

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - October 2003

Membership dues were due last month. If you get this mailed to you look at the number at the end of your name, If it says 03 you still need to renew. Just take a moment to fill in the attached form and send it with a check. If you already sent your renewal in, thank you, and why not take the opportunity to give it to an interested friend? If you are getting this by snail mail instead of email as you normally would, it means I don't have any record of your renewal.

Have you laid in your supply of mulch for winter yet? How is the screening holding up for sheltering your plants from the wind under your benches? One of the things I learned the hard way last year was that a hard winter will drive out the rare visitor and they can create havoc on your trees. I have never had rabbit problems before, but last winter they came out in February and visited the Clayton salad bar. I lost a few things but they created a mess out of my azaleas. They all came back, but now something has been industriously rooting up my cuttings. They are not being eaten, but (Squirrels I think) something has been examining the roots carefully and looking for hidden treasures under the emerging root ball. The main problem is they are not being repotted after the exam.

Annual Picnic

The September picnic was well attended, and we had a lot of our newer members there. There were enough of the Ficus too little for everyone to work on courtesy of Oakland Park Nursery. the food was excellent as usual and the company was wonderful.

There were three entries for the Jing Gow Jiang, or Golden Dog award for the most completely hopeless tree style. The rules are 1. It must be alive. and 2. It must be in a bonsai pot. Now I must say that over the last several years entirely too much emphasis has been placed on rule 1. The object here is not to provide the most nearly dead tree possible. This is really for a hopeless styling challenge. the Hopeless styling that won this year was a Little Leaf Linden, *Tillia cordata* that Ken Schultz brought in. Since Ken had a tree in competition, Zack ran the commentary period and the popular acclaim vote.

Affair of the Hort

Despite cool rainy weather our participation in the Affair of the Hort at Inniswood was successful. We met a lot of nice people and sold most of what we bought. And we have a new member as a result, Jodi Nolin. I want to thank Zack for helping Ken with the setup and presentation on Saturday. We went last, and only seven enthusiasts were there for our presentation. I want to thank all the volunteers who staffed our booth: Sonny Meister, Mark Passerello, Marcia Harrold, Jeremy Riddell, Denny Sackett, Ken and Sandy Schoenfeld, Zack Clayton, Shelby Conrad, Doc.Guervitz, Rebecca Sebring, and Ken Schultz. I also want to thank Bill Johanes and the other Inniswood volunteers who helped make our weekend enjoyable.

If you have never been out to this event, it is well worth the while. Admission is free and the variety of vendors is amazing. If you are looking for unusual stock that is hard to find in area stores, this is a place to come look. There is usually a variety of hard to find species and unusual

variants of familiar species available. An additional bonus is you can talk to the enthusiasts who have the material there for sale and find out the idiosyncrasies of that particular plant variant.

Coming Attractions

And our October 19 guest is Jack Wikle. Jack is widely known for his mame bonsai that he keeps indoors under artificial lights. He does not consider size, species, and all that to be big issues. Almost anything that has some bonsai potential or poses interesting design problems is a candidate and opportunity for personal growth. A lot of bonsai is about what one can do with what one has. His media presentation will not be a slide show, he will be using real bonsai he has been growing under fluorescent light, not images. The format is “show and tell” and response to questions from the group.

If you attended the MABA show in July, the outstanding *Pyrocantha* root over rock was a larger tree from his collection. from his collection.

Book of the month

Book Report/Bonsai Magazines
By: Ken Schultz and Zack Clayton

Magazines have a different effect than books. Normally you must go specifically to a library, bookstore or a booksellers website to make a selection. Magazines are delivered to your mailbox on a regular basis once you've made the decision to subscribe. For me, this results in rekindled interest in some aspect of my collection. Also, I have been know to take my magazines on trips, and if I notice that I'm near one of the advertisers locations, I've made short expeditions to their nursery. This is how Meehans has become a potential visiting location when we drive to see Linda's son in Washington D.C.

A bonsai purchased at one of these local vendors on a vacation trip makes a great souvenir of the trip, although transportation home can present a challenge. I have safely transported living purchases home when gotten at the tail end of the trip. Just be aware of the agricultural regulations of your travel route home. you wouldn't want to have it confiscated at an inspection station.

Essentially there are three magazines available to the American public. None of them are monthly, two are bi-monthly and one is quarterly. Two of them are published by the larger Club organizations. “Bonsai Magazine” is the official publication of Bonsai Clubs International. (www.bonsai-bci.com) A one year membership is \$36.00. BCI is a worldwide organization and you can see the efforts of artists not only in the US, but Europe and Asia too. “Bonsai Magazine” is a great place to see what is happening in other countries and emphasizes the social aspects of Bonsai and the camaraderie of enthusiasts. It also has a section devoted to viewing stones. This is not usually where I look for ‘how to’ articles, but it does have a great picture gallery..

“Bonsai, Journal of the American Bonsai Society” is as its title indicates. An annual membership is \$28. The magazine is published quarterly. Since the magazine is published in Toledo, by

joining you would be supporting some part of Ohio's bonsai economy. Both the BCI and the ABS magazines carry calendars of upcoming events. You can visit the ABS site at www.absbonsai.org Our Club is a member of both BCI and ABS.

"Bonsai Today" is the other bi-monthly magazine. A currently annual subscription is \$45.00. While many of its articles are Japanese Translations, you will also find contributors from the artists who write for ABS and BCI. This magazine is offered by Stone Lantern Publishing, www.stonelantern.com All three of these magazines can be found in the Club's Library; if you are patient and aren't concerned that you might miss a calendar event, as a member you can check out issues with trees, or stylings that catch your interest; but you have to come to our meetings regularly to make your selections and to return items borrowed. "Bonsai Today" has great how to articles and the pictures do a good job of illustrating what the technique described will accomplish. It usually has several articles of interest in each issue.

Tree of the Month

Natal Plum – *Carrisa grandiflora*

By Ken Schultz

Much to my amazement, not many of my 38 bonsai books had a Natal Plum; in fact only three had an entry. These were: "the Complete Bonsai Handbook" by Darlene Dunton, "Indoor Bonsai" – Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and "Bonsai In Your Home" by Paul Lesniewicz. This caused me to resort to the Internet for additional information. Actually, "Bonsai In Your Home" called Natal Plum, *Carrisa macrocarpa*; I tried to determine if they were referring to something slightly different than the treasured cascade that we have in the Franklin Park Conservatory collection, some of the Internet sites had photos that lead me to believe it is a different variety, but another seemed the same. I do have a miniature leaved natal plum in my collection at home. I got it at Meehan's over in Rhorville Md.; it was sold to me as "Pettit Point". The *Carrisa macrocarpa* I found on the Internet seems to have pointier leaves that are tighter to the stem. Indoor Bonsai was also limited to one very short paragraph. Dunton's book has only a black and white photo of a twin trunked plant that hardly qualified as bonsai.

The best photograph I finally found was on the Internet, which was found by searching for *Carrisa grandiflora*. There I found a delightful picture of one in flower.

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~grnhouse/images/families/Apocynaceae.html> The flowers are up to 2" and have five petals. (There's even a variegated Natal Plum offered, it reportedly grows two-four feet tall and three to six feet wide.)

Yes, when given enough light these plants have a wonderful five petaled white flower that smells similar to a jasmine. Once one of my Natal Plums not only flowered, but it had a plum. Yes, they produce a purple-red fruit about 2 inches long, which is edible! According to Dunton's book they can be cooked into a syrup with sugar and lemon juice that makes a great ice-cream topping.

This plant is originally from South Africa. I have seen it used as a hedge in Hawaii. It reportedly likes nighttime temperatures between 55 and 70 degrees, daytime temperatures of 68 or higher. One source stated that it will survive temperatures down to 35 degrees. Its leaves are very oval

and dark green. The leaves are thick and the tips of the stems tend to be green. The plant does have thorns, but they are not as pronounced as a pyrocantha. This plant is a real sun lover. It needs at least 4 hours of sunlight a day (or equivalent artificial light) to flower. Sources say they can take full sun outdoors, though I found that this causes some of the leaves to develop a reddish cast. One author recommends that you keep this plant moist, another says water moderately. I find that it is tolerant. I have allowed mine to dry out, and yet this year all the rain merely made them grow more rapidly.

Given that this plant is a zone 9-10 tropical, it grows rapidly and may need to be pruned more than twice a year. When you take cuttings, they will root very easily. While new growth is greenish, the bark grays quickly and develops furrows. The new wood quite flexible, this allows you to style this plant into virtually any position. Three cautions; first, old wood can become brittle; second branches may die back especially if there are no leaves left when the tip is cut off; and third, since growth can be rapid, check your wiring often. Major pruning or styling should be done after flowering in mid to late spring.

The general care is reported to be like that for jasmine. I believe they are much easier. However this means that they do like humidity, and when you bring them indoors a humidity tray of gravel under them is recommended. As with all indoor plant arrangements, it is recommended that a fan be used to keep the air moving to prevent fungus. Also they like an acid fertilizer, like Miracid". I have also used African Violet food. Feeding during the summer should be at least every two weeks, reduced to monthly in the fall and winter.

All three of my books warn that Natal Plum does not like root pruning. Lesniewicz says that transplanting should only be done in the fall and winter. Another source said mid-spring to mid-summer is OK. As with other bonsai, use a rapid draining soil mixture to prevent root rot. If you decide that you need to add this plant to your bonsai collection, talk to your fellow members to see if they will give you a cutting. My largest Natal Plum came from a cutting that Linda cut from a plant at a Dawes workshop. I sold three new plants taken from my cuttings at the Affair of the Hort. I was surprised to find that prebonsai and bonsai ran from \$11.95 to \$48.95 plus shipping.

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. The meetings are open to members.

October 19 - Guest speaker is Jack Wikle on Raising Mame Indoors. Bring in your trees to show off their fall colors.

November 16 -4 stations - Pot selection /Wireing/ Tool sharpening/ Winterization

December 10* - Holiday dinner - December 10 at Asian Star Buffet

December 21* - NO REGULAR MEETING

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January – Did your friend get a bonsai for Christmas?

February 28 - Dawes Work Day, 9:00 at Dawes Arboretum

March - Work session to make soil for the March meeting.

April 18 - Getting a tree show ready, what the professionals do - Also help and advice on trees you are considering for the June show.

June 19 and 20 - The Columbus Bonsai Society Annual Show. Yes it's on Fathers day again.

President - Ken Schultz

Past President - Jose Cueto

1st Vice President - Dan Binder

2nd Vice President - Mark Passerello

Secretary - Sonny Meister

Treasurer - Dick Guervitz

1 year Board - Ben William

2 year Board - Jesse Welton

3 year Board - Linda Fields

Librarian - Merida Weinstein

Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

Refreshment Coord - Leanne Parnell

email to: columbusbonsai@hotmail.com

Check your mailing label and send in the enclosed membership form if you haven't renewed.