

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - May 2002

April is the cruelest month, . . . Nah, May is, at least for Bonsai in Central Ohio. Just about everything wants to be repotted, wants to be pruned - NOW, or needs some other attention (Feed Me.) I'll admit that some of this is self-inflicted. I decided this year to move my benches to a spot in the yard that gets more direct sun. This is an area of the yard that slopes along the length of the benches so I had to do a cut and fill on the ground underneath and prune back some fruit trees. A lot of extra work that took away from other maintenance, but my trees should do better there in the long term.

Speaking of the ground underneath, what do you use to control weeds under your benchwork? at various houses I have had dry sand (Florida), concrete patio (Michigan, Florida, and Columbus), grass (Michigan and Columbus), and mulch. For me weed fabric and mulch seems to work best. It keeps the weeds down and gives me a ready place to winterize. My mistake on the last go round with it was to use hardwood chips which look nice, but seem to come pre-composted so it breaks down to wonderful top soil really quickly. So much for weed control. This time I'm using small pine bark nuggets.

For those of you that got the Japanese Beaches for the forest workshop, DON'T DESPAIR. several of our Board members selected that species and they reported that the buds are just beginning to break on their trees. So don't give up. keep them watered and put them out in the sun. They should come around any day now.

Collin Lewis Afterglow - Ken Schultz

For those who were unable to attend the April meeting with Colin Lewis, where do I begin to describe the day we had? The workshop participants quickly realized that Colin's experience transcended the twisted trunks of our Chinese Elm Stock. He sat with each person and studied their tree, then sketched what he saw that it could become. Looking with his eye, we saw the potential too. I saw several members trying the air layer technique with a new found confidence, somehow knowing that they would have not one but two good trees in the future.

After our pizza lunch, Colin began styling the larch. I had purchased this tree from our pot lady, Helen Brabander about 3 years ago. Last year I had repotted it and changed the angle it had been growing. Most of its branches were on one side and I had worked very hard to encourage the lower branch on the left. Colin saw that this tree needed significant shari and jin. The branch was soon lying on the floor. He worked steady, wiring and wiring. When he was done we were all amazed at the transformation. Several other Board members have asked me to bring the tree to the Show so that all can see it. John Hill our Club Photographer captured some of this event. Colin told me that he would like to return next year to rewire and perhaps repot the tree.

When Colin finished it was a little after 6:00 PM, many had to leave while this work was in progress. Afterward we gave Colin a tour of the Conservatory's collection. He is currently under contract to restore the Arnold Arboretum's Lars Anderson Bonsai collection. He said we have quite an impressive collection. Later that night Colin shared that he was quite impressed also

with our Club members, noting that we had a wide range of ages and experience. A good sign of a healthy Club. He said he had worked with several very talented people during the workshop.

The May Meeting

Right Pot for the Tree : For our May meeting we have two activities planned. First Jose' Cueto will present information to explain selecting the "Right Pot for the Tree". With our up coming Show, this information will help illustrate how different pots can help to enhance the beauty of your trees. Size, shape, and color reflect style, composition and the personality of your trees. We may include a tour of the Conservatory tree collection as a part of this activity. Over the past several months, as their trees were repotted, different color, sized and shaped pots were used to enhance the beauty of the collection.

\$5 Dollar Tree Workshop: Second, we have the "\$5 Tree Workshop". Don't worry if you didn't sign up, Ken and Zack bought 6 extra, or you could stop and select something. We bought mugo pines, azaleas, cotoneasters, and junipers. There were plenty left at Oakland Park Nursery. What we did was try to find stock that had single trunks with some character so that it is "potensai". Bring your tools, wire, and perhaps a training pot and soil. Zack, Mark Passerello, and Ken Schultz will work with you to start this material on the path to becoming Bonsai.

A Book Report

A Step-by Step Guide to Growing and Displaying Bonsai by Colin Lewis.

I've had this book in my collection of Bonsai books for many years. When someone asks to borrow a book that would be good for a beginner I reach for this one. Frankly, I hadn't thought too much about who the author was until now. Yes, it is Colin Lewis and Neil Sutherland. Frankly, I bought it because it shows how to turn nursery stock into bonsai, and it actually deals with keeping bonsai in the four seasons. There's even a picture showing snow on the bonsai. Our Club Library has a copy, it has a very attractive red Japanese maple on the cover. Chapter 3 talks about buying a bonsai, first in a bonsai nursery, then at a garden center. For our Elm workshop members, there is section on air layers, using a cork bark elm.

While dealing with the subjects one normally finds in almost all bonsai books, there are a number of unique items; such as, Maintenance Pruning, and Summer pinching. For our \$5 Workshop group, Chapter 7 addresses Creating Your Bonsai. This chapter includes both junipers and cotoneaster. Chapter 8 addresses Aging and Refinement, showing how to create Jin and Shari. And for our Forest Planting Workshop group Colin is shown creating a Beech Group and a Forest on a Slab.

So, if you're looking for a bonsai book, this is one to have! - Ken Schultz

Tree of the Month

Common Name: Lantana, (*Lantana camara*)
by Ken Schultz

Many of you may be familiar with Lantana as a flowering garden plant, that can be placed in the yard from frost to frost. At last Summer's Society show, Dale Cochoy had a number of small specimens, that some of you purchased. I originally became interested in adding a Lantana to my bonsai collection when I saw a specimen plant at the Indoor Bonsai nursery. I was fascinated by its gnarled woody trunk, serrated elongated heart shaped leaves and the verbena like flowers held above the leaves on thin sticks.

In "Outstanding American Bonsai" by Randy T. Clarke and Peter Voynovich, Photographer, 1984, a specimen tree belonging to James J. Smith of Vero Beach Florida is shown as bonsai #26 . The tree was collected by James Smith in 1959 when the tractor clearing his lot pulled it out of the ground. Smith salvaged the plant, and at the time of the photograph (no flowers) it had been in training for 28 years and stood 23" high. It was shown in a round grey-black matte finish pot. Its spread was about 40" and it was a slanting style.

In the January/February 1994 Volume XXXIII, Number 1 issue of Bonsai Magazine, an article written by Alberto Cruz of Miami Florida is accompanied with photographs by James Smith. This article, simply titled "Lantana" tells the reader that Lantana is an old Italian word for Viburnum, which the Lantana leaf resembles. Lantana does belong to the verbena family, naturally occurring from Florida through Panama and tropical Asia and Africa. In its natural habitat it grows as a mostly erect evergreen herb shrub, reaching up to 10 feet tall to 12' wide. It is found mostly in exposed areas and dry terrain, having infertile ground or rocky subsoil. It is hardy in zones 8 to 11 (we're 5).

Flowers (1 -2" diameter clusters) are year round, though in Ohio, indoors they may tend to be cyclic, with stronger flowering after being placed back outdoors. The compound flowers range in color; both in the same compound flower and from plant to plant, in hues of red, orange, lilac, yellow, white, or blue. There are more than 150 species. One of my gardening books (Encyclopedia of Flowers) mentions that the stems are prickly, and the foliage is covered in short hairs. I have noted the leaf hairs, but not the prickly stems. Yellow and orange flowering specimens seem to be the most common. Small black berries may develop by Summer's end if old blooms are left on. The seeds must be fairly prolific and virile, as the books refer to Lantana as a weed in Florida.

When transplanting Lantana, place it in full shade during the first 15-20 days. Roots can be trimmed as short as 5 - 10" away from the trunk (closer on smaller specimens). However, before trimming the roots, trim the top first. When trimming, make sure that your cuts are very smooth. Prior to transplanting Lantana, the "Bonsai Magazine" article recommends watering heavily 15 minutes before, to maximize internal hydration. They also recommend dampening your soil mix prior to planting; then do not water for the first 12 - 18 hours to avoid root rot. For your first watering use "Superthrive". Over potting will promote both branch and root growth. One book recommended transplanting every two years, in the Spring. The other every year in September or October. However, the second author is from Italy.

Once established, Lantana are fast growers and therefore, consume more water than most tropicals. This is why a fast draining soil mix is needed, to prevent rotting of the roots and bark.

To prevent rotting you may need to use a fungicide during rainy periods; however, be cautious as fungicide prevents new buds or branches from sprouting. Once new shoots appear the plant can be moved to partial sun, preferably morning. The gardening books say to place the plant in full sun, but the bonsai books recommend partial shade; due to the thirstiness of the plant in full sun. During active growth, fertilize every 10 days using a 15-30-15 liquid, but do not over fertilize. If you do, leaves will become stiff and dull and eventually the plant will die. In an article written by Susan Bartlett, "For Beautiful Butterflies, Plant Lantana" , Birds and Blooms #23, she warns to much fertilizer will result in lush leaves but few flowers.

Since Lantana can grow rapidly, you will need to prune to encourage branching. While it is tempting to allow branches to grow for flowering, they should be cut to one, two or three leaf bud sets. Branching is similar to maples, appearing in pairs. Defoliation will reduce leaf size. Wiring can be tricky, as the new growth is extremely delicate, but woody growth is very brittle. Therefore, wire when the new growth is 4 - 6" long using 1.5mm or 2mm aluminum wire. It may be necessary to rewire as often as every 2 - 3 weeks during periods of vigorous growth.

Pests: I have noticed that white fly seem to be very fond of Lantana. Frequently, hatching shortly after the plant has been brought indoors. Malathion and the breeze from a fan helped control this problem.

Two to three inch long cuttings may be propagated in sand under glass. Encyclopedia of Gardening says cuttings should be taken in February or March and kept between 60-70 degrees F. Bartlett notes that bedding plant branches may root where they touch the ground. During the Winter, the plants may be kept as cool as 41 - 46 degrees. They reportedly need a rest period and will do better. During winter, watering can be reduced, but do not let the root ball dry out.

My other sources of information were:

Bonsai: The Complete illustrated guide to growing and caring for miniature plants and trees; Luigi Crespi, 1989 Italy

Bonsai in Your Home: An Indoor Growers Guide; Paul Lesniewicz, 1991 Germany

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.

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 - Matching Your Pots and Trees - Jose Cueto And \$5 workshop with selected stock.

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

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

Erodium Workshop, Ken Huth, and Demos by Dale Cochoy and members of the Columbus Club, and lotsa nice trees in the exhibit room.

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 13 - 14, 2002 - Grand Rapids, Michigan All-State Bonsai Show 2002. Ben Oki, Ivan Watters, Jack Douthitt, Jack Wilke. Registration information at the meeting.

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.

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