

The February, 2002 Newsletter

In January I said we would be placing a tool and wire order. It's Heerre! See the list on the back of the Telephone/Email roster. There is some really nice stuff.

Have you been thinking about what pots you want to order for your show tree? Do you have a good pot or slab for a forest planting? We are getting ready for a Forest Workshop and you will want to get a pot for it. We still plan on making a pot order in March for arrival in April. Start thinking about this now. Order your pots and save on shipping.

Have you gotten your "soil" ready yet? Now is not too soon to be looking for those supplies. Do you know where you'll get Turface or Premier soil conditioner? brick chips? mini orchid bark? Hadite? granite grit? This last is getting to be a challenge as poultry production moves farther away from Columbus. Speaking of which, does anyone have a source for granite that isn't STARK WHITE? I know granite occurs in pinks, reds, and darker colors to almost black. Why are all the chips white? Uhh, does anyone in Vermont get this newsletter as a club exchange?

ZAC

Vice President Dan says: Get ready for the Forest Bonsai Workshop!

Remember that on April 6th, which is a Saturday, we will be meeting in a classroom at the Conservatory for the forest workshop. The time is yet to be announced, but it will be in the morning. I will arrange to have the tree bundles and soil, including 'muck'. You will need your tools and a pot for the planting.

Starting with the February meeting we will briefly discuss design elements and special care needed to keep the trees alive once in the arrangement as preparation for the April workshop. Remember these trees will be bare root so we have to try harder to get them to take. Secondly we will need to collect money to reimburse the Club since the order needed to be made with payment by January 30th. So bring your checkbook as we will circulate a sign-up sheet to match the bundles ordered with a person and confirmed payment. One last item, Mr. Valvanis charges a \$5 per bundle handling fee. So a \$30 hornbeam bundle of ten trees will cost \$35. - Just a heads up on costs.

Guest Artist News

Colin Lewis is coming to Columbus Sunday, April 21, 2002 he will present a morning Demonstration on a specimen tree, probably a Taxus or Larch. This will be refinement Demonstration on an established tree. The workshop will follow the demonstration and we have obtained some nice Chinese Elms. These have been brought into warm shelter to break dormancy earlier than normal so they will have long leggy growth and active roots.

This should be an excellent workshop for the first 15 paid participants, and there will be space for quiet observers listen in on the styling tips and techniques. The cost has been set at \$75.00

for Columbus Bonsai Club members, and a \$10 fee for the silent observers. If there are extra slots available after the Columbus Club members have had a chance to sign up, we plan to open the workshop to non members at \$85.00.

Tree of the Month - Hornbeam

February's Tree of the Month is dedicated to one of those trees we will work with in the grove planting workshop, Korean Hornbeam, *Carpinus coreana*.

Carpinus sp. are deciduous trees native to North America and Asia. Local common names for them are Hornbeam, Ironwood, Blue Beech, and Water Beach. They are Most have folded or wrinkled foliage that makes them nice for bonsai as it gives the leaves a pleated look. They make good ornamental trees and can be found in more complete garden centers. They generally grow as an understory tree and may require protection from afternoon sun in hot dry display areas. Hornbeams make good group plantings as well as specimen bonsai due to the fine branch ramification and small leaf size in bonsai culture. It grows with an attractive open habit in total shade, but will form a dense canopy in full sun. The muscle-like bark is smooth, gray and fluted. Ironwood has a slow growth rate and is reportedly difficult to transplant from a field nursery but is easy from containers. The fall color is red and orange to yellowy bronze and stands out in the in the fall. Brown leaves occasionally hang on the tree into the winter. As usual, the Asian species are the traditional bonsai species, but the American hornbeam, *C. caroliniana*, will make equally good bonsai.

According to Otis, in Michigan Trees, the *C. caroliniana* habitat is a rich deep moist deep soil along the borders of streams and swamps. It is also found in dryer soil as an understory. This indicates moderate watering and never letting the soil dry out completely. It is hardy from zone 3 through 9A.

The growth rate of the hornbeam species varies greatly. This is of particular importance if you are growing them out for larger trunked bonsai. From fastest to slowest they rank: *C. betulus*, *C. turczaninowii*, *C. japonica*, *C. laxiflora*, *C. caroliniana*, and *C. coreana*. *Carpinus coreana* is very popular because of its small leaves and very ramified growth pattern. However, it takes a significantly longer time than any other to thicken and add visual mass. Mature hornbeam specimens will produce hop-like flowers and seed pods. These pods are an attractive addition to the fall and winter display. Cutting produced plants from mature wood are capable of flowering in a year or two as opposed to seven years or more for seedlings.

Feeding: Feeding instructions vary greatly. Simon and Schuster's Guide recommends feeding Every 20-30 days, stopping for a month-long break in midsummer. Tomlinson recommends a weekly feeding for the first month after bud-burst, switching to every two weeks until late summer. Ordinary plant food at half strength is fine, as is bonsai fertilizer. Of course, the whole controversy can be avoided with time-released pellets. (i.e. constant feeding). However, everyone agrees, do not feed for two months after repotting. Pick what works for you.

Pruning and wiring: Can be wired from spring to autumn - some bark protection may be needed,

but the hornbeam is fairly sturdy for a deciduous tree. Accepts repeated hard pruning. Prune back to the first pair of leaves on new shoots to force back budding. The best times for minor pruning are early spring and after flowering. Major developmental pruning should be done in late winter, before bud burst. There is strong apical growth in the upper part of the tree, so cut back radically at the apex, but prune the lower portions conservatively to check rapid apical growth. As it ages branches die, complicating management as a bonsai. On older trees branches may die back for no discernable reason.

Repotting: Every 2-3 years in early spring. Use basic bonsai soil. Prefers a deep pot.

Pests and diseases: Relatively few insects attack hornbeam. Several fungi cause leaf spots on *Carpinus*. Canker, caused by several fungi, causes infected branches to dieback and entire trees die if the trunk is infected and girdled. Severely infected trees can not be saved and any infected branches should be pruned out.

Book Review

The Art of Bonsai Design
By Colin Lewis
Sterling Publishing Co. issued 2001

Since Colin Lewis will be conducting a workshop/demo for the club, its appropriate to use our usual book review column to help introduce some of his work.

An Englishman by birth, but well known as a bonsai educator and author around the world, Lewis has published several previous books. All bonsai authors seem to have some repetition as their published works start to mount up, but Lewis covers material in his latest book in a very specific way. The main part of the book are four in-depth discussions of design strategies and cultural practices for specific types of trees: Elms, Junipers, Pines and Larch. Each of those four sections has three or four specific examples, case studies really of the development and evolution of trees and their designs. Some of these case studies cover a good length of time, and where initial designs fell short or were uninspired, Lewis is not shy about letting the reader know this. Like many bonsai hobbyists, Lewis learned much by practical experience, with a good dose of trial and error, and the message here is that every example, either positive or negative, is a learning experience. Each of the sections is a short course on working with the particular tree species in question, but there is design help to be had from the whole book as well.

The book is written in a very accessible, informal style; the author is a genuinely good writer, and had no trouble conveying ideas or information and has broad base of knowledge to impart. This shows up in the introduction, where Lewis examines Bonsai as a western art, and poses the question: are we denying our cultural heritage in our pursuit of Japanese style? It's an interesting examination of design aesthetics East and West, and may help prove the point that a tree (and by extension bonsai) can be very different depending on the cultural heritage of the grower-and the viewer. Lewis seems to definitely be a proponent of the philosophy that Japanese design is an inspiration for bonsai, but not the final word, and trees should both reflect their natural habits and the environment where they grow.

Complementing the words are great color photographs, as well as some charts and graphs where needed. No photography credit is given, so assumedly Lewis is a skilled photographer as well. In all the end result is a book that is great to look at which bears repeated use and reference down the road. It also gives an indication that we will be treated to a great program later this spring!

Mark Passerello

Raffle Updates

We have raffled the Ponderosa Pine that Andy Smith donated to the club at the last show. Mike Scholl is now the proud owner of this very nice tree.

Next up for consideration is a Helen Brabander pot from the June show. This is a high quality stoneware hand thrown pot that has all of Helen's design sense and attention to detail. Buy your raffle tickets this month because I anticipate this will go at the meeting.

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.

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

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

February 23, 2002 - Dawes Workday - Meet at Dawes Arboretum classroom at 9:00.

Bring a dish to pass for lunch.

March 9, 2002 - Saturday - Dublin Asian Arts Festival "Celebration of Japan" at Dublin Scioto High School, 4000 Hard Road, 10:00am - 5:00pm. We have committed to staff a booth.

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 - Saturday Workshop - Forest Planting with Korean Hornbeam, Japanese Beech, or Japanese Maple - Dan Binder

April 6 & 7, 2002 - Erie Pa Club Show at Stan's Garden Center in Erie - Jim Doyle, Nature's Way will lecture and Demo.

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

April 21, 2002 - "Regular" CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Colin Lewis Demonstration and Workshop (full day)

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

May 18, 2002 - Erie, PA and the Buffalo, NY Club are sponsoring Roy Nagatoshi from Fuji Bonsai in California

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 15 - Erie, PA -Bill Valvanis will lecture/demo AM and workshop PM on Styrax Japonica

June 22-23, 2002 - CBS Show - Note, this is one week later than our normal meeting.

June 27 - 30, 2002 - Milwaukee 2002 - ABS Symposium at the Four Points Sheraton Airport Hotel - we have programs and registration forms for anyone interested.

July 21, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Overview of Japanese Maples, Many Varieties, One Species - John Harris

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 - Columbus Bonsai Society 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 -

An alien being named R'ee
Grew this fine bonsai thing, named E.T.
He cut off its toes,
And shortened its nose
'Cause R'ee was the tree, don't you see.

Tom Pillichody

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