

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - July 2002

Its time to start the elections process again. We have almost a complete slate of officers to run, and will be taking nominations from the floor for the elections in August. We are taking a longer range view of club planning so if you are interested in a position, but you are not sure if you can just jump in swimming, please notice that the calendar is planned out through December. This gives you plenty of time to get used to the routine. I know that we are looking for a secretary, and there may be a vacant third year at large Board position open. If there is a position you would like to serve in, don't be shy. Even If we have a person in that particular slot, they may want to work in another capacity but felt the need to cover where they are.

The slate is : President - Ken Schultz
1st Vice President - Dan Binder
2nd Vice President - John Hill
Secretary - ?
Treasurer - Dick Guervitz
1 year Board - Mark Passerello ?
2 year Board - Linda Fields
3 year Board - Ben William ?
Librarian - Merida Weinstein
Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

In addition, Jesse Welton is working on our Web site so that we have an archive available to the members.

A long time friend of Ken Schultz and maple aficionado Jack Haris will be talking about his experience with Japanese Maples. Jack has lived in California, where he grew Bonsai, and Midland, Mi, Philadelphia, PA, and now Columbus. He has always had a collection of Japanese Maples but is currently down to only 32 varieties - from 130 that he had in the ground in Philadelphia. He will share information on how to recognize several diseases that we get here in Ohio and how to treat them to prevent the spread to other trees.

The second half of the meeting will have Jose Cueto talking about the basics of carving Jin and Shari on smaller trees with some practical advice on tools and a demo on the Mugho pine Zack was working on at the show.

The August Workshop

For our August club meeting, 8/18/02, we wish to focus on tropicals, especially good for those of you who don't have large outdoor spaces to overwinter the evergreen and deciduous trees. Our guest presenter is none other than Dale Cochoy, from Hartville, OH, who has attended our CBS shows as one of our regular vendors.

Program format will be two-fold 1). a discussion on tropicals in general and nerifolia in particular because 2). we are offering an opportunity for up to 15 individuals to experience a hands-on workshop with nerifolia. Workshop fees (includes tree) will be \$65 for larger trees and

\$45 for smaller trees. We've had some pre-registrations already, as this was first announced at the May meeting. But don't despair - we still have openings for 4 large trees and 3 small trees. We will complete sign-ups and collect money at the July meeting. Club members are welcome to stay and observe this workshop, free of charge.

Those of you who have attended our shows in the past and observed Dale's demos have seen what great work he does. This should be a great opportunity to add to your bonsai collection. Be sure to bring your own wire and tools. These will not be provided, but the Club will be glad to sell you some wire if you need it.

Dale has just sent us this information - I brought your trees back from Florida. All are nice specimens I picked. They will be great. Even the small ones have great trunks. Also, I'm bringing some bigger ones for anyone who wants to upsize. I'll have 3-4 bigger size at \$75.00 for the Tree. A couple of folks indicated they wanted to go BIG.

Make sure you mention in newsletter that these won't be potted, but, this is the time to do it and they can be potted at a later time after meeting.

Dale Cochoy, Wild Things Bonsai Studio, Hartville, Ohio

A Book Report

The Bonsai Identifier by Gordon Owen

Over the years as I have purchased various books about bonsai, I have noticed that they generally fall into three categories; 1) coffee table/photo gallery, 2) how to, and 3) books that provide care instruction on a number of types of trees used in bonsai. This last group are the books I use to help me identify the trees I plan to show each year. The Club has the more common ones, like the Readers Digest book and the Simon and Schuster book; I have these also. The Bonsai Identifier was originally published in London and has a 1990 copyright. Remember I had pointed out when we started the book report article series that it is important to note where the author is from. Frequently their tips on care are based on their personal experiences wherever their trees are being raised.

The Bonsai identifier is organized into a short introduction that covers: history, the meaning of bonsai, outdoor vs. indoor; shapes and styles; sizes; bonsai material; seasonal displays; viewing position; care; pots; and a key to using the species directory. While no one topic in the introduction is more than four paragraphs, I found the information they contained meaningful. For example; reporting is normally done just before the tree starts to make new growth in the spring, which could be early or late in the season depending on the species and the weather. On the subject of viewing, Owen advises the reader that the optimum distance to look at a tree is twice its height, and from a height that allows you to look up into its canopy just as you would view a tree growing in open park land.

The next one hundred pages are devoted to the Species Directory. The number of pages and photographs of each species varies, for example Podocarpus only has one example photograph

but maples and Taxus each have three photos. The information about each species is organized as follows; Description, Bonsai styles and presentation, Species and varieties, and care. There are a few entries that I have only seen in this book; these are dogwood and English oak. One other unusual offering is weeping willow. Owen notes that willows require heavy pruning and wiring and even with this they only are at their best right after the leaves bud out in the spring. As expected they are thirsty; he suggests that their pots be placed in a bowl of water throughout the summer. Also they grow so quickly they may need to be repotted twice a year!

The Bonsai Styles and Presentation text for each of the species contains interesting tips. In the text for Taxus, he suggests covering pruning scars with strips of bark taken from other parts of the tree.

Following the Species Directory is a Guide to the Appreciation of Bonsai. This guide summarizes the basic “rules of bonsai”. I found this guide in developing and caring for bonsai trees to be an excellent reference from tree selection, to development of a tree that I will eventually find ready to show. Because we did a “grove planting” this past Spring I chose the following guide as an example: Space should be left in the pot to imply a natural expanse of open ground.

Finally I found the index to be user friendly. Cross-references to common and scientific names were provided, as well as text on general subject matter. I bought this book in 1995 for \$12.98, I suspect at one of Columbus’s half price bookstores. Its pages are 8.5X11. I’d buy it again!
~ Ken Schultz

A second book review has been rolling around my hard drive and since I just heard it reviewed on NPR, I thought it was probably time to pull it out and run it.

The Botany of Desire by Michael Pollan

Pollan tells the interesting and complicated story of human/plant relations in this absorbing book, which has some surprising Ohio connections.

The book is structured to tell how certain plants have been used, valued, and changed by people through history, and how those plants in turn changed or affected human society. Four prime examples are used, each valued by human for a different reason: apples for their sweetness, tulips for their aesthetic beauty, potatoes for their food value and marijuana for its consciousness changing properties.

Ohio is center stage for much of the apple discussion, since this area was home territory for a most unique and legendary American, John Chapman, known to most people as Johnny apple seed. Chapman ranged through Ohio in the state's infancy, working from a home base in Allegheny County in Pennsylvania and eventually crossing into Indiana. Reading Pollan's account of Chapman's single minded quest to plant both apple trees and Swendenborgian religious principles may help shake up any preconceived notions about what life was like in the Buckeye state's early years. Until the 1930's, almost every apple grown in this country was destined not for a pie; tart or eating as fresh fruit. Rather it was headed for a cider barrel, and

since refrigeration didn't exist, that cider was hard cider. The old adage "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" isn't old at all- it was savvy advertising used by apple growers to instill a healthy, wholesome image for their product, at time when Prohibition made cider seem less than appealing. Cider was necessity for many reasons. Clean, pure drinking water may not have been available, and for those wishing a more potent beverage, cider was easier to produce than beer or ale, and better adapted to the American climate than grapes. Native varieties of grape have insufficient sugar to ferment, and European grapes did not do well in the north American climate. And though the consumption of wine and other spirituous liquors may have been frowned on for religious grounds, cider was ignored in this prohibition, and all ages consumed-toddlers to grandparents.

Chapman himself was not entirely the impoverished woodsman that legend has portrayed him as. Though an odd man by any definition (he once punished his foot for stepping on a worm) who preferred to sleep outdoors, he was also a sound headed businessman. He owned considerable amounts of property, which he used as nurseries for his apple seedlings. In time he would have a chain of nurseries that stretched across the state, each tended by local residents acting on Chapman's behalf. When he died, Chapman left a considerable estate. Those with an interest in nature and history will find this book a fascinating read.

Tree of the Month

Bald Cypress/Pond Cypress
by Ken Schoenfeld

Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) is a deciduous conifer which grows to a height of 80 to 120 feet, depending on the tree's age and the climate in which it is grown. It is very long-lived, due to its tolerance of a wide variety of growing conditions, and will even grow in swamps with its roots completely under water. Some specimens in upstate New York have been documented to be over 100 years old, and some trees in Florida are estimated to be 3,000 to 3,500 years old. Bald Cypress are found from Florida to Southern Canada (well north of its natural range), and also from Delaware to Illinois.

T. distichum leaves are frond-like four to six-inch long stems with 1/2 to 3/4 inch leaflets which turn an attractive burnt orange in autumn. Its bark is reddish-brown, and will exfoliate with age. Flowers are inconspicuous, with female flowers located at branch tips, and male flowers more towards the interior of the tree. Fruit are small round cones about one inch in diameter. Natural shapes of Bald Cypress vary with climate and growing conditions. Trees grown in northern areas (e.g. Ohio) typically have a 30 to 40 foot wide conical/pyramidal shape, while trees found in the swamps of Florida and Louisiana Typically have wide flat tops, with few branches below the apex.

One unique property of Bald Cypress is its habit of developing woody root growths commonly known as knees, which are common in trees grown in swamps, but rarely seen when trees are grown in dryer soil. There has been much debate regarding what function knees perform, if any. It was once thought that they helped with gaseous exchange supplying oxygen to submerged roots. However, Prof. Michael Dirr of the University of Georgia claims that, as of 1983, studies

have disproven this theory. Unfortunately, Prof. Dirr didn't cite any specific research, so I am unable to go into any more detail on the subject. The wood of Bald Cypress is very resistant to rotting, and has been used in construction, as railroad ties, and has even been made into pipe (both plumbing and smoking types).

As Bonsai, Bald Cypress are commonly styled with hollow trunks and jinned tops, although flat tops are gaining popularity. Its extreme growth rate makes it ideal bonsai material. For example, when I planted a Bald Cypress in my front yard in 1992, it was six feet tall, with a two inch caliper at the base. Ten years later, that same tree is thirty feet tall with a 24 inch caliper at the base. This high growth rate is the reason so many Taxodium bonsai have jinned apices, which help keep their vigorous upward growth in check. Another advantage to bonsaiists is that trees will recover very quickly from re-potting and severe pruning. I have personally cut nursery stock from six feet to four feet to two feet in a single growing season, and repotted it from a two gallon container into a bonsai pot the following spring without causing any decline in the tree's health.

Bald Cypress buds back vigorously on old wood, and will produce new buds even if all branches and foliage are removed from the trunk. As for pests and diseases, Taxodium are susceptible to very few of either. Borers are common, but rarely do much damage. In hollow trunk styles, wood rot will occur eventually, though at a much slower rate than most other species.

Pond Cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) is often confused with Bald Cypress, as their trunks and bark are similar in appearance, and both will grow in water. Pond cypress are hardy to zone 4, have a much narrower (20 foot wide) conical growth habit, and generally don't exceed 80 feet in height. *T. ascendens* can be distinguished from *T. distichum* by the shape of their leaves, as Pond Cypress leaves are needle- or scale-like (somewhat similar to Shimpaku), and grow vertically from the branches.

Sources:

M. Dirr, Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, 1983 edition
L. Snyder, Trees and Shrubs for Northern Landscape Gardens, 1980 edition
Peterson's Field Guide to Eastern Trees

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.

July 21, 2002 - 1:00 bring a tree for advice from our Board. 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Overview of Japanese Maples, Many Varieties, One Species - John Harris and Beginning Carving and Jin Work - Jose Cueto
August 18, 2002 - 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory - Elections of Board - Tropical Workshop on *Ficus nerifolia* - Dale Cochoy
September 15, 2002 - Annual Picnic
October 20, 2002 - 1:00 bring a tree for advice from our Board. 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at

Franklin Park Conservatory - Fall Show/panel judging
November 17, 2002 - 1:00 bring a tree for advice from our Board. 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
January 19, 2003 - 1:00 bring a tree for advice from our Board. 2:00pm Regular CBS Meeting at
Franklin Park Conservatory -

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.

President - Ken Schultz
1st Vice President - Sandy Schoenfeld
2nd Vice President - Dan Binder
Secretary - Shelby Conrad
Treasurer - Dick Guervitz
1 year Board - Ben William
2 year Board - Mark Passerello
3 year Board - Linda Fields
Librarian - Merida Weinstein
Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton
Refreshment Coord - Patrica Radloff
email to: columbusbonsai@hotmail.com

Time to start renewing!

This is the first notice that it's getting to be time to renew memberships. For all of you new
members who joined at the June show, thank you. I hope you enjoy your association with bonsai
much as we do.

If you signed up to get a free newsletter, here it is. It is pretty typical. It talks about what the next
month or two will bring, has a calendar of events, a Tree of the Month article detailing care and
training for that species, a book review from a member or the library. Sometimes it will have
general care advice based on the season of the year. This time it was in the final word. Yes, trees
really can get scorched in the sun in July and August. Make sure yours has plenty of water and
some shade if it is a tender variety. I would encourage you to join the club if you are at all
interested. If you are on the fence, a couple of newsletters and meetings should help you decide
one way or another. I would much rather a person decide not to continue the hobby because they
realized they weren't interested than to decide based on losing a first tree through lack of
information.