

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - June 2005

If you didn't go to Dawes for their show you really missed it. I was there, and I missed the show, but got a big boost in hands on advanced techniques. I took the BYOT class from Craig Cousins and it was Great! (Excuse me if I sound like Tony the Tiger.) I can't emphasize enough that taking a challenging tree to a class like that is priceless. For only \$50 I got more education than I have had in a long time, if ever at one time. I took in a Yew that I rescued out of a dumpster 4 years ago, about 3 1/2 feet tall and about a 9" caliper trunk. It has two trunks and I was expecting to sacrifice one and go with something windswept. Craig looked at it and said that's the easy way out. Try this instead. - Which is exactly why I took it. I didn't have a strong vision for where that tree needed to go. I got tutored in trunk splitting, raffia, extreme bending, more Jin and wiring than I've done in a while and after we ran out of 6 and 4 gauge wire - we resorted to tie downs. I now have a two tree clump with a very jinned/shari base and lots of hands on experience to tackle the other Yew I dug out three years ago. The side bonus is having your friends who took the course stopping by about 3-4 hours into the project and the "Wow" comments when they see what you are doing. I was there about 7 hours working on it and could have stayed longer if I hadn't over scheduled the day with getting tickets to the symphony. Perfect ending to a great day. Find a class with a master, bring in a challenge, learn a lot.

Coming Attractions

Well, our June show for one thing. Bring your trees Friday evening, or (ONLY if you send in your registrations now) Saturday morning. If you bring your registration on Saturday morning your tree will have no information. Email your registration to Merrida mekkisan@yahoo.com or columbusbonsai@hotmail.com ASAP! Right now we have three (3) registrations. I don't think that is going to be a very good show. So get those registrations to us so Merrida can letter the cards. See you all there on Saturday and Sunday for the show and take down.

July is our road trip to the Krohn Conservatory in Cincinnati. Sign up and find out where we will be meeting to caravan down. If you are not able to attend the road trip we will have a video on the care and feeding of Ponderosa Pines by Andrew Smith of Golden Arrowwood Bonsai.

In August we will be working on tropicals and having a cutting exchange.

Tree of the Month

Species: Common name: Scots or Scotch Pine

Botanical name: *Pinus sylvestris*

Japanese name: No equivalent

Scots Pine is a two needle pine with "short" 1 to three inch bluish-green needles. These needles can be reduced in length with proper cultivation techniques. The needles are somewhat twisted. It is a fast growing pine, with a mature height of 75 feet, spreading to 25 feet. The tree has unique, easily recognized orange bark on branches and upper trunk, darkening somewhat with age. It's usually seen as a Christmas tree or landscape specimen, but is also grown for lumber production.

This species is native to Scotland and northern Europe across to Siberia. In the Scottish Caledonian Islands where it is native, mature trees can be 250 years old growing straight and tall, often used for lumber.

The Scots pine most of us are used to are small and crooked because of the seeds they grew from. Those seeds came from trees that grew in a specific mountainous area and were short, stunted, and crooked. When the tree was introduced into the US after WWI, people interested in making a few dollars energetically gathered bushels of pine cones, but it was easier to collect the cones that came from those short, crooked trees rather than from the tall ones. So people searched out the short, squatty ones for easy picking. Viola, America has, for the most part, that variety of Scots pine.

Advantages: Wide hardiness range; readily available from any of dozens of nurseries in the Midwest; good color: deep, rich green; excellent crusty bark even when young; reacts well to root pruning; produces excellent buttress roots; sends out adventitious buds after terminals are pinched; tolerates dry as well as wet conditions and most soils, thus will grow well in a pot. Dwarf forms are available and excellent as well. The tree will tolerate full sun.

Disadvantages: The Scots Pine does acquire pine needle cast, the larvae or the European saw fly and pine needle scale but these problems can be controlled by a rose spray.

Keith Scott rates the tree as a 10 on a scale of 1 to 10

Watering: Keep soil evenly moist: damp to the touch. Be sure to pot the pine in coarse soil.

Fertilizing: Use a balanced fertilizer every week or two during the growing season.

Over-wintering: The Scots Pine is so hardy that it needs little protection in most Midwest winters. (Zone 4) Zone 3 will need to protect from wind.

Scots pine does well with most upright styles. Informal upright is a natural. Avoid cascade and semi-cascade.

Look out for sawfly larvae and do not let it dry out.

An additional reminder that is good for many pines, Craig Cousins had everyone working on the Mugo pines for the Dawes workshop and a couple of people that brought in other pines to work on. Trim off last years needles about 1/8 inch off the branch. This encourages back budding in this area to help define or further develop the foliage pads. For trees in development, take off all but the last four or five sets of needles even on new growth. Wire to the tip to form the foliage pads.

Book of the Month

The Origin and Cultivation of Shade and Ornamental Trees
Li, Hui-Lin
1963, University of Pennsylvania Press

Review by Ross D. Lebold

Since time immemorial, humanity has selected useful plants and cultivated them to produce food and fiber. These selections were further refined to produce plants that bore more fruit or for particular palatability. Today, this practice still occurs as disease resistance, drought tolerance, added nutritional value and other traits are incorporated into crops. While we are all familiar with the ongoing development of most food plants, many of our shade and ornamental trees have also undergone significant breeding. Many people may take for granted the trees in their yards and public areas, not knowing that there may be a history to them that goes back hundreds of years. It is very likely that these species were manipulated for certain favorable traits and may not even resemble their wild counterparts.

In *The Origin and Cultivation of Shade and Ornamental Trees*, Li presents an overview of tree cultivation from the dawn of humanity to the present and cites the utilitarian, spiritual and economic bases of this activity and discusses the important role trade and exploration played in the distribution of ornamentals. Li also provides a thorough reference of the cultivated histories of most common ornamental species. While the majority of the species described are native to Asia, there are also several references of North American species' introduction to and cultivation in Europe and Asia.

Although the book is reference-like in style, there are several sections that provide extensive case histories. Most notable of which are the chapters on ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) and dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). Another compelling chapter deals with those cultivated trees that are presumed to be extinct in the wild. Perhaps the best known example is that of the native franklin tree (*Frankliniana altamaha*) which was collected in Georgia by explorer and naturalist, John Bartram in the 1700's. The tree has since disappeared from the wild, and perhaps all franklin trees in cultivation are the progeny of Bartram's collections. Li also cites, the apricot as another cultivated tree with no known wild population remaining.

An excellent account of the history of Ginkgo is presented in the book. Ginkgo, long cultivated and revered in China and Japan was thought to be extinct in the wild. Several botanical explorers searched China for wild populations and failed. By the early 20th century, a few apparently wild groves were located throughout China.

Just as interesting is the tale of the discovery of the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in China in 1941. This species was previously known only from fossil specimens thought to be related to *Sequoia* or *Taxodium*. A Chinese botanist discovered the tree during the Japanese occupation of China during World War II. Much to the astonishment of botanists and paleobotanists alike, the collected specimens were nearly identical to the fossil specimens. This resulted in several other expeditions to collect cuttings and seeds for cultivation for research and commerce purposes.

Unfortunately, some sections seem to be much less thorough. For example, all needle conifers, a large, diverse and very important group - were combined into one brief chapter. In other sections, the historic accounts are replaced with tables and lists. Overall, *The Origin and Cultivation of*

Shade and Ornamental Trees provides interesting reading to the tree enthusiast and Li presents a lot of information on selected species through well-written narratives.

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.

June 18-19 - 30th Annual Columbus Bonsai show.

June 21 - Dawes - Tropical Plant Repotting

July 17 - Club meeting is a Field Trip to the Cincinnati Krohn Conservatory for members not traveling to the Krohn, there will be a video of ponderosa pine techniques at FPC.

July 19 - Dawes - Jining/leaf pruning

August 21 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. Elections. Tropical subjects w/cutting exchange

August 16 - Dawes - fertilizer making

September 18 - Picnic

Sept 20 - Dawes - Road trip/Demo

October 16 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory. Guest artist Keith Scott. Tentatively a Scotts Pine/Juniper Demo and tree critique.

Oct 18 - Dawes - Over-Wintering

November 20 - Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory.

Nov 15 - Dawes - Pot selection/Orientation

December TBA - Holiday dinner

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

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton