

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - August 2004

Its getting to be time to renew your memberships. If you joined Columbus Bonsai Society for the first time in June or at the show then you are signed up for 2005 already. If you are a continuing member then you know the drill. Get me a completed membership form and a check. Please do not turn in just a check or cash. It makes it very hard to track who has or has not renewed. I get grief about it every year. This year it will be easy. If I don't get a form, you didn't renew but you may have made a donation. Thank you. It's your choice.

Coming Attractions

Elections, Elections, Elections. This month. Our slate of officers is:

Past President - Ken Schultz President - Daniel Binder

1st Vice President - Mark Passerello 2nd Vice President - Ben William

1 year Board - Leanne Parnell 2 year Board - Ross Lebold

3 year Board - Denny Sackett Treasurer - Richard Gurevitz

Librarian - Merida Weinstein Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

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. We had Ross Lebold pick up a few extra at Ken Huth's, so if you missed the opportunity to sign up last month there are still a few slots left. 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.

September 19 is our club picnic. The picnic this year is at Ken and Linda Schultz. A map is attached for members. Ken says to park at the office park behind the house, his road is under construction and its hard to get in the front. As always there will be a Member Sale of bonsai related items. The Golden Dog Trophy contest, Plenty of good potluck food, friends, family, and fun. This is a great social event for the ones close to us who tolerate our passion, but don't always share it.

The Golden Dog Trophy is open to all members who have a hopeless styling challenge. In the years past it has been awarded to presidents, officers, and members with that "special tree" that should probably just go in the compost or be free released. The criteria for entry is simple, just bring in your living, most dog ugly, tree in a bonsai pot that has presented you with the most trouble or that you just are not willing to admit defeat with it. The winner will get custody of the trophy for a year and be memorialized with a dog tag on the Trophy with your name and year of award.

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

Ortho's "All About Bonsai"

This might be the newest book about bonsai you find at your local library or book retailer. Copyrighted 2004, it bears the Ortho imprint and is put out by Meredith Books of Des Moines, Iowa. Authorship credit is given to Penelope O'Sullivan, not a well known name in the area of bonsai. Bonsai books may be divided into two general categories, those written by an expert as a summation of the writer's experience and personal experiences in the field, and a book like this one crafted by a writer who learned about the subject by research. Some books of the later type that I have seen leave a lot to be desired, and could easily steer new bonsai hobbyists off the track with misleading or incomplete information.

This book bears direct comparison to a very familiar and well regarded bonsai publication, *The Sunset Guide to Bonsai*. Both books are meant to be introductory publications, giving basics of the artistic and horticultural practices that are part of bonsai. Bound in paper and modestly priced (\$14.95) the Ortho book is illustrated with color photographs and clear illustrations. The section on various bonsai styles is especially clear and concise because each style has several paragraphs of text with a clear photograph of a tree or planting in that style. The topic of pests and diseases has the same advantage, with photo illustrations making it clear what each symptom is and how to identify it readily.

Almost half the book is dedicated to what seems a standard fixture of bonsai primers, a listing of plant species suitable for bonsai training. Each plant is given at least one page, and the more popular types get two pages. There are the expected notations about watering, fertilizing and repotting, along with other care guidelines, as well as recommended cultivars for bonsai growing. What separates these species guides in my mind is that the publishers have made an effort to find good examples for each species, rather than using the first one that might have been available.

At 128 pages, Ortho's *All About Bonsai* is not an exhaustive treatment of the topic, but it is an effective and highly readable introduction to the hobby. It would make a fine first purchase to begin a personal bonsai library, or as a gift for the new bonsai grower. ~ Mark P.

Tree of the Month

Myrtus communis True Myrtle

A plant with a long history in cultivation, the Myrtle has much to recommend it as a bonsai subject. Hardy, readily available, forgiving of imperfect care, and adaptable to most all styles of bonsai, it seems unfairly ignored. As one German website charmingly renders it into translated

English: "As Bonsai it to see is rare and it is hardly offered in the specialized trade. This is somewhat incomprehensible, since it is by its small (leaves) and beautiful blooms an attractive plant for the organization as Bonsai".

Native Habitat: Originating in the Mediterranean and Near East, the plant's long association with humans shows in its multiple common names: Greek myrtle, sweet myrtle, foxtail myrtle and many more. It has been used as a curative and restorative in herbal medicines, and also in tanning leather, imparting a lovely warm brown sheen and distinctive aroma. The environment is sunny, tends to the dry side and the soil is not rich. All these factors helped a tough, adaptable plant evolve. It is grown both as a pot plant and in the ground. Where the climate is favorable- zones 7,8 and 9 in this country- it can grow to a height of about 10 feet or more and tends to be rather shrubby.

Growth Habits and Appearance. New shoots are a light green that matures into a deeper, emerald green color. Leaves are lanceolate (botanist talk for lance-shaped) and opposite. New shoots lignify fairly quickly and are brittle. Bark is a tan color and slightly shaggy. The plant blossoms fairly easily when allowed to grow freely, producing small white flowers that are very fuzzy, looking almost like tassels. Bonsai trimming usually limits the amount of flowering.

There are many named cultivars available, including variegated forms, but the type most often seen in the trade is a dwarf or compact form.

When growing the plant prefers as much sunshine as possible. Large bonsai and plants in training pots can certainly tolerate and even enjoy all day sun, smaller trees will benefit from some noon time shade simply to keep them from drying out. Use a standard bonsai growing medium for tropical plants, being sure that it will drain well. Keep the soil moist but don't allow to sit in water. Myrtle can take a dry living condition and I have had plants that were wilted from a missed watering come right back with no ill effects. Fertilize lightly during the growing season outdoors. Myrtle is not winter hardy, and leaves will turn bronze color in light frosts. Bring it indoors when night time temperatures fall below 45 degrees. It is a good candidate for indoor culture because it comes from a dry environment.

Bonsai Culture: The small leaves and hardy nature of the plant make it an excellent choice for bonsai of all sizes and styles. It would likely not make a convincing broom of literati, but would be suited for most any other style. When seeking out this plant be sure you are getting *Myrtus communis*-many plants are referred to as æmyrtleÆ but not all are as suitable for bonsai culture as this one is! Most garden centers and general market nurseries carry young stock that will need to grow a season or two to have a worthwhile trunk. This is easily accomplished with some with some thoughtful pruning. Just clip the terminal leader short and trim off extra branches to concentrate vigor in a few well chosen shoots. Shoppers at specialized nurseries may be lucky enough to find larger specimens available. The price difference between general market plant stock and items specifically identified as bonsai can be remarkable, so the low price may be a surprise. Myrtle is one of those plants to keep an eye out for if you happen to be traveling in the South. It is used as hedging and topiary subject in Southern California, South West and in Florida. In these areas sizable plants may be found.

Nice looking mame or shohin can be created in a short span of time. Growing a larger tree may take some time but can be worth the effort since the bark will take on a rough and shaggy look. It is possible to style simply with a grow and clip approach, though careful wiring of young wood is easy to accomplish. Old wood is brittle. ~ Mark P.

Presented for your consideration

NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center Date: 2004-07-30

Spring Through Fall, Cities Are Greener Longer Than Neighboring Rural Regions

Urban heat islands make cities greener. NASA satellite confirms urban heat islands increase rainfall around cities. Urban areas with high concentrations of buildings, roads and other artificial surfaces retain heat, creating urban heat islands. Satellite data reveal that urban heat islands increase surface temperatures compared to rural surroundings. City climates have a noticeable influence on plant growing seasons up to 10 kilometers (6 miles) away from a city's edges. Growing seasons in 70 cities in eastern North America were about 15 days longer in urban areas compared to rural areas outside of a city's influence.

"If you live in a rural area and drive regularly into the city, and if you pay attention to vegetation, you will see a difference in the growing seasons in early spring and late autumn," said Xiaoyang Zhang, the study's lead author and a researcher at Boston University. The study appeared in a recent issue of the American Geophysical Union's Geophysical Research Letters journal.

Zhang added that urban heat islands provide a very good model to assess the effects of global warming on plant growing seasons and ecosystems. As temperatures warm due to climate change, growing seasons will likely change as well. Zhang and colleagues found that for every 1 degree Celsius (C) or 1.8 Fahrenheit (F) that temperatures rose on average during the early springtime, vegetation bloomed 3 days earlier.

F) higher than the surrounding areas. These higher urban temperatures caused plants to start greening-up on average seven days earlier in spring. Similarly, in urban heat island areas, the growing season lasted eight days longer in the fall than the rural areas. EC (2.7EF) warmer than surrounding rural areas, according to the study. In late autumn to winter, the city temperatures were 1.5EC (4.1E Springtime land surface temperatures in eastern North American cities were on average 2.3

The researchers found that the effect urban heat islands have on plants' growing seasons is exponentially weaker the further away from the city one travels. Significant effects were seen up to 10 kilometers (6 miles) from city lines. In other words, the impact of urban climates on ecosystems extended out 2.4 times the size of a city itself.

Editor - Now we know why some of can get away with leaving our plants out later and can put them out earlier. It depends on where you live. I just don't know that I would want to bet my prized specimen on it. - ZAC

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.

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 - Winter protection for new members

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>

President - Ken Schultz

Past President - Jose Cueto

1st Vice President - Daniel Binder

2nd Vice President - Mark Passerello

1 year Board - Ben William

2 year Board - Jesse Welton

3 year Board - Ross Lebold

Treasurer - Richard Gurevitz

Librarian - Merida Weinstein

Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

Refreshment Coord - Linda Fields