

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - July 2004

Coming Attractions

On July 18 the club meeting is devoted to working on a large specimen tree. Jose Cuerto will be demonstrating various techniques on one of his hornbeams. We have decided not to have Jose judge the Alberta Spruce contestants as he will be busy with the demo. We know how much this will break his heart, but have decided that the current club president and a select cadre of officials will judge this event. Hope you have been working on your entry(s)

By the way, the styling contest for Alberta Spruce (*Picea glauca albertiana* 'conica') is open to all Club members. We have beginner (styled less than 5 trees so far) intermediate (styled 5 – 25 trees), and advanced (more than 25 trees styled by you). The "Winners" will get their names in the newsletter - with a photo of them and their tree and a free bag of soil - value \$3. (Other prizes to be determined) Judging at the July meeting.

The August 15 meeting will be dedicated to a Boxwood workshop. We will be getting a batch of the boxwoods that Ken Huth had at the June show and will lead the workshop. Ken will have a sign up sheet at the meeting to pre-register or you can call him at 818-9914. The cost for the workshop will be \$25 including the tree so you won't find a better value than this. Those were nice Buxus specimens.

And for you really long range planners:

Bonsai and suiseki enthusiasts worldwide are invited to attend the 5th World Bonsai Convention in the beautiful and inspiring capital city of Washington, D.C., home of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, May 28-31, 2005. Along with co-sponsoring this exciting event, Bonsai Clubs International and American Bonsai Society will hold their annual meetings for 2005 in conjunction with the 5th World Bonsai Convention.

Honor Saburo Kato and John Naka for their vision of world peace through bonsai. Tour the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Enjoy multiple exhibits including I.C. Su's antique bonsai pot collection.

Celebrate the 400 year-old Yamaki pine - symbol of peace.

Visit it on the web at: <http://www.bonsai-wbff.org/wbc5/main.htm>

Book Report

Bonsai: Nature in Miniature, By Kyuzo Murata & Isamu Murata

This September 2000 copyrighted book has some photos that appeared in an earlier book by this father son team. I found it at the Village Bookstore in Lynworth for only \$6.95 (I also purchased another book by Constance Tindale, "BONSAI: A guide to successful care and creation that I will report on another time). This 128 page book has many color photographs of "old" bonsai. Since the father is over 90, I suspect that he started them when he was quite young. After the photo gallery, the book is divided into six chapters. The first deals with the art of bonsai, the second is growing bonsai. One of the longest chapter is Introduction to Branch Arrangement. Chapter V deals with favorite Japanese species for bonsai.

Remember that I always say that one thing to check when getting advice from a book is note where the author is from to avoid fatal (for the tree) mistakes. This book used detailed drawings similar to Bonsai Today to illustrate points on wiring. The section on trunk wiring is very informative. I also found the note that tree need a rest from fertilizers and insecticides for a week after wiring an interesting tidbit, as are the notes on using wooden shelves and tying your bonsai to them to keep the wind from harming them. At the same time you are warned not to put your bonsai on the ground, stones, bricks, tiles or concrete. Apparently only thick boards will do.

Chapters V is devoted to the most popular trees used for bonsai. Each has; characteristics, varieties, Type of tree to use as bonsai, care, nipping, arranging the branches, pest control, transplanting and more. Chapter 6 is shorter summaries of other species used, such as Japanese Larch, Flowering Cherry, and so on.

This is definitely a great find. SO I give it a strong buy. ~ Ken Schultz

Tree of the Month

Trident Maples

This maple, *Acer buergerianum*, is one of the most adaptable maples that I can think of for bonsai use. I have seen large specimen trees, forest plantings and mame. Also in one book there was a planting where several whips were planted similar to a phoenix graft and within a relatively few years their trunks fused into a specimen tree. Another use is for root-over-rock as these trees will grow very long roots in sandy soil.

While literature states that these trees can handle full sun, in bonsai it is best to protect them from direct afternoon sun (2PM-4PM). Due to their vigorous growth habits they are thirsty and need frequent fertilizing. Make sure that your tree's soil never dries out all the way. Be careful when wiring because this rapid growth habit can result in scarred bark in a very short time (sometimes within two weeks!). Also this means that you need to repot frequently, at least while the tree is young. Even when the tree is mature it may need to be repotted every two to three years. If your tree is healthy it will reward you with an abundance of back budding and these will quickly extend. This means that you will need to decide fairly quickly, which to keep and when to cut them back. This will depend on the ultimate tree size you are going for. Once you have decided on tree size new grow will need constant finger pinching. This will ensure ramification

The new growth while flexible has two characteristics that make wiring somewhat tricky. While new, they are tender and can be easily damaged. Later if you try to wire while the tree is full of water they may snap. Some just seem to break off at the trunk if you try to wire too soon, and invariably it is the one that was in the perfect place for that branch you were hoping for. Some of the back issues of "Bonsai Today" show thread grafting by bending long whips into small holes drilled through the trunk, this means that there is no guessing where the branch will grow. It was noted in one of my references that the wood becomes "very brittle" easy to break as it matures. However, in one case history, the owner decided that his Trident had the wrong side as the front, so he removed all its branches. It took six years, but the new tree looked beautiful.

The leaves are characteristically shaped like that of ivy (*Hedera helix*). There are various shades of green. In the spring when they first come out some are light green. I have even seen a specimen where the foliage stayed light to yellowish green, but these are not particularly hardy up here in the "cold north." If your tree is healthy, leaf pruning to get that second crop of smaller leaves is possible. This cannot be done year after year as it will weaken the tree. I am told that in Japan, and some experts here, know exactly how long it takes to regrow these new smaller leaves, and they will leaf prune at the right time before a show so that their tree has the most beautiful new small leaves just in time for the show.

Many Trident Maples are field grown in our southern states, I know of at least one grower in Greenville South Carolina. This also means that they are somewhat tricky here in the "north". In winter you will need to protect them. Their roots are especially vulnerable and the pot may need to be heated into the ground. (I have never had luck keeping trees in my garage. It faces south and is on the southwest corner of our house, and gets too warm too early in the spring. ~ Ken Schultz

And a bonus:

from the USDA Mugo Pine (Swiss Mountain Pine) - *Pinus mugo*

General Information: Mugo Pine is a shrub or small tree which grows best in sun or partial shade in moist loam. It comes from Alpine Europe. The dark green, stiff needles of this two-needle Pine are held on the tree for more than four years making this one of the more dense Pines. When selecting a Mugo Pine to grow into an upright tree, choose one with a central leader; if looking for a more informal type Mugo Pine choose among the many compact selections.

Environment: Full sun. Turn the tree from time to time so that all parts of the foliage receive adequate light. Zones 2 through 7. Will tolerate freezing but roots need to be protected. Okay to dry out between waterings. Fast draining soil to avoid root rot. Spray the foliage with water daily during the summer.

Feeding Simon and Schuster's recommends feeding once a month in spring and autumn using a slow-acting organic fertilizer. If you prefer to feed using chemical fertilizers, feed the tree once every two weeks with a half-strength solution of a fertilizer meant for acid-loving plants, such as Miracid. Suspend feeding for two months during the hot part of summer (July and August in the northern hemisphere). Do not feed if the tree is ailing or has been repotted recently (2-4 weeks).

Pruning and wiring: Initial pruning should be carried out at the same time as repotting. When repotting, be sure to leave a good root system. Subsequent pruning can be carried out when wiring in the fall. Pinch by shortening new shoots (candles) by two thirds in the spring, before the needles open. Pinch the candles in two stages, pinching the most vigorous candles first and a week later pinching the weaker candles. In the fall, reduce the number of buds on each branch to two to encourage ramification. Also in the fall, thin the needles by removing any needles that are too long or that are growing downward. Thin more at the apex of the tree and less as you work down the tree. This will allow light to reach the lower branches and will slow the growth of the apex. Wiring should be done in late fall or early winter, and the wire removed 6-8 months later at most.

With healthy trees, it is possible to remove all the new candles every other year, before they harden. The following fall, buds will appear where the candles were removed. This serves to shorten the internodes and encourage more dense foliage.

Repotting In early spring or late summer, every 2-3 years for young specimens and every 3-5 years for older ones. Mugo need deep, well drained soil,. Rémy Samson recommends 1 part leaf mould, 1 part loam, and 1 part coarse sand. Peter Chan recommends 1 part loam, 1 part peat, and 3 parts coarse sand.

Pines and other conifers grow in association with a symbiotic fungus which grows in the root ball of the tree. If this fungus is not present, the tree may die. For this reason, pines and other conifers should never be bare-rooted. Some feel that it is more important to be sure that the tree always has a healthy root system with sufficient feeder roots than to worry about symbiotic fungi. They feel that trees are more likely to die from having their root systems reduced too much than from not having the fungus present. Certainly it is good advice in any case to be sure the tree has sufficient roots.

Pests and diseases: Mugo Pine is a favored host for Pine sawfly and Pine needle scale. Some adelgids will appear as white cottony growths on the bark. All types produce honeydew which may support sooty mold. European Pine shoot moth causes young shoots to fall over. Infested shoots may exude resin. The insects can be found in the shoots during May. Pesticides are only effective when caterpillars are moving from overwintering sites to new shoots. This occurs in mid to late April or when needle growth is about half developed. Bark beetles bore into trunks making small holes scattered up and down the trunk. Stressed trees are more susceptible to attack. The holes look like shotholes. Keep trees healthy. Sawfly larvae caterpillars are variously colored but generally feed in groups on the needles. Some sawfly larvae will flex or rear back in unison when disturbed. Sawflies can cause rapid defoliation of branches if left unchecked. Pine needle miner larvae feed inside needles causing them to turn yellow and dry up. Pine needle scale is a white, elongated scale found on the needles. Pine tortoise scale is brown and found on twigs. Depending on the scale, horticultural oil may control overwintering stages.

Pine spittle bug lives and hides in a foamy mass. Spruce mites cause damage to older needles, and are usually active in the spring and fall. Mites cause older needles to become yellowed or stippled. Zimmerman Pine moth larvae bore into the trunk. The only outward symptoms may be death of parts of the tree or masses of hardened pitch on the branches. The larvae of Pine weevils

feed on the sapwood of the leaders. The leader is killed and the shoots replacing it are distorted. First symptoms are pearl white drops of resin on the leaders. The leaders die when the shoot is girdled as adults emerge in August. Prune out and burn infested terminals before July 15. Pine wilt nematode can kill trees.

Diseases: Diplodia tip blight is a common problem and Mugo Pine is very sensitive. This pine is susceptible to rusts. Canker diseases may rarely cause dieback of landscape Pines. Keep trees healthy and prune out the infected branches. Needle cast is common on small trees and plantation or forest trees. Infected needles yellow and fall off.

Bibliography:

USDA Fact Sheet ST-467

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.

July 18 - Jose will Demo one of his large hornbeams. Judging of the Alberta Spruce contest.

August 14-15 Boxwood Workshop.

September 19 - Club Picnic at the Schultz residence, Golden Dog award, food, member's sale.

October 17 - Saikei - (ground landscapes)

November 21 - Fall show and demo

December - Dinner TBA - and something else?

January 16 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory

February 20 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory

February 26 - Annual Saturday bonsai workshop at Dawes for their Show sale. - I checked with Keith Stevens and this is a continuing tradition.

March 20 - Annual CBS soil sale with tools and pots.

May 7-8, 2005 Michigan All-State Bonsai Show, Fredrick Meyers Gardens Grand Rapids

May 28-31, 2005 5th Annual World Bonsai Convention, Washington, D. C.

<http://www.bonsai-wbff.org/wbc5/main.htm>

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