

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - February 2006

Okay this winter is just being weird. This is the time when we should be sharpening our tools and making sure they are clean for the spring rush. You have disinfected them from last year haven't you? I am looking at how much soil I will need, what pots I have and if I need any new ones for trees moving up in style and class. And planning on where my benches will be going next year. My yard is in the middle of a major make over as I have taken out an old apple, drastically pruned another, and installed a hot tub in an area that used to have benches. We are also planning the footprint of a new deck. Winter - it's a great time for planning and dreaming. I just hope there are enough hours to get it all done when warm weather shows up.

Coming Attractions

February will feature growing from scratch - seeds and cuttings. We will be in the Palm House for this meeting. For new members this is accessed from the second floor of the conservatory straight all the way to the back past the indoor bonsai display. We will be talking about strategies for starting from seed, how to succeed with cuttings, and Tom Holcomb will be talking about air layering. We will have vermiculite, peat moss, sandwich bags and five varieties of seeds for workshop participants. We are planning to have:

1. Pitch Pine, *Pinus rigida*
2. Gingko Biloba
3. Trident Maple, *Acer buergeranum*
4. Yeddo Spruce, *Picea jezoensis*
5. Korean

Hornbeam, *Carpinus coreana* seeds available at a reasonable cost. As of this writing the cost is expected to be \$6 for a sampling of all the seeds - except ginkgo - which is priced separately. Each person should be able to have several seeds of each species. Some seed are quite small and the ginkgoes are almost pea sized.

For those of you with no evening plans for Valentines Day: At Dawes, the Pun-Ching Members are invited to attend a special event on February 14, 2006. Craig Coussins will give a Tree Critique workshop in our normal meeting room at 6:00-9:00pm. It is open to non-members for a fee of \$15.00. Reservations for all are required, due to limited space. Please RSVP to Jeff Carr, at 740-403-0215, jcarr@adrcivil.com. They have Space for 25 participants with trees, others can observe.

March will feature soil, repotting tips, and pot selection.

In April we will be having Boon Manakitivipart as a guest Artist. Boon's start in bonsai was the result of a birthday gift: a small juniper bonsai. Before long, he joined the Bonsai Society of San Francisco, the club through which he took his first beginner class in the spring of 1989. Anxious to learn as much as possible about bonsai, Boon studied with as many teachers as he could find in California. Serious study began when he hosted Akio Kondo, Kihachiro Kamiya's first apprentice. Mr. Kondo arrived as what the Japanese call a first-year professional, and stayed at

Boon's home for one year. In 1993, the Golden State Bonsai Federation awarded Boon a Teacher Development Scholarship; two years later, he received the Ben Oki International Design Award for styling a Sierra juniper. In 1995, Boon received several informal offers to study bonsai in Japan. Several months later he traveled to Japan where he studied bonsai for one year as an apprentice with Yasuo Mitsuya. Following his apprenticeship, Boon returned to Japan twice a year to continue his study with Kihachiro Kamiya until his passing in January, 2004. In 1998, Boon founded and became the teacher of Bay Island Bonsai, and started his business, Bonsai Boon.

Boon with Mas Imazumi - In April 2000, Boon won the Grand Prize in the Kindai Bonsai Styling Contest in Japan (sponsored by Kindai Bonsai Magazine). Contestants styled large Japanese white pines. Boon was the only non-Japanese in the contest. The World Bonsai Contest recognized Boon's trees in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as among the world's top 100 entries, and his students' trees have been recognized in every contest to date.

Today Boon makes his living as a full-time bonsai artist in Northern California. He styles client trees, lectures, puts on demonstrations, holds workshops, and finds show-quality bonsai for clients.

Tree of the Month Starting Trees From Seeds

As announced at our last meeting we will be talking on the subjects of Starting Bonsai from seeds and cuttings. Let me be the first to say that I am guilty of poking fun at the idea of starting a bonsai from a seed. I was known to say, "Look how old I am I don't have time." But I have admired the patience of those who took the time. At the MABA Show in Cincinnati I stood there admiring a beautiful Hawthorn grown root over rock. It was Jack Wikel's entry and the tag said "37 years old." Jack walked up and not being shy, I asked, "How did you arrive at 37, since most of us are taking an educated guess on the age of the tree?" And Jack said, "Because, I started them from seeds myself."

Last month I bought Dave Joyce's book Natural Bonsai (on clearance at Barnes and Noble for \$10 - normally \$30) and in it there are several case history trees that state that they were started from seed 28 years ago; one of the trees started from seed was a black pine, another was a crab apple. In the Crab apple case history it was grown in the ground for 6 years.

I must also confess being an avid gardener and starting things from seed or cutting does appeal to me. I have started red pines from seed, and yes, lost all but two of them to fungus that damped them off. Also, I like to take cuttings; azalea, various junipers, and even Ginkgo have sprouted roots for me. Zack says that he has had luck with maples, but so far I haven't.

This article will loosely discuss getting tree seeds to sprout and cuttings to root. I leafed thru my library of bonsai books and at least five of them covered starting your bonsai from seed, more discussed taking cuttings. Interestingly the English and the Japanese authored books covered these subjects in more detail. In fact there is a Japanese term for growing bonsai from seed called Misho~.

There is no real mystery to starting seeds. It happens outside naturally all the time. The trick is to try to replicate nature in our controlled home environments; and because we can control the environment, we get to optimize the soil our seeds will be started in. The trick will come when its time for their first transplanting.

However, most books, because they generically discuss started from seed, state that the seeds may be sown after stratification. In general each author describes a technique that has been successful for them stating that deciduous trees need to be thinned and transplanted in six month while evergreens should be left alone for a year.

What is this stratification? Essentially it is a period of artificial winter that trees that are not tropical need to set off the internal clock that Spring triggers and makes seed sprout when it finally warms up. The species we have selected for the workshop will need 21 to 90 days (depending on the seed species, of cold storage to trigger their clocks. This can be done in your refrigerators at home. While several authors have you taking the seeds and planting them in a flat or some type of growing pot. I found an article from a non-bonsai source that used zip-lock sandwich bags with damp vermiculite or peat moss. Either way it is suggested that a fungicide be used in the media to discourage mold from killing the seedlings. One source said that a couple capfuls of household bleach in the water you use to dampen your peat moss or vermiculite would act as a fungicide. The recommended fungicide is "NO-DAMP". It is recommended not to put all your seeds in one baggie just in case. If any of your seeds germinate in the frig, plant them. Mold outbreaks can be lightly sprayed.

When your artificial winter is over, the seeds are ready to be planted. It is suggested that they be soaked over night in room temperature water to improve germination percentages. One author said that seeds that float after soaking won't germinate so toss them out. Thick-coated seeds, like ginkgo may have germinations odds improved by artificially "nicking" their shell. Anyhow, warmer temperatures, 68-86 degrees, then follow the length of artificial winter.

One author says that he individually pokes and sprays each seed hole with a fungicide water mix; another says that he lays the seed on the soil and sprinkles peat moss over them. Regardless, the soil mixture is always described as light and friable so that it drains to prevent fungus. Generally seeds are only planted indoors from 1/2" to 1" deep. I found the idea of covering them with a tent to keep moisture high troublesome with the mold issue, and conflictingly another author says that the air should move to prevent damp-off. The air movement he says simulates natural outdoor conditions. What I found to unfortunately be true is that light friable soil dries quickly and seedling with their minimal root system can be killed in a few hours from dryness, or direct sun!

Whether you do the workshop or not, you may find yourself collecting seeds from the ground near trees that you want to start. In the fall you might start your trees in the ground and let Mother Nature take care of your stratification. Just remember to protect them from rodents (squirrels and mice) and label the area when you plant them so that when they sprout in the spring you don't mistake them for weeds coming up. ~ Ken Schultz

Book of the Month

BONSAI LANDSCAPES Author Peter Adams

This book is a 1999 edition. I have had it in my collection for some time now, and I couldn't believe that I had not reported on it in the past. As we prepared for our Hypertufa pot making workshop, I flipped through several books looking for photos of handmade landscape slabs, carved rocks and irregular shaped. Three books were identified, the authors were; Su Chin Ee, Constance Tinsdale and Peter Adams. I am fairly certain that I have previously reported on the Tinsdale book and the Ee book. It is possible that I have reported on the Adams book, but if I have, it has been a long time ago.

This would be an excellent resource book for our upcoming forest planting workshop. A high proportion of the photographs are multiple tree plantings. The book has two large sections. The first section ; "Looking at Miniature Landscapes", shows individual species of trees in established plantings. This chapter includes, trident maple, elm, hemlock, Kingsville boxwood, European hornbeam, and American Larch. We will be offering Tridents and Larch in April.

Chapter seven of this book, "creating miniature landscapes" has nine different planting projects that the reader can attempt to duplicate. The landscapes include, Shimpaku, trident maple, elm, hemlock, Kingsville boxwood, hornbeam and American Larch.

In between these two major chapters is a lot of interesting material. Chapter five shows how to use the bottom out of a nursery tray to create a grid to tie trees in your forest to position and anchor them. It also shows how to use rocks and moss to create a more interesting finished work. Chapter six shows a couple of fiberglass "rock planter" projects. Chapter four covers plant shaping; this chapter includes how to create a raft from a single rooted tree.

I find the photographs by Bill Jordan, to be among the best I have seen in a bonsai book. In conjunction with the line drawings that illustrate the projects, this book ranks very high on my list. If you cannot find this book for sale, I know I have seen it in the Westerville library.

~ Ken Schultz

And if you want to see the kind of bonsai that Boon encourages at Bay Island Bonsai, a coffee table style book is available at this link: <http://www.bonsaiboon.com/bib/book.htm> Its worthwhile going to the site to see the sample pages of this book. I have heard that members must have two show ready bonsai. The club description indicates they attend nine workshops a year and participate in all club events. I can only say the trees in the book reflect that level of dedication. They are magnificent. ~ ZAC

Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

The Bonsai Series at Franklin Park Conservatory

A comprehensive beginner's course on this ancient form of gardening. Students receive their own tree and learn the basics of bonsai in a hands-on repotting and styling session under the expert guidance of FPC horticulturist, Mark Ryan and members of the Columbus Bonsai Society. Learn the history of bonsai; compare traditional and American styles;

and receive information on basic plant care including soil preparation, fertilizing and pest control.

Wednesdays: April 12, 19, 26 6:30-8:30 pm

Instructors: Mark Ryan, FPC Horticulturist and members of Columbus Bonsai Society

FPC Members: \$95, Non-members: \$105

Fee includes tools and nursery-stock tree

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.

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

February 25: Dawes Bonsai Planting Workshop and potluck, 9-12
bring a dish and tableware.

March 19: Soil workshop, repotting, pot selection.

April 1: Delaware Gardeners' Fair - Olentangy Liberty High
School, Powell

April 5: Beginning Bonsai 1 - Dawes

April 12: Beginning Bonsai 2 - Dawes

April 16: Easter! NO meeting see April 23

April 19: Advanced Bonsai - Dawes

April 23: 4th Sunday of the Month, Boon Manakitivipart

TBD Workshop: 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

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Refreshment Coordinator - Vacant

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