthy growing conditions.

Sorry, folks, not to tell you more about Mr Whitcomb. I seem to have put the intro to this article in a really safe place. Will try to remember to give proper credit in next issue. And by the way, any time you see a snail at the end of a comment, that will tell you it's Betty's 2 cents - 

Understanding Kengai *by*

Warren Hill, Curator, NB&P Museum

Part I. Formal

One of the most unique styles in the field of bonsai is the kengai (cascade). It also seems to be one of the least understood from a creative standpoint. In far too many instances, it seems that all one has to do to create a kengai is to find any plant with a long branch, bend it over the pot's edge and presto, you have a sort of bonsai novelty because of its unusual shape. The lack of thought and understanding of this beautiful style is all too apparent in the finished product.

The many different sub-categories of kengai, such as formal, hanging, semi, windswept, bunjin, etc., make this style a good one for creative people seeking diversity in their collection. By far the most popular category in the US is the so-called formal style which is very elegant in appearance when properly designed and exhibited. This is also the basic kengai style most instructors teach their beginning students. (A large part of its popularity is probably due to this exposure.) However, the many other sub-categories can be equally as dramatic and beautiful if handled properly. The intent of this article is to cover the basics for the formal style. Some of these elements will apply to the other categories as well. Specific design parameters for the other types of kengai will be covered in Part II - Vertical.

The initial degree of drop usually places the kengai into one of three broad classifications. These are:

1. Semi-cascade
2. Formal cascade

The initial degree of drop for the formal style is usually around 45 degrees (fig. 2). As indicated by Figure 1, the initial degree of drop usually changes to another angle in the lower section of the "tail" to accomplish the proper balance.

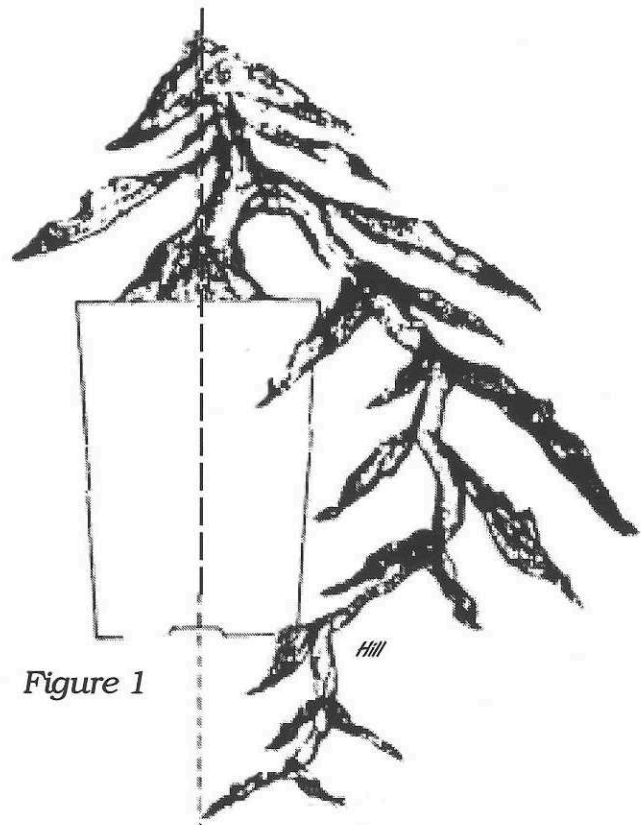


Figure 1

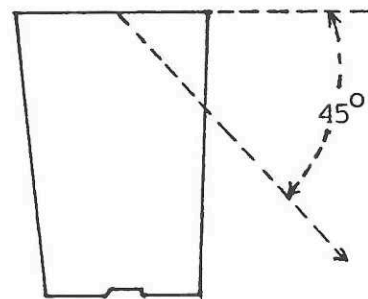


Figure 2

Choosing Materials

The proper selection of plant material will result in a tree that has a "natural feel" about its new look. The improper selection of material will result in the tree having a strained, unnatural shape. The types of plant used in most kengai styles are conifers. The reason for this is they fit the style so well. Most of the cascading-type trees found in the mountainous regions of the world are usually juniper or pine. They are both very hardy plant types and are able to survive the environmental extremes which create the dramatic shapes we all admire so much. If choosing a mature plant with hardened wood, try to find one with a natural prostrate growth habit so as to minimize

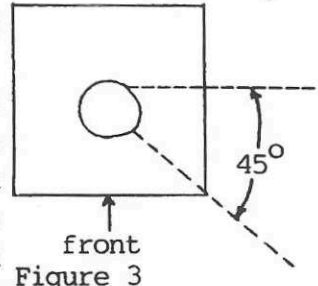
the necessity of bending old wood. (It breaks many times before it bends.)

1. Select a tree with a strong, prostrate growing branch or trunk.
2. This branch or trunk should have an adequate number of secondary branches for proper styling.
3. Look for a branch or trunk that has interesting curves.
4. For best results, some branches should be placed on the outside curves of the main trunk line.

STEPS IN CREATING KENGAI (Formal)

1. Determine the front side by observing the root structure and main trunk line.
2. Select the number one branch for use as the new apex.
3. Wire the main trunk and primary branches. Alternate primary branches as in the informal upright style (except in this case, the front branches will take the place of the back branches in the moyogi style).
4. Bend the main trunk to the desired position.
 - a. Usually the initial degree of drop is approximately 45°. Bend sharply at the joints. Try not to create rainbow-type bends.
 - b. The lower tip of the tree is directed either right or left to end just below the center trunk/pot line.
5. Creating the apex. Position the number one branch to align the apex over the tree's center trunk/ pot line. (Alignment of the apex/center trunk/pot line and lower tip usually produces the best balance for this style; however, this arrangement is not always possible due to limitations in plant structure.)
6. Wire the secondary branches. Alternate as in other styles.
7. Potting.
 - a. A deep pot is always used for kengai.
 - b. Usually the tree is positioned in the center or slightly forward.
 - c. The main descending trunk line is positioned at approximately 45° as viewed

from the front of the pot (fig. 3).



d. Do not bring the main trunk line directly down the front side of the pot. This is a very common mistake. Always try to bring the main trunk line over the corner of the pot (45°); the reasons for this are:

1. It conceals the trunk base and rootage.
2. It eliminates the beautiful first curve.
3. It conceals the pot.
4. It appears too symmetrical.

e. Do not allow the trunk to touch the edge of the pot.

Always keep in mind when arranging your branches that so-called rules are only guidelines to be used as a reference. Try not to create "sterile"-looking trees by following rules too rigidly. Remember, the most important thing in creating a bonsai is that it be beautiful and have artistic impact. The technical correctness, in my opinion, always comes second.

PART II: VERTICAL

The subcategory of kengai known as vertical is usually the most dramatic of the three kengai classifications. It is important that this style communicate to the viewer a strong message. In nature, the vertical kengai normally struggles for its existence in the most inhospitable of environments. This cliff dweller, lodged in crack and crevice, buffeted by the canyon winds and weighted by the winter snows is a marvel of strength and endurance. It is important for the

bonsai artist who creates this style to understand its natural habitat to accurately reflect the tree's character. The initial degree of drop for the vertical style is somewhere between 45° and 90°.

As indicated in Figure 4 (as in the formal style), the degree of drop usually changes in the lower section to accomplish the proper balancing point.

Choosing Materials

Selecting the proper plant material for the vertical kengai is somewhat more difficult due to the sharp angle in the initial trunk line. Of course, the best material would be a natural-shaped tree from the mountains, but these are very rare in most parts of the United States; and I would suspect equally so in most parts of the world. This leaves most of us with pre-trained material or nursery stock with which to work. The pre-trained material is usually superior in quality but has the disadvantage of time required to develop usable size.

In selecting nursery stock, pines are usually the best material for this style due to their more flexible trunks and branches. Pines also seem to fit the style better than most trees because of their reputation for rugged beauty. The second best material would be a prostrate growing juniper such as *Prostrata*, *Procumbens nana*, or *Shimpaku*.

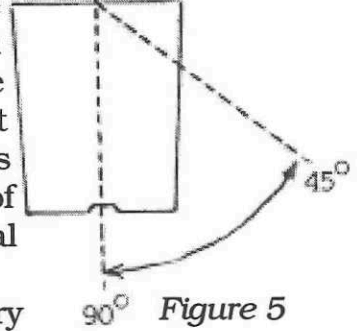
1. Select a tree with either a sharp bend in the lower trunk or a strong branch that can be used as the new vertical trunk line leader.
2. As in the formal style, numerous secondary branches are necessary for proper styling.
3. Interesting curves in the trunk line are important.
4. Branches for the creation of an apex is usually not necessary unless a decorative



element created by the use of jin is desired. The knee of the trunk's initial sharp bend usually forms the tree's apex.

Steps in Creating Kengai (Vertical)

1. Determine the tree's front by observing root structure and main trunk line. Keep in mind that the future main descending trunk line is to be positioned at approximately 45° as viewed from the front of the pot (as in the formal style - see figure 5).



2. If using nursery stock without a bend in the lower trunk, select a strong, low growing branch which can be pulled down to the proper vertical position as the new leader. Try to choose a branch that has good taper into the lower trunk line.

3. Wire the main trunk line. If using a new leader branch for the main trunk, remove the old trunk section after wiring and bending the new leader to help prevent splitting and cracking at the trunk/branch joint. This joint is usually weakened considerably by the heavy cuts needed to remove the old part of the trunk. Try to keep removal scars on the back side of the tree.

4. Bend the main trunk to desired position.

a. The initial degree of drop should be between 45 and 90° .

b. The initial bend should be sharp, not rainbow-like.

c. Position the lower tip of the tree for balance. Either right or left is okay. However, usually the best balance is produced by the alignment of the apex/center trunk/pot line (as in the formal style).

d. When positioning the lower tip, do not point it directly to the ground like an arrow. Provide a slight amount of "lift" as if seeking the sun.

5. Select, wire, and position the primary branches.

a. Alternate as in the formal style.

b. Strip, wire, and position the branches left on for jin. (Jin is very desirable for this style. It adds greatly to the rugged character. Use it freely.)

c. Wire and position the secondary branches.

6. Potting.

a. Choose a tall, thin pot for the vertical kengai. (More so than the formal style.)


b. If possible, position the tree in the center or forward in the pot.

c. Position the "knee" of the trunk (apex) to align with the center trunk/pot and the lower tip line if applicable.

d. Position the main descending trunk line over the corner of the pot at 45°.

e. Do not bring the main trunk line down the front side of the pot or allow the trunk to touch the pot's edge.

When displaying the vertical kengai, the stand should be tall and slender to blend with the tree's vertical element. If possible, use a stand that is light and open in order to maximize the hanging effect. Try not to use a stand that is the same height as the pot. This creates a symmetrical 1:1 pot/stand ratio which is usually unattractive.

[Warren tells us there's a follow-up piece to this article for which he has started to search. If we're lucky, we will read the semi-cascade view next month. Watch this space. ]

The Washington Home and Garden Show -- an opportunity we use to promote all the clubs of the PBA --


is coming up soon. The show runs from March 29th until April 1st. The hours are: 11:00am to 9pm, the 29th and 30th. 10:00am to 9:00pm on the 31st, and 11:00am to 6:00pm on the 1st of April. We look forward to seeing a lot of PBA members participating in the show this year.

We will want to display a variety of trees from early training stage to much more developed trees. Please don't feel that your tree isn't good enough for the show. By displaying the various levels of developed trees, we will attract more people into thinking that they too can do Bonsai. Please see your club vice president or e-mail me at e.j.suarez@worldnet.att.net to sign up for the show. We will need volunteers for setting up the booth, attending the booth, and for take down. I will have more information on the show preparations within the next month. – Ed Suarez, NVBS

ENERGY AGAIN from Back to Basics *by Berni Gastrich*

Introduction: Berni Gastrich writes a brief but very informative column every month in the Yama Ki Newsletter, Long Island, NY. The following appeared in the December 1999 issue. Old timers will recognize the facts of life as far as keeping leaves small.

A high-energy tree does not try to reproduce (bloom) it goes for maximum growth. A stressed tree, e.g. dry or low on nitrogen, goes into a reproductive phase (blooms to produce seed.). If it cannot thrive, and may die, it makes an attempt to create offspring before the end of that growing season. Photosynthesis requires sunlight. A tree in full sun has smaller leaves. The tree in excessive shade creates larger leaves and longer internodes in order to photosynthesize in spite of less sun. Energy in a plant is produced by the use of nutrients and water which are converted to sugars in the leaves via photosynthesis. Chlorophyll acts as the catalyst in this process. If we let a branch grow longer, the leaves grow larger, because the energy is there to build them. Frequent trimming prevents this. Large leaves produce long internodes to prevent shading each other. If we keep leaves small we automatically get shorter internodes.

[I love Berni Gastrich. Don't you? Some day I hope to meet him. Marion Gyllenswan says he's a heck of a nice guy. Every month he contributes a concise bit to his club. Each one probably takes him at least two hours. My wistful dream is that someday PBA will have knowledgeable, sharing bonsaiists to write for us, too. ]

MATCHING POT TO TREE *by John Biel*

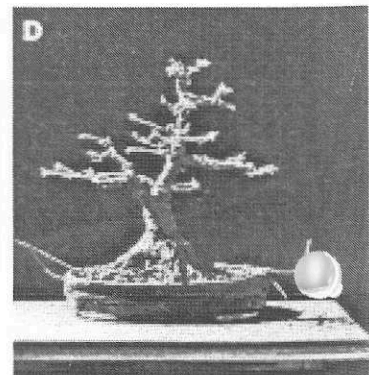
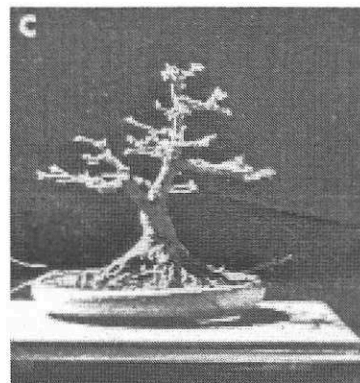
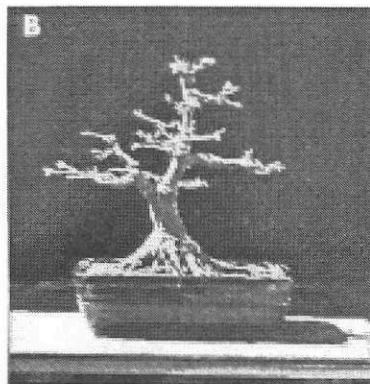
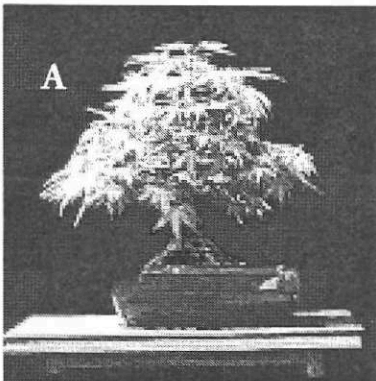
Introduction: The author takes the reader through how he went about selecting a pot for a tree. See if you agree with his choice. The article appeared in the April 1998 issue of *The Journal of the Toronto Bonsai Society*.

HAVING MORE THAN ONE CONTAINER suitable for your bonsai can be both a blessing and a burden. The former, because it gives you a choice, and the latter, because it requires a decision. For the most part, though, having more than one pot is the way to go because each pot bestows a unique look to your bonsai. So unique, in fact, that people will wonder when you got that "new" tree!

In the case of deciduous plants such as Japanese maples, there is more choice in pot selection than for conifers. This is primarily because of the great variety of colour glazes that are available. To show how a container will modify the appearance of a bonsai, I'll use a series of photographs to illustrate the point.

First, a bit of background on the tree. The bonsai is a Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum Kiyohime*. Over the years its top got very weak and it also experienced some serious branch die-back. As a result, I pruned it very heavily, reducing all branches to stubs. That was in early spring, 1995. It was then regrown for two seasons. The result after two years is shown in photo A. The tree is 30 cm tall with a 10 cm buttress. In late March 1997, the tree was pruned (Photo B.) in preparation for planting in a more suitable bonsai container.

SELECTING A POT It's too bad this journal is not in colour to show the attractive pots that were considered. The container made by Petra Engelke in photo C is oval with an inside lip and rounded sides. The legs are low and wide. Its colour is grey with prominent gold flecks. In centimetres, the dimensions are 30.5 x 24.5 x 5.



Congrats to John Biel whose Japanese Maple placed in the top 100 trees in the JAL World Bonsai Contest.

The second container considered (photo D), is also made by Petra. Its dimensions are, again in centimetres, 27 x 21 x 5.5. It is oval with straight sides. The legs are low and wide. It's a tri-colour glaze, the top colour being a cinder-grey. The middle is a drip glaze in teal, and the lower colour, which is free of the drip glaze, is a dark honey colour. It has a heavier look than the pot in photo C.

The third candidate (photo E) is Tokoname-ware, having the following dimensions: 28 x 22 x 6.5. It is rectangular with chopped corners. The feet are pointy and tiered. The colour is referred to as almond.

Other Factors To Consider Since I was dealing with colour, I also had to consider some prominent features of the bonsai. Its bark is primarily green, except for the lower trunk, which is grey. The emerging foliage is attractive but not a spectacular red. Its autumn colour is unpredictable, although in 1994 it turned a striking uniform red.

Colour aside, the bonsai has two additional dominant visual features: its massive buttress and root spread. These must be accommodated and displayed

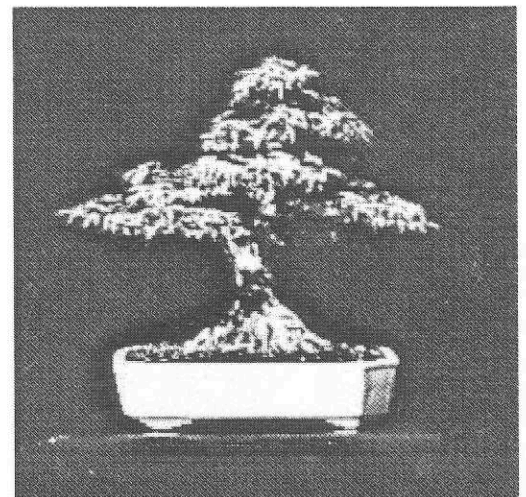
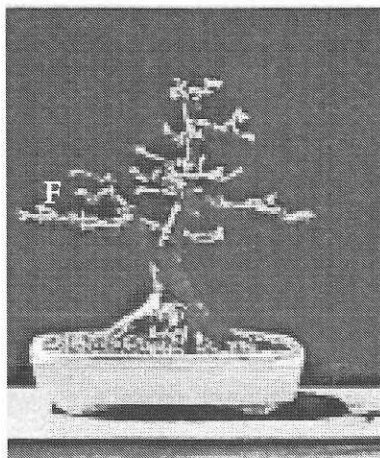
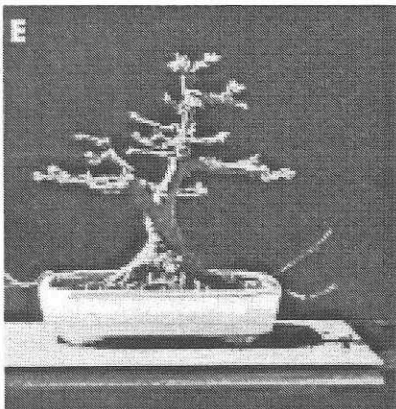
tastefully in any container chosen.

Not necessarily lastly, the container selected had to be large enough to take into account the tree's full complement of foliage. This need is often overlooked and as a result, the tree will look too big for the pot by the middle of summer.

Because I'm focusing on a maple, I will only comment briefly on flowering and fruiting bonsai. There, the container colour of choice would be one that complements or contrasts the best feature of the tree: flower or fruit.

Another important factor in selecting containers, whether for deciduous or evergreen material, is the health of the tree. The pot should be large enough so the bonsai is not unduly stressed when given normal care.

THE FINAL STEP After all this, I would be hard-pressed to tell you exactly why I selected the container I did. I think all the containers would have been suitable. When faced with this reality, I think it comes down to intuition, which is the equivalent of mentally flipping a coin. Which container would you have chosen?



*Speaking of matching, have you matched your dues payment to your membership? This is your last **Clippings** if your name doesn't appear on the list of current members as of 17 February.*



The schedule of events for this coming 27 - 29 April is given herein to indicate why the readers should earmark those dates when they should **without question** attend the *National Bonsai and Penjing Museum 25th Anniversary Asian Arts Festival* at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. It will be a banner event to mark the opened 25 years ago.

**Come Celebrate 31 Years in Bonsai Education and Volunteerism
at Potomac Bonsai Association's 31st Anniversary Spring Show
held in conjunction with
the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum
25th Anniversary Asian Arts Festival
April 27-29, 2001**

Mark your calendars for the following special events and times and watch this website for updates and additions.

All events are free except where noted.

Visit our wonderful vendor tent bursting with things you can't live without. You will find pots, potting mixes, plant material, tools of all descriptions, books, pots, mud men, ikebana supplies, etc. Our vendors are skilled in the art of bonsai, well supplied, and their prices will be better than in any store.

For the **Bonsai for Kids** event, please phone 202.245.4521 to register, weekdays 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Satsuki Azalea Exhibit

27-29 April, 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Bonsai and Penjing Museum Special Exhibits Wing

The Museum showcases six satsuki azaleas donated by the Japan Satsuki Association.

Potomac Bonsai Association Annual Exhibition of Bonsai and Viewing Stones

27-29 April, 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Bonsai and Penjing Museum Chinese Pavilion and International Pavilion

PBA Members present their personal masterpieces.

Bonsai Pot Competition Display

National Bonsai and Penjing Museum International Pavilion

Sponsored by the National Bonsai Foundation in association with the Takagi Bonsai Museum, this is the first North American bonsai pot competition. The six prize-winning pots will be on display during the festival.

Ikebana International Flower Show

27 April- 6 May, 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

National Bonsai and Penjing Museum International Pavilion & Special Exhibits Wing

Sponsored by the Washington DC Chapter #1 of Ikebana International, this annual show features dozens of arrangements in both traditional and modern styles, and includes demonstrations by master teachers.

Demonstrations are 1 hour long

28 April & 5 May, 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

29 April & 6 May, 1:00 p.m.

Bonsai for Kids

28 April, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

29 April, 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Admin Building Classroom

Chase & Solita Rosade specialize in teaching children aged 10-15 how to create and style bonsai. Registration required (be sure to indicate which day).

Fee: \$25 (covers all supplies).

Limit: 12 participants per class.

Introduction to Satsuki Azaleas

28 April, 1:30 -2:00 p.m.

Admin Building Auditorium

The chairman of the Japan Satsuki Association presents this special slide-illustrated lecture.

How to Style a Mature Satsuki Bonsai

28 April, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Administration Building Auditorium

Bonsai artists from the Japan Satsuki Association offer this special demonstration.

Bonsai Demonstrations

28 & 29 April, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Admin Building Auditorium

Presented by the Potomac Bonsai Association.

How to Make a Forest-Style Bonsai

29 April, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Administration Building Auditorium

Special demonstration presented by bonsai master Susumu Nakamura from Yokohama, Japan.

For the past few years, Pete Jones has been tireless in his efforts to cement a niche for bonsai in Northern Virginia. What with trying to find a place where club meetings, bonsai shows and workshops can be held either free of charge or for a modest fee, it has been, to say the least, quite trying to the members of NVBS. In this world, when one does anything there is the expectation of something in return like knowledge, pleasure, or more often money. When one does not have much money with which to work [so that rental fees could be affordable], one replaces money with bartering whatever is acceptable as a worthy trade for "renting" space. The following article describes Pete's efforts to obtain a such a relationship between NVBS and Meadowlark Gardens.

A Blind Date That Turned Out Good *by Pete Jones (NVBS)*

Working with Keith Tomlinson, Administrator of Meadowlark Gardens (Vienna, Va), the Southeastern Region of the American Conifer Society (ACS) and the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society (NVBS) accomplished something that is not often done. They both participated in the Fall Color Festival sponsored by Meadowlark Gardens – a blind date, so to speak. Such effort gave both Societies a chance to present their activities to the general public and each other, FREE of charge. This was a first for Meadowlark Gardens and I believe a first for both societies, to not be charged for use of the visitor's center. Meadowlark Gardens has only been in existence for 13 years, but has the potential of becoming a vital source for information on various horticultural practices. Additionally, Meadowlark Gardens is interested in working with the horticulture hobbyist, clubs and societies.

Mr Tomlinson is developing a mission statement for Meadowlark Gardens. Part of this statement will be to "educate the public" on the various gardens, their use and care. Keith has many challenges facing him and wishes to deploy the horticulture hobbyist where possible, to help with maintenance, educational events, shows and programs. In working with Keith for the Fall Color Festival, we discussed many long-term (years) possibilities for programs and methods of reaching people interested in such activities. We both acknowledge that this is an up-hill battle; and that working with the local gardening clubs/plant societies can be difficult when it comes to scheduling meetings and events. Non-profit organizations depend on volunteers and have limited funds with which to work. However, it is that volunteer spirit of gardening clubs and plant society members that often puts together

A brief synopsis of how Meadowlark Gardens came to be:

"Meadowlark Gardens began as a hope . . . the hope of economist Gardiner Means and his wife, social historian Caroline Ware, to preserve "the bounty of the countryside." The pair of internationally respected scholars and educators studied the performance and accomplishments of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and decided to entrust their beloved 75-acre farm to the Authority in 1980. The Regional Park Authority purchased an adjacent 20 acres to add to the future garden complex.

The gardens opened in 1987. Gardiner Means and Caroline Ware advised, watched over, and endorsed the plans and the budding, growing gardens from the very beginning, often expressing appreciation and approval. Mr Means died in 1988 and Ms Ware in 1990. Family members continue to visit. Today, plant societies, garden club volunteers, conservationists and others help the Authority nurture and develop this graceful display of botanic gardens, a living memorial to the foresight and wisdom of this couple."

enjoyable, successful symposia, plant shows and presentations, at a minimal cost.

With so many ACS members living within a 30-mile radius of Meadowlark Gardens, we should look at working with Meadowlark Gardens on dwarf conifer development and educating the public. Through the long-term propagation program being established at Meadowlark Gardens, each of us could learn how rare, choice, and unique conifers are developed. It is nice to tour someone's garden to see what they have. It is more rewarding to propagate those plants we have seen, and plant them in our own yard. NVBS plans to participate in this program and continue working with Meadowlark Gardens to promote the horticulture hobbyist activities as one of life's enjoyments.

Dr Al Paulsen has been the driving force in establishing a beautiful conifer collection at Meadowlark Gardens. Al gave the participating ACS members a personal tour of the conifer collection he was instrumental in establishing at Meadowlark Gardens. Through his efforts and care, this collection has become quite a collection of conifers which do well in this area. In the past 15 years, our paths have often crossed at gardening shows, plant sales, and rock garden club meetings. These chance meetings were always a joy and the conversation was naturally dwarf conifers. At 80 years young, Al is an inspiration to all who know him. We can only hope that we can remain as active, and accomplish as much as Al has at Meadowlark Gardens. I salute you, my dear friend!

As I was setting up a display to show the progress of *Chamaecyparis obtusa* from seeds to a 10-year-old plant, Jordan Jack entered the visitor's center and asked an employee for the ACS meeting. The young man didn't have any idea of what Jordan was asking for, so he pointed to me and said, "Maybe he can help you." Jordan

approached the display, presenting his hand, saying, "Hi, I'm Jordan Jack. I'm here for the ACS meeting." After the formal salutations, Jordan noticed the *Chamaecyparis* and said, "Those are some nice *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. Look at how nicely they have grown." We discussed the variations as he looked at each flat of plants.

As we were discussing this display and the plants, Robert and Linda Guiles came in. Seeing Jordan confirmed that they were at the right place. One could see that the old friends were happy to see each other again. Jordan introduced me, and showed them the display I had just completed. After a brief conversation about it, we went outside to unload the materials that were needed for the meeting. Since this was their first visit to Meadowlark Gardens, Linda, Robert, and Jordan decided to do a quick tour of the landscape around the parking lots.

During the meeting, this display attracted many visitors with questions. It would have been nice if we could have had some handouts about the ACS and applications for joining the American Conifer Society. Such a display shows the visitors what can be accomplished with a little effort and the rewards of investing some time. Although there were signs, with one inch lettering marking each flat, potted plant and bonsai, the visitors still asked about each item in the display. Many visitors wanted to purchase the 4-year-old *Chamaecyparis obtusa* once they learned that these plants were locally grown.

The display was done to show how one could obtain nice conifers from seeds. There was a flat of seedlings planted last fall (of 1999). These seedlings were already showing variations after growing for only 6 months. The variations in the 2 flats of 4-year-old *Chamaecyparis obtusa* grown from seeds was so great that many people didn't believe that the seeds came from the one conifer. To show how such a

tree will grow and develop, a 10-year-old *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, grown from seed was also on display. These seeds came from *Chamaecyparis obtusa* growing in my front yard. This display also had a flat of 4-year-old *Chamaecyparis pisifera* "Tsukumo" rooted cuttings, a 12-year-old *Chamaecyparis pisifera* "Tsukumo" in bonsai training for 4 years, and a 24-year-old *Chamaecyparis obtusa* "Kosteri" first styled as a bonsai 12 years ago. Also in this display was a 9-year-old *Pinus thunbergii* with the top being "air layered" so it could be trained as a bonsai. A 3-year-old, root crown graft of *Pinus parviflora* "Aka-Kawa" and *Pinus parviflora* "EI-KO Nishiki" were used to show how one can develop plants from grafting.

Two of the guest speakers, Michael Bowers



Last minute fine-tuning (Doug French (NVBS) and Christine Flanagan, are friends from an earlier time, back in the 90's, and it was great to see them both again. We first met when Dr Flanagan worked at the State

Arboretum of Virginia as head of programs and activities. Michael was head of entomology.

Years ago, Christine contacted me about putting some bonsai on display for the Arboretum's fall festival "East meets West." We also scheduled a Basic Bonsai Beginners Course for the following spring. It was through these efforts that the Blandy Experimental Farm and the State Arboretum of Virginia became known to me. She is now on staff at the National Botanic Garden. Michael is now the Director of Blandy, and Christine is at the National Botanic Gardens as special events coordinator. Michael gave a slide presentation on Blandy and the work and studies that are being done.

Christine gave a slide presentation on the N.B.G. renovations and what it will look like when completed.

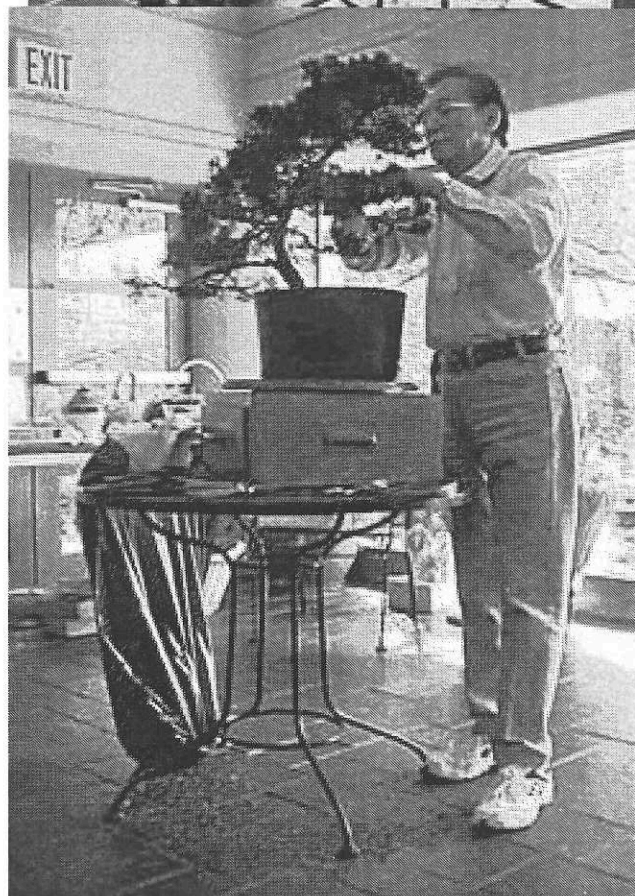
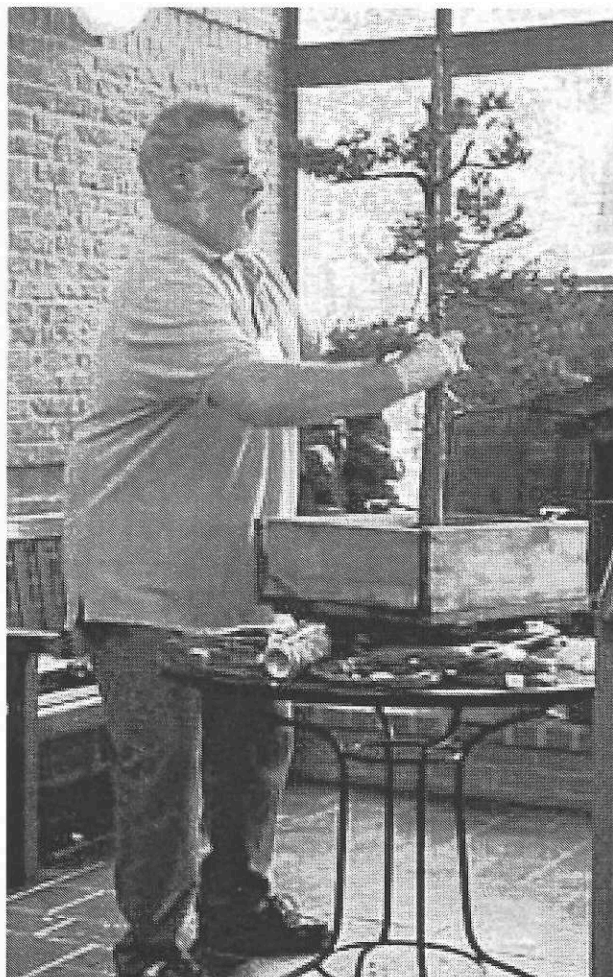
Saturday morning proved to be an interesting time. Claire Segawa, chairperson of the NVBS set-up/take-down committees had planned to have the complete bonsai display set up within half an hour. Claire's planning objective was to get the bonsai displays done with minimum disruption to the ACS meeting. Through her leadership and planning, the set-up was completed as planned, which gave members of both societies a chance to talk about their interests in growing plants. This also gave the ACS participants a chance to talk with the individual bonsai tree owners. In sharing his experience with growing bonsai, Jordan helped to "break-the-ice" and started people talking. His tact and charisma won him the respect of many of the bonsaiists participating in the Fall Color Festival.

There were a few NVBS members on hand to answer any questions on bonsai. These members also used this opportunity to show interested visitors the plants that the ACS had for the Saturday night auction, and how such plants could look if

if one wished to train them as bonsai. Some members were very interested in the conifers brought in for the auction and told Linda Guiles that they would attend; however, they didn't show up for the auction. I am truly sorry that more bonsai members didn't participate in some of the scheduled events.

To provide ideas on pruning conifers, Chuck Croft worked on a *Juniperus chinensis foemina* and Dr Joe Gutierrez, worked on *Juniperus chinensis Shimpaku*. To make sure that anyone would have a chance to ask questions about pruning conifers, both worked on their trees all day. Pruning conifers is just as individual as each of us. Learning to prune correctly is a life study in itself. In learning to prune for bonsai, the Japanese have firmly taught us to: first, only prune on healthy trees; second, understand the growth cycle and characteristic of the plant(s) one wishes to prune; and third, prune to maintain the natural growth characteristic and health of the tree or plant.

Often we see people pruning because they wish to maintain a specific size and shape. Most trees, however, end up in a ball shape, rather than have their the natural characteristics and shape maintained. In bonsai, we learn to maintain the growth characteristics of the species, cultivars and varieties of plants we are training. These same principles can be applied to conifers and evergreens grown in our personal collections and in formal displays of dwarf conifers and evergreens. It is this type of information that both the ACS and the bonsai folks should share. While teaching the Basic Bonsai Beginners Course in the Northern Virginia area, I often see the need to educate the participants about the species, cultivars and varieties of plants. Too often, participants want a bonsai because they like the way they look. Understanding the beauty, varieties, horticultural requirements, artistic value and



uniqueness of the plant material used to create a bonsai is overlooked.

One can only admire the efficiency and effectiveness of Ms. Guiles, Secretary/Treasurer of the newly formed Southeast Region of the ACS. Her well-organized manner and concise directions kept we hardheads in line. Through her efforts, events took place as scheduled, and she made everyone feel welcomed. Linda's attention to details and people skills made a lasting impression on the bonsai club members.

As my success with grafting *Pinus parviflora* in the root crown of *Pinus thunbergii* improves, *Pinus parviflora* will be offered to Meadowlark Gardens to build a *Pinus parviflora* collection. To show our appreciation, I will donate one each of the following trees to Meadowlark Gardens on behalf of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society and the American Conifer Society.

Acer palmatum Dissectum "Seir" 20-gal container, 6 ft. tall.

Acer japonicum f. 'Aconitifolium' "Maiku Jaku" 20-gal container, 7 ft. tall

Acer palmatum "Koshimino" 15-gal container, 7 ft. tall.

Pinus Bungeana "lacebark pine" 5-gal container, 5 ft tall.

Cedrus Deodara 15-gal container, 3 ft tall.

Satsuki Azalea "Kinsai" (12 years old)

Betula (Purple leaf River Birch) 12-gal container, 5 ft tall.

I wish to give special thanks to my wife, Caecilie (CJ) and my daughter Geraldine. Their support, help, and encouragement were most beneficial. Once the details had been finalized, Geraldine created a colorful flier and e-mailed it to the local NVBS members so they could print it and distribute it. CJ made sure that I had covered all aspects in arranging for the Fall Color Festival. She also kept me from over-booking myself, and made sure I did things in a timely manner. I tend to over-commit when arranging for such an event. Her firm grip and quick snap of the lead activated my choke chain, and the subtle command "HEEL" kept this dude in line and on track.

All in all, the "blind date" went well. It gave NVBS and ACS an opportunity to work together for our common cause, to promote our societies, and to share in our adoration for choice and rare plants. We couldn't have had better weather -- it was great! Like a blind date, there are many things that could have been done better. However, seeing the members from both societies sharing their appreciation of each other's interests was well worth the effort. Such meetings will encourage cooperation in future events. Joint ventures will help both societies to grow, and give us opportunities to educate the general public and each other.

All photos by Rich Bozek, VP, NVBS

SEVEN RULES FOR SUCCESS IN BONSAI:

ONE MUST PLANT A LOT.

ONE MUST GROW A LOT.

ONE MUST PRUNE A LOT.

ONE MUST PINCH A LOT.

ONE MUST SEE A LOT.

ONE MUST HEAR A LOT.

ONE MUST KILL A LOT.



MONTHLY CARE TIPS for FEBRUARY *compiled by Jules*

The following tips have been compiled in part from 4 Japanese bonsai magazines and Yuji Yoshimura's book. The time table for various task agrees with the Japanese books' instructions for a climate similar to the Washington, DC, locale. The watering schedules are those cited under specific plant species in the Japanese books. However, where no schedule was given the words "Water as needed" appear to remind the reader that watering is a very essential part of keeping the bonsai healthy and alive.

Watering: The following timely advice is from "BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI" by Berni Gastrich which appeared in the December 2000 issue of the Yama Ki Newsletter.

"On a morning when the soil in the pot is frozen, the sun is strong, and there is a wind, an evergreen tree can be desiccated in hours. This is deadly. Even deciduous trees lose water to the sun and wind on such days. The primary objective of winter bonsai protection is to prevent dessication. Your wind-protective shelter should not act as a greenhouse. However, if it does, the long periods of warm temperatures will not allow for full dormancy, and your tree will die within the next year.

"Don't forget watering ! Most of the trees your writer has lost during winter have died of dessication, not from wind or sun, but from insufficient watering. Evergreen trees are not totally dormant at temperatures above about 25 degrees. They use quite a bit of water.

"Even dormant deciduous trees use some water. A soil moisture gauge is very helpful in telling which trees need water in winter. If you are using a modern bonsai mix (no humus, peat moss, or topsoil), over-watering is not really a danger, even in winter. **Just don't water when the soil is frozen.** The water cannot penetrate and could do harm."

I'm a firm advocate for using a soil moisture gauge to check the way your bonsai are accepting water. Gauges can be found priced below \$10. When the meter reads one-half of full scale, it's time to water the plant. **The following tips have been compiled from 4 Japanese bonsai magazines and**

CONIFERS

Black Pine: Water once per day. The following activities can commence sometime after mid-February. Remove any wire digging into the bark and wire/rewire where needed. Remove any unwanted branches and branchlets. pH 4.5 - 6.0

Cryptomeria: Water once per day including the leaves. Keep in a polyhouse or coldframe for as long as temperatures will go below 32°F. During the last week in the month one can begin removing unwanted branches and needles. pH 5.5 - 7.0

Hemlock: Water as needed. pH 5.0 - 6.0

Hinoki: Water as needed. At the end of the month thin out the foliage. pH 5.0 - 6.0

Larch: Water as needed. pH 5.0 - 6.5

Needle Juniper: Water once per day including the leaves. pH 6.0 - 7.0

Sawara Cypress: Water as needed. pH 5.0 - 6.0

Shimpaku (Sargent juniper): Water once per day. Weather permitting or if the plant is in a coldframe one can consider rewiring and repotting anytime after the 20th of January. Remove the old wire before rewiring. Repotting can be done during this month but it need only be done every 3 years unless plant is rootbound. pH 5.0 - 6.0

Spruce: Water once per day. Wiring can be done but once the tree has been wired it should be placed in a coldframe or polyhouse. Repotting can be done when plant is out of winter protection during this month. pH 5.0 - 6.0

White Pine: Water once per day. Unwanted branches can be pruned. Repotting need only be done every 3 years unless plant is rootbound. pH 4.5 - 6.0

Yew: Water as needed. Apply fertilizer balls at the end of the month.

WARNING: From the USDA Integrated Pest Management: Avoid using shredded hardwood bark mulch on yews. As it decays, it often releases toxic quantities of copper and manganese. Yews are very sensitive to these metals; affected plants are stunted, may turn yellow, and in severe cases, small branches may die. pH 5.0 - 6.0

DECIDUOUS (Non-fruiting/non-flowering)

Keep all of the following bonsai in a polyhouse or coldframe until temperatures stabilize above 32°F.

Beech: Water once per day. It is natural for beech trees to keep the old, brown leaves through the fall and winter and one can remove them during this month. pH 5.0 - 7.0

Chinese Elm: Water as needed. pH 6.0 - 7.5

Gingko: Water as needed. During the middle of February you can remove unwanted branches. pH 6.0 - 7.0

Hornbeam: Water as needed. Wiring can be done in early part of the month. Unnecessary branches and sprouts can be removed. pH 6.0 - 8.0

Japanese Maple: Water once per day. Unnecessary branches and sprouts can be removed. pH 6.0 - 8.0

Trident Maple: Water once per day. Unnecessary branches and sprouts can be

removed. Repotting can be done after the 20th of the month. New leaf buds may appear so keep the maple where frost won't hit it. pH

Weeping Willow: Water once per day. When the temperature remains above 40°F one can apply insecticide such as dormant oil. Prune branches that survived the winter. pH 6.0 - 8.0

Winged Euonymus: Water as needed. Wiring can be done. When the temperature remains above 40 degrees Fahrenheit one can apply insecticide such as dormant oil. pH 5.5 - 7.0

Flowering/Fruiting Plants

Keep all of the following bonsai in a polyhouse or coldframe until temperatures stabilize above 32°F.

CHERRY: Water once every 2 to 3 days. pH 6.0 - 8.0

CRAB APPLE: Water every other day. pH 5.0 - 6.5

GARDENIA: Water as needed. Spray with Malathion. A one-time winter feeding of fertilizer can be done. pH 5.0 - 6.0

HOLLY: Water once every 2 days. A one-time winter feeding of fertilizer can be done. pH 5.0 - 6.0

PYRACANTHA: Water once every 2 days. A one-time reduced winter feeding of fertilizer can be done. pH 5.0 - 6.0

QUINCE: Water once every 2 days. pH 6.0 - 7.5

SATSUKI (azalea): Water once every 2 days. pH 4.5 - 5.0

UME (Japanese flowering plum or apricot): Water once every 2 days. Enjoy the blossoms. pH 6.0 - 7.5

WISTERIA: Water as needed. pH 6.0 - 8.0

Buy - Sell - Trade

PBA member is interested in buying the #4 issue of *BONSAI TODAY*. Please call Jim at 301.779.2891 if you have one available to sell.

Thanks, and Happy New Year. - Jim Hughes