

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - June 2002

We are looking forward to seeing the trees that will be in our show this year. Some will be returns, some will be new, but regardless, they are yours and you should show them! If you haven't registered your trees, or tree yet, please do so by emailing us your registration so that we can get the cards made up telling the public what they are. (If you are mailing your registrations in we ask that they be sent by June 15, to give them time to arrive and be processed.)

As the pride and joy of your personal bonsai collection, we ask that you take a few minutes and get your tree(s) ready to show. Clean the pot, pluck off dead foliage, and trim any wild growth that may have sprouted with all the rain we've been having. (minimal wiring please) If you have a stand or accent plant you want shown with your tree, make sure we know that when you drop them off at registration.

We hope that you will be able to drop your trees off on Friday night between 4:30 and 7:00 PM. We will have to cut off registration by 8:30 Saturday morning to allow the placement team to get the room set up and open for the public by 10:00 AM.

Things to Do in June

With all this rain, I'm sure your trees are all growing like crazy. This means there is lots to do. But what ever you do, water when it doesn't rain. A hot sunny day can dry out a bonsai pot very quickly, especially if its windy too.

Fertilize, our soil mixture drains quickly, this means that extra nutrients need to be provided by you. You should select a variety of fertilizers and be careful not to over apply. Chloritic leaves or poor budding may be a sign that you need to feed. Osmicoat, or slow release mixtures are popular choices.

Wire, refining the shape of your trees will result in good bonsai.

Prune, pinch candles , pluck at that fresh growth on your junipers, and cut back growth with long internodes. Remove dead blossoms.

Pest Control, spray your trees to prevent bugs or fungal infections. Watch out for scale, aphids and red spider mites. If you don't like spraying, try a systemic insecticide.

Cleanup, keep weeds and other problems under control now instead of waiting for them to establish as a problem. This would include moss growing on trunks and infections of Erinaria.

Leaf prune, or defoliate anything that you want to increase ramification now.

A Book Report

Book of the Month: Outstanding American Bonsai
By Randy T. Clark, photography by Peter Voynovich

Normally I don't purchase what I consider to be "coffee table" books, I'd rather check them out of the library, and reserve my shelf space more for those books that are either instructional, or are helpful in providing care tips for the different species kept by bonsai hobbyist. However this book's unique style caught my eye. It is a collection of photographs of trees shown at the International Bonsai Symposium held in Minneapolis in 1987. There are just a little over 50 fullpage color plates. The tree is shown on the right and the facing page describes the tree; giving details about the species, it's approximate age, size and its pot selection. Below the description of the tree is a paragraph about the artist. It tells in the artist's words when they got started in bonsai, highlights of their involvement with a club, or study of bonsai.

One of the unique things about the tree photo plates is that the trees are shown on dais, or stands. I was able to copy the design of one of the stands for a dai that I built one winter. One of my favorite entries in this book is Keith Scott's Smooth Leaf Elm (*Ulmus carpinifolia*) It is a favorite, because shortly after I bought the book our club hosted a demo by Keith Scott. The book reports that he is from Chagrin Falls, Ohio (Keith is the curator at the Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh now). About three years ago I took pictures of a number of trees in the National Arboretum in Washington D.C. during one of my visits. As I was looking at my photographs, I thought, "Boy that looks like one I've seen some where before." It was Keith Scott's Smooth Leaf Elm!

I encourage you to look for books featuring American trees by American artists. Using native materials styled as we see them here, may prove more rewarding than trying to keep an imported tree in an unfamiliar style.

Ken Schultz

Tree of the Month

Red Maple - *Acer rubrum*

The Maple genus hybridizes easily and most volunteers are hybrids, so if you have a red maple nearby you will have access to varying degrees of pure to mixed red maples in your lawn or flowerbeds. These are the trees I actually started out with in bonsai in high school. At a nursery you can occasionally find a gallon container that can be chopped to get a thick trunk to develop as bonsai, but they grow fast enough that you will get better results in a planting bed in about the same time as growing new branches on a stump.

Red maples have opposite leaves with 3 to 5 palmate lobes with serrate margins, sinuses relatively shallow, light green above, whitened and sometimes glaucous or hairy beneath. They produce small inconspicuous flowers in late March, usually before bud break; usually bright red but occasionally yellow. The fruit are clusters of 1/2 to 3/4 inch long samara that appear May to June, on long slender stems. The twigs are reddish and lustrous with small lenticular markings, when bark develops it is smooth and light gray, becoming darker with age and possibly breaking up into scaly plates. This is not as common on bonsai.

Keith Scott says, "I began my bonsai addiction with American and regional trees and I've not found many foreign trees that surpass our own locals. Such can be said for the Rubrum: beautiful

fall color, rich, deep; ease of digging; tolerates container growing; prunes well when following Shigo's rules; flowers well, seeds well; hardy; deer don't eat them unless starving; leaves smaller than most Japanese maples.”

Red maples like a rich soil that is damp. The wild tree grows in moist soils in swamps, bottom lands, and uplands. Use plenty of organic content in the soil mix. A water retainer like bisque-fired clay will do well also. Drying out will produce rapid, if reversible wilt, but this is not a recommended practice. For this reason I tend to overpot my red maples. The advantage of this is they are a great indicator for emergency watering. After wilting trees that do not get enough water will scorch. Scorch symptoms are light brown or tan dead areas between leaf veins. Scorching due to drying out may be overcome by watering. In addition to harvesting volunteers or deliberate seeding, red maples will propagate by air layers and cuttings.

Use a balanced fertilizer starting after the buds break. Maples leaf out quickly and early feeding will strengthen the plant for early summer pruning and/or defoliation. Defoliation will reduce the leaf size for showing the tree. A tree in development will benefit from superfeeding, as will trees being thickened up in the ground. Trees planted in a bed for development will need to be aggressively pruned. Maintain a fertilizer schedule through the summer until the leaves turn color in fall but it does not need as much as in early spring unless you are trying to pack on the growth.

Training is best achieved by pinching and pruning to force growth in the direction you want. Wiring is possible but on newer growth runs the danger of cutting into the bark. The twigs swell quickly and suddenly. Wire marks take a long time to smooth out. If I did wire I would use electrical wire with the insulation left on. Maples will sprout multiple buds at a pruning scar, usually sending out 2 or 4 buds just below and either side of the wound. The natural habit of red maples is with ascending branches, forming a generally oval shape with a rounded top, wiring to pull down branches is not necessary for this style. This tree will do well with almost any style except bunjin and cascade or severely windswept.

Insect pests include spidermites, occasionally aphids, and leafminers. The most common is cottony maple scale. The insect forms a cottony mass on the lower sides of branches. Scales are usually controlled with oil sprays, alcohol, or hand picking. Anthracnose fungus is more of a problem in rainy seasons. The disease resembles scorch. The disease causes light brown or tan areas on the leaves. Anthracnose may be controlled by fungicides sprayed on as leaves open in the spring. Two additional sprays at two-week intervals will be needed.

Mulch the pot in to protect it over the winter. The tree is hardy if you got it locally, If you get a tree from the south you may need to protect it more than a local volunteer.

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.

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. After the break: Carving Demonstration on the conservatory Bald Cypress by Jose Cuerto.

August 18, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Tropical Workshop - Dale Cochoy

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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