

The December, 2001 Newsletter

Lets see, I have read that it's bad form to refer to the "first annual" event of something, so lets just say we have a December newsletter this year. I hope everyone with an email address got the member alert I sent out regarding the Franklin Park Conservatory budget. If you didn't get that alert, the city is planning on cutting the FPC budget by over 60%. This funding cut will reach all the way down to affecting how often the grounds are mowed and will definitely impact the collections and clubs that meet there. If you did not get the email I sent out and want to get an occasional update (that was the first one I sent out in over a year, you will not get spammed) then please email the club address at columbusbonsai@hotmail.com. Please include your real name in the message so I can tell who "bliffiks@gorp.net" really is.

Can you believe the weather we have been having? Check your trees for signs of growth. I don't know what to tell you if they are budding out, but at least you won't be surprised if they don't seem as vigorous in the spring. I have noticed a lot of spring bulbs are really confused, and wildflower seeds planted according to directions in mid-November have sprouted. I don't think they were supposed to do that.

On a lighter note, I think I have found a way to squirrel-proof my planting beds. I had some acorns and beech nuts that I was going to sprout in the ground. I put egg crate lighting diffuser over them but the vermin moved that off and rummaged around for the seeds - EXCEPT where I had fertilized them with the bottom sludge from my pond filters. It is a thick black slurry that smells like a chunk of bad swamp, and either the squirrels can't stand the smell, or it covers the smell of the acorns and nuts so the vermin can't find the goodies to dig up. I'll have to see how long the effect lasts with the rain we are having.

ZAC

Michigan Show in 2002

Mollie Holler writes:

"I'm in the midst of planning for our Michigan All-State Show 2002, and need help from you. What do you think would be the best way to assure that information about the show will get to all the MEMBERS of each MABA club? In the past I've sent info to presidents or newsletter people, but I seriously doubt that much of it got to the members.

We are having Ben Oki come from California to do at least one workshop for us (possibly bring your own tree). In addition, he will be available by the hour to work with individuals one-on-one on their trees. People will bring in several trees, depending on the amount of time they sign up for, and Ben will help with them. You're probably aware that he does this regularly for many clubs around the country. The cost for this will be \$50 per hour.

Other presenters for workshops/demos we have so far are Ivan Watters and Jim Doyle. My husband and I will do a couple of workshops for kids. I'm still working on one or two others. Registration forms for all workshops will be in the show brochure that should be out near the first of the year. In the past, we've done registrations only through Meijer Gardens by people

calling or coming in. I'm very uncomfortable with that, especially since we absolutely have to be marketing to the entire country. So I just checked with the education head who handles the registrations, and she ok'd doing registration by forms too.

I will open this option to the other Michigan clubs first, but I'd like to have it available for MABA clubs soon. If you could help me in this, I'd greatly appreciate it. As this show grows, I depend on a lot more people to help put it together, even if it's just for answers to questions, as opposed to me doing everything the first two years."

As we hear more about this show I will make sure the Columbus members are informed. -ZAC

Craig Coussins at Wildwood Gardens - Ken Schultz

Craig Coussins appeared recently at Wildwood Gardens, which is just east of Chardon Ohio. Of course Mr. Coussins comes from Scotland, where he founded the Scottish Bonsai Association in 1978. He mentioned that the winters were not as hard as we have in Ohio, but that there is snow in the highlands, and they do have skiing. He has authored three books, Bonsai for Beginners, Bonsai School, and Bonsai Artist which will be released next year.

The day was organized into a demo in the morning and a hands-on workshop in the afternoon. The material selected for the demo was a Juniperus chinenses "Shimpaku" that was in a three gallon pot. Mr. Coussins offered the following observations about this tree. Its most common pest is the red spider mite. It is a plucking tree, that is it requires constant plucking to develop dense foliage clouds. Feeding should begin mid February (not sure if that's in Scotland or Ohio) with 1/2 strength fertilizer, and continue summer and fall, shifting to a low nitrogen fertilizer in the fall.

While removing the tree from its nursery pot, he commented that you must first look for the nebari, starting at the outside of the root ball and working towards the trunk. Don't be afraid to dig down to locate the major roots, as there may be finer roots at the surface caused by being placed deeper in the pot than the tree was in the ground. The tree selected was decided to be an extreme moyogi. Coussins cautioned, "Don't rush to repot after styling. To make sure not to shock the tree which may have up to two thirds of its foliage removed, it may be necessary to wait, maybe two to three years." He went on to say the trouble with bonsai is at one stage you're cutting all the branches off, then you spend the next five years growing them back. So his technique is to try to use the branches that are there. He said his wife calls the way he twists the branches, "making a doughnut."

Coussins stated that he likes to create jin just before wiring. On this tree he wired the jin down with a tourniquet. As he twisted the stick in the wire, he commented that he was watching to see if the wire was lightening, that's the way you can tell its getting ready to break.

With the extreme bending that he was going to do, he first wrapped the trunk with raffia soaked in cold water. He said he used cold water because it would shrink less than raffia soaked in hot water. He used two heavy wires layed parallel with the branch and then wired them on. On one

pat he even used electricians shrink wrap. When asked why he was using raffia, he said that way if the branch cracks, it will heal itself under the raffia.

His wiring technique was to use wire bundles cut 1/3 longer than the branches. As he wired up the trunk he would drop off wires for each branch, and then wire the branches. He is an advocate of wiring all the branches right from the start to save time. He also hooks the wire back at the end of the branch to keep the branch from springing away for the wire. For this Shimpaku, he felt that the wire should be left on for one year. When twisting branches on junipers he said you need to keep "up" - "up" as the branch could die if the foliage was wired into an upside down position.

This technique of "extreme bending" is only good for taxus, junipers and pine; it doesn't work on deciduous species. Coussins also believes in using cut paste with an enzyme in it to seal cracks and branches that have been cut off. Also after styling a tree, he said it should be sprayed four times a day to prevent browning where the foliage had been cut back. He also said he would not put the tree directly into the sun for about a month.

After lunch each of the 14 people who had signed up for this workshop got to select either a small juniper, or a eugenia to style. Mr. Coussins sat at the end of the two short rows of tables and we were allowed to bring them up for personal advise as we progressed with our styling. The finishing touch was when Craig gave the trees his final "bit of tweaking." as he called it. I must say, that Linda and I both came away with trees styled at a new level of expertise. I truly felt that I had gotten more than my money's worth. The six hours we spent at Wildwood fairly flew by!

Tree of the month - Bougainvillea

Following you will find extracts from an article in Southern Living magazine written by Steve Bender. It was written addressing a way one person has made bougainvilleas bloom for the last 15 years, but look at how they are winterized! They are kept without light and minimum maintenance. José Cueto tried applying this method last winter and was amazed at how it revitalized his bougainvillea that was starting to look pretty sad and was obviously slowly losing its vigor. It was getting pretty weak and he believes that without taking this drastic measure he might have lost it. In any event, the bonsai has not looked this good in many years and grew like a weed this year. He was able to show it at the Dawes Arboretum and the Columbus bonsai shows for the first time in several years and it sat in a very prominent place in his yard this past summer. José also applied the same winterizing technique to some figs and they did fine, but there was not a significant change in their vigor or appearance.

Following are the guiding principles that guided José's experiment last winter:

A calendar for Bougainvillea

Autumn – Under this care schedule, fall is bougainvillea's showiest time. The plants bloom for weeks and weeks. Take the plants indoors for winter before first frost. You do not have to acclimate them to a different light pattern, they are going to go dormant very quickly. Move

them into a **dark, cool basement**, even if they are still blooming.

Winter – Bougainvilleas need little care during dormancy. Don't feed them and let them go dry, watering only every three to four weeks. They will lose most, if not all, of their leaves. Though the bougainvilleas appear dead, they're only dormant and will quickly revive when warm weather returns.

Spring – After the danger of the frost has passed, take the plants outside to an area where they will get direct sun. Again there is no need to acclimate the plant as it is now coming out of dormancy. Cut off any weak, spindly growth left from the year before. Fertilize the plant with a dilute balanced fertilizer and start a regular weekly schedule for them. Bougainvilleas bloom best when pot bound, so leave them in the pots in which they've grown. When watering bougainvillea, let the plants go a little dry between watering. Flower bracts appear in spring, although they're not as plentiful as in fall.

Summer – Bougainvilleas need steady nutrition, boost the fertilizer concentration slightly or add a few extra organic cakes. Prune as needed to maintain shape during this time. The most important thing at this time of year is seeing that the plants get plenty of sun. With this care, bougainvillea should respond with periodic blooms off and on throughout the summer.

Raffle News

There were enough sales for raffle tickets for the Green Island Ficus that the drawing was held at the Holiday Dinner. One of the last minute purchasers and the winner was, long time Club member Pat Radliff. Hopefully you will recognize Pat as the member who coordinates our meeting coffee and refreshments. Congradulations Pat!! With a little work, I'm sure we'll see that tree at a future show.

Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

Unless otherwise noted, The Columbus Bonsai Society meets the third Sunday of every month at 2:00 pm. at the Franklin Park Conservatory. Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 in the Franklin Park Conservatory library.

Jan 20, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Bonsai Basics - Tom Holcomb and Orchids and Bonsai - Cultural Commons

February 17, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Making Training Boxes, and Indoor Light (the light store guy)

February 21, 2002 - Lecture / Demonstration and Workshop by Art Skolnik - Cincinnati Club

February 24, 2002 - Dawes Work day - Meet at Dawes at 9:00. Bring a dish to pass for lunch.

March 9, 2002 - Dublin Asian Arts Festival

March 17, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Soil, Fertilizer, and pest Control -

March 22, 2002 - Lecture / Demonstration and Workshop by Gary Marchal - Cincinnati Club

April 6, 2002 - Workshop - Forest Planting - Dan Binder

April 18, 2002 - Lecture / Demonstration and Workshop by Colin Lewis - Cincinnati Club

April 21, 2002 - 2:00pm "Regular" CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Colin Lewis Demo and Workshop (full day)

May 16, 2002 - Lecture / Demonstration and Workshop by Roy Nagatoshi - Cincinnati Club

May 19, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Air Layering - Elm Demo - Ken Schoenfeld - Pots and Trees - Jose Cueto
 June 1 - potential road trip
June 22-23, 2002 - CBS Show - Note, this is one week later than our normal meeting.
July 21, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory -Japanese Maples- John Harris / Make a Tuffa Slab/pot
August 18, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Tropical Workshop
September 15, 2002 - Annual Picnic
October 20, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Fall Show/panel judging
November 17, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Winterization/Wiring and Pruning that can be done Now
December 15, 2002 - Holiday Dinner

Members are encouraged to add events to this list. We probably should focus on events that are within 250 miles and the majors such as MABA, BCI, and ABS.

And a final word -

I saw in a store at the mall
 A bonsai, with man on a wall
 But shellac on the rocks
 Made a real paradox -
 'Cause the tree got no water at all!

Tom Pillichody

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