

# Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - November 2005

Who would have thought it would stay this warm so late into the year? Hope you have kept your plants watered as bone dry pots now will yield bone dry sticks in spring. And we have no excuses for not doing our fall maintenance.

## President's Column

Our Club is beginning to examine the needs of our members in an organized way. We started with our October meeting. We are tracking member participation and will be gathering suggestions on a regular basis. We will ask for some basic information in a sign-in format and pass out 3X5 note cards for suggestions, a suggestion box format without the box. The idea is that while we regularly recruit new members we have more difficulty retaining them. Bonsai is a difficult hobby for the beginner, this partly explains why people might try the Club out but after a little while stop going to meetings. If we can better understand the interest of members new and returning, we can better select programs and activities that appeal to a better range of bonsai enthusiasts. While all Board members are interested in cultivation our membership new Board member, Wendy Fissel, is making a concerted effort to collect some data. I am encouraged by this because while we looked at building our Club up for awhile we have never gotten particularly serious about it, now we are. Help us provide you with good programs that appeal to your bonsai interest. ~ Dan Binder

## Coming Attractions

November will have a variation on the "Four Corners" that we have done in the past. Rather than just one program, the meeting will highlight four different topics and activities appropriate for bonsai at this time of year. Small groups will rotate through each station. Those attending the meeting can sit in on all four topics if they choose, or can be selective and take in as many or as few as they want. The four topics will be:

! Paint Pruning. Using paint ( and other marking systems) to plan ahead and mark out pruning plans on a tree that has lost its leaves for winter.

! Tool Care and Sharpening. The right tool makes the job easier and more effective, and good tools must have good care to work they way they should.

! Winter Care. Always a topic that raises questions and debate. Methods and strategies to get your trees through the winter months safely.

! Swap Meet Table. The usual club sale items, PLUS great stuff from the membership. You are encouraged to clean out your closets and storage areas, thin out the plants on your benches and under your lights. Bonsai stuff is best, but anything horticultural is good too.

December 6th - Tuesday, at 6:30 - 7:00 gathering time, our holiday dinner and program will be at the Imperial Garden on Hayden Run just west of the Bethel/Hayden Run Split. We have experience that this is a very good restaurant and has an excellent selection of traditional choices as well as a Chinese menu for the adventurous. The Club has arraigned for a Buffet style offering of food so everyone should be able to find something to enjoy. I personally recommend the Fish with Hot Schechwan Pepper and the KungPao Triple delight. Imperial Garden will have the buffet ready for us at 7pm on the 6th. They have put a ton of things on the buffet, everything we wanted and a bit more (plus one soup), for one price: Including tax and required tip it comes to

\$11 per person. They expect 30-40 people and they can scale to accommodate more as needed. We should practically have the whole place to ourselves as Tuesday is usually a light night for them. Ross is adapting a program he has done for The Nature Conservancy on invasive species for us. Sounds like a good night out.

From Sawmill turn west on Bethel, bear right at the split and turn right into the plaza. Imperial Garden is about half way back in the shops along the side.

## Tree of the Month

### Summary of Keith Scott's Visit

Yes, the Columbus Bonsai Society was very lucky indeed. Mr. Scott was on target with his comments about a variety of trees presented to him at our October meeting. One thing I noticed was his focus on the Nebari of the trees that we had brought to share with him and our fellow Bonsai enthusiasts. And the price (for anyone who hasn't participated in a tree critique by an expert the caliber of Keith Scott) was a genuine bargain! Here are a few notes that I wrote from the things Keith Scott told us about the trees that he critiqued.

Tree 1 – a *Chamaecyparis*: Keith suggested that the owner look at John Naka's book. The top of this species should be rounded not triangular like a pine. The foliage should be trained into clouds. The minor roots at the base should be trimmed to make the roots radiate out from the trunk. This surface root pruning is OK to do until the tree is frozen. He suggested when repotted that this type of tree should be in an oval pot.

Tree 2 – Juniper "San Hosea?" – Eliminate the small jin that clutters the design. This tree had branches that had been cut; Keith said to jin them so that they did not look cut. When repotting – raise the tree up so that its buttress is about 1" above the edge of the pot. This tree is about 2 feet tall. The tree had a pair of branches one over the other; the top one was to be removed. The minor branches needed to be wired down to make the tree look older.

Tree 3 – Shimpaku – the first branch on the right was to be jinned. There was already a lower branch that had been jinned. In the spring Keith recommended repotting this tree so that the first branch is parallel to the ground. He said that Shimpaku have weak root systems, so he recommends burying the pot to the rim in the winter. He said that Shimpaku, Trident Maple, Scots Pine and Smooth Bark Elm were his favorite species for bonsai. He said that with enough sun, water and fertilizer a healthy Shimpaku should put on 6" of growth a year.

Tree 4- American White Spruce – He wanted the lowest branch towards the back taken off and the next lowest branch, to the left jinned. In the spring when the candles come out he wanted the owner to work on reducing branch length. He said that the tree had become leggy and needed to be worked back. He said that it needed more light and that the pot seemed to busy for his taste.

Tree 5 – Elm – Keith identified it as a Formosa Elm and stated that it was not hardy here for outdoors. Again he drew our attention to the roots as they radiated out from the nebari. He

wanted surface roots to touch the soil and radiate out. Again he said this was a rounded top tree that should have foliage pad clouds.

Tree 6 – San Jose Juniper. He said that these were pokey. To trim he said that they need to be cut between the buds to control the length of the branches.

Tree 7 – Smooth Bark Elm – *Ulmus carpinifolia* - Keith said that this was one of his favorite species for bonsai. In the spring they have small red blossoms. He said this tree was too high in its pot and needed to have some of its bottom sheared off in the spring when it was repotted. It needs full sun and lots of water. He suggested that this tree be trained in a two top style. The tree that Keith has in the National Arboretum is of the same species. There were a few roots that he suggested be cut to lower the nebari to make it look larger. He said that the roots should be left because after they were cut they would bud and form new trees. He cut two and propped them away from the trunk. He said they would develop buds now but in the spring such budding is more rapid.

Tree 8 – Juniper procumbens - Nana – He noted that the tree was tied into the pot with wire that was too thin. He said that we should never use wire less than 3.0 mm to wire roots. This tree had three hefty back branches that were cut. Keith suggested taking them off and working with the smaller branches. He suggested that the top needed to be pinched back to encourage bottom growth. As another styling idea he suggested turning the tree 90 degrees. Perhaps developing two tops. He said that Junipers need lots of sun and water.

Tree 9- Korean Hornbeam – He said that the natural shape of the hornbeam is a rounded crown. This tree needed to be potted lower, and he noted that he liked his bonsai to have a more open branching pattern. Take off all the new growth that has grown straight up. He noted that Korean Hornbeam are hardy to about 20 below (F), but they cannot take a lot of fertilizer especially liquid, this causes them to have leaf burn and may kill the tree. He said that their natural size is about 10 feet tall with about a 12 foot spread.

Tree 10 – Wisteria – This tree had moss in the pot and up the trunk. Keith went into great detail as to why it is necessary to keep the moss off the trunk – He said it is OK between the roots, but clean it off the trunk with a brush at least once a year. He said that the water that the moss holds produces rot in the bark. He said he uses Daconil, Funginex, or dormant rose spray to control fungus and recommended that we do that. He said Orchard Spray was good to – on all types of trees, not just fruit trees. One side of this specimen had died. Keith noted that Wisteria will do that. He said to jin the dead side and work the wood with a brass brush and then to treat the wood with rose spray to slow down any rotting. He noted that Wisteria are rapid growers, and that they should be pruned after they bloom in July. He also said that the soil needs to be kept damp to the touch.

Tree 11- Japanese Quince – Again he brushed the moss from the trunk. He said that it needed more sun than it had been getting. Also this tree does best when its pot is placed directly on the ground. That way its roots won't dry as quickly. He suggested that we look up flowering trees on the Internet and note how to get them to blossom. He said even moisture gives more blossoms

(on the ground). He said leaves produce roots. Roots do not produce leaves. He told us that when the blossoms come, then prune back to the blossoms in the spring.

Keith mentioned that he started teaching bonsai in 1964. He said that he has even taught in Japan, though his Japanese wasn't very good. But now he doesn't lecture anymore, but he loves to talk about trees. We were very lucky that we heard him talk about our trees. ~ Ken Schultz

Book of the Month

Step-by-Step Create Your Own Bonsai By: Ken Norman

This book is designed for the beginner. It was published in 1996 in England. The book is a little heavier on photographs than it is text. It is organized into six chapters and has just under 100 pages. The first chapter has fairly simple text and illustrates the typical subject, history, soil, tools, and pots. The second chapter is about the bonsai year dividing tasks between the seasons. Spring, wiring and potting; Summer, watering and watching when to take the wire off; Autumn, more wire watching, reduced watering, preparing for winter. And finally, Winter, protecting trees that need it, buying pots and mixing soil to get ready for repotting in spring. The photographs in this chapter though few, show trees in various seasons.

The third chapter, Basic Bonsai Techniques, covers a wide variety of pruning techniques, both branches, pinching, and root pruning. Bonsai Styles is the fourth chapter. This chapter actually shows styling nursery stock into the various styles of bonsai. Because the material is similar to what anyone of us can find in almost any nursery. This chapter actually shows what the trees look like after their very first styling. To me this chapter is probably the one reason to buy this book, because so many others never show the raw stock – like we can actually buy, being styled for the first time. It is frustrating for the beginning bonsai enthusiast to see spectacular trees of costly material being refined by advanced techniques.

The fifth chapter shows five different plants that can be used for indoor bonsai; Ficus, Sageretta thezans, aralia, Crassula and myrtle. He uses two pots of Aralia to make a landscape, and three myrtles to create a miniature landscape. He says that this is because myrtle is usually only available as young plant material.

The final chapter is Care and Maintenance. He starts off reviewing pruning and pinching techniques, he then talks about watering and feeding, followed by insects and diseases. Then to my surprise he spends four pages on exhibiting your bonsai, including getting a tree ready to show. He states that hygiene is important to your tree's health so be sure to clean up around them and keep their pots clean. In winter preparation he shows using a plastic basket, setting two bonsai in it and then covering the pots and a little of the trunk with milled humus to protect them from severe winter frosts.

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.

November 20: Club meeting at Franklin Park Conservatory.

Nov 15: Dawes - Pot selection/Orientation

December 6: Tuesday, Gather at 6:30 - 7:00 - Holiday dinner at Imperial Garden

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January 15: Hypertufa slab workshop. This will provide everyone with a slab for the grove planting workshop for April.

February 19: Seeds, and keeping your tropicals healthy indoors.

March 19: Soil workshop, repotting, pot selection.

April 16: Easter! NO meeting

April 23: 4th Sunday of the Month, a forest planting workshop.

May 21: Refining your Styles - getting ready for the show. How to judge lecture.

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

July 16: BYOT workshop – maybe that tree you got at the show.

August 20: Tropicals – NOT FICUS

September 17: Field Trip to Adena and garden tour.

October 15: Chamaecyparis and Off Beat Junipers – Perhaps a guest master.

November 19: Ramification and Fall wiring.

December : Holiday Dinner

President - Daniel Binder

Past President - Ken Schultz

1st Vice President - Mark Passerello

2nd Vice President - Ben William

1 year Board - Denny Sackett

2 year Board - Ross Lebold

3 year Board - Wendy Fissel

Treasurer - Richard Gurevitz

Secretary - Chris "Pootsie" Conomy

Librarian - Merida Weinstein

Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

Resident Advisor - Jose Cueto

Refreshment Coordinator - Vacant

email to: ColumbusBonsai@hotmail.com

IF you have not already renewed your membership, please do so Now, while you are thinking about it.