

## **Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - November 2004**

This is the last month for renewing your club membership. If you have not renewed you will be getting, or have gotten in the last few days, a membership form. Please mail this form and your check to the club address or bring them both to the meeting. Please do not turn in just a check or cash. If you have paid and filled in a membership form and you get one of these cards by mistake, talk to the board member who you gave the information and check to. They haven't passed it on to me. I can't update the membership without the form. The club address is at the end of this newsletter. I also wish to apologize to those who have written to ask about the status of their dues check, I don't know either.

November has been a blur of activity - After having moved all my tropical trees into the basement, space is beyond tight. A timer comes on at 7AM and keeps the lights on until 9PM. Besides watering and keeping the leaves picked up, I am checking all my trees for winter work. Fortunately I have no wires that need to come off, but the ones inside are starting to grow like gangbusters again. Woo Hoo! Pruning. November is a good supply getting month. Tools get sharpened between other chores (Not! That will happen in December this year). I use winter for cleaning pots and preparing them with screen. I start checking on what new soil supplies I need to get. It is a great month to contemplate the future. Our November meeting is demonstrating a new technique for that which I have not used before, but it makes a lot of sense as I read Dan's description of it.

In our quest to make the Club's meeting more enjoyable, we are asking you to take a few minutes to answer the following Questions:

- 1) What do you like about the Club?
- 2) What would you like to see more of?
- 3) What would you like us to change?
- 4) What do you not like about the Club?
- 5) Of the Nationally know Bonsai Masters - Who would you like to see?
- 6) What new programs would you like to see at the meetings?

Bring your answers to these to the November meeting or the Holiday Dinner. We want to have programs and activities that you are interested in attending.

### **President's Column**

Autumn brings changes to the routine of bonsai tree care, temperate plants shed deciduous leaves, evergreens slow growth down even turning "dull" and tropical plants go into a modest rest phase. We respond by protecting outdoor trees for the over winter period, tropical plants may lose some leaves and require less water. All plants should have reduced fertilization especially nitrogen. This reduced growth for indoor trees lasts until after we pass the shortest day of the year or approximately December 21st. Gradually daylight hours lengthen and indoor plants pop new growth, some flower marking the beginning of a new cycle.

The Columbus Bonsai Society goes through seasonal changes too. Our Holiday dinner comes up soon, on December 7th , 6 PM, at the China Dynasty at Lane Ave. The shopping center at Lane Avenue has been totally refurbished and the restaurant is very nice. The Society will provide appetizers for every one. Members can order off the menu and there is a cash bar. Plan to attend and confirm it at the November meeting.

### Coming Attractions

In November we will cover a couple of topics relating to the late Fall of the year. We will work with tree silhouettes. Bring in a tree from your collection and we will throw shadows on drawing paper and consider styling modifications by drawing all or part of the trees shadow. This will give the tree care-taker the chance to imagine the plant without a branch or two without ever making a cut. In addition a slide show of trees without leaves from tree friendly neighborhoods will be presented. These naked trees demonstrate the underlying structures that make for good bonsai too. Finally back by popular demand we will play a video tape produced a number of years ago that will discuss proper over wintering of outdoor bonsai trees.

Next year is looking like fun already. The January meeting will be the fourth Sunday on January 23rd. Gary Clarke, the Conservatory's Director of Horticulture will give CBS members a behind the scenes look at the plant collections. We will break into two groups and while one group tours we will discuss winter care tips for indoor plants then we will switch so that each group is small enough to get an effective tour with Garry.

February meeting will tap the talent of longtime CBS member and recent bonsai pottery artist, Tom Holcomb, who will teach us Tree Biology. Within the last 20 years biologists have begun to understand trees differently. For those that want a heads up search the internet for Alex Shigo, father of modern arboriculture. In March we will have a visiting bonsai artist join us, Jim Doyle of [www.natureswaybonsai.com](http://www.natureswaybonsai.com) who will present two workshops, more on these later. So start thinking now about making plans for the third Sunday of the month (except January which will be the fourth Sunday of the month).

The CBS Board has purchased 20 mid sized Junipers and plans to schedule a separate Saturday event in the spring - Watch for the sign-up and date for this event.

### Tool Care Reminder

Idealy bonsai tools should be cleaned and oiled after each use. Turpentine is excellent for removing sap buildup on the blades. After cleaning, the tool should be wiped with an oily rag, giving special attention to the cutting surfaces of the blades. Be careful - the blades are very sharp. Most of us are not disciplined enough to clean and oil our tools after each use. If one falls into this category, be sure to perform this important chore after any use that subjects the tools to unusual amounts of sap, moisture or perspiration. Tools that are stored where they are subjected to wide temperature and humidity variations corrode at an accelerated rate due to moisture condensation.

If you are like me and have left your tools uncared for during the summer, now is the time to get them cleaned and sharpened for next year. A little time spent now will pay off next year with tools that are ready to go and almost as good as new. And, a clean sharp tool is much easier to use than a rusted and dull cutter.

## Tree of the Month

Common hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*

Common hackberry grows in lower Michigan, Ohio and other Great Lake states. It is a common volunteer in some areas and may be easily confused with some elms, as they are in the same family as Elms, Osage Orange, and Red Mulberry. Hackberry prefers rich, moist, well drained soils on river bottoms but may tolerate gravely or rocky hillsides. It is a slow grower and branches irregularly when young, transplants well and will tolerate deep shade. The bark is greenish in the first year, lustrous red-brown in the first winter. Old bark is light brown to silver grey with deep short ridges or warty excrescences.

The varieties are hardy to zone 3 except for the Enoki (Chinese variety) which will show damage below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. The local *Celtis crassifolia* is more vigorous and will mature to a larger size.

Hackberry leaf prunes well and has twiggy growth that ramifies well. The leaves are thin and papery and resemble an elm or zelkova. It is a medium sized tree with a natural shape of a short straight trunk to 12 feet breaking into several heavy limbs and many slender zig-zaging branches forming a broad rounded crown.

Kieth Scott describes them as being prone to insect attack as well as all manner of fungi. Otis says they are hardy throughout their range, desirable as a street tree and free from serious diseases.

Growing location: Full sun; filtered sun July, August if growing in a shallow pot. Or deep shade. I have had two growing in dense shade under a pear tree for the last two years and they are quite healthy.

Watering: Full and deep watering will produce better growth. It's that moist and well drained natural adaptation.

Propagation: Primarily from seed; cuttings have reduced percentage of success. Sow seed in late fall or stratify for 90 days in the refrigerator. Perhaps the best is to recognize and rescue volunteers before they are weeded. Fertilizing: Balanced May to October.

Styling: In China, hackberry is twisted into a contorted shape, then lined out until a suitable trunk size develops. Otherwise, hackberry is treated much like an elm, which is its family origin. The horizontal branching can be used to great effect.

## Book Review

Dave Joyce, *The Art of Natural Bonsai*  
Sterling Publishing, 2003

This big beautifully illustrated bonsai may prompt a bit of head scratching. Natural bonsai might seem a contradiction in terms, since the art form uses elements of nature manipulated in sometimes very unnatural ways to create an image of a tree in nature.

Joyce explains his theory in this way, that a natural bonsai has no obvious man made elements. That means that severe trunk chops or artistically carved drift wood features don't come into play, and the final styling is simple, natural and pleasing. He illustrates with well chosen illustrations, showing developments in a few of his own trees and comparing with "bad" examples. One such bad example is a fabulously contorted set of branches topped by tiny perfect spheres of foliage, on display on the grounds of the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand. Although a striking specimen, it verges on a thin line between bonsai and topiary and does not fit what Joyce defines as a good bonsai. You may find yourself agreeing with him

Sterling Publishing has produced a sturdy, well bound volume much like some of their other well regarded titles on this subject ( Sterling publishes well regarded bonsai author Herb Gustafson). The large format book has gorgeous color photographs. This is a very complete book, with in depth information about growing some familiar and some not as well known species. Growing practices as well as design principles and the combination of both that result in superior trees receive lots of coverage. Detailed case histories with year-after-year photos and text show how stock was developed from a variety of sources and gradually achieved bonsai status.

There are also discussions of bonsai garden design, methods and structures for over wintering as well as some attention paid to home made pots and rocks. An appendix covers brief care and culture requirements for a variety of trees, many of which would be familiar to British and European growers but less well known on this continent. The descriptions and photos of these plants make them interesting enough to hunt down sources for some of them!

Perhaps the only draw back is that after creating a volume that reflects three decades worth of life experience in bonsai, the author is no longer around to write further on the subject. Stricken with cancer in the final stages of publication, Dave Joyce died in 2000 as the book was nearly complete. ~Mark Passerello

### 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 17 - Bring your own tree workshop Fall color foliage - share a tree with the club.

November 21 - Fall branch Ramification and demo - Winter protection for new members

December - Dinner TBA - and something else?

January 23 - Note - 4th Sunday of the month! Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory with a

tour of the current show.

February 20 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. Emphasis on pots.

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 – Master Bonsai Artist - Jim Doyle - Nature's Way Bonsai Nursery - Critique and specimen workshop - 2 events - same day

April 17 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. ?A Korean Hornbeam forest planting demo

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

May 15 - Club Meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. A mini Mugo Pine workshop.

May 28-30, 2005 5th Annual World Bonsai Convention, Washington, D. C.

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

June 18-19 - 30th Annual Columbus Bonsai show. It's not too early to start thinking about what you want to show. Just think, you have months to get it ready for looking its best – pot, wiring, best accent plant, best display stand. At this point you have the time to do it up in traditional style.

President - Daniel Binder

Past President - Ken Schultz

1st Vice President - Mark Passerello

2nd Vice President - Ben William

1 year Board - Jose Cueto

2 year Board - Ross Lebold

3 year Board - Denny Sackett

Treasurer - Richard Gurevitz

Librarian - Merida Weinstein

Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

email to: [columbusbonsai@hotmail.com](mailto:columbusbonsai@hotmail.com) Refreshment Coord - Vacant

Please mail your membership and check to:

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