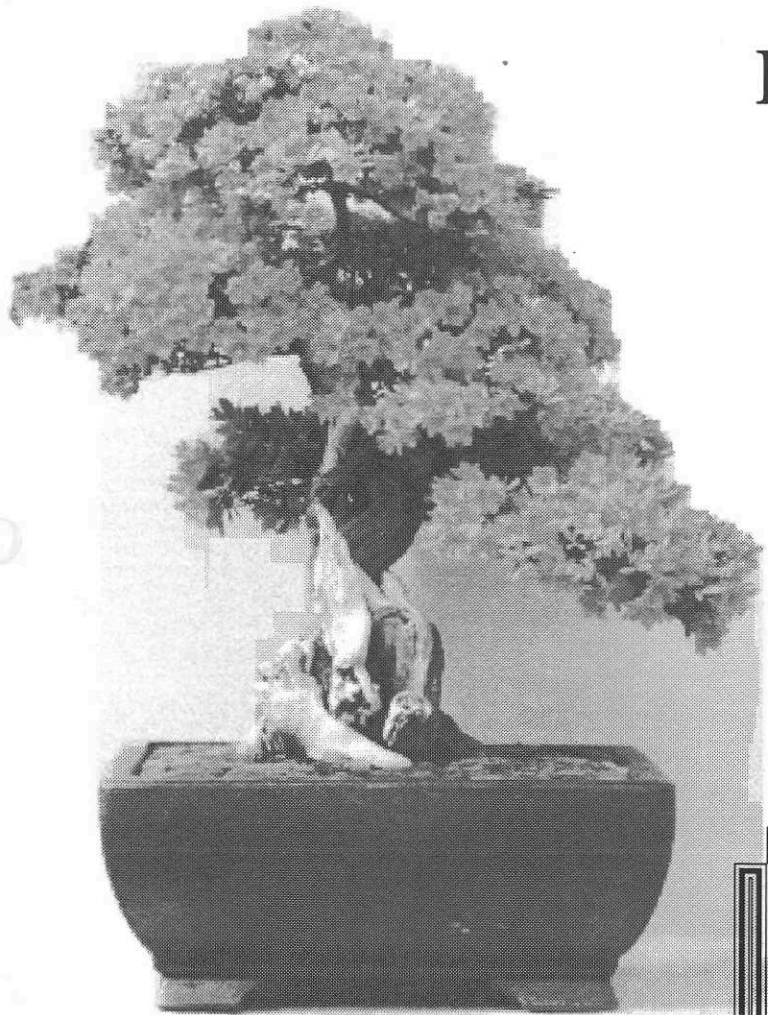


PBA Clippings

NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

Volume 31, Number 7
July 2001



Inside . . .



sustenance (not by
bonsai alone, but . . .

. a winner,

. . . cultural enlightenment

How LUCKY are you! And it's
mailed right to your home.

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PBA
Clippings
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Editorial by the Indentured Servant

Dear friends,

Jules has run away with Jane and left me holding the bag. ~ ~ ~ 

I hope you read the article 'SoupSong' and enjoy it as much as I do. It was pointed out to me year's before bonsai entered my life that I am a *soup lover*. My sister-in-law made note of it before it occurred to me, the noticable effort to include a soup course with every possible meal. Since that dinner with Despa, soup loving has become a conscious endeavor and led to finding Pat Solley's educational *soup site*, defined as a cultural exploration of soup and food, on the Internet.

As you read the piece we offer you in this issue (particularly 'How do you eat Japanese soup?'), I hope you relate the poetry of soup appreciation to that of bonsai appreciation. Instead of the actors in *Tampopa*, I revisit a trip Sylmar, CA, and Roy Nagatoshi teaching Chris and me about "cup of tea bonsai" as he was tricking me into editing an excellent article of the same name. Read "observe the whole tree;" and relate 'savoring' to trunk movement and branch forms, placement of delicate leaf 'clouds,' the form of the landscape, the proper potting mix to compliment the coloration of the tree - gestalt. *Draw the line at "poking," if it's not your tree.*

By the way, we reprint with gracious permission of the author, costing us only one *July Clippings*. Several other more bonsai-related pieces in the media have had price tags of \$150, so have gone un-shared and under-appreciated by our eclectic audience.)

I prodded Roger Benson (NVBS) because of his extensive experience to share some thoughts on the article. If you have a positive insight, please send it along.

Revisiting "Beyond Wonderment . . ." has given me a new appreciation for good, tight writing from someone who really knew his stuff. What a great primer this series has proved to be. Next month's focus will be Mr Ballard's thoughts on tokonoma display. I hope other pieces of his work show up in a timely fashion for inclusion here. [Ernesta, can you help us here?]

Let me here praise Donna Banting, too, for allowing us to use anything from her professional glamorous publication, *BONSAI Magazine*. We are reprinting the BCI story on PBAer, Terry Adkins, to accompany Jules' azalea article.

CHUCK'S PLACE . . .



"Congratulations for putting on a wonderful display and working with NBF and the Arboretum to produce a delightful weekend of celebration and enjoyment of bonsai." - Harold and Tina Johnson, NC

"I didn't know they had bonsai like this out here." - a California visitor

"What wonderful bonsai! It's hard to tell where the museum's trees quit and PBA's begin." - a visitor

"What a wonderful display!" - a visitor

The comments presented above are but a few of those received during and after our Spring Show for 2001. Our show, and the entire program, was outstanding! We more than accomplished our goal of placing our best foot forward for the international visitors who attended and for the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum's 25th anniversary at the National Arboretum. In addition, we have shown that PBA members have bonsai that, while different, are the equal of those presented elsewhere in the United States and around the world. There were over 15,000 visitors just on Saturday and Sunday. The total for the entire show would be well over that.

Many people have complemented me on the show and the job accomplished. I, however, deserve very little of the credit for the activities and their presentation. First, we must thank Arlene Polinsky, who as PBA President Elect, was responsible for the show as Chairperson. She worked as liaison between PBA and the Arboretum. She arranged for the vendors, tent, set-up, docents, refreshments, and tear-down. The PBA Board and attending club representatives should all receive a huge "Thank You" for their support and labor to prepare for the show. They assisted with the planning, obtained material, made label stands (Ron Lang), labels and comprehensive booklet of show trees (Betty Yeapanis), assisted with tree selection (Arschel Morell, Jim Sullivan, Fred Mies), set-up (Jim Hughes, Jane Ashley, Chris Yeapanis, Richard Brian, Jim Rieden, John Lewis), and take down, demonstrations (Doug French, Tom Smallwood), watered the show trees (Jim Hughes, Neil Morton, Fred Mies, Arschel Morell, Jim Sullivan, Godfrey Trammell), acted as docents in the display area, and planned the Jules Koetsch Day presentation (Betty and Chris Yeapanis, Jim Doyle). Peggy Koetsch served as our show photographer, with Jane K. acting as her assistant. Also, we need to thank everyone who prepared and contributed a bonsai tree or trees to the show and delivered the trees on time. This allowed us to get the display together within the time parameters required to meet publicity needs. Without their assistance and the trees, nothing would have happened.

Secondly, the members of the National Arboretum's Steering Committee should receive our deepest gratitude. They were responsible for scheduling, parking, publicity, and travel arrangements for the visitors from Japan, traffic control, etc. They also assisted with scheduling the two afternoon demonstrations by our visitors. Without their help, the weekend could not have been successful. Members of PBA who assisted with the Steering Committee include: Arlene Polinsky, Janet Lanman, Jane Ashley, Tom Elias, and me.

Finally, I think it is appropriate for us to thank the National Bonsai Foundation, the National Arboretum, Ikebana International and our vendors for working with us to produce such a successful weekend. In addition, Chase and Solida Rosade contributed trees and expertise for children's workshops during the weekend. It took everyone to make this great show happen - through planning, labor and finances.

I know that I have been unable to remember and identify everyone who participated. It was, at times, somewhat confusing. Please accept my apologies and know that the PBA membership and I thank you also.

Thanks to everyone for a job well done.

- Chuck Croft, President, PBA

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

JULY

Lancaster Bonsai Society

11 6 pm annual picnic and auction of plants, pots, and bonsai supplies at the Manheim Township Park. Guests invited. For details and directions contact Ken Williams WilliamsKen@aol.com

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

14 9:00 am Tree of Month Question Session
- bring in your group plantings
10:00 am Felix Laughlin Group/Forest Plantings

Brookside Bonsai Club

14 12:00 Poolside potluck picnic at Janet Lanman's (Note change of normal time and place) No regular meeting on the 3rd Thursday
Baltimore Bonsai Club - No meeting

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

14 12:30 p.m. Slab making /Potluck Picnic
Washington Bonsai Club - No meeting

Bowie Bonsai Club

30 7:00 p.m. Creating/Treating deadwood

No Report of Meeting for July From:

Chesapeake Bonsai Society

Rappahanock Bonsai Society

AUGUST

Lancaster Bonsai Society

8 7 pm Conestoga House library demo of planting sedum on rock to increase visual appeal of bonsai. contact Mark Emerson at mmemerson@onemain.com

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

11 Trip to Gardens Unlimited - Speakers Bob and Todd

The following clubs will not be meeting during the month of August:

Baltimore, Bowie, Brookside Kiyomizu, & Washington

No report regarding meetings from:
Chesapeake & Rappahanock

Also see page 16 for some late-arriving activities.

Non-PBA Functions

The following are events of The US National Arboretum:

Mieko Ishikawa Botanical Art Exhibition Admin Bldg Lobby

Through June 30, 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

In celebration of the Japanese cherry trees bursting into bloom around the Tidal Basin, the Arboretum presents the first American exhibition of original paintings by the renowned Japanese botanical illustrator and artist Mieko Ishikawa.

Bonsai Pot Competition Display

Through August 1 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

View the six winning pots from the first North American bonsai pot competition sponsored by the National Bonsai Foundation in association with the Takagi Bonsai Museum in Tokyo, Japan, in the USNA National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. Free

Asian Accent: Botanical Art on Silk

Admin Bldg Lobby, USNA

August 1-September 30, 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Opening Reception

12 Aug 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Unique juried exhibition of framed artwork and banners by members of SPIN, Silk Painters International, interprets botanical motifs on lustrous silk using brilliant dyes. Silk painting, watercolor on silk, an art form of Asian origin on display for the first time at the Arboretum. During the opening reception, SPIN artists will demonstrate and encourage visitors to try various silk painting techniques. Exhibit and opening reception free.

What is Silk Painting? Admin Bldg Classroom

11 Aug, 2:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Diane Truckman, Executive Director of SPIN, demystifies the magical art of painting on silk. Hear its history and discover its techniques. Free. Registration req'd

Silk Painting Workshop Admin Bldg Auditorium

18 & 19 Aug, 10:00 a.m.- 4: p.m.

Join Diane Tuckman, co-author of three books on silk painting, for an unforgettable creative experience. Intensive 2-day class covers everything from preparation of silk for painting to pen techniques. Participants will take home a completed, framed work and enough materials to continue additional projects at home. Fee \$125.00 (includes all materials). Registration required.

Club Calendar Keepers: Be sure you are keeping Arschel informed of your club events.

Summer Reading - okay, you're busy now -- maybe the rain's stopped. Buy the book now and read it in November. Remember Dave Bogan from December 2000 issue, p. 6. He got to read "The Bonsai Saga" in rainy May.

I just finished reading "The Bonsai Saga" which I recently received from you. I have read many many bonsai-related books and articles, but I have never, ever read one which was more inspiring and gave me such a huge amount of Pride in my country and the "art" of Bonsai. An unbelievable amount of work, effort and pride went into the establishment of The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection/Museum. How proud we all should be of this collection and what it stands for. I have visited the collection several times over the years; but I know now, on my next visit I will be totally re-inspired and in awe of it's meaning.

I was particularly impressed by the number of people and organizations which became involved, not only the people who volunteered their time, connections and "bonsai skills," but also all the bureaucratic challenges within our own government which had to be overcome in order to bring this willingly donated collection to the U.S.

One other particularly interesting facet was the story concerning the 350-year-old white pine donated by Mr. Masaru Yamaki. We all want to think that Bonsai has helped in bringing the "East" closer to the "West," but the story of this tree was a true inspiration. Could we be so forgiving of such an horrific event that we would donate one of our most cherished and loved trees to the country which had devastated our home. This is true friendship and compassion to another. I personally will look upon Bonsai and Asia in a different light.

I have learned through this book and the "art" of Bonsai that the true translation and meaning of the word Bonsai is "Friendship."

Again, thanks so much for recommending this book to me.

Thank You

Dave Bogan, Editor, Newsletter of Greater Evansville Bonsai Society

To acquire your very own inspiring copy of ***The Bonsai Saga — How the Bicentennial Bonsai Collection Came to America*** by Dr. John Creech, former Director of the U. S. National Arboretum:

Softbound edition \$13.00 (includes postage) [Only a limited number of copies are available.]

make check payable to NBF, and mail to Johann Klodzen, Executive Director of NBF, US National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002-1958

BONsaiMOT

Hi Jules, As you requested during our conversation at the Arboretum, here is a Bon Mot.

It was quoted by Dorie Froning and attributed to John Naka.

John says. "If you have too many trees, get rid of half of them and spend twice as much time on the other half."

Jack Billet

The very apropos advice above describes the pitfall that a number of us including me fall into. Even though I try to emulate John Naka's boast that he can make a bonsai out of any plant, there are some of my "plants in pots" that won't make it in my lifetime. Will have to heed my wife's advice and part with them.

Then there's the other side of the coin. Bill Orsinger remarked during a recent demonstration at NVBS that if he saw no future a particular tree and auctioned it off at Behnke's, it would appear later as a commendable bonsai in a PBA show.

ONE THING by Danny Bird (NVBS) from the July NVBS newsletter

In this art form bonsai, until you learn **one thing**, you don't know how much you don't know. Let me explain . . .

A couple of years ago, I ventured into bonsai with some plants, nursery stock really, that I had attempted to sculpt. A few of them had some potential. They weren't great, but they were 'starters.' Looking back, what I didn't know was immense. I was pruning pines in July; re-potting into improper soil; changing the plant's soil drastically, too. I fed my trees at the wrong times, and knew none of the subtleties of care which allow for a tree's natural development.

Needless to say, this "innocence" led to a loss of almost all my trees. My dead bonsai pile developed much faster than my live collection did. The loss was a real downer, enough to turn me away from bonsai and toward some other pursuit . . . golf maybe (oh, I do like golf).

I took my troubles to Pete Jones. He graciously offered to spend some time with me, and to help me to understand where I failed and how to prevent it from happening again.

I visited the modestly famous 'Jones backyard' one hot afternoon, a few months after all my trees had died. We spent a couple of hours together, with Pete asking and answering many questions. We discussed soil, light, water, nutrition, re-potting, etc., as they relate to bonsai care.

Pete was able to zero in on my pitfalls. He suggested many things to try, addressing all these subjects.

At the end of the day, as I thanked Pete and prepared to leave, he asked that in return, I write an article telling the club what I'd learned.

I pondered the idea for a long time, too long probably. It's been almost 2 years. Exactly what I learned was not clear at the time. I had many bits of advice and suggestions of methods that have worked for Pete and many others. But I needed to use these methods, and put his suggestions to work, and ultimately succeed with them, before I could know what I had "learned" that day with Pete.

I haven't got the space here or the time to present a dissertation on the proper care of bonsai trees. But, the obviously paramount issue is that the tree must live. If it does not, the finest hand-made pot you can select, the gnarliest corkbark trunk, the smallest leaf, the best trunk taper we've ever developed, every aesthetic choice we've made, is worthless.

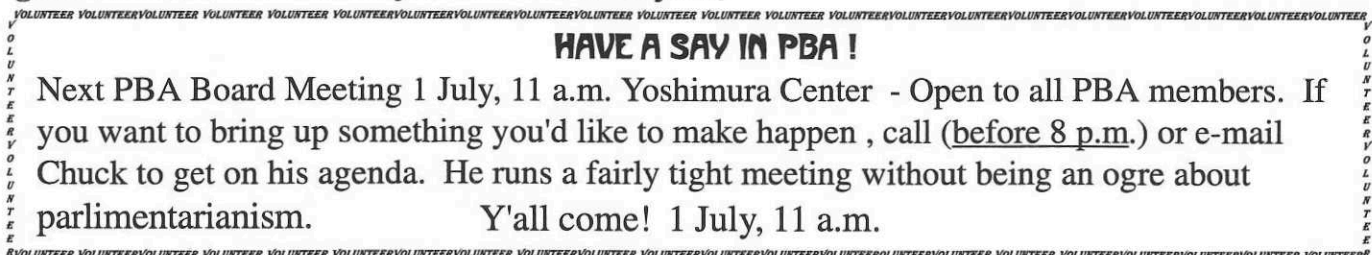
To any newbies (or should I say *seito*) out there, save yourselves a couple of years and some money, with this advice: **Learn to keep your trees alive first!** This must succeed before anything else can.

Thank you, Pete.

[Anyone who's spent much time around Peter C. Jones will recognize this is one of his wise mantras: Know your material! Danny has expressed well why Pete tries to drive this point home. It will save you a great deal of disappointment. And when it comes time to enter your still living bonsai in a PBA Spring Show, you'll know the information to be written on the identification card. Pete will be proud for you, and the maker of the hundred i.d. cards will be grateful not to have to do **your** research for you.]

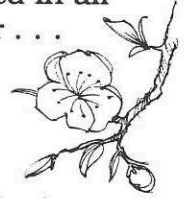
HAVE A SAY IN PBA !

Next PBA Board Meeting 1 July, 11 a.m. Yoshimura Center - Open to all PBA members. If you want to bring up something you'd like to make happen , call (before 8 p.m.) or e-mail Chuck to get on his agenda. He runs a fairly tight meeting without being an ogre about parliamentarianism. Y'all come! 1 July, 11 a.m.



Oftentimes, we get caught up in the mystery of symbolism in the art of bonsai. Many of us do not have the life experience to know that the poetry found in bonsai is invested in all facets of life in Japan, even in that humble bowl of soup set before you at dinner . . .

Reflecting on Japanese Soup at Cherry Blossom Time (e-SoupSong 13: May 1, 2001)



ONCE UPON A TIME, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attended an evening meal in Japan hosted by Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki. A clear soup was served in a dark bowl painted inside with pictures of the bamboo tree. Only a few vegetables and one single pigeon's egg were floated in the broth, leaving the bamboo design visible. Mr. Suzuki asked Mrs. Gandhi what she thought of the presentation. Instantly she replied: "To my eyes, it [the egg] is a full moon shining over a dark forest on a clear night." Japanese officials sat up, completely amazed at her accurate and spontaneous reply.

This was the first – and really the only – story I knew about Japanese soups when I arrived in Nobi on April 3, in a shower of cherry blossoms, to experience my granddaughter's first weeks of life. Then, over the next 20 days, with tiny Wilhemina Jean in tow, mother Virginia, daughter-in-law Angi, and I heeded the call: *cherchez la soupe*, or rather *soup o manabu*.

Between feedings and diaper changes, I couldn't help it – I kept bringing it up: What's Japanese soup made of; when do you serve it; how do you eat it; can we make it? And perhaps above all: Does it figure largely in Japanese culture and history?

Thus began a journey – mostly on those incredibly efficient Japanese trains – that took us into the homes and hospitality of friends Odagawa, Suchiyo, Sachiko, and tea master Taketani. Not to mention restaurants in Tokyo, Yokosuka, Kamakura, and Nobi; theaters in Tokyo and Yokohama; video stores; and the pages of seminal books and cookbooks about Japan.

There's no beating around the *sansho* [Japanese pepper tree or prickly ash] bush here: Japanese soups are really *really* different than soups anywhere else in the world. They taste different. They look different. They have unique things in them. They're packaged differently. Mrs. Gandhi's *sui mono* (clear) soup is a good example. So

are the myriad *shirumono* (thick) miso soups. So are noodle and rice soup meals – *soba*, *udon*, *ramen* (actually a Chinese hybrid), and *donburis*. Likewise, one-pot meals (*nabemono*) like *chankonabes* – a sumo-wrestler specialty that traditionally never contains beef . . . because a cow, with all 4 feet on the ground, might foreshadow defeat for the wrestler.

HOW DIFFERENT ARE THESE SOUPS?

Very different. For one thing, there's just no other place on earth that makes its all-time favorite soup stock from bonito fish and kelp (seaweed). And not just fresh bonito and kelp, mind you. Oh no, the bonito (*katsuobushi*) is caught, filleted, simmered, dry smoked for some 2 weeks in fragrant wooden chambers, dried in the sun, and cured with *Aspergillus glaucus* mold for 6 weeks – at which point it looks just like chunks of wood and is ready to go. Likewise, the kelp (*konbu*, usually *Laminaria japonica* and chock full of natural, non-headachy monosodium glutamate) is harvested from *konbu* boats with long forked poles, then spread out on shore to dry – first in the sun, then in drying chambers, at which point they are folded, bundled, and sent to market.

All the soupmaker needs to do is shave pieces of the bonito block with a carpenter's plane (honest! that, or buy it already shaved), wipe down the *konbu*, simmer one after the other in the same water, and briefly. Voila - perfect *dashi*, truly the *fond de cuisine* of Japanese kitchens – and totally but totally different from the meat, fish, and vegetable stocks of the rest of the world. As you can imagine. Second, unusual and nearly unique things join *dashi* in the soup bowl. To name just a few:

Miso: steamed soybeans, salt, and rice or barley (that have been cultured with the mold *Aspergillus oryzae*) that've fermented for over a year in a cedar vat, into a glorious and highly nutritious paste.

Fu: wheat gluten that's made into light little puffy shapes . . . that turn into fascinatingly spongy mouthfuls once they hit the dashi.

Wakame: dried seaweed which hydrates into a delicate but meaty vegetable.

Kikuna and *shungiku*: chrysanthemum leaves.

Mizuna: an herb that looks like dandelion leaves; from the mustard/cabbage family.

Mitsuba: a showy herb that looks like a giant serrated 3-leaf clover; from the chervil/parsley family.

Komatsuna: a green that looks like flat leaf spinach; from the mustard/cabbage family.

Badger: at least in the old days. In *Kakushi-Danuki*, the Kyogen farce I saw at a classical Noh performance in Yokohama, a Master inebriates his servant Taro Kaja to make him confess to catching the badger he (the Master) wants to make into badger soup for his guests. (In the mood for something silly? Click [HERE](#) for details).

All sorts of mushrooms (*shiitake*, *enokitake*, *shimeji*, *maitake*, the precious *matsutake*), Japanese radish (*daikon*) and turnip (*kabu*), and tofu are common ingredients, too, and they are, happily, becoming much easier for us to find at the market.



WHY SO DIFFERENT?

Because Japanese soups grew from exotic historical roots . . . but this history is muddled and full of more questions than answers.

Here's my read of the facts. Japanese cuisine really began in the Yamato Imperial Court of the 6th century. Prince Shotoku, regent of his aunt, the Emperor, embraced Chinese Mahayana Buddhism in 593, and with it, imported ceremonial and formal Chinese cuisine into his hard-knock land of subsistence food. Newly converted Japanese monks served this new cuisine to the court; but they were selective, and transformed it in the process. Miso (from Chinese *chiang*), rice, tea, and fish, yes. But not other things. Heavy on seaweed, right from the start.

Then Japan's one and only food revolution occurred (until the recent Western food craze): With the rise of the all-powerful shogun in Kamakura (1185), Buddhist monks lost their powerful Imperial protectors in Kyoto and forsook their fancy ways. New "common man" Buddhist sects led by Honen and Nichiren

preached the virtues of a simple diet and discouraged harming any living thing, including fish. Out the window went Japan's universal fish sauce seasoning *uoshoyu* (like *nam pla/nuoc mam*) and in came plant-based soy sauce. The monks encouraged people to eat simple vegetable meals: rice (or barley/millet), salt-pickled vegetables, and miso soup.

And this exact regimen stuck for nearly 270 years – actually was frozen in time. Why? Because when Tokugawa Ieyasu moved his shogunate to present day Tokyo in 1600, he enforced a policy of nearly total national isolation that lasted until 1868. While the rest of the world was busy cross-fertilizing with new world foods like tomatoes, chile peppers, potatoes, common beans, corn, squash, vanilla, and chocolate, Japan only managed to sneak in white and sweet potatoes. Even when chiles finally made the scene, they were hybridized down to be small and sweet. Squashes too.

How did all this affect soup and the rest of Japanese cuisine? Profoundly. With limited ingredients, with limited food processes (preserving, drying, smoking, pickling), with meditative habits, and isolated from outside influences, Japanese cooks looked deeply into the heart of the food they did have – and created out of it an art form.

What's important in Japanese soups? NOT just the flavor. There's Aroma with a capital A and Texture with a capital T. Rarity counts – hard to find things that don't necessarily taste good. Certainly danger – the poisonous fugu. And expensiveness. But, above all, Simplicity and Beauty ...both in presentation and in concept. Indira Gandhi's soup, for example. Or novelist Junichiro Tanizaki's miso soup: "I was once invited to a tea ceremony," he says, "where miso was served. And when I saw the muddy, claylike color, quiet in a black lacquer bowl beneath the faint light of a candle, this soup that I usually take without a second thought seemed somehow to acquire a real depth, and to become infinitely more appetizing as well."

OKAY, WHAT ARE THE SOUPS – AND WHEN ARE THEY EATEN?

Soups that are served as courses of a meal are known as *shirumono* and include both clear

soups and thick soups.

Clear *suimono*, or “something to drink,” are elegant, sparkling, and generally have 3 tiny solid bits of ingredients in them – often a bite of seafood, a slice of complementary vegetable, and a not-necessarily-to-be-eaten thing for fragrance (lemon peel, pepper leaves, whatever). Generally they’re served in black or red lacquer bowls with lids, so that when the lid is removed, you are suddenly suffused with the soup’s fragrance. At 8-course formal dinners, they’re served as the second course – and also as a palate cleanser (“to wash the chopsticks”) or as a last course at 9- or 14-course fancy banquets (*kaiseki ryori*).

Thick soups, also called *shirumono*, are made of *dashi* and miso (which does the thickening) – with additions of sea and land vegetables, eggs, tofu, meats, or seafoods, generally with one ingredient reliably sinking ... and one reliably floating. Simple miso soup is eaten for breakfast with rice and pickles (not too much anymore, though – witness my friend Sachiko’s 92-year-old mother-in-law who starts each day with toast and coffee, eggs, and salad with Thousand Island dressing . . . after 80+ years of miso soup breakfasts). More complex miso soups are served with 3-dish meals at lunch and dinner (*khiju sansai*), often ending the meal along with rice and salt pickled vegetables. The most famous miso soup? O-zoni, eaten on New Year’s morning with a cake of grilled sticky rice at the bottom of the bowl.

Noodle soups (*menruu*) are hearty and, hot or cold, are never served as a course. Rather, they are complete meals, often for lunch. Japanese noodle soups come with thin *soba* buckwheat noodles or thick wheat *udon* noodles; they use *dashi* for broth and come topped with meat, egg, vegetables. You can find Soba Houses all over Japan. Ramen – or *chuka soba* – is made out of Chinese-style wheat noodles and meat broth, and is topped with pork, *shinachiku* (pickled bamboo shoot), and *kamaboku* (a slice of colored fish paste). Ramen soups are mostly hawked by street vendors, who announce what they’ve got with the blast of their *charamelas*, the shattering Japanese oboe.

Rice soups (*gohanmono*) are also hearty – layering toppings on a bowl of rice, then filling it up to the rice line with *dashi*.

HOW DO YOU EAT JAPANESE SOUP?

With tenderness, through all 5 senses (maybe 6), and, in the case of noodles, slurping. I don’t think anyone has described – or visualized – the process better than Juzo Itami in his brilliant 1986 film *Tampopo*. In the opening scene, truck driver Gun (Ken Watanabe) reads from a book to his partner Goro (Tsutomu Yamazaki) to pass the time on the road. As Gun reads, the action comes to life on film: a young man is telling, poker-faced, about how he learned to eat ramen correctly from a true Master (Yoshi Kato). And please note – no spoons.

“I went out with an old man. He’s studied noodles for 40 years. He was showing me the right way to eat them.”

“Master, [says the narrator] soup first, or noodles first?”

“First observe the whole bowl,” says the man, slowly and with great restraint.

“Yes sir”

“Appreciate its gestalt, savor the aromas. Jewels of fat glittering on the surface. *Shinachiku* roots shining. Seaweed slowly sinking. Spring onions floating. Concentrate on the 3 pork slices. They play the key role, but stay modestly hidden. First, caress the surface with the chopstick tips.”

“What for?”

“To express affection.”

“I see”

“Then poke the pork.”

“Eat the pork first?”

“No, just touch it. Caress it with the chopstick tips, gently pick it up, and dip it into the soup on the right of the bowl. What’s important here is to apologize to the pork by saying, “See you soon.”

[At this point truck driver Goro interrupts the reading – it’s making him hungry]

“Finally start eating, the noodles first,” says the Master.

[They eat.]

“Oh,” adds the Master, “at this time, while slurping the noodles, look at the pork. Eye it affectionately.”

The narrator comments, “The old man bit some *shinachiku* root and chewed it awhile. Then he took some noodles. Still chewing the noodles, he took some more *shinachiku*. Then



he sipped some soup. Three times. He sat up, signed, picked up one slice of pork as if making a major decision in life, and lightly tapped it on the side of the bowl.”

“What for?” asks the narrator.

“To drain it, that’s all.”

SO, IS IT EASY TO MAKE JAPANESE SOUPS?

Yes – if you can find the ingredients. Fortunately the foundation of most soups – *dashi* – is marketed as Hon-Dashi by Ajinomoto in stock granule form and is pretty easy to find. Be aware, though, that it has pure monosodium glutamate in it, though not very much. The good news: zero calories. Click [HERE](#) to find a recipe for the real stuff. I encourage you to try the following soups, all pretty accessible, easy to make, and quite wonderful.

Shirumono (miso) soups (please note: friend Suchiyo advises that she always uses half white miso and half red – and it’s a good idea in miso soups to have one ingredient that sinks and one that floats.)

Tofu to negi no miso shiru (Miso soup with tofu and leeks)

Wakame to tofu no miso shiru (Miso soup with wakame seaweed and tofu)

Jagaimo to negi no miso-shiru (Miso soup with potato and leek)

O-zoni (New Year’s soup with chicken and grilled rice cakes)

Suimono soups (clear soups)

Tamago to kinusaya no suimono (Egg drop soup with snow peas)

Tori to negi no suimono (Clear soup with chicken and leeks)

Gohanmono (rice one-pot soup – eaten as a meal)

Katsudon. In Banana Yoshimoto’s *Kitchen*, she describes it so: “This katsudon, encountered almost by accident, was made with unusual skill, I must say. Good quality meat, excellent broth, the eggs and leeks handled beautifully, the rice with just the right degree of firmness to hold up in the broth – it was flawless. “If you want the recipe – or a good laugh on my efforts to track it down in Japan, click [HERE](#).”

Menrui (noodle soups – eaten as a meal)

Nabeyaki udon (thick wheat noodles with mushrooms, spinach, and chicken)

Tamago toji soba (thin buckwheat noodles with peas, eggs, and seaweed)

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

In the end, I think it all comes back to the story about Mrs. Gandhi. After eating my way through many, many bowls of soup, I am convinced that this ur-food resonates from the very soul of the Japanese people.

What else is the broth but the sea, the firmament, amniotic fluid, the source of life – whether it is dashi made from bonito fish and seaweed or, in the case of Buddhist monks, just from seaweed?

What else are the ingredients in the soup but characters and concepts which reflect on their environment and give it shape and meaning? Miso, the earth; herbs and greens, vegetation; eggs, the life force.

That’s why the noodle soup master in *Tampopo* treats his ramen like a beautiful friend – viewing it with appreciation, treating it with humor, respect, and affection. That’s why Jippensha Ikku opens his marvelous Tokaido road story *Hizakurige* with rascals Yojirobei and Kitahachi eating soup in Omori – and why Kawatake Mokuami shows his Edo hero Banzui Chobei, in Kabuki drama, betrayed by his samurai enemy through the image of uneaten soup. And it’s why contemporary author Banana Yoshimoto uses a variety of soups in *Kitchen* to symbolize the deepest connections between people: Yuichi asks Mikage “Why is it that [this *Katsudon* I’m eating with you] is so delicious?” “Could it be you’re satisfying hunger and lust at the same time?” “No way, no way, no way!” he said, laughing, “It must be because we’re family.” I give the last word to Toyo Eicho, who compiled Zen capping phrases in the 15th century, poems designed to connect the world of letters with the unexplainable world of Zen experience: “Bread and soup / And cotton clothes / Help you. But the other possessions / May lead you astray.”

Many thanks to Mom, Angi, and Billie Jean for supporting my soup habit; to Odagawa, Suchiyo, and Sachiko for their invaluable advice and carefully labeled soup ingredients; and to all who helped introduce me to the fascinating world of Japanese soups.

Best regards, Pat Solley

Sources not noted in text: Ikku Jippensha's *Hizakurige* (or Shanks' Mare), translated by Thomas Satchell (Charles Tuttle: Rutland, VT, and Tokyo, 1960); Noriko Kamachi's *Culture and Custom's of Japan* (Greenwood Press: Westport, CT, and London, 1999); Hiroko Shimbo's *The Japanese Kitchen* (Harvard Common Press: Boston, 2000); *Introducing Japan*, ed. Paul Norbury (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1977); Richard Hosking's *A Dictionary of Japanese Food* (Tuttle Publishing: Boston, Rutland, Tokyo, 1972); *Zenrin Segoshu, or A Zen Harvest*, trans. Soiku Sigematsu (North Point Press: San Francisco, 1988); Tomi Egami's *Typical Japanese Cooking* (Shibata Publishing: Tokyo, 1959); Soei Yoneda's *Good Food from a Japanese Temple* (Kodansha International: Tokyo, 1982); Leslie Downer and Minoru Yoneda's *Step-by-Step Japanese Cooking* (Barrons: Woodbury, NY, 1986); Masako Yamaoka's *First Book of*

Japanese Cooking (Kodansha International: Tokyo, 1984); Harry Guest's *Traveller's Literary Companion: Japan* (Passport Books: Lincolnwood, IL, 1975); Fodor's Japan (1994); U.A. Casal's *The Five Sacred Festivals of Ancient Japan* (Charles E. Tuttle: Vermont and Tokyo, 1967).

Other business: you may unsubscribe by directly e-mailing Pat Solley at psolley@capu.net. And if you're inspired to make some healthy soups and don't feel like making your own stock, I highly recommend using Redibase, a professional soup base for the home cook (www.redibase.com).

*My joy: Cherry blossoms in spring,
Moon in autumn
Three meals every day
In family harmony.*

-- Rinzai Zen 15th Century capping phrase
from *Zenrin Segoshu*

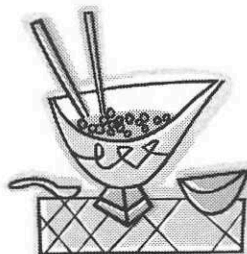
We left in all the *Click HERE's* to let folks with Internet access know they can get more info on the subject at Pat's site [<http://www.soupsong.com/>].

From: RNBenson [RNBenson@email.msn.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2001 2:20 PM

To: Jules Koetsch

Subject: comments on soup



Last month Betty Yeapanis asked for comments about an article she had found in an Internet magazine. Readers who have not seen it, but who have Internet access, can view it as the first on the list found by a simple "google" search on Internet Explorer under "Japanese soups." Click the links for recipes.

Having spent a total of 10 years in Japan enjoying Japanese soups with nary a thought to their cultural aspects, this excellent article taught me stuff I never knew. If I were to make any changes, one would be to translate the word "shinachiku" (which Ms. Solley tells me, means a pickled bamboo shoot – my huge Japanese-English dictionary appears not to include the word) as bamboo shoot (take-no-ko) rather than bamboo root. Roots grow out from the rhizome underground; shoots are from the growing tip of the young culm above ground. Shoots – cooked in many styles, not just pickled – are common in Japanese cuisine. Roots are not. Also at New Year's, no respectable Page 3 Japanese press report would fail to mention some elderly person choking on the soggy but chewy rice cake (mochi) in the "ozoni."

Any reader in the Washington metro area can find the ingredients - many instant - to the recipes in Asian, Japanese, or Korean, grocery stores, i.e., Lotte's at Fairfax Circle or Lucky World near Loehman's Plaza. Likewise, the article or recipes will help you enjoy local Japanese-style restaurants, except some will not make the labor-intensive but delicious "ozoni." Liquid soups are drunk straight from the lacquered wooden or plastic bowl; normally, spoons are not used. Chopsticks pick up the solids. And as Ms. Solley says, appropriate slurping is acceptable.

The relation of soup to bonsai? None, except both are parts of Japanese culture enjoyed in the West.

[Thank goodness for differing opinions. Wouldn't life be boring if we all saw through the same eyes.]

SATSUKI AZALEA, A MUST IN YOUR COLLECTION

by Jules Koetsch

The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum's 25th Asian Arts Festival was held during the last weekend in April 2001 - the time of the year when azaleas are in bloom. At that time, most of the various species of azalea were past their peak for showy blossoms; but the Satsuki azalea blossoms were just coming into their prime. It was a propitious time since one of the two demonstrations addressed the basics of creating and taking care of an azalea. It was given by two Japanese gentlemen, Mr. Takeo Toyoda and Mr. Masayuki Nakamura, who are prominent members of the Japan Satsuki Association in Japan. They and five other members of that organization each had donated a Satsuki azalea for addition to the museum's collection. They were on display in the Mary Mrose International Pavilion.

Bill Daly (NVBS) loaned me the definitive book *AZALEAS* by Fred C. Galle; Timber Press, Portland, Oregon; 1985. It gives a brief account of how Satsuki came into the Western hemisphere and excerpts follow: The Satsuki, *Rhododendron indicum* variety, was introduced into Holland in 1680 by Dutch merchants, citing the plant as from Batavia, Java [Jakarta, Indonesia]. Plants doubtlessly were taken by Dutch trading ships to England. At about the same time, different azaleas were brought to England from China. In 1838, the *indica* azalea came to Boston; and in 1840 and 1870, the Magnolia Gardens in South Carolina had received Satsuki.

The thick book offers colored plates so that the reader can identify a specific azalea among the entire family of azaleas. Some of the Satsukis had just started to blossom since the name Satsuki is synonymous with Maytime. The name Satsuki is adapted from the Chinese and refers to the fourth or sixth month in the old Chinese calendar. This species of azalea is easily recognized in the landscape being in full bloom when other azalea varieties are fading. Some Satsuki flower even into June. That would be reason enough to have some Satsuki so that you can enjoy a continuation of a vivid display of colors among your azalea bonsai. And one

gains another bonus. A Satsuki azalea can throw blossoms on a single plant ranging from all crimson, to white streaked with red, and those that are all white. I've heard that when a Satsuki reaches old age unfortunately, the blossoms turn to all white. But that can be readily overlooked when one not only sees the multi-colored blossoms, but also the eye-popping sizes of the blossoms - often up to 3 inches in diameter. If you do not have a Satsuki azalea in your bonsai collection, you'll certainly want at least one after seeing a prize in bloom.

Hence, it seemed appropriate to go back through some of the old articles on growing azalea bonsai that first appeared in the old PBA Newsletters and see what could be made more current with today's practices for growing Satsuki bonsai . . .

LOCATION: Before growing any species of bonsai, one should know where to place a specific species so that it can grow and thrive. Azaleas do not tolerate being exposed to sunlight from dawn to dusk. They like filtered sunlight, but one can apply the maxim that full sun in the morning until 1 p.m. and full shade thereafter is a suitable equivalent. The reverse - a location where there is full shade in the morning and full sun after 1 p.m. is equivalent to being in sunlight from dawn to dusk and is a no-no location.

Azaleas, in general, like to be out of the wind. Plants not given protection from the wind develop leaf scorch or splitting of the bark or stems. Avoid placing azaleas at the corners of buildings where winds tend to be stronger. For many years I've had four Satsuki growing year round in the ground outside our kitchen window. They are winter hardy in this area. Hence you can winterize them outdoors along with your other bonsai in a wind-free location. Or you may want to winter the Satsuki bonsai in a cold frame or a poly house.

FINDING A SATSUKI: After first seeing a Satsuki azalea, it will be apparent, if you give it some thought, that - seldom, if ever, does one see a Satsuki amongst plantings of azaleas in local landscapes. One reason

perhaps is that Satsuki created an interest in foreigners who visited Japan after WWII. One can log on to the Internet and find places in Japan touting their May azalea shows, and it is those shows that have made foreigners interested in growing Satsuki. Another Japanese variety of azalea, Kurume, was brought to the United States from Japan around 1915, causing a wave of popularity for evergreen azalea varieties. Kurume azaleas also make good bonsai in that they have smaller leaves and flowers than other azaleas and they bloom before the Satsuki.

Satsuki are available from some of the nurseries in this area. Also, you may be able to con an owner of a Satsuki to give you a cutting. Club members with Satsuki could take their cuttings and start them in plastic containers so they'd be available to other club members, especially the new members.

PROPAGATION: Propagation using stem cuttings is the one method most frequently used to get new azaleas. Then one is certain, unlike propagating from seeds, that the new azaleas will grow with identical properties of the parent. Cuttings should be made from new wood (June and July) from healthy, mature plants. (Note that this is the time to prune your azalea and you'll have your cuttings.)

Suitable new wood should snap when broken. Cuttings should be 3- to 6-inches long with leaves removed from the lower one-third to one-half of the cutting. Insert the cuttings 1 to 1½ inches deep in the rooting medium. Before sticking the cuttings into the rooting medium, the rooting medium should be thoroughly moist (not wet) so that it is firm. The ends of the cuttings should be made with a sharp knife at an angle. The small residue of bark left on the end of the cut is then removed by cutting it off at an angle opposite to the previous cut. The cuttings are best placed into the soil on a slant so that one can press down on the top of the soil and firmly fix the cuttings in place. Rooting medium can vary from (a) equal parts of perlite and Canadian peat moss; (b) 1 part Canadian peat and 2 parts perlite; to (c) equal parts of well-rotted pine bark, peat, and perlite. Canadian peat is recommended over Michigan peat because it has less undesirable salts in it.

Flats or individual pots may be used, depending on preference or quantity of cuttings. The cuttings can be rooted outside in a shady area if humidity is high [and there is no lack of that around the Washington, D.C., area]. The more professional approach is to use a mist system. A clear plastic bag with some small holes in it can cover the pot with the cuttings to enhance the moisture level.

If you want a thick base on the trunk, you can shorten the time to develop it by growing and pruning an azalea in the ground. Janet Lanman mentioned at NVBS's last meeting that you can see large areas in some nurseries in Japan with row on row of azaleas growing in the ground. Mr. Ichihara mentioned in his lecture that a 3/8-inch diameter azalea trunk will reach as much as 5 inches at its base in 25 years. Those used for the demonstrations had 6-inch trunk bases.

REPOTTING: Azalea roots need to be cleared of as much soil as possible before repotting. Use a chopstick or other device to clear soil from the rootball. Once you have cleared the roots of as much soil as possible, wash away the remainder with a hose. I think that Mr. Nakamura, when queried about that, said that air can be used - probably air gun. To me that may eliminate the need to provide a drain for the water, but it seems that the air would unduly dry out the roots. Clearing the old soil from the rootball will remove deleterious salts, the heaviest concentration of which is often around the base of the trunk.

SOIL: Azaleas thrive in soil that is acidic and the pH should be between 4.5 and 6.0, and ideally around 5.5 as indicated in some pH sources. To achieve a pH within the 4.5 to 6.0 range, one introduces Canadian peat into the soil mix.

During the demonstration, Mr. Nakamura advised that one should not put too much peat moss in the soil mix because the roots of the azalea will "choke in the peat moss and die." About 15 or 20 years ago, a man in Florida, I believe his name was Batchelder, had a TV program touting new bonsai techniques. Besides what was tantamount to a "grow and clip" technique for training the trees, he proposed planting tropicals in only sphagnum moss. A few years ago, after hearing that Jim

Sullivan of the Bowie Bonsai Club mention he had successfully gotten an azalea to survive in a solid sphagnum moss medium, I tried that approach. I still have one azalea living in the sphagnum moss, so what else is new? Bonsai sometimes seems to be a comedy of contradictions.

When questioned, Mr. Nakamura said that the Japanese do like to plant their azaleas in kanuma soil. Kanuma soil comes from a region in Japan by that name, and it can be purchased in this country. I've found kanuma soil which is pale yellow in color; and the bag of kanuma soil contains varying sizes of particles down to powder due to the softness of the particles. It has a pH in the range one wants for azaleas. Mr. Nakamura said that he mixes the kanuma soil with 10% to 15% yama goken which I could not translate into anything we could use as a substitute. Perhaps it is like rotted pine bark mulch. I'm going to try again with the kanuma soil and rotted pine bark mulch in the amounts of 85% to 15%. Not on all my azaleas - maybe one or two.

If you're going to grow your azalea in the ground for a number of years to fatten its trunk, you might consider doing the following to get a good bed of soil. A large amount of organic matter in the soil is necessary for good growth. In clay soils, which seem to be in abundance in this area, a mixture of 50% peat moss, or leaf mold from pine or oak leaves, 25% sand, and 25% of the soil could be used. If the soil is sandy, use 50% soil and 50% organic material. I suggest adding some perlite to aerate the soil.

If you're growing your azalea in a container, the following mix was suggested by Bill Orsinger at the NVBS May meeting on azaleas. In fact, the mix is good for acid-loving plants with pH 6 or lower: 3 parts Canadian peat, 2 parts perlite, 1 part fine granite. The fine granite can be found at *Southern States* and is the "STARTER SIZE" which is used when feeding the young baby chickens. Also mix into 5 gallons of the above soil mix: 1 tablespoon of gypsum to counteract any deleterious salts that may form in the soil and 1 tablespoon of superphosphate with an NPK of 0-44-0 per 5 gallons to stimulate more flowering. Note that any clay material such as Turface is not used because over time the

clayey soils have a tendency to trap the undesirable salts in fertilizers which eventually may kill a plant.

A telephone call to Terry Atkins whose Kurume azalea won the *Ben Oki International Design Award* (the azalea is featured on the cover of this issue) said that he uses kuruma soil on all his azaleas. Besides using a soil mix of just kanuma soil, he has used mixtures with peat moss, Turface, and leaf mold.

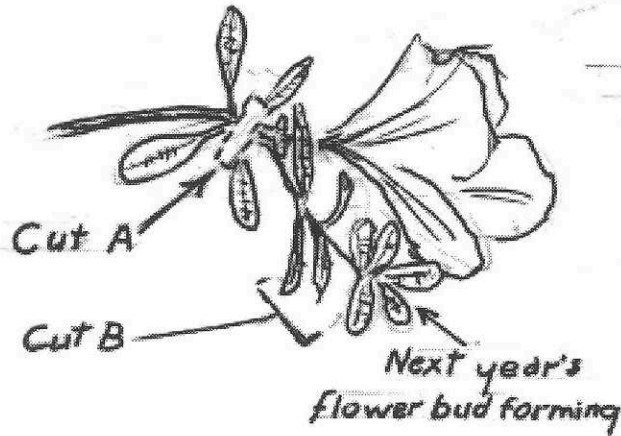
Hence your answer to what you want in your soil mix is as always, whatever you prefer from the myriad of ingredients used for bonsai soil mixes. However, there is one important - the soil mix must have a pH between 4.5 and 6.0 and preferably around 5.5.

FERTILIZING: Fertilization should be done in May, but do not fertilize after July 1. Late summer fertilization may force out tender fall growth that will be killed by the winter cold. That is, unless you can give the azalea protection in the winter. The old standby for azaleas in the ground has been *Hollytone* which is dry and organic. For those plants in a container, one has a wide choice of N-P-K values - some with N or nitrogen values higher than the other values, and some have P or phosphate values higher than the others. The high P value is supposed to induce the plant to create many blooms. Note phosphate has been amended to the above soil mix suggested by Bill Orsinger. When questioned, Mr. Nakamura said that he uses a fertilizer with an N-P-K of 5-5-5.

WATERING: Needless to say that azaleas, preferring locations where there is filtered sunlight, are plants that do not like dry roots. Since the amount of water needed by the plant is a function of soil mix, your micro-climate, plus the health of the plant, you will just have to decide how often to water if you do not own a moisture meter. With a moisture meter, when it reads ½ scale or less, you can water.

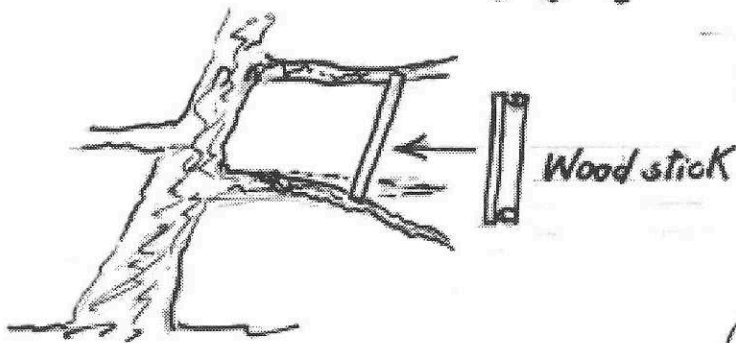
PRUNING: I've been informed that the azaleas in the demonstration cited above, have sprouted tiny, new leaves - something that seems hard to believe since they were stripped of all leaves during the demonstration at the end of April last. Apparently a healthy azalea will do that.

Pruning time is usually after the flowers are starting to fade - one should enjoy the blooms.



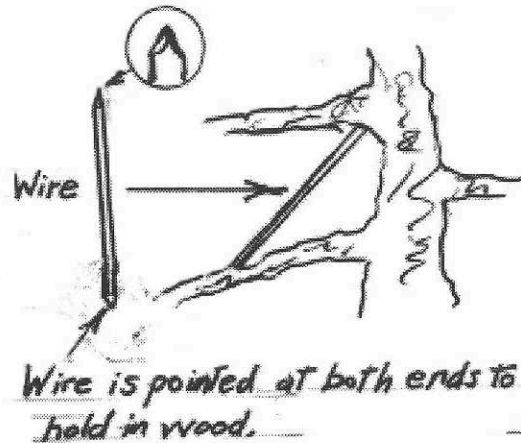
No later than July and preferably as soon as buds fade cut at A. If no longer growth is needed. Prune anywhere along B leaving new ring of leaves.

WAYS TO BEND BRANCHES

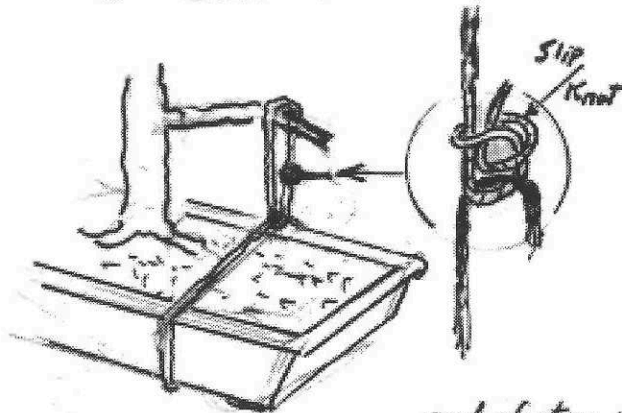


Bend branch and insert wood stick that is notched at both ends to fit around branches.

Bend branch and insert a heavy wire going from branch to juncture of upper branch and trunk.



Wire is pointed at both ends to hold in wood.



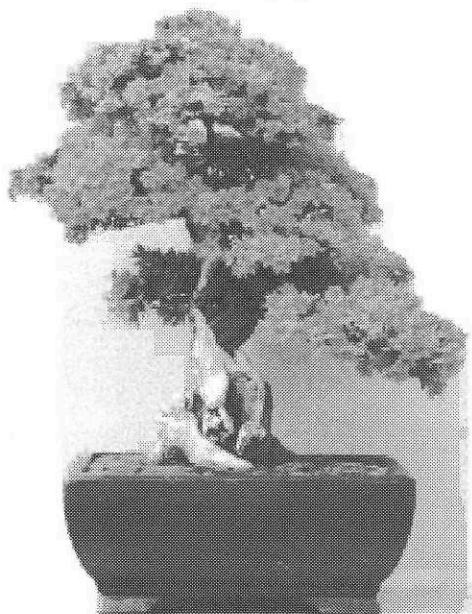
Girdle base of pot with one string. Attach second as shown with a slip knot at the end of one string. Pass other

end of string through the slip knot loop and pull to bend branch.

NOTE

Due to brittle nature of the wood it is best to bend branches little by little over time.

Remembering ~ A PBAr took Azalea to Heart to Win the 1996 Ben Oki Award



Ben Oki International Design Award winner Terry Adkins (left) shows off his prize to bonsai artist, Ernie Kuo and BOIDA sponsor Cheryl Owens, during the banquet night activities at IBC '96, all the work for which was done by PBA ~ remember? [Terry, you look different here than you did at April auction! What's up with that? 🐌]

Terry Adkins, 44, of Mitchelville, Maryland, has been selected as the winner of the 1996 Ben Oki International Design Award. The honor was announced in July at the IBC '96 Convention held in Washington D.C. Mr. Adkins is a member of the Bowie Bonsai Club and has been involved in bonsai since 1975. The Ben Oki International Design Award is an annual cash grant of \$ 1000 US, which is given to an individual in recognition of his/her outstanding bonsai design.

The winning tree, an azalea (*Rhododendron kaempferi kurume*), was selected from a field of six entries by a panel of judges who included bonsai artists Dan Barton of England, Marie Elena Duran of Colombia and Mas Ishii of California.

Members of BCI are eligible to enter the competition providing they are considered by their peers to be amateurs. The award was established in 1991 by Charles and Cheryl Owens of Elkhardt, Indiana. "The purpose of the award is to encourage novices to do more refined work . . . to work hard and to improve their art and their talents," Cheryl said.

The Kurume azalea for which Terry Adkins received the award spent most of its 44 years as a landscape focal point along a sidewalk in a Washington D.C. cemetery managed by Adkins. The tree was dug in March 1990 and

the following month was reduced to a single trunk. The roots were washed and planted in a mixture of Turface, granite, and peat moss. Since that time, the soil has been changed to straight kanuma clay. The dead wood on the tree was carved in April of 1990 as well. Adkins noted that the azalea has developed slowly compared to other azaleas in his collection and still needs further growth to add to its charm. Terry's collection, which he describes as "slimmed down" includes about 30 bonsai of which four are show quality azaleas.

The winning azalea was first displayed at the Midwest Bonsai Show in Chicago in August 1994. Ben Oki was the judge and thought the tree was an import. "He offered me some suggestions for a few changes in the tree which I took and have been well pleased with," Terry said. "I feel very blessed to own and care for this azalea."

The judges for the '96 competition were: (from left) Marie Elena Duran, Mas Ishii and Dan Barton.



The artist's material - medium or message? To the casual eye, the bonsai medium really is the message. The medium is trees; the message is miniature trees. What could be easier?

To the horticulturist, it is not so simple. The medium's message has been changed by the artist's hand. The size of the tree has been reduced, sometimes a hundred fold. Leaves are smaller; although flowers and fruit remain the same size. A tree that in nature would be open in structure and globular in shape has been transformed into a tightly knit triangle. So drastic are the changes that taxonomists sometimes have difficulty recognizing a familiar species in its altered form.

To the bonsai practitioner, the medium conveys a separate message of its own, quite apart from the form of the tree. A bonsai fancier may be impressed as much by the charm of the plant material as by the appearance of the bonsai created out of it. Some of the features that intrigue the enthusiast are:

(a) **Foliage.** Bonsai experts prize good plant material in its own right on account of the spacing, shape, color and texture of its leaves or needles. One of the attractions of Trident maple, Ezo spruce, and Sargent's juniper as bonsai material is the charm of their foliage.

(b) **Bark.** Another independent source of interest. Some pines have cork bark as gnarled as the name implies. The bark of beech trees and zelkovas is an attractive gray. Some birches are white. The exfoliating bark of crepe myrtle is smooth, as though polished. The humble honeysuckle's bark winds round the trunk in delicate spirals, accented with light purple stripes.

(c) **Other features.** Crab apples are prized for their fruit. Azaleas, plums and cherries for their flowers. Maples for their fall color as well as their roots, which are

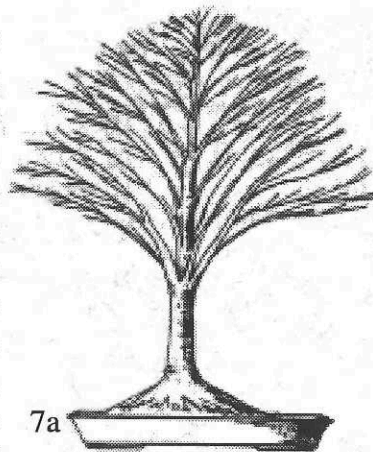
most amenable to root-over-rock training. We are all familiar with the wisteria's pendulous blossoms, the cypress's curious knees, the elm's vase shape, and the willow's graceful habit of growth (Figure 7).

(d) **Genetic dwarfs.** The art of bonsai does not depend on genetic dwarfs. Most bonsai are created from full-size material not different from the trees and shrubs in the woods and nurseries

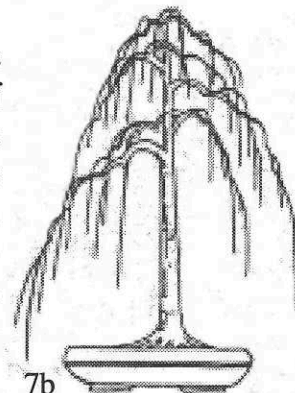
around us. Indeed, many dwarf varieties do not lend themselves to bonsai training because, like dwarf animals, they are contorted and uncomfortable looking. But there are important exceptions. The North American collection contains dwarf pine, dwarf elm, and dwarf juniper. Dwarf bamboos, sedges and horsetails make fascinating accent plants.

(e) **Ancient collected material.** Collected material and, to a lesser extent, nursery stock is sometimes very old at the time it is shaped into a bonsai. Collectors may estimate the age of their specimens in centuries. This is interesting, but it does not contribute to the quality of the bonsai except to the extent that it is reflected in form or texture. There are no prizes for the oldest tree.

Pots. Pictures have frames; bonsai have pots. In both cases harmony in dimensions, weight, color, and texture is crucial to aesthetic effect. But one



7a



7b

culture's harmony may be another's dissonance. Japanese thinking dictates that the pot be subordinate to the tree. Consequently, pots used for Japanese bonsai (many of which are of Chinese manufacture) tend to be simple in design and muted in color, with little or no decoration. On the other hand, pots used for Chinese penjing are often elaborately ornamental in their own right.

In both the Japanese and the Chinese traditions, the selection of a pot and the placement of the tree constitute an art in themselves. Japanese practitioners have developed rules of thumb: glazed pots for flowering specimens; long, shallow pots for tall, slender trees; deep round, square, or octagonal pots for cascades; the tree to be planted one third of the pot length from the end of oblong or oval pots and in the center of round, square or octagonal ones. Figure 8 shows the proportional norms: Figure 8a and Figure 8d suggest that the length of the pot should be about two thirds the longest dimension of the tree. Figure 8b and Figure 8c suggest that the depth of the pot should approximate the thickness of the trunk at its base. But no rules can substitute for artistic taste.

Pots are worthy of study. Viewed as free standing works of art, Chinese pots are preeminent in design and execution - not surprising considering the long history of Chinese ceramics. Viewed as a setting for bonsai, Japanese pots are more restrained, perhaps better suited to their task. American pots are still in the formative stage. Some of our potters look to Japanese models. Others are influenced more by modern designs developed for other uses. Given a few more years of experimentation, they may well come up with a truly American style.

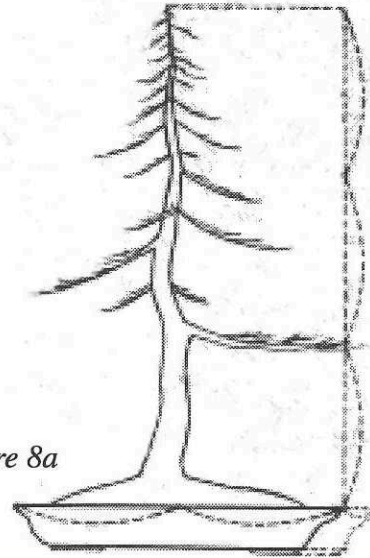


Figure 8a

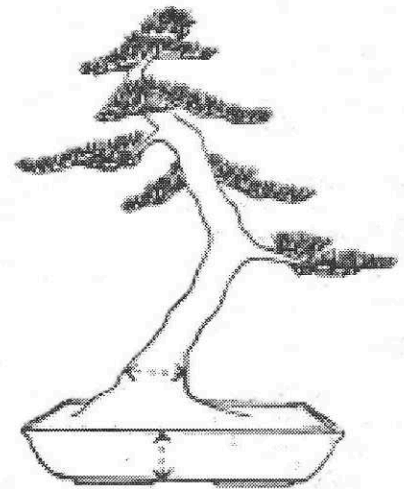


Figure 8b

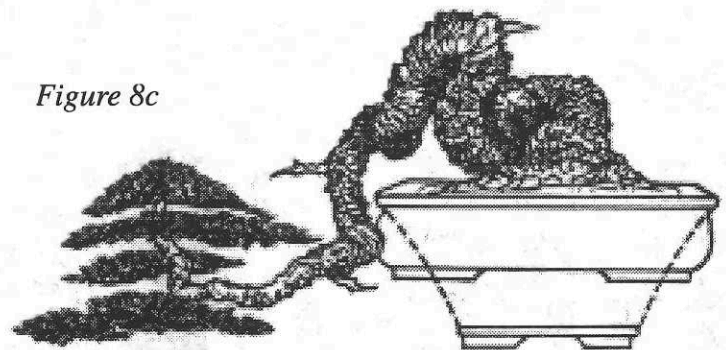


Figure 8c

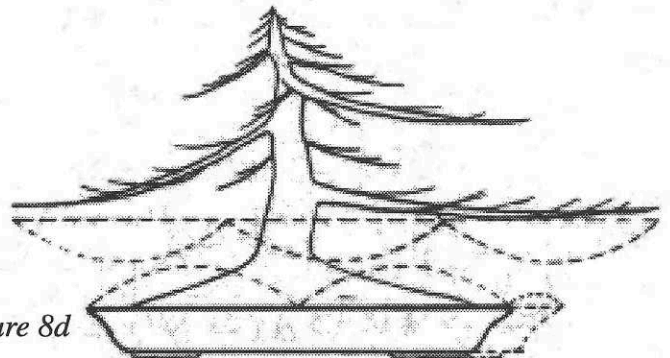
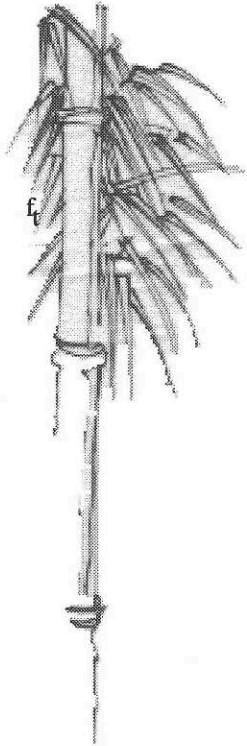


Figure 8d

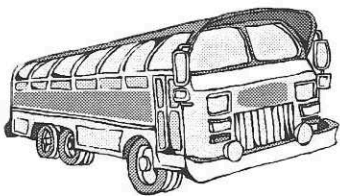


The following thoughts from Basho and Thoreau express what a person doing bonsai may well take heed to.

*Learn about a pine from a pine,
and about a bamboo from a bamboo*
- Basho

*Few come to the woods to see how a pine lives and
grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the
light, too see its perfect success.*
- Thoreau

The above are from the book *MORNING MIST, Through the Seasons with Matsuo Basho and Henry David Thoreau*, selected by Mary Kullberg: Weatherhill, New York, 1993.



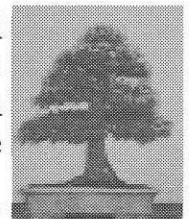
VISIT THE MUSEUM BY BUS



For the first time there is direct bus service on weekends from downtown Washington, D.C., to the U.S. National Arboretum and the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Now, on Saturdays and Sundays, out-of-town and local visitors have access to the Museum via public transportation.

With funding from the Friends of the National Arboretum and the National Bonsai Foundation, weekend bus service was inaugurated in March 2001 between the Arboretum and Union Station, the center-city train station which provides connections to the major airports, train routes and the Washington metropolitan area subway system.

The direct bus line from Union Station to the Arboretum — the X-6 “National Arboretum” — takes about 20 minutes one way and costs \$1.10 per trip or \$2.50 for a regional one-day pass for all bus routes. The first bus leaves the station at 7:55 a.m. and the last bus leaves the Arboretum at 4:56 p.m. If the route is well used by Arboretum patrons, the service will be instituted on a daily basis next year.



So, bus to the bonsai!



MONTHLY CARE TIPS for JULY *compiled by Jules*

The following tips have been compiled from 4 Japanese bonsai magazines and Yuji Yoshimura's book.

One procedure often followed is to **not** fertilize bonsai during the hot summer months since this can stress the tree, making it expend too much energy producing new growth. It is interesting to note that for some of the plant material listed below, the Japanese book suggests applying fertilizer during July.

Wherever fertilizing is to be done, it is noted as "apply fertilizer balls" since that is how the Japanese do it. If you do not use fertilizer balls, you can consider applying the fertilizer of your choice during that time. One application of fertilizer balls is expected to be good for about 30 days. For example, if you are using a certain strength liquid fertilizer and apply it once per week, you can apply it once every week for a month starting from when the words "apply fertilizer balls" appear. If a gap of more than a month appears between "apply fertilizer balls" in the schedule, you may consider holding back on applying any fertilizer during that time period.

Wherever the words "push back" appear, it signifies you should reduce the length of new foliage to maintain the tree's shape. If you have questions about how to push back for your plant species, ask members of your bonsai club to help you.

The watering notations are meant to indicate how thirsty a species might be. You must gauge the amount of watering depending on the plant species, the soil mix, and the micro-climate where your bonsai are.

Half a day of morning sun equals half a day of shade. Half a day of afternoon sun equals a full day of sun.

CONIFERS

BLACK PINE: Water once a day. Note that the Japanese usually plant a black pine in a soil mix, usually sand, which does not hold water for too long a time. Gauge your watering based on your soil mixes' abilities to hold water, and weather conditions. Needle removal continues as prescribed last month. The new needles in the mid-third of the tree, except for those needles at the tips of the branches, are removed. Ten days later, repeat the process for the branches in the upper third of the tree. Wire during the last 20 days of the month after old wire has been removed. Place in full sun all day and preferably in a windy location. pH 4.5 - 6.0

CRYPTOMERIA: Water three times per day, including the leaves. In the last 20 days of the month, trim new growth to desired lengths. Also apply fertilizer balls. Wiring can be done any time during the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.5 - 7.0

HEMLOCK: Water whenever the top of the soil appears dry. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

HINOKI: Water whenever the top of the soil appears dry. Wiring can be done in the middle of the month. Make certain no existing wire is biting into bark. Repotting can be done any time during the month. Repotting is done every 3 years. Pluck the edges of the foliage to reduce the lengths of the new growth when it gets too leggy. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

LARCH: Water whenever the top of the soil appears dry. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.5

NEEDLE JUNIPER: Water three times per day including the leaves. Wiring can be done any time after the old wire which might be digging into the bark has been removed. Pluck to reduce length of new growth and prevent legginess. Apply fertilizer balls during the last 10 days of the month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 5.0 - 6.5

SAWARA CYPRESS: Water whenever the top of the soil appears dry. Pluck new growth to keep it from getting leggy. Wire can be applied during the middle of the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

SHIMPAKU (Sargent juniper): Water twice per day, including the foliage. Repotting can be done up to the 10th of month. Repot every 3 years. Pluck, push back new growth, and remove dead growth and unwanted branches before the 20th of month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 5.0 - 6.0

SPRUCE: Water 3 times per day.

WHITE PINE: Water 3 times per day. Keep in full sun all day and preferably where there is air movement. pH 4.5 - 6.0

YEW: Water as needed. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

DECIDUOUS

(Non-fruiting/non-flowering)

BEECH: Water twice per day up to the middle of the month; and then start watering 2 to 3 times per day. Wire any time during the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.7

CHINESE ELM: Water as needed. Push back new growth by reducing the lengths of branchlets to 4 leaves. Remove any wire digging into bark. Apply fertilizer balls in the first 10 days of month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 6.0 - 7.5

GINGKO: Water as needed. Remove unwanted lengths of branches in the beginning of the month. Also apply fertilizer balls during that time. Remove wire digging into the bark during this month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 6.0 - 7.0

HORNBEAM: Water 2 to 3 times per day. Prune unwanted branches and push back new growth. Wire any time during month. Apply fertilizer balls during the middle of month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 6.0 - 8.0

JAPANESE MAPLE: Water 3 times per

day. Pluck or cut off unwanted leaves until the middle of the month. Wire any time during the month. Remove unwanted growth (branches) starting on the 20th. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 6.0 - 8.0

TRIDENT MAPLE: Water 3 times per day. Remove unwanted branches, sprouts and leaves. Wire any time during the month. Apply fertilizer balls during the middle of the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 6.0 - 8.0

WEeping WILLOW: Water once per day. Keep the pot in a dish of water during the month. Apply fertilizer balls once some time during the last 20 days of month. Remove unwanted lengths of branches and wire them to conform to the desired pendulous shape. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

WINGED EUONYMOUS: Water as needed. Prune unwanted branches and push back new growth. During the middle of the month, remove any wire that is digging into the bark. Apply fertilizer balls once during the last 10 days of the month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 5.5 - 7.0

Flowering/Fruiting Plants

CHERRY: Water 3 times per day up to about the 10th of the month and then drop back to 2 times per day. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 6.0 - 8.0

CRAB APPLE: Water 3 times per day. Keep in full sun all day. pH 5.0 - 6.5

GARDENIA: Water as needed. Remove spent blossoms. Reduce lengths of branches where desired to 3 leaf pairs. Apply fertilizer balls during the last 10 days of the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 5.0 - 6.0

HOLLY: Water often: 2 to 3 times per day. Apply fertilizer balls during the last 10 days of the month. Prune unwanted growth. Keep in full sun all day. pH 5.0 - 6.0

PYRACANTHA: Water 2 times per day during the first half of the month and then

go to watering 3 times per day. Prune branches and unwanted growth up to the 10th. Apply fertilizer balls once during the last 10 days of the month. pH 5.0 - 6.0

QUINCE: Water 2 to 3 times per day and go to 3 times per day after about the 10th. Apply fertilizer balls once during the last 10 days of the month. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 6.0 - 7.5


SATSUKI (azalea): Water 3 times per day. Sometime during the middle of the month

apply fertilizer balls. Place tree where it gets half-day of shade. pH 4.5 - 5.0

UME (Japanese flowering plum or apricot): Water 3 times per day. Keep in full sun all day. pH 6.0 - 7.5

WISTERIA: Water often. Trim back branches so that 2 leaf pairs remain. Apply fertilizer balls during the last 10 days of the month. Keep in full sun all day. pH 6.0 - 8.0



... and just in case you've been taking my sensei for granted, I'll be sneaking in some of the congratulatory letters sent to me for inclusion in Jules' Memory Book to celebrate *Jules Koetsch Day*, 28 April 2001. If you just found your contribution crumpled under the sofa cushion, iron out the wrinkles and send it to me by the end of July. I'll sneak it into the book and he'll never know you were late - 

Jules Koetsch Day!

20 April 2001

It's about time we recognize the guy who challenged bonsai newsletter editors around the country more than 20 years ago! Jules' early feats of presenting great bonsai education to those of us who attended PBA conventions and were "corresponding" members so we could receive this great little publication - an 8.5 x 11-inch white sheet folded in half, with black (sometimes smudgy) type in tiny (elite) letters packed with goodies for bonsai growers - set a standard for all who provide bonsai information to local clubs, regional associations and internationalists. And it is a continuing work, with a better quality appearance but still the much needed instruction.

Thank you Jules for your tireless commitment to quality information. Believe me, we have noticed and are most grateful.

Donna Banting
Managing Editor

BONSAI
Magazine