

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - March 2005

Coming Attractions

March 20, 2005 A Day with Artist Jim Doyle

A nationally known artist is being brought to you on our regular meeting day at Franklin Park Conservatory. The CBS Board of Directors has made it a goal to afford its membership the opportunity to work with well known guest artists two times a year. We encourage you to participate to learn new techniques and enjoy this wonderful experience. Remember, hands-on experience allows you to stretch yourself, perhaps moving up to that next level. Similar events offered at regional shows are two to four times the amounts listed below. Act NOW!

About the Artist: Who is Jim Doyle? Jim is a teacher and horticulturist. He earned his degree in horticulture from Delaware Valley College. Jim started Nature's Way Nursery <http://www.natureswaybonsai.com/gallery.htm> which features dwarf conifers, Japanese maples and many other pre-bonsai. He has studied with many artists and visited Japan and China to study bonsai and import materials. Jim Doyle has over 30 years of involvement with bonsai, including the American Bonsai Society Board of Directors.

Shimpaku Juniper Workshop: Beginning at 9:30 AM on March 20, 2005, a hands-on Shimpaku Workshop will afford you the opportunity to unleash your individual creativity! Unfortunately this opportunity will be limited to Twelve individuals. For a fee of \$75 you will receive a fine one-gallon pre-bonsai Shimpaku juniper selected personally by Jim for this workshop from Nature's Way Nursery. You will receive personal instruction by nationally known artist, Jim Doyle. Jim says that this workshop is ideal for the Intermediate artist, but it is also good for beginners. Shimpaku, also known as Chinese Juniper, are sometimes called the "Queen of Bonsai" the black pine, the "King." They are known for their soft foliage, which form dense clouds with pinching. Shimpaku has long been a favorite bonsai species and is relatively easy to care for. Participants will need to bring their own tools, wire, soil and a pot. If you wish to observe, the fee is \$5. The Workshop will include an in depth discussion about the care of Shimpaku juniper bonsai.

Tree Critique: This is an opportunity to work with a tree that you already own! Why would you want to have someone critique your tree? Have you ever suspected that your favorite tree could be better if an expert would just give you a little advice? Or you may choose that tree that has a special styling problem; Jim will provide you ideas on how to develop your tree into an excellent bonsai specimen. Jim Doyle will share ideas gained over thirty years of international experience on improving the styling and development of your very own tree. While time for cutting and wiring will not be provided during the critique, you should bring something to mark branches and paper to take detailed notes. The Critique Participant fee is \$25. The Critique will start at our regular Club meeting time. Since this will be our regular meeting, no observer fee will be charged for the Critique.

Registration: We still have a few spots in each group. If you want to take the session as a participant, bring your fee with you.

April 2, 2005 - 8:30 - 3:30 - 5th Annual Green Thumbs - Delaware Gardeners' Fair - The Columbus Bonsai Society will have a booth. Mark Passerrella and I plan to do a demo in the morning and another in the afternoon. Where? - Olentangy Liberty High School, 3384 Home Road - (NEW LOCATION).

At the April 17th meeting we will be presenting a Korean Hornbeam forest planting demonstration with club material. Jose Cueto will be planting the forest in a pot donated by Bob Puseker and we will be raffling this to the membership after it is established and healthy.

President's Column Repotting Begins This Month

March is the month when the start of our work season begins in earnest. In getting started repotting you can wait too long, once the soil has thawed (in the pot – in winter storage) then it's not too early to look for that root bound tree and get repotting. The problems that can cause trouble for re-potted plants early in the season are the same that can cause problems anytime you repot. Don't let the newly potted plant dry out! If you return the plant back to winter storage - and I'd recommend that – provide the newly potted plants careful watering. March is known for wind and that occasional 70 degree day that will kill a newly repotted bonsai, don't let them dry out.

Make sure there are no excessive air gaps inside the root ball - this is what the chop stick is used for. Rock the stick gently back and forth to get good soil to root contact. Fight the urge to plant the tree too high, exposing too much root crown, and don't try to shove roots into too small of a new pot. Going to a slightly bigger pot makes better sense

Bonsai growing media is now available to Club members for all your re-potting needs, stayed tuned for details. Bonsai growing media in its most basic form is starter orchid bark and either turface or haydite. Some formulas call for chicken grit, even a small dash of compost. What the club will be providing is just the basics. The basic composition for conifer is 60% haydite 40% bark while deciduous plants like more moisture so we have a mix containing 40% haydite and 60% bark. This is Brussels basic growing composition. Each member is encouraged to customize to the special needs or preferences of the grower or the plant. Customizing is not necessary particularly if you follow a good fertilization program. For tropical plants the deciduous mix will work well. Like with all bonsai subjects there's plenty of room for experimentation but never fear asking for help!

Finally the Club meeting this month will feature guest demonstrator Jim Doyle - we have a Shimpaku workshop arranged and tree critique. There are still spaces left in each workshop, call me for last minute registrations 614-205-2712. Observers are invited to both workshops for a small fee. This should be an exciting day for all to enjoy. Hope to see you there.

Tree of the Month

Dwarf Pomegranate By Ken Schultz

Dwarf Pomegranate, scientifically known as *Punica granatum nana*, is described as a slow growing shrub with bright green leaves, showy flowers and edible fruit; though I can't remember ever having eaten them. These plants come from Southeast Asia and are not hardy outdoors in Columbus. They are reportedly hardy to zones 8 and 9. They need a winter "resting" period of 50-65 degrees. They can survive temperatures down to 40 degrees. I keep them in my unheated greenhouse until the outdoor temperatures are near freezing, by this time they usually drop their leaves and I bring them into the basement with the rest of my tropicals, soon they begin to leaf out again. Pomegranates are considered to be semi-tropicals, because of their need to go into a resting period, they aren't for everyone. The leaves are narrow, spear shaped and smooth edged. They can be over 1" long. The leaves are also thin and if you miss a watering on a hot summer day may get burned along the edge. Because of their leaf size most specimen bonsai are 15"-20" tall

During their resting period watering should be reduced, in fact over watering in winter is usually my weakness. This results in root rot with this plant, but at the same time waiting for them to dry out will result in limp leaves. Too much of either will make the leaves drop. The plant will weaken and eventually die (yep I've killed them, but I keep trying). New leaves have a slight coppery color and in bright light, which you will need to encourage flowering, they do get a reddish edge on the leaves. Needless to say they like well drained bonsai soil; though one reference said they like a heavy soil to promote flowering, another attributes flowering to being slightly pot bound. If you are going to repot, do so in mid spring, when the buds are developing. Watering is tricky with this plant; try to keep it damp, without rotting it. Feeding during growth is every 10 days using half strength Miracle Grow, with a monthly dose of fish emulsion.

The flowers are normally flame orange, pear shaped and typically hang with their opening tipped downward. Color varieties range from red to yellow, Four Seasons of Bonsai showed a white flowered variety. There are non-dwarf varieties, which have coarser growth habits. These may grow to 10-20 feet high in the ground; the dwarf varieties are smaller reaching only 18". They may occasionally be found in greenhouses where bonsai are not sold. One year I found them in among the indoor greenhouse plants in one-gallon pots for \$6.00, I bought two; unfortunately they were pot bound and while they survived the initial repotting and a very hot dry summer, I watered them to death when I brought them indoors. The bonsai specimens are much more costly, and usually not very large, as the dwarf varieties grow very slowly. While a sunny location is needed, one source said that some shade is recommended starting mid summer. If too shady they may not flower. You are also cautioned that too much water and fertilizer will give wonderful leaf growth, but few flowers, much like a Bougainvillea.

Flowering and bonsai are almost mutually exclusive terms, as the flowers form at the end of new shoots from mid-summer to fall. Pruning results in a very dense twiggy plant, with few flowers. When you take the plant outdoors and it responds by putting on some very quick growth, you will need to decide where you want it to flower and be willing to sacrifice good bonsai shape until you are ready to put it into dormancy. The other branches will need to be pruned frequently to keep them from becoming too leggy. Wiring is very tricky as the wood is brittle and will easily snap rather than bend; fortunately, they back bud easily. Fruit will weaken the tree's strength if left to develop. The trimming in early spring may be used to start new plants. If you find a multi-stemmed shrub you may be able to divide it into two acceptable trees. Because this

plant is naturally a shrub, you will need to prune off buds that will emerge near the soil or on your trunk.

The bark on an older specimen will eventually get craggy, younger tree's bark is smooth gray. The trunks on older trees also seem to twist, these may be a variety known as Nejikan (plan to spend more for these). Because it flowers, pomegranates look best in a glazed pot, especially blue. However be warned, do not use a shallow pot.

Book of the Month

Bonsai: A guide to successful care and creation By Constance Tindale

This book was published in 2001 in England. Constance Tindale lives in England and winters in Egypt. I say that up front so that if you decide to purchase this or any of the books I review, you are aware that there may be some climatic issues with growing advice. England has a milder climate, and the materials used for bonsai may differ. I selected this book for my personal library for a number of reasons. Having read and reviewed a number of books, I usually stand in the bookstore and try to decide: Are the photos decent? Did I see a project or styling series that I may want to try? Are there species of trees that I have, or wish I had discussed in the text? This book passed all the tests, and I found it at a half price bookstore, making it affordable.

I previously reported on the Classic Bonsai of Japan book, it is first a photo gallery of outstanding specimens; in contrast this book has a good deal of text with smaller photographs illustrating the points that the author is trying to make.

This book is organized into four major parts; 1) Knowing the tree; part one covers history, how trees grow, bonsai sizes and shapes and buying and growing bonsai material. This last section is done very well. 2) Caring for the tree; part two covers tools and pots, watering, feeding and display, maintenance pruning, repotting, and pests and diseases. This section alone contains more good basic information than many other books on the market. 3) Creating the Tree, part three covers: suitable bonsai stock, jins and sharis, wiring, rocks and landscapes and groups and rafts. The wiring chapter has a number of very good photo series that take the reader from fairly rough stock through initial styling. Part 4 covers project and case histories. One of the projects is a very do-able Saikai.

If there is a problem with this book, it is that it presents an amazing amount of information. Some of the tidbits are placed in a yellow field to bring attention to the subject presented. I am still discovering new information in this book. ~ Ken Schultz

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.

March 20 - Master Bonsai Artist - Jim Doyle - Nature's Way Bonsai Nursery - Critique and specimen workshop - 2 events - same day
April 2, 2005 - 8:30 - 3:30 - 5th Annual Green Thumbs - Delaware Gardeners' Fair
April 17 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. A Korean Hornbeam forest planting demonstration by Jose Cueto.
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 B pot, wiring, best accent plant, best display stand. At this point you have the time to do it up in traditional style.
July 17 - Club meeting is a Field Trip to the Cincinnati Krohn Conservatory
August 21 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. Elections. Tropical subjects w/cutting exchange
September 18 - Picnic
October 16 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. Guest artist Keith Scott. Tentatively a Scotts Pine/Juniper Demo and tree critique.
November 20 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory.

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