

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - October 2005

The Club picnic seemed to be a success for most of us. (Sorry - we didn't know they were going to pick that weekend to rip out the road by the Library.) We had a great time at Whetstone Park. Good food, company, and a guided tour of the new prairie that Wild Ones is putting in (thanks Shelby!). We had member sales, trades, and a giveaway at the end. We had a discussion, and I think the consensus is that the traditional Dog Show doesn't meet its own criteria - its dead in the pot. So we are going to retire the award for some time. If there is enough interest at some future time it may be resuscitated, but for now we are going to pull the plug and let it be finished statuary.

Thanks to the following Volunteers for helping make our booth a success at "An Affair of the Hort!" We really met a lot of nice people, and hopefully some will become new members, Say "Hi" to them if you see them at the meeting. We also sold a lot of trees!

Zack Clayton
Shelby Conrad
Doc Gurevitz
Mary Jane Howell
Ross Lebold
Sonny Meister
Sara Nguyen (for feeding us)
Mark Passerello
Denny Sackett

Coming Attractions

The Club's October meeting will feature a return visit to Columbus by Keith Scott, a very well regarded and respected bonsai artist. Keith has trees in "Outstanding American Bonsai", by Randy Clark, and has a tree in the National Collection. Keith's presentation will be a "bring your own tree" workshop, with each participant receiving some individual one-on-one time to discuss in detail changes or adjustments to one tree. Participation is limited and the sign up list is nearly full but there is still space for a lucky few with email or phone reservations. If you are interested in signing up for one of the last few spots, or being on a stand by list, please email Mark Passerello. The cost of the Workshop is \$25.

Keith has set a few guidelines for the work shop. Any sort of material is appropriate, so hardy or tropical, deciduous or evergreen, large or small will be fine. Plants in training or "finished" in a pot are welcome. One restriction: Keith wants to make sure the trees in the workshop should be trees that the grower has had for a while and may even worked on to some extent-no raw stock. In Keith's own words: ". . . not something that a person picked up at Kmart on the way to the workshop." The only other real restriction is that although observers are welcome, they are listening and watching only. To make the most of Keith's time, questions and discussion will be limited to participants in the workshop.

Work shop participants are encouraged to bring their tools and do some work on their trees during the meeting, if it is the right time of year to do such things; or to be sure to have pencils, pens, sketchbook or note pad to record ideas and suggestions.

November will have a variation on the “Four Corners” that we have done in the past. There will be a tool sharpening station available and there will be several stations dedicated to “Conceptualizing Your Tree”, shadow drawings and “paint pruning.” Bring in a tree that you are considering for restyling or major pruning. We will have stations set up to project a shadow, sketching materials to trace your ideas and twist ties or white out to mark the branches that will be going away after the styling. We will also have a short session on which trees will be safe to work on in November and which you should wait to prune until spring.

December 6th - our holiday dinner and program will be at the Imperial Garden on Bethel Road at Sawmill. We have reports that this is a very good restaurant and has an excellent selection of traditional choices as well as a Chinese menu for the adventurous. Details to follow.

Tree of the Month: Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*

As an herbal bonsai, rosemary has it all, tiny needle like foliage, stems that are covered with an exfoliating bark similar to *chamaecyparis*, scent and perfectly proportioned flowers.

Rosemary is a long-lived, semi-woody, perennial herb. With pruning, fertilizer and light it can become a really nice bonsai in one or two years. In the wild or in the ground rosemary can reach a height of 48" in three years. Reportedly, some bonsai rosemary specimens have been in training for over 30 years. I saw a photo of a specimen on the Internet that was collected in Italy reported to be that old. Its trunk was thick and even sported some shari. Because rosemary's leaves are needle-like, the plant is most often grown in the same bonsai styles as pines.

Rosemary has been cultivated as an herb and ornamental for thousands of years. They are available in at least twenty different cultivars sporting flowers that are blue, violet, pink, or white. They are very fragrant, some cultivars smell like pine or lemon. They also have various growth habits such as upright, twisting, and creeping. I recently discovered one called “Blue Boy” (yes it has nice blue flowers) with shorter needles, making them even more desirable for bonsai training.

In our area rosemary cannot be grown out-of-doors all year round. They naturally grow in zones 7 and 8. When the temperatures fall below freezing they need to come indoors to a very sunny location or under lights. Before first frost date bring your rosemary indoors with the rest of your tropical and semi-hardy trees. However, rosemary can withstand brief 20F temperatures as long as the roots don't freeze. Indoors they appreciate cooler temperatures for a short resting period. During the winter they prefer cool days (~70F) and cooler nights (65-60F) with lots of morning sun, no afternoon sun, (east, not west windows) and lots of air circulation. I run a fan to prevent heat buildup under my lights

Out doors to promote flowering and make them look their best rosemary need full sun for a minimum of 6 hours per day during spring/summer/autumn. When over-wintering indoors, I give

mine 14 hours under fluorescents. I also have kept one for a few years in a south-facing window. At a minimum find a sunny spot with direct morning sun. If you don't the plant will become spindly and the inner needles will die.

Rosemary does not like wet feet. Unlike serissa they can survive dry soil for a day or two. Let the soil dry out almost completely then water. Use a chopstick to determine soil moisture. When the chopstick is pulled out and feels dry - water. I try to water all my trees in the morning to prevent the roots from sitting in water overnight. Remember it's from the Mediterranean where it's dry; I've killed at least one due to over watering. I especially have a problem when they are next to a ficus!

Humidity should be maintained around 50% (relative). I use of a humidity tray filled with aquarium gravel under all my plants under lights.

Repot your rosemary every other year in a well-drained mix of 50% organics such as screened fir or pine bark and 50% inorganic (pumice, perlite, haydite, etc). Add limestone or dolomite to the soil mix to buffer the pH of the soil mix. Do not add peat moss. (I add some for boxwood and azaleas and for other acid lovers). Rosemary is subject to root rot in poorly draining soils or when grown in inadequate light.

The soil in the Mediterranean area tends to be alkaline. So unlike azaleas, and other acid loving plants, use a non-acidic liquid fertilizer every other week as long as day temperatures are above 50F. During the winter to allow for resting, reduce feeding to once monthly. Watch for nitrogen deficiency (yellowing or no flowering), Osmocote (36:18:12) works well. Reportedly rosemary is tough so no dilution of your fertilizer is needed.

Try to limit any root pruning to the early spring, before the new growth gets too advanced. DO NOT remove more than 1/3 of the roots during any year. Care following repotting is critical. The roots are somewhat slow to recover and a healthy plant can wither and die if you aren't careful.

Since different varieties of Rosemary are upright or prostrate, a number of styles can be used. *Rosmarinus officinalis* lends itself to an informal upright style. The prostrate varieties can be formed into everything from informal upright to cascade, or windswept. The only style that the species does not lend itself to is root-over-rock. I saw a large bonsai specimen at the Cleveland Home and Flower Show 4 years ago in a 3' tall informal upright style. It was a display at a vendor from Huron County, near Norwalk, Ohio. Of course I bought a starter plant in a 3" pot. Clip and grow is the best training method since the wood is impossible to bend without breaking once it lignifies. Pinch new growth after the first sets of leaves completely open to control the length of the internodes. To encourage growth on lower branched cut back the top foliage to old wood mid to late July.

Rosemary is propagated from softwood and semi-hardwood cuttings in summer using Rootone TM, or Hormex #1 or #3 TM or Dip and Grow TM. Cuttings are placed in sand and should root in 2-4 weeks.

Book of the Month

This space available for an aspiring author.

Care Tips: Fall

It will be frosting soon. Have you prepared your indoor tree area for that fateful night when you do the bonsai shuffle? Are you going to take them in and out until it is constantly too cold to be outside? I don't, but many do. I have an unheated greenhouse so I stage the indoor trees there until it gets pretty cold. I try to gage the temperature dips at night to judge that day that they need to come indoors. In the interim, I spray them to get rid of unwelcome passengers. It seems to hold off the first outbreak of white fly by at least a month.

Outdoor with lower temperatures, watering becomes more of a look and see, rather than, just water – it was hot. Cool weather coupled with cloudy days can let you skip water most plants a few days out of the week. Why “most” and not all, you ask? Because pots are different sizes and trees use water at different rates, but most importantly, pot bound trees really don't have any soil left in their pots to hold water. You can see the water having trouble soaking in, or just running off. Mark these to be repotted first in the spring. If they are really bad, you may want to stick them in the ground (without their pot) soon. If you don't they may dry out and die. At the very least they will probably break their posts during the winter.

If you can, sort your trees into their known or suspected climatic zones, those that aren't nearly as hardy will need more protection. These include some Chinese elms and Japanese maples. You may hear some members say they put them in their garage for the winter, mine is too warm. As you stage your indoor trees to bring them inside, put them in a shadier area because they will soon need to get used to a lower amount of light. This reduction may reduce the leaf drop you will get when you bring them in.

I unwire trees that have had their wire on for more than three months, simply because with my collection, in the spring when the sap begins to flow, wire will quickly cut in. Also this is a good time to wire some trees that you didn't have time for in the spring. While the wire won't do much due to the slow or non-existent rate of growth in the winter you can leave the wire on a bit longer than you can when you wire in the spring. For the same reasons, you should have stopped or scaled back nitrogen fertilizers on your outdoor trees (new growth may die because it hasn't had a chance to harden before winter, and indoor trees need a rest to, so slow down on them – or wait until you bring them in and they have a chance to adjust. Mine usually stop growing for awhile, but then you will notice new growth due to your warmer house conditions.

As you handle your outdoor trees to get them ready to store in a non-windy, non-sunny location until you are sure that it's safe to bring them out, you can do some pruning or wiring. You may discover some trees have really branched out and you missed pinching or pruning them. Do it now so the side buds get the strength of those spring growth hormones the trees put into the first flush of growth. Lay in some mulch to protect the root balls from freezing too hard. And if you have trees that give a great fall color show – move them to center stage!

~ Ken Schultz

A suggestion from Cave Bogen taken from the PBA “Clippings”:

As you are preparing your trees for winter make your wish list for spring work and the materials

you will need. Ex: a shallow 6x8" oval pot for that maple. Be specific about the size shape and color of what you want in a pot.

You might also want to mark spring pruning and repotting jobs with a plastic stake.

~ ZAC

Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outer Belt

Unless otherwise noted, The Columbus Bonsai Society meets the third Sunday of every month at 2:00 pm. at the Franklin Park Conservatory. Non-members are welcome! Our calendar for 2006 is filling up fast! Stay tuned for a full list of topics, workshops, and demonstrations!

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.

2005

October 16: CBS meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory with guest artist Keith Scott.

BYOT workshop and critique, \$25. Limited spaces still available!

October 18: Dawes: Over-Wintering

November 20: CBS meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory

November 15: Dawes: Pot selection/Orientation

December 6: CBS Holiday dinner at Imperial Garden

2006

January 15: "So you got a Bonsai for Christmas" and other TBA.

April 23: Meeting will be held on 4th Sunday of the Month, no meeting on Easter!

June 17-18: All Ohio Bonsai Show at Franklin Park Conservatory

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