

# PBA Clippings

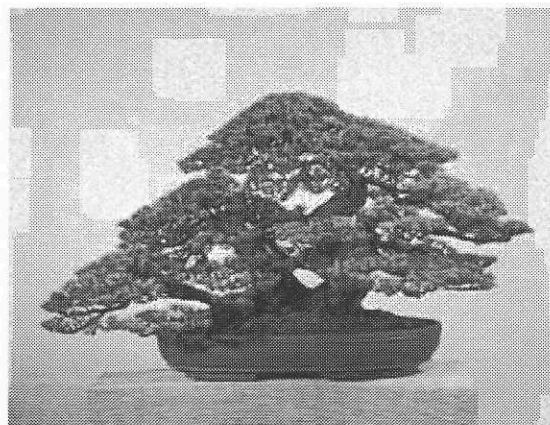
NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION



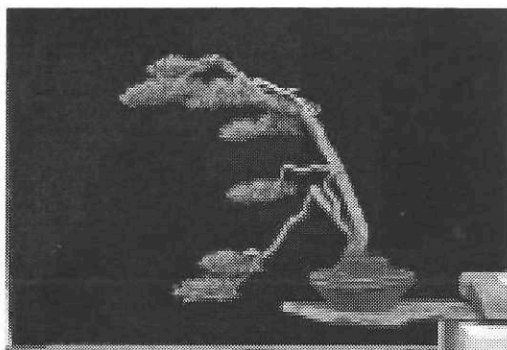
Volume 32, Number 5  
May 2002

Goals Inspiration

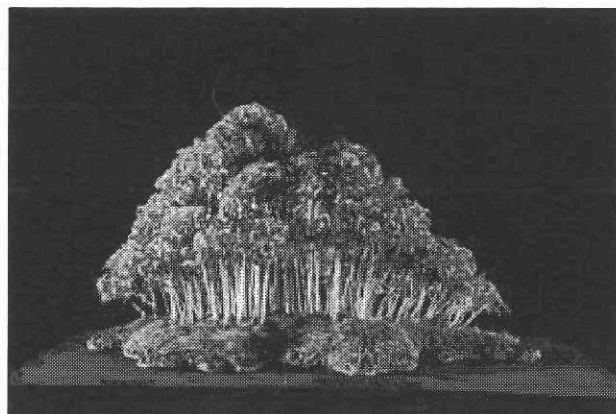
RECOGNITION



Classic . . .



Nothing STAIID about this installation



Perspective, don't we always talk about it . . .

In April's issue, we told you how to enter for 2002- all you need do is send a photo these days.

Co-sponsored by Japan Bonsai Exhibition, TAIKANTEN

Sponsor: JAL World Bonsai Contest '01

Secretariat Cooperation: Nippon Bonsai

Association Support: Japan Bonsai Growers

Cooperative Assistance: Japan Airlines

First Place

- Casuarina Equistifolia/clump -  
Henky Wahyu / Indonesia

Second Place

- Scots Pine -  
Colin Lewis / England

Third Place

- Matapalo -  
Luis Ricardo Garcia Gomez / Venezuela



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**PBA**  
**Clippings**  
NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

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**Editorial** by Jules Koetsch

Sometimes one finds it hard to resist one's urge to root the cuttings one invariably ends up with when creating or redesigning a plant as a bonsai. Sometimes rooting cuttings is prudent when one is putting together a group or forest planting. There's always the possibility that one of the plants will not have taken kindly to the pruning, wiring, and repotting operation and give up the ghost. One could consider leaving it to represent a dead tree. It may lend the appearance that the planting is an aging grove or forest; but such practice is looked upon as poor taste. Someone once mentioned seeing that done in a Japanese bonsai; but if it was, it hasn't caught on.

My poor fortune in the past has been that the largest and key tree in a group planting did not survive. I did not try to grow any of the cuttings and now the grove has 6 instead of 7 trees. Six isn't a very popular number for the Japanese since one never finds photos of 6-tree bonsai - more than likely you will find in their bonsai and saikei that it must be an odd number of plants - never an even number. Keith Scott once remarked that he had seen a very interesting 6-tree bonsai in Japan and queried the creator of it why there were 6 trees because the Japanese books never allowed for any 6-tree groups. The answer was that the creator of the grove had not read those books. So much for the rules.

It isn't too long before a person cultivating cuttings finds himself or herself running out of room to grow them - plus they represent just so many more individual plants that must be tended. Also many of the plants probably lack the correct branch displacements to qualify as the perfect bonsai, such as branches diminishing in thickness and spaced properly when going up the trunk, strong roots, et cetera and etcetera and etcetera. Aside from pawning them off on other club members, or planting them in the ground on one's property, or lastly sending them to the compost heap, one can explore the possibilities of putting them altogether in a single planting. This eliminates the need to fuss with umpteen individual plants.

Now, one must procure a large tray or slab on which to plant the assemblage. A thin stone, slate slab is the cheaper way to go, but one

must then make a dam of muck to retain the soil. The muck can be a bother in that it washes away if moss planted on top of the muck does not take.

Usually one goes through some bonsai publications, relies on one's memory or tries to be original in deciding what to do with the growing ex-cuttings. I decided to explore my bonsai library to find out the possibilities since I remembered there's such descriptors as grove plantings, forest plantings, saikei, penjing and mixed-group plantings.

The three options for ex-cuttings of the same species plant material are either a grove with between 5 and 11 trees, a forest with over 9 and preferably 11 trees or more, and lastly saikei. It may be just my taste but such plantings draw my interest more than plantings with different species that are not from the same genus such as pines and maples together. Usually one of the objectives in those types of plantings is to enhance the perception of depth in the miniature landscape. To that end, it has been suggested that different species from the same genus be used in a single planting. I've thought of using Kingsville boxwood in that manner since leaf sizes vary and the plants with the large leaves could be in the forefront of the planting with leaf size decreasing proportionately as one goes to the rear of the planting.

Mr. Kling suggested the following combinations of front and back trees to enhance the perception of depth in a tray landscape (penjing in Chinese, bonkei in Japanese terminology). The plants listed are not identical in species, but come from the same genus and have the similar leaf shapes and structure.

#### Front

1. Juniper - procumbens nana
2. Japanese Black Pine
3. Variegated Serissa
4. Large or medium leaf Fukien Tea
5. Ficus Benjamina
6. Mimosa, Leucana glauca
7. Chinese Elm
8. Drake Elm
9. Japanese or Korean Boxwood

#### Back

- Shimpaku juniper(J. Squamata prostrata)
- Juniper - many varieties
- Snow rose, Kyoto Serissa
- Small leaf Fukien tea
- Ficus phillipensis (F.b. nuda)
- Sweet acacia
- Seiju or Hokkaido Elm
- Chinese Elm
- Kingsville boxwood

I know of only one mixed-group planting which I define as having at least 3 or more different species of trees that are not from the same genus. It is the one in the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection which came over with the founding collection of Japanese bonsai, and consists of Japanese white pines, red leafed hornbeam, and Japanese white beech. Somehow the combination of species has never appealed to me - the needles of the white pine seem out of place with leaves of the other trees.

Then there's also the watering problem - do the different species need the same amount of watering, and the same pH for the soil? This mixed-group planting does not have anything in it such as rocks or figurines or else it would not be classified as a bonsai.

Somehow in contrast to the austere presentation described above, the presence of rocks as in a Penjing (tray landscape) along with the plant material makes a more intriguing composition. At this April's PBA spring show at the National Arboretum there were two multiple species plantings wherein the use of rocks made both of them very interesting and pleasurable arrangements. Photos of both are shown herein. The one by Jim Rieden (Brookside) contained 10 different species of plant material anywhere from 2 to 6 years of age, and was in training for 3 years. The plant material came from cuttings and nursery stock. Jim said that he had drilled only 2 holes into the stone to accommodate the plant material. The other by Pat Pettus (Kiyomizu) consisted of Japanese cryptomeria, shimpaku and cedar, and the overall effect was aided by the fact that the leaf structures were similar. The material was 8 years old from nursery stock and was 4 years in training.

Hence if you have cuttings with which you know not what to do, you can cogitate on what approach you want to take. If you're venturing toward the use of different species, consider the use of rocks in the planting.







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

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

### MAY

#### Rappahanock Bonsai Society

**4** 10:00 a.m. Satsuki Azalea wksp  
Potomac Bonsai Association Board Meeting

**5** 11:00 a.m. Mezzanine meeting room in the Admin Bldg, All paid-up members encouraged to attend

#### Lancaster Bonsai Society

**5** 7:00 p.m. Styling Night - Bring problem trees for critiquing and making need changes. Frank Thomas will organize and lead the event

#### Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

**11** 9:00 am Open discussion  
10:00 am Lecture/Demo by Michael Persiano

12:00 Azalea wksp - Michael Persiano  
Brookside Bonsai Society

**16** 7:30 p.m. Bill Valvanis will give a presentation on maples

#### International Scholarly Symposium on Bonsai and Viewing Stones

**17** 12:00 Noon to 5:30 p. m. Admin Bldg Auditorium

**18-19** 8:00 am to 4:30 p.m.

Leading experts will provide in-depth information about the history and development of the art and science of bonsai, suiseki and related art forms. Participation is limited to 140. Fee

#### Washington Bonsai Club

**18** 2:00 p.m. byo tree wksp

#### Baltimore Bonsai Club

**21** 1:00 p.m. Bring collected material - Any material for wksp- Distribution and explanation of charter tree program

3:00 p.m. Beginners' wksp

#### PBA Spring Auction

**25** 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Behnke's Nursery

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club - no meeting

Chesapeake Bonsai Society - Time and date TBA at the home of Brian Eppinger

### JUNE

#### Rappahannock

**1** 10:00 a.m. Tropicals workshop - species and cost TBA

#### Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

**8** 9:00 a.m. Open discussion-Maples and defoliation-Bill Daly  
10:00 a.m. Presentation-TBA  
12:00 noon Wksp-TBA

#### Lancaster Bonsai Society

**12** 6:00 p.m. Club picnic organized by Len McMullen

#### Washington Bonsai Club

**15** 2:00 p.m. Refining workshop

#### Chesapeake Bonsai Society

**16** noon to 4:00 p.m. Spring Show at Homestead Gardens

#### Brookside Bonsai Society

**20** 7:30 p.m. TBA

#### Baltimore Bonsai Club

**23** Wksp at the home of Mike Ramina- Call Mike for directions- (410) 668-1868

#### Kiyomizu

**23** 2:00 p.m. Styling wksp- Bring your own tree

#### Bowie

**24** 7:00 p.m. TBA

Potomac Viewing Stone Group-No meeting this month

### Non- Association Events of Interest

#### Sogetsu Ikebana Flower Arrangement Exhibition

**1** 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Admin Bldg Auditorium USNA.

**2** 10:00 am.-4:00 p.m.

The skillful arrangers of the entries in annual exhibition of this modern school of Japanese Flower Arranging always surprise visitors with creative touches. Members of Sogetsu Maryland and Washington will be on hand to answer questions. Free, No registration reqd

**Please, Club Officers:** We are asking you to find volunteer Calendar correspondents in each club to send items in a timely fashion without prodding by Arschel every month.



## Rocky Road Trip to Staten Island

Potomac Viewing Stone Group members are building a reputation for being where the action is, that is if you consider stones action. April 14 was the opening and reception of *Roots of Clouds, Bones of Mountains: One Hundred Stones from the Collection of Kemin Hu*. This wonderful exhibit, continues until July 28, 2002, at the NY Chinese Scholar's Garden, which is located within the Staten Island Botanical Garden. Kemin will be speaking again June 25 at 1 PM and July 28 at 2 PM. Dr. Judith Whitbeck, Curator, will be speaking May 16 at 7 PM. If you have any interest in



Chinese Scholar's Rocks, this is a trip you should take. It is unlikely you will ever find this many quality Scholar's Rocks exhibited together again, and these are in a beautiful Chinese garden venue. If you feel you are only interested in suiseki (as I thought I was), you should give Chinese stones a chance. They deserve it. This exhibit contains over 100 of Kemin Hu's personal collection of fine stones, with forty different



types, from five ounces to probably five hundred pounds.

The five Potomac Viewing Stone Group members pictured made this exciting trip, included stops at the Japan Society, the Asia Society Galleries, and the Met, and dragged themselves back home all in two days, all with big smiles on their tired faces. It is a rocky road. Glenn Reusch, PVSG, NVBS



## Poetry Corner - Calm yourself

The following are from the booklet An Introduction to HAIKU (An anthology of Poems and Poets from Basho to Shiki); Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York; 1958.

### *Leaving the House of a Friend*

Out comes the bee  
from deep among peony pistils -  
Oh, so reluctantly  
~ Matsuo Basho

### *Clouds*

Clouds come from time to time -  
and bring to men a chance to rest  
from looking at the moon.  
~ Matsuo Basho



## Shonan School of Bonsai Studies ~ Part 3

*This will be the concluding article about Dave Johnson's studies at Mr Nakamura's Shonan School of Bonsai in Japan. He did two styled plantings using raw material: root connected and root over rock. There will also be more on the Koku-fu Exhibition and visits to bonsai nurseries.*

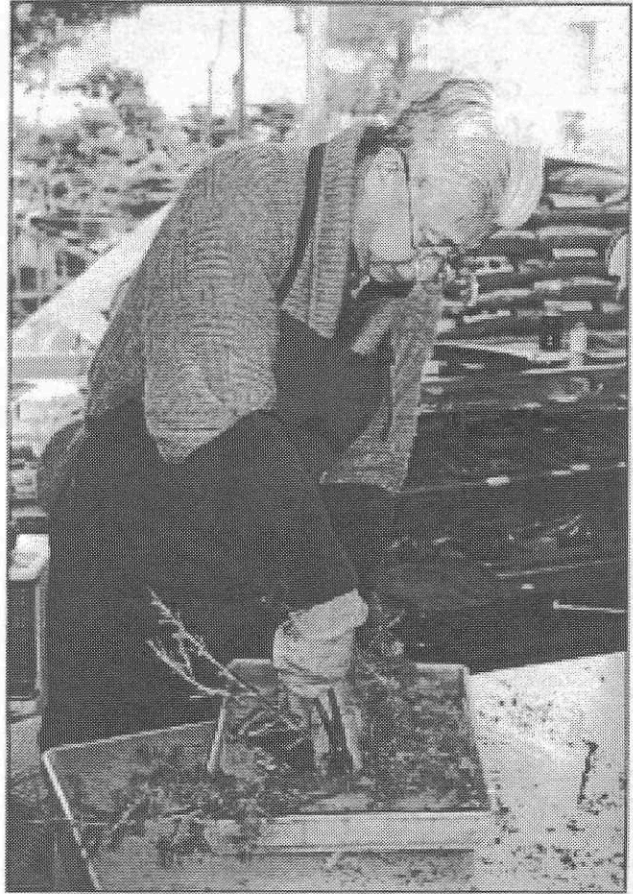
### ROOT-CONNECTED STYLE

A root-connected-style is made by placing a single tree on its side in a container using the side- and top-growing branches to form a group planting. Mr. Nakamura said the advantages of the root-connected style was uniform foliage in the group, and similar tree strength. The material Mr Nakamura used was a *juniperus rigida yatsu busa* (needle juniper). Mr Nakamura said that this variety is very healthy, disease resistant, and the foliage stays healthy in shaded conditions. Therefore, the inner leaves will not die. It was about 18 inches long with a ½-inch trunk.

After removing the tree from the pot, Mr. Nakamura teased out the roots in order to lay it flat in the container. He then wired down the tree in a rectangular plastic container about 10 by 16 inches. The long end of the wire was used to wire up an adjacent branch. Several wires were used at different points to wire down the tree in an "S" pattern.

The tree was planted in straight Akadama (baked clay) soil. Mr. Nakamura said not to train or prune this planting for 3 years so that it can produce thicker trunks, although the branches [now trees] can be wired up in the fall (this planting was done in the spring). Three years later, the tree placement can be rearranged in better form.

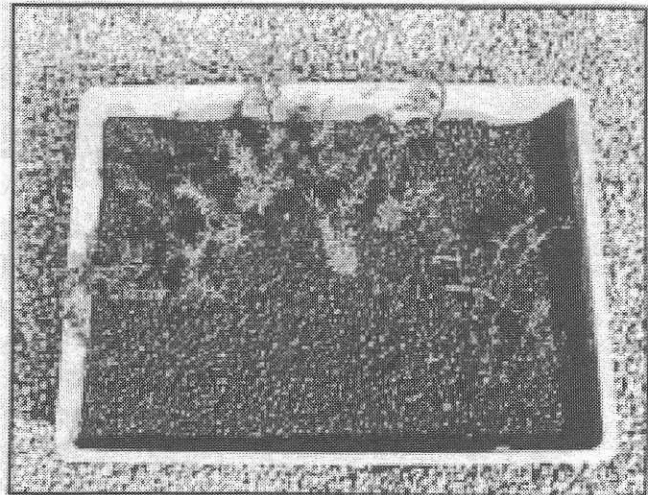
Mr. Nakamura said some ficus and prunus mumé (plum) can be used for root-connected plantings. Mr. Nakamura did a root-connected planting while I watched. Then Mr. Nakamura's son, Makoto Nakamura, and I did our own plantings. When I was doing my planting, Mr. Nakamura said my "S" was too wide as opposed to a tighter "S." A wide "S" requires too large a pot which would be out of



Nakamura-san wiring juniper into container.

proportion to the group planting itself.

[The *Toronto Bonsai Society Journal* of October 1997 has an article by Arthur Skolnik entitled "The Claft Style" that can be a reference. [For those of us without access to *TBS Journal*, Arthur kindly provided this note: "CRAFT style is not my invention. I believe Hal Mahoney of Long Island, NY, first coined (or potted) the term and first promoted the style. It is a combination of the clump and raft styles. Many multi-trunked plants are good



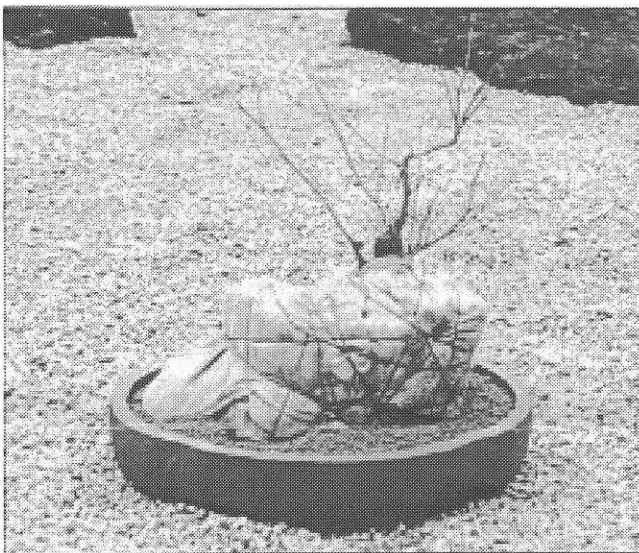
My completed root-connected *juniperus rigida yatsu busa* planting.



candidates for a cleft. I led a workshop here in Toronto long ago using 2- or 3-gallon Procumbens 'nana' junipers. The long arms of this juniper are easy to splay out horizontally and the secondary branches, which unwired, grow flat, form the 'trunks' of a multi-tree (or clump), planting. There wasn't time in the workshop to do the ground-layer (similar to an air-layer) and repotting, but several members' clefts looked very cool 1 year later. The temptation is to keep many branches-cum-trunks. Don't. *Many trunks with many branches means much maintenance.*"]

### ROOT-OVER-ROCK STYLE

This style may be more easily recognized with a tree and its exposed roots growing over a rock. The selection of the rock and its placement is very important according to Mr. Nakamura. The trees we used were Chinese bush clover. Mr Nakamura again did the first planting with explanations while I watched, and then I did a tree. Mr. Nakamura began by teasing out the roots. The bottom growing roots were cut off so that the tree would sit better on the rock. Mr Nakamura examined both the rock and the tree, deciding which side of each provided the best front. After determining how the tree would look on the proper location and fitting of the tree, Mr Nakamura placed a small amount of muck (a combination of peat moss and clay, which in this case produced a black colour) on the rock



Nakamura-san's completed Ch. bush clover root-over-rock planting

where the tree would go. The tree and its roots were then placed on the rock and wired down by wrapping aluminum wire around the rock. More muck was placed over the roots and where he wanted future roots. A towel was placed over the roots and mucked areas covering the rock. *Do not wrap the towel under the rock so that the roots can grow into the soil over which the tree and rock will eventually be placed.*

Wire was wrapped around the rock to hold the towel in place and then the tree and rock were placed in an appropriate container partially filled with Akadama soil. The tree and rock were wired into the container and more Akadama soil was added. The tree will be fertilized after 2 months, and then styled after it has grown for 2 years.

### Koku-fu Exhibition

While drawing and appreciating the trees during the 8 days I attended the exhibition, I also wanted to learn about some of the practical side of running a show (with our own in mind). Mr. Nakamura was kind enough to arrange an interview with the man (I rudely did not get his name) who, with a crew of five, was charged with the task of maintaining the exhibition's trees. This man was so accommodating that he took time from his very responsible and busy job to allow me to interview him. His main concern was watering and misting the trees and accent plants. Keep in mind that the trees were in the exhibit area for about 12 days. He described the process to me. The workers touch the tree's moss, and water if it is dry. The misting schedule is 8:00-10:00 for all trees, 12:30-13:00 for only conifers and accent plants (with their foliage and small containers), and 15:00-16:00 for conifers and accent plants. The deciduous trees are misted less to discourage leaf sprouting (it is February and the leaves are not out yet) so only the roots are misted. As some of the trees leaf out, the foliage is misted more regularly. (While I was at the show, some trees blossomed, dropped, or had their old flowers removed by the maintenance crew, and leafed out.) Accent plants always dry out more quickly than trees. When there are many people at the exhibition and the rooms heat



up, more misting is done. *Juniperus rigida* (needle juniper), *Juniperus chinensis* var. *sargentii* (Chinese juniper), *Picea glehnii* (ezo spruce) and *Tsuga sieboldii* (hemlock) are misted more often. The trees' owners delivered the trees thoroughly watered. The maintenance crew chief concluded by saying that caring for the trees required a lot of experience.

The trees were displayed in three sections, beginning with large, medium and small trees. The trees were separated by three pieces of dark bamboo tied together in two places. All of the large trees were complemented with accent plants placed on thin flat pieces of wood. The accent plants attracted a lot of attention because of their size, colour and beauty. The medium sized trees were displayed in pairs. The trees were arranged to create a sense of variety: an evergreen, a flowering tree, and then a bare-branched tree, and so on.

#### Bonsai Nurseries

The last day of my studies appropriately concluded with a trip to Omiya, a small town just north of Tokyo where many bonsai professionals have nurseries. With Mr Makoto Nakamura as our guide, my partner Nancy Chong and I first visited Mr Hiroshi Takeyama's nursery, Fuyo-en or "Rose Mallow." Mr Takeyama is the chairman of the Koku-fu Exhibition.

Rows of large bonsai, pines, *Prunus mume* in bloom, and Mr Takeyama's specialty, broom-style zelkova, greeted us. Mrs Takeyama warmly welcomed us and served us refreshments. She asked questions about trees in Canada and their appreciation by the people.

Our next visit was to Mr Saburo Kato's nursery, Manseisen or "Blue Vine." Mr. Kato is the chairman of the Nippon Bonsai

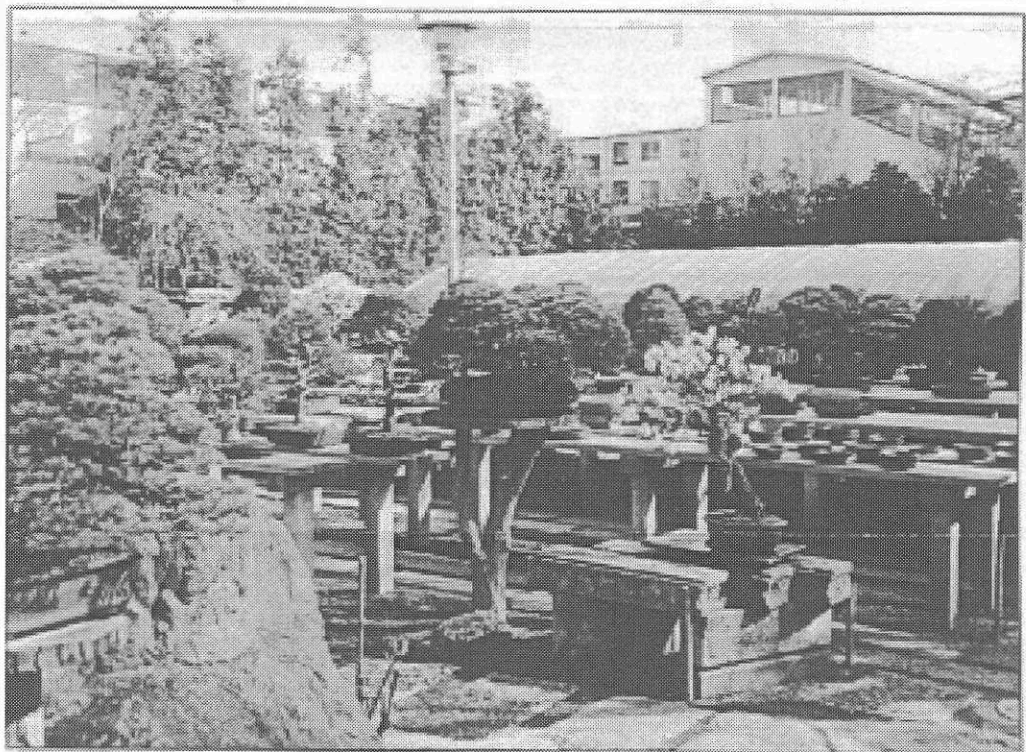
Association. We met Mr. Kato at the entrance of his nursery as he was pruning one of his maples. Mr Kato gave us permission to wander throughout the nursery (including areas normally closed to the public) and then chatted with us over tea. It was absolutely amazing to see row upon row of bonsai of such quality. Upon hearing what I did for a living, Mr Kato expressed hoped I would keep safe and continue to do bonsai for a long time as we exchanged gifts.

The visits to both nurseries were like seeing the Koku-fu Exhibition all over again.

Mr. Kato asked if I had learned a lot during my stay. I could only answer "yes". My sojourn of four short weeks truly opened my eyes to bonsai in a way books alone cannot. It has made me more appreciative of other bonsai styles; other trees, smaller trees; working with the weaknesses a tree may possess and bringing out its strengths; seedlings and cuttings, and what they mean for the historical continuity of bonsai; the refinement and delicacy of bonsai; and the list could go on.

*One of the principal lessons I learned was that if an opportunity presents itself to go to Japan to see and learn about bonsai up close, do it.*

Mr Hiroshi Takeyama's Fuyo-en nursery



## AN E-MAIL FROM PEGGY SNOW in JAPAN

Hi Jules,

I don't know if you remember me and my husband Tom. We attended the PBA board meetings several years ago as representatives of the Chesapeake Bonsai Society. Anyway, we moved to Japan a little more than a year ago and are doing what we can to continue to learn more about bonsai. Sometime last fall, we actually ran into Jack Sustic in Omiya while we were ogling

our way through the many bonsai nurseries there. We had not met him before and were only able to chat with him for a little while, but it was nice to see another gaign and talk in English about bonsai.

It occurred to me that you might be interested in an article for the *Clippings* from time to time that relates some of our bonsai adventures here. Examples include our trips to Omiya, Tokoname, and the Japan Bonsai Association exhibition which is going on right now, and which we went to


see last weekend. Let me know what you think.

I saw in my most recent *Clippings* that you have started a mentor program. What a wonderful idea, and I sure wish that there had been one in place when I was living in Maryland. My experience was that it was really difficult to learn as much as I felt I needed. You go, guys!

In our favor, we have found a nursery that teaches bonsai classes once a month, and the sensei speaks English. For 500 yen (\$3.85) we go to class from 10-4 on Sundays. Can't beat that!

Nice chatting with you, and let me know what you think.

Peggy and Tom Snow

*EDITOR'S ANSWER: The staff of Clippings were overjoyed to receive the above e-mail. A reply to the affirmative was immediately drafted stating that any item concerning their stay in Japan are most welcome, including ones that are not bonsai related. The following is her reply - the first article of many, I hope. (Chief Underling is hoping for photos. )*

## Peggy's Adventures in Japan . . .

Every morning at exactly 6:00, I am awakened by the sound of the gong ringing from the nearby Shinto shrine. For me, it is the first sound of each new day, its resonance full and almost haunting as it is carried through my bedroom window. I can't help but smile. I love that gong and the message that it sends me. The first couple of rings of the gong rouse me out of my sleep, and the next four just seem to move to a place inside me that reminds me that the challenge of the gong is to admonish me to wake up not just from my night's sleep, but to WAKE UP on a much deeper level, too. I am lucky to have such a message to carry me through my day. I've been living in Kanagawa Prefecture in a city area called Sagamihara for about a year and a half, and our projected stay will be about three years. My husband Tom is working with the Army Corps of Engineers at Camp Zama, and this is our second tour living in Japan (we were here in the mid-80's). I have always known about myself that I am an Eastern person trapped in a Western body (at least this time around), so Japan feels like home to me, and I'm glad to be here. When we found out that we were coming back to Japan, Tom and I decided that we would have lots of fun, spend our money whenever we want, and bring back memories and other treasures. Our goal is to not have any "I wish I had's" haunting us when the airplane wheels lift to send us back to the States.

The change in Japan from the mid-80's to now is very apparent, and, in some ways I'm saddened by it. I love the old, traditional parts of Japan; women in kimono, the sound of the shakuhachi (bamboo flute), the clack-clack of bamboo in the wind, the artistry of a master calligrapher, the craftsmanship of fine lacquerware, and, of course, bonsai. All of these things still exist in Japan, but you have to look harder to find them now. Many Japanese, especially younger people, are simply not interested in traditional Japan, preferring instead to go the Western route, and do everything from using "skin lightening" lotions to having their eyes surgically altered for a more rounded look. At first I despaired at the changes I saw, but

**Continued on page 14**

## ANYONE'S SOIL MIX

*Editor's note: I forgot to get this into the issue with Harvey Everett's soil testing procedure. My sincerest apology.*

Bill Orsinger has been working on the bonsai and penjing in the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection for many years. The following e-mail was in response to my request for a soil mix that evolved from the many soil mixes Warren Hill had been working with to define good soil mixes for various plant species. The one advantage to using a Warren Hill mix is that the materials are locally available.

Mix #3 General mix for MOST plants including maples

### TO MAKE 5 GALLONS

4 parts Fine granite  
1 part Perlite  
2 parts Peat  
1 part pine bark, aged one year

To every five gallons of the above mix add:  
5 Tablespoons Dolomitic limestone  
2 Tablespoons Gypsum  
1 Tablespoon Superphosphate (0-4-0)

Warren has many variations on his mix. For acid loving plants (azaleas, geraniums) we omitted the lime. During the week of January 17th, Jack Sustic had me make Mix #3 with a ratio of 3 parts fine granite and one part coarse. These things will change more, you can bet. I must say, my plants all did well on Warren's mixes. Last week Sustic had me list all trees showing any green growth . . . which means ideal time to repot.

Bill

The fine and coarse granite chips refer to granite chips which have been graded in size for use in poultry feed. The store usually sells three sizes of which "fine granite" refers to the smallest size and "one coarse" above refers to the middle size. The fine granite will not pass through a sieve with an opening of 1/32 of an inch and the 1/8th-inch screen stops the middle size grits. The large size is not used. Remember that the finer the particle sizes in the mix, the more likely the mix will retain more liquid and very little gas, and the roots will perform poorly. By sieving the soils, you eliminate any extreme amounts of water retention.

Warren Hill was adamant about not using clay products (e.g., Turface) in a soil mix because they trap salts which can lead to a plant's decreasing health and eventual death. The gypsum additive in the soil mix is to further inhibit salt concentrations in the soil. There is possibly another side to the coin - frequent repotting may lessen the exposure to salt by simply replacing the old soil with salt-free soil.

A number of club members are using Roy Nagatoshi's bonsai medium which is similar to Warren's mix in that it contains no clay. It consists of volcanic cinder, organic compost, and nutrient supplements. Roy has developed this mix over an 8-year period.

Also some of Warren Hill's mixes have used Canadian peat moss in place of "pine bark aged one year" cited in Bill's suggested mix above. The Canadian peat would reduce the pH to around 5.5 instead of around 6.5 with the pine bark. Canadian peat would be used for acid-loving plants such as pines, azaleas and the like. Setting the pH of the soil before repotting avoids having to doctor it later on.

**Check your soil mixes using a pH meter and also the Harvey Everett Soil, Water, Gas Test described in the March 2002 issue. Make certain that your plants start out this year with proper soil mixes !**



## **Buxus Microphylla Compacta Kingsville**

### **Boxwood by Carole Roelofs, NVBS**

Editors note: Carole Roelofs, President of Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, gave an excellent presentation covering boxwoods (and Kingsville in particular). *Clippings* has somewhat recently run articles on Kingsville boxwood; but Carole did an excellent job of putting together the following comprehensive information on Kingsville boxwood. So here you have the final, definitive information contained in her notes.

There are those who consider boxwood a shrub, and hence not suitable for converting into bonsai, which are supposed to be dwarfed trees. John Naka once said that he did not make any distinction as to what material you use for a bonsai, as long as the finished effort looks like a tree. Yes, most species of *Buxus* fall into the category of shrubs; but Hugh Johnson considers the *Buxus sempervirens*, which grows to as tall as 25 feet, worthy of belonging in his book Hugh Johnson's Encyclopedia of Trees (Portland House, New York;1990). Then again, boxwood may be considered by some to be not much of a challenge - too easy to grow and too easy to bonsai. But why let that stand in the way of your having some fun creating almost every style of bonsai except the semi- and full-cascade styles.

There are enough varieties of boxwood that you can select a growth pattern to fit your needs. There are boxwood that grow straight, columnar trunks like *Buxus semipervirens*. I'm putting together a forest of formal upright boxwoods. Then there is the Kingsville boxwood which can be turned into an outstanding informal style. Some varieties make excellent broom styles. Enjoy doing bonsai - style and maintain at least one boxwood as a bonsai.

#### **History**

The Kingsville is truly a North American plant. Mr. Sam Appleby who lived north of Baltimore, Maryland, discovered it in 1912. It was a sport on a *Buxus Microphylla*. Mr. Appleby propagated the sport for nine years

until his death in 1923. There were 10 Kingsvilles which were acquired by Mr. Henry Hohman in those years. Mr. Hohman opened his famous Kingsville Nursery named for the nearby town.

Henry Hohman named the boxwood's sport Kingsville, and throughout his long and distinguished career as a nurseryman and world-renowned plant propagator, the *Little King* was Mr. Hohman's special horticultural pet. However, the *Little King* proved to be a commercial disappointment until the bonsai world discovered this special boxwood in the 1960's. By the early 70's, his nursery was empty of mature Kingsvilles, except for perhaps half a dozen plants remaining of the original ten.

In 1975, Mr. Hohman was asked to donate one of the original ten Kingsvilles to the US National Arboretum for inclusion in the *to-be* collection of American bonsai. In late summer of 1975, a small group of East Coast bonsai people accompanied by Dr. John Creech, then Director of the Arboretum, and Mr. March, the Arboretum's Chief of Propagation, went to the Kingsville Nursery. In the group was Mr. Yuji Yoshimura, the Japanese bonsai master from New York State, who studied each of the original Kingsvilles Mr. Hohman still possessed. None of the trees came close to being a good natural bonsai. However, Mr. Yoshimura chose one, and it was dug up and moved to the Arboretum. He styled the Kingsville the next day before members of the Potomac Bonsai Association. He noted that he had to do a severe styling to overcome the fundamental design defects of the tree. The tree after all these years has matured into the anticipated design.

As many people know, Bill Merritt (NVBS) also propagated and grew Kingsville boxwoods. He acquired his original Kingsvilles from Henry Hohman, too. Mrs. Merritt still has about five left of the original trees. Bill propagated many of these trees; and gave many members in PBA these trees. I own several myself. Bill taught many of us to love, appreciate, care for, trim, design, and propagate these wonderful little trees.

Chuck Bird (Kiyomizu) started propagating Kingsville from a variety of sources in the very late 70's or early 80's. As many people know,

Mrs. Bird still has hundreds of Kingsvilles in her yard (as Chuck was a propagator first, and bonsaiist second).

Enjoy your *Little Kings*, as this tree can bring you years of enjoyment.

### Kingsville Boxwood – “Little King”

**General Information:** Boxwoods are densely branched shrubs native to Europe and Asia. Steeped in history, boxwood sprigs have been found in the tombs of Romans. It is widely used as a hedge plant, and is a common topiary subject. Most varieties of boxwood are marked by a distinctive “foxy” smell which some find distasteful. This is not true of Kingsville boxwood. It was developed from a sport on a *Buxus Microphylla*. Reference, Wyman’s Gardening Encyclopedia, defines “sport” as: “A shoot usually arising from a single bud, different in character from the typical growth of the plant which produced it. The difference is usually in a single characteristic, as a branch with double flowers – on a plant producing all single flowers. Sports must be propagated asexually to retain their variation.” In other words, propagation of the Kingsville Boxwood is from cuttings or air layering.

Most boxwoods are grown as hardy bonsai, but the Kingsville Boxwood has been successfully grown indoors and outdoors. Kingsville Boxwood is very popular for bonsai due to its tiny leaves and its tolerance to extensive pruning and shaping.

One note of caution: boxwood leaves are **poisonous**, and eating even a few can kill a small pet. The following table presents the Kingsville Boxwood characteristics.

### Characteristics Description

**Growth Patterns** Although it is not an apparent growth characteristic in young Kingsville boxwoods, this plant has a natural inclination to grow broader than tall especially those over 20 years old. Growth rate of established plants is about ½” to ¾” a year, but they grow at a faster rate during the first 5 years. At an early age, the bark develops a textured, gray appearance which contrasts well with the tiny, dark green leaves, each being ¼” to ⅜” in size. The fine, fibrous root system grows at a rate out of

proportion to the slow growth rate above ground. They form a dense, rounded, twiggy shrub.

**Lighting** Filtered sun is the best home for the Kingsville. Too much direct sunlight (all day) will cause the Kingsville to lose leaf color. This condition is reversible by placing the tree back in open shade. *Buxus Microphylla compacta* can be brought indoors in the winter into a cool area, 60° to 70° max and put in a south window or under ultraviolet lighting. Don’t forget to rotate the tree. It should not be subjected to hot, dry atmosphere. Place on a large enough tray of gravel to allow the moisture to pass through the entire leaf system.

**Temperature** Hardiness depends on variety, but boxwoods need protection from frost and cold winds even when grown in the proper climate. Although the Kingsville may survive overnight temperatures of 5° and 6° above zero, such temperatures over several consecutive nights could doubtless be more serious. If you do not have a cool place in the house, find an area that is well protected from the wind, and mulch in. Don’t forget to water over the winter, but not if the pot is frozen. Leaves may turn reddish brown in winter. In the summer, boxwoods appreciate fresh air.

**Watering** Moderate, but does not like wet soil. Allow the boxwood to dry somewhat between waterings. Moisture is recommended. Kingsville does not like to dry out completely. A moisture tray is recommended.

**Feeding\*** Fertilizing often seems not to affect the top growth, but it does accelerate the root growth. Keep this in mind when it comes to repotting. In addition, fertilizing can cause stimulation of reversion. (*Reversion* is when the tiny leaves start to grow longer and more pointed, reverting back the genetic parent, *Buxus Microphylla*.) Every month or so during growing season, I use a weak general-purpose fertilizer or fish emulsion. Use one application of pulverized organic fertilizer (bonemeal) in early September. Foliar feeding of weak solution once or twice a season does seem to enrich the leaf color.

**Soil** They require a neutral (about 6.0 pH) or preferably an acid soil (about 4.5 pH). See Mix #3 at end of table for a mix recommended by Warren Hill. (Basic bonsai soil has worked

for me as long as it is fine; or add some sharp sand to get good drainage.

Pruning and wiring Whenever any new growth appears that is larger than the leaf sizes further in on a branch, it should be immediately pruned. Otherwise the plant will eventually lose its growth of smaller leaves and be taken over by the larger ones. Growth on the dwarf varieties can be very slow. Vertical growth can be encouraged by pruning the lateral branches and by wiring up the trunk leader. Boxwoods can be wired at any time; however, wiring must be done with care because the wood of the boxwood is very brittle. It is tolerant of radical treatments such as creating shari and being grown root-over-rock. Control shape by thinning and by pinching off most of unwanted new growth.

Pots It has been shown that the Kingsville boxwood does not like life in a show pot. Aesthetic rule that a "bonsai should never be potted in a pot which is deeper than the diameter of the trunk" should be ignored (i.e., the Kingsville boxwood prefers a deep pot. Grows well on lava rock using more of a muck mix.

Propagation By division in spring, or from hardwood cuttings taken in late summer or autumn in coarse sand after dipping the cut end in water and then Root Tone. Air-layering is also possible, but most Kingsvilles are rather small for such a procedure. If you want a single-trunk Kingsville, you must remove the lower branches as they grow. If the branches are permitted to touch the soil, they will root. If you are getting multiple trunks and do not wish to have a multi-trunk tree, you must remove the excess sprouts. You can sometimes divide the plant or cut off sprouts to propagate them.

Repotting At first potting, I bare-root the tree with a hose, pot, and soak in Super Thrive for 15 minutes. Otherwise, repot every 2 years unless the tree is potted in a rather small pot. Spring is the best time, but as boxwoods are a broadleaf evergreen, there is more leeway with appropriate times to repot than with deciduous trees. They can be repotted in summer and autumn if need be, but avoid repotting during very hot weather or during a growth spurt. An easy technique is to remove the tree from the pot, trim off the

excess root pad, and then cut a pie-shape wedge out of the root system that is about one-sixth of the total root area. Place bonsai soil in the bottom, replace the tree and fill in the pie-shape. In following years, take another one-sixth pie-shape out, but in the opposite side. Boxwoods dislike acid soil, and the use of limestone in the soil mix or adding an occasional dose of lime to the soil is recommended. Soil must be well drained.

Roots Kingsville is not normally noted for its exceptional roots (nebari). When Kingsville are planted too deep, they develop more exposed roots emanating from the trunk. In many cases, these can be cut off or retained if they enhance the look of the tree.

Pests and diseases Nematodes, mites and leaf miners, blackfly, greenfly, and red spider mites. Although the boxwood is very disease resistant, honey fungus and rust are sometimes encountered

There are debates about how much to fertilize. I fertilize lightly a couple of times a season.

Soil Mix #3 from Warren Hill:

- 4 part fine granite
- 1 part Perlite
- 2 part Peat
- 1 part Pine bark, aged one year

To every 5 gallons of soil mix, add:

- 5 Tablespoons Dolomitic Limestone
- 2 Tablespoons Gypsum
- 1 Tablespoon Superphosphate (0-40-0)

Species useful for bonsai:

- *Buxus harlandii*: Harland boxwood, a native of Taiwan, can grow to 33 feet. Its leaves are thinner than other boxwood species. This boxwood doesn't like cold, and should not be exposed to temperatures below 37°F, but it has been grown successfully as an indoor plant. If the temperature goes above 65°F, the Harland boxwood enjoys a daily misting, and the amount of food should be reduced. During the winter, keep the tree at a temperature below 65°F; between 46°F and 50°F is best.
- *Buxus microphylla*: Japanese boxwood, grows to 5 feet, and has evergreen leaves under 1 inch long. It tolerates both sun



- and shade. All *B. microphylla* varieties are scentless. It grows best in zones 5-8.
- *Buxus Microphylla* 'Compacta': dwarf boxwood, Kingsville box. Quarterly spray with *Black Leaf 40* mixed with soap. Grow in zones 5-8.
  - *Buxus Microphylla* 'Koreana': Korean boxwood, the most hardy box. It grows in zones 4-8, but expect the foliage to brown in the winter. It is a low, spreading variety growing to only 3 feet tall.
  - *Buxus Microphylla* 'Morris Midget': Morris Midget boxwood.
  - *Buxus sempervirens*: common box, English boxwood, can grow to 25 feet in a mild climate, and therefore is used as both hedging and small trees. Its evergreen leaves grow to 1½". This boxwood is hardy in zones 6-8 with some winter protection at the upper end of the range, although there is a cultivar, 'Vardar Valley' which is hardy to zone 5. This is a long-lived plant, and historic boxwoods from colonial days are still alive in Virginia.
  - *Buxus sinica* - A native of China, similar to other small boxwoods.

#### Acknowledgment:

Selections of this presentation were taken from February 2000, *Clippings* article by John Hinds reprinted from Golden State Bonsai Federation, September 1983; Golden State Bonsai Federation website; Bonsai Societies of Florida website; and Mrs. Norma Merritt, Bill Orsinger, and Mrs. Jinny Bird.

*It's time someone stepped forward to be advertising director on the Clippings Staff . . .*

Do you know a business that would like to reach some nice people. We're not too fussy about whom we'll sell space: your fave restaurant/body shop/kite store/tattoo parlor, You could act as a catalyst for improvement by encouraging them to contact Jerry Antel to advertise with us (see p. 2, Col 1.).

#### **Continued from page 9**

soon came to realize that the old Japan was in fact still there, we just had to go and find it. In the articles for the *Clippings*, I will write about our rediscoveries of the old, traditional Japan and leave Shibuya, Roppongi, and Robotman to someone else. [Roppongi and Shibuya are two of the boroughs of Tokyo that are known for raucous nightlife, conspicuous consumerism, and everything that goes against classical, understated Japan.]

As I write this (the last week in March), the cherry blossoms are in full bloom and the Japanese people are scurrying to move up their celebrations and cherry blossom viewing parties. Due to our unusually warm Spring, this is the earliest the cherry blossoms have bloomed in about 50 years, and all of the festivities had been scheduled to begin about April 6. Unfortunately, the warm Spring also brings dreaded "yellow dust" blowing in from the high deserts of China and the Gobi in Mongolia and wreaks havoc with the blossoms. Fine yellow dust spreads

everywhere, giving people real misery in terms of allergy infections and the clean-up necessary after the dust works its way into every imaginable little crack and space. The Japanese people all head into the nearest kusuri-ya, or drugstore, and buy little white face masks (similar to a surgical mask) to protect themselves from the affront. I personally have always been just a little too self-conscious to put one on, although I'm sure I'd be better off if I did.

In upcoming *Clippings*, I'll be telling you about our recent trip to two of the seven ancient pottery kilns of Japan, Echizen and Tokoname. Of course, anyone who knows bonsai knows Tokoname as the home of world-class bonsai pots. We had a great time there, and I'm eager to share our experiences with you. My e-mail address is Peggysnow2@excite.com and I'll be happy to receive your comments, questions, suggestions, or anything else you wish to communicate to me. See you soon.

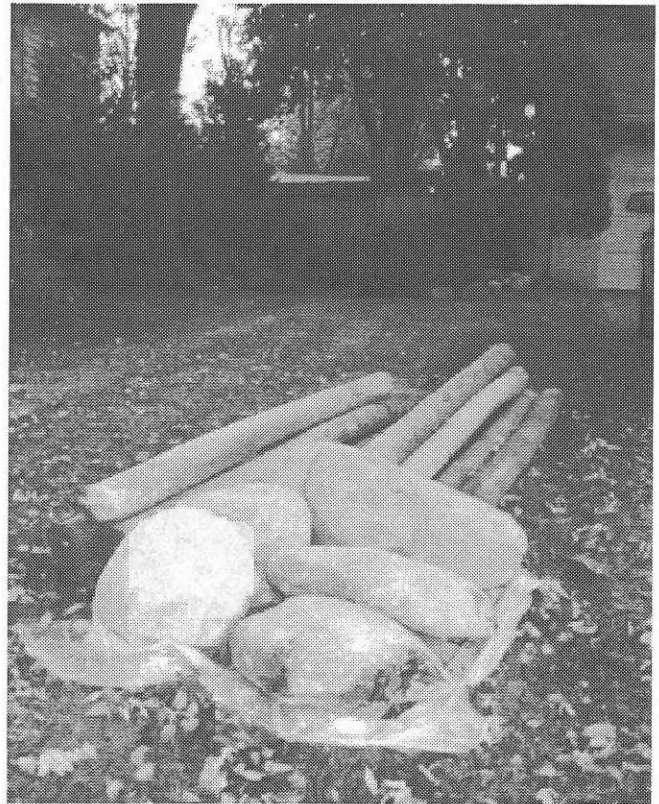
## A Kui Retaining Wall/ Dry Stream Bed by David Hockstein, BBS

My Japanese garden wraps around my suburban garden, and I find it to be a welcome addition. You may be interested in retrofitting a Japanese garden into your existing garden or including it in new garden plan. Spending time out in the garden is a real pleasure for me, and I enjoy working on such projects. To add a more Japanese aura to my Japanese garden I recently installed a modest retaining wall using wooden posts and also several small boulders plus a dry streambed of rocks. The Japanese call the wooden posts "kui" which are round or rectangular posts placed vertically side by side to simulate a retaining wall at the edge of a stream bed. Just adding a wall of kui posts and rocks to your garden gives it an oriental flavor. The new retaining wall has become a focal point in my garden so I thought you might be interested in how to go about it and create your own arrangement of posts and rocks to add an oriental touch to part or all of your garden.

I was ably assisted in the project by Ed Grove, a crew chief for Garden Gate Landscaping Company in Silver Spring. We started by purchasing six river boulders selected by size, color, and grain at my local stone yard. The rocks should be of different sizes and have the same color and grain or texture. The 1600 lbs. palette was dropped on the lawn next to my driveway at the front of the property. Rounding out the bill of materials were 800 lbs. of assorted palm-sized cobbles. (In my area, such water-washed stones graded '3-inch' with a few '2-inch' and '5-inch' added, are called "river jacks.")

Two hardware items completed the bill: 10-inch-long 1/4" fence lock bolts with lag heads (quantity 75); and 3-foot piping to serve as a supporting element behind the wall (quantity - 10 pieces). In addition, I purchased thirteen 6-inch-diameter treated pine posts - 8 feet in length. I carried this load home in a borrowed pick-up truck.

First we cut each 8' post into three 32" sections. Then we dug an eleven inch deep trench marking the base of the wall and into which the bottom edges of the kui posts are to sit. The first kui post was set to begin the wall and a string was run to a post at the



projected center of the wall to serve as a level and mark the tops of the kui posts. This will provide a straight line for the tops of the kui posts. Some walls have the alternating posts set at a lower level than those on either side to give a saw-tooth look to the wall. Each post is countersunk near its top to accommodate the lag head of a 10-inch-long, 1/4" diameter fence lock bolt which will fasten it into the side of the preceding post. Make certain that the countersinking is done so that each bolt will not hit the preceding bolt head when a post is screwed into place against the preceding post. Also do the countersinking far enough from the top of a post so that the bolt head will not be visible when the next post is fastened in place. Be certain to establish a lean of a few degrees from perpendicular into the hill to counteract the pressure from the backfill when you are firming the soil back into the trench and around the base of the wall. The 3' pipes were pounded flush with every third post acting as a support against forward tilt. Posts were added, one by one, to the center, being careful to impart the right amount of curve. At the center, a hole was dug to accommodate





the largest of the boulders. It would be set vertically. We rolled the boulder from the palette onto a hand truck laid on its side and, with the aid of a pry bar, secured it with rope before righting the hand truck. After carting the boulder to the site, we positioned it carefully before dropping it into the hole (knowing that once it was placed, we would be unable to turn it, but we would be able to adjust the boulder to and fro and fore and aft). After successfully placing the 400-lb. beast into position, we added the remaining posts to complete the construction of the wall. I then dressed the site with shorter posts in between several posts and wrapped the corner boulders with ascending posts for aesthetic reasons.

The placing of the river jacks in the streambed is the final step. The width and shape of the streambed is up to you so that you arrive at an aesthetically pleasing combination of kui posts, rocks and stream.] I thought briefly about putting some kind of weed barrier under the river jacks, but decided against it. Barriers tend to become exposed and ugly over time. Use of weed prevention cloth is an

option, but use of weed killers may obviate the need.

I truly enjoyed doing this project and would recommend it to any hands-on homeowner who needs a small retaining wall in some section of a Japanese style garden. I derive a great deal of enjoyment from its addition to my garden.

Respectfully submitted  
David Hockstein

*Editor's note: A very good book for those interested in Japanese gardens and some of aspects involved, is the book, The Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens, Design Principles, Aesthetic Values, by David Slawson; Kodansha International Ltd., New York 1987. The author relies on a fifteenth-century "secret" gardening manual, observations of existing gardens in Kyoto, and contemporary theories of the psychology of art, the author derives a set of universal design principles for structuring a Japanese garden. How to place rocks to conform to Japanese principles is covered in detail.*

The Staff would like to sincerely thank ROTH Tei-en's *Journal of Japanese Gardening* for reprint permission graciously granted.





## Relying on the Kindness of Bonsaiists

I have had many conversations with Dave Bogan, Editor of the newsletter for the Greater Evansville Bonsai Society, over the last 3 years or so. We commiserate over the state of participation in the bonsai community. We razz each other - but most often Dave is praising, telling me how much he admires Clippings, what a good job we do, giving me anything I ask of him, stories, pictures, research. Recently, Chris and I did him the small favor of shipping him some Arboretum clothing he had purchased. For this tiny favor, he let us in on a little secret about himself. He has, for the last five winters, been teaching himself to carve stone.

Dave's effusive good will gave me permission to request a favor. I pretended to twist his arm for a contribution to the upcoming auction taking place during the Saturday dinner for the Scholarly Symposium, 18 May. His response astounded me. Not only would he send a carving for the auction - he would send us a sample of his work as a gift so that we might judge his work as "worthy." He rewarded us with a beautiful piece of Steatite carved with a twin-trunk bonsai image. [In addition, he sent a tiny handmade piece by another mid-west bonsai fanatic - more on that little jewel later.]

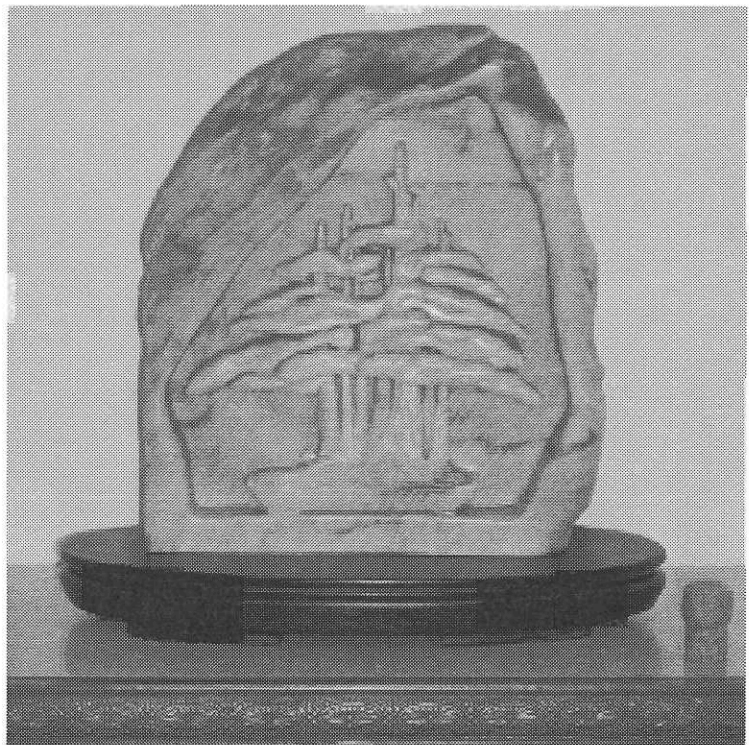
Here's a little story about his contribution to benefit the Bonsai and Penjing Museum. The photo does not do justice to the beauty he crafted.



Steatite (soapstone) is a variety of talc. Earliest relics of its use as a carving material date back to 3000 BCE. Over the years it has been used in many ways other than carving. It was eaten by the Amerindians and African natives, used as soap by the Arabs, sawn into slabs to line ovens and bath houses. Used as writing instruments in Burma.

Once fired, it becomes very hard so it was also used as cooking utensils. With a softness of 1 on the Mohs scale, it can (in its raw form) be scratched with your finger nail. It occurs in a wide variety of colors: white, gray, yellow, green, red, brown, and black. In its raw form it generally looks whitish. Once polished, it takes on its true color. The light green stone I favor is found in Brazil, China, India, and Egypt. I love the green color due to its natural beauty once polished. It takes on an almost marbled color of green.

I have been carving this stone now for a few years. Since my primary hobby is Bonsai, I wanted another use of my time during the cold winter months when I could not play with my trees. The carving helps to occupy the winter for me. With my love of Bonsai, it was only natural for me to want to carve Bonsai in this stone.



I obtain my stone from a local stone yard. The original piece for this work weighed 49 pounds. (I didn't weigh it after I finished). [ed. Note: The UPS man, Betty, and Chris will swear it didn't feel a lot lighter when it was delivered to the Yeapanis household.]

Initially, I cut the stone so I have the largest flat surface I can obtain and get the stone to a workable size and shape. Once I have a flat

surface, I draw the tree/design I want to carve on the surface with soft lead pencils. The design for this stone came from my visits to the Arboretum and viewing John Naka's famous Goshin.

Now the work begins. Initially, using a small router with a wood carving bit, I carve out the general outline as deep into the stone as possible. On this stone, it took me 8 passes to obtain the depth - approximately 8 hours work.

Now that I have the shape I want, I start carving the actual design. I carve using a high-speed bit on a flex shaft carving tool. This takes time and many tries in between to study the design finally obtaining what I feel is right. I then use very small carving gouges and sand paper to obtain the finer detail. I estimate with this stone that I had over 25 hours in the carving process over a period of 4 weeks.

Once a design is complete, I sand the project starting with 180 grit paper and finishing with 4000 grit to give it a polished luster. Once finished, I coat it with 4 coats of poly and it's done.

The wood stand is of solid walnut, coming from a native Indiana tree felled 20 years ago by a friend and sawn into slabs. I obtained this piece in a 3" thick piece. I layed out the oval shape and cut it using a scroll saw. Then, using a router and carving tools, I made the side designs and legs - all one solid piece of wood. After 10 different sandings and coats of poly, I would say I had about 12 hours work in it.

I truly hope this helps, this work is a labor of love and I truly enjoyed making this piece for you and the auction. Thanks, Dave

(... and there's his kind nature showing itself again, thanking us for the opportunity to pay big bucks for shipping a gift to

**Friends of Dorothy Warren**, a charter member of PBA: Dorothy's husband, Chuck, has passed away after a long illness. Notes may be sent to Dorothy at 3511 Farragut Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895.

We'll try to tell you a little about Chuck next month. He was an interesting guy.

## Integrated Pest Management Tips for April *by Scott Aker, IPM Specialist, USNA Arboretum*

The following has been excerpted from [www.ars.grin.gov/ars/Beltsville/na](http://www.ars.grin.gov/ars/Beltsville/na) web site to contain items applicable to bonsai. The tips for May do not come on-line in time for this issue.

Begin looking at your junipers for the black fruiting bodies of a fungal disease known as juniper tip blight. Look for branches that appear off-color or brown. Be sure to check new shoots as well they can appear healthy now but turn brown and dry by midsummer. Infected branches should be pruned out and disposed of. If a plant becomes heavily infected, it should be removed. Try replanting with more resistant juniper varieties such as 'Sargentii,' 'Shoosmithm,' or 'Broadmoor.' In shady locations, where junipers are more susceptible to tip blight, a new plant species may be in order. Try Siberian cypress, *Microbiota decussata*, as a substitute since it does well in shade and has an appearance similar to groundcover junipers.

Check your boxwood this month for blister-like orange spots. These spots are a sign of feeding larvae of the boxwood leafminer. Tiny holes on the back of leaves show where larvae exit as tiny orange, gnat-like adults. Flying adults can be killed by spraying with a pyrethroid insecticide. For large infestations, further control methods may be required in late summer or early fall with a systemic insecticide containing imidacloprid.

Looking for a good tree to plant this spring? Try a flowering cherry tree. Ornamental cherries prefer full sun and require minimal pruning. Flowering cherries also provide beautiful spring blooms and vibrant fall color. One to try is *Prunus* 'Dream Catcher,' a US National Arboretum introduction, known for its insect and disease resistance. Medium pink flowers bloom in early spring and dark green foliage follows. Leaves turn a yellowish-orange color in the fall. Winter reveals its pleasing its upright, vase-shaped habit. With year-round appeal, ornamental cherries are an asset to any landscape.

Begin beat testing your dwarf white pines for white pine tip dwarf mites this month. The mites cause older needles to yellow and drop. Severely infested pines can become completely defoliated just before new growth begins to emerge. Check your pines about once a week by gently tapping a branch on a piece of white paper. Look for small, translucent to yellowish mites moving across the page. Keep mite levels low by periodically spraying down your pines with water from a hose. If you see more than thirty mites per beat, a treatment with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap will be needed. White pine tip dwarf mites are cool season mites, so they are more active in early spring and will disappear as the weather warms up.

Phytophthora is a soil borne fungus that grows on the roots of woody and herbaceous plants. It causes plants to wilt and, if the infection is severe enough, it can lead to plant death. Phytophthora thrives in water-saturated soils and areas with poor drainage. However, it can survive in cold, dry soil until more advantageous conditions are present. Lawns and planting beds that are frequently watered often have problems with Phytophthora root rot. There are several steps you can take to limit Phytophthora in your garden. Improve soil structure and drainage by adding compost and organic matter to the soil. Create raised beds in low lying areas. Plant species that are resistant to Phytophthora such as American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*). If Phytophthora is already a problem in your garden, don't water plants too frequently and plant new plants slightly higher than the surrounding grade.

If you have noticed a white, waxy, fluffy residue on your plants, you likely have a mealybug problem. Mealybugs get into the crevices on the foliage, stems, and flowers of plants. Often, they can be found on the roots as well. They have a flattened, oval shape and range in color from white to pinkish gray. Outdoors, mealybugs are usually controlled by beneficial insects such as lacewings, hover flies, and ladybird beetles. Indoors where natural controls are not present, mealybugs can run rampant and are hard to get rid of even with frequent pesticide applications. The best treatment for mealybug is

sanitation. If at all possible, throw away infested plants and replace them.

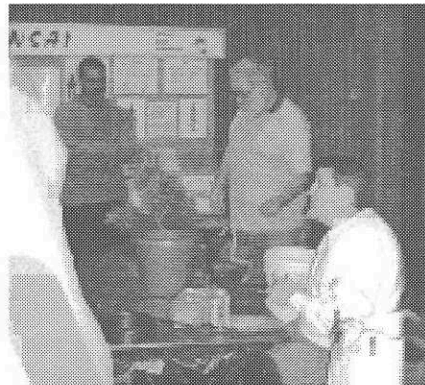
Check your conifers for leaves and debris that may have accumulated in the interior branches of your trees. Removing the debris will help restore air circulation and allow more light to reach the innermost needles.

Did you know that 90% of the insects around your home are beneficial to, or do not harm, your plants? They eat pest insects, recycle organic debris, or feed on plants without causing any noticeable damage.

The best way to manage pests is to use a combination of chemical and non-chemical controls. Only take action when the problem is serious enough to damage the plant. If we all use Integrated Pest Management (IPM), we can control pests in an environmentally conscious manner.

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**PBA Spring Show Helpers . . .** were you



one? Here are Chuck Croft (NVBS) and Steve Liverman (CBS) teaching in front of our educational display revamped by

the talented Alan Giese. Thanks y'all.

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