

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - August 2006

Elections are coming up and club members vote on the officers. Have you renewed your membership yet? Many of you have not. Please renew your membership now or at the meeting prior to the elections.

Slate of officers: President: Mark Passerello
VP 1 Ben William
VP2 Ken Schultz
Trustee(3 year) Chris "Pootsie" Conomy
Trustee (2 Year) Wendy Fissel
Trustee (1 year) Denny Sackett
Secretary Ross Lebold (?)
Treasurer Dick Guerevitz
Librarian Merrida Weinstein
Editor Zack Clayton
Past President Dan Binder (Ex Officio)
President Emeritus Jose Cueto (Ex Officio)

Also - Huge thanks to Wendy and Rob for their work on the web site. We now have a nice one. If the elections go as planned, Pootsie will be the webmeister, but the bones of the site and the hard work that entails were done by Rob. Thank you, thank you! To see the fruits of their labor, go to <http://www.columbusbonsai.org/>.

Coming Attractions

The August workshop is with Podocarpus. Ken has gotten a supply of these from Ken Huth and has them in hand. Podocarpus is a tropical and is detailed in the Tree of the Month section. I had a podocarpus in college and they are a fun tree to work with. For you who have not reserved a tree yet, Tom Holcomb has agreed to have some Serrisa and Ficus available.

September Picnic/Road trip - Mark Passerello has reserved a club tour of the house and gardens at Adena, which is Thomas Worthington's estate in Chillicothe. For some info and photos, check out this link <http://www.ohiohistory.org/places/adena/> . We will have conducted tours of the house and the gardens, total time will be about two hours. There is also a museum and gift shop on site that individuals can take in at their leisure.

Admission for the house and garden tour is \$8 for adults, \$3 for children and under 5 is free. OHS members also get in free. IF we have 20 or more in the group we deduct \$1 on each admission. We have a reservation for our group to tour at 1:00-on Sunday, September 17th (our usual meeting day). Here's our tentative schedule:

10:30-10:45 AM Gather at Franklin Park Conservatory. Organize car pool/caravan
11:00 Depart for Chillicothe
12:00-12:45 Arrive at Adena . Unpack picnic lunches and enjoy.
1:00-3:00 PM Tour of house and gardens.

After 3:00 Further picnicking? Nursery crawl? Or adjourn to a local watering hole? Perhaps <http://www.sumburger.com/index.html>

We are still debating what to do for members who can't make the road trip. If you have ideas, let us know.

Tree of the Month

Podocarpus macrophyllus var. Maki by Ken Schultz

This is the tree stock selected for our August 20 meeting workshop. I have picked up the twelve trees ordered. I understand that Tom Holcomb will offer Serrisa or Ficus if you missed signing up and wish to participate.

Podocarpus are native to china and Japan. There they are known as "Buddhist Pine." Here they are sold as "China yew" or "Southern Yew" due to their resemblance to taxus. The Maki variety has shorter needles, about 1/2". You may see other varieties in your bonsai books with longer needles. Supposedly the shorter needled variety is a bit hardier. My references say they are zones 9-11, which means tropical.

I found information on growing and training Podocarpus in books by Crespi, Lewis, Lesniewicz, Owen and the Internet. Each author offered a tidbit of information the others failed to mention. Together, I hope that the following information will help you to keep your tree healthy for many years.

Because we will be styling and trimming up our new plant material at the August meeting, I will present tips on training first. Use sharp scissors. Any crushing by using dull scissors will cause die back. Wire should only be applied to shoots that have lignified (turned woody). When trimming back foliage, leave at least 5-6 needles/leaves. Generally, shoots can be trimmed once they are 2 1/2 to 4" long back to 3/4" to 1 1/2".

Pruning can take place whenever there is active growth. One author talks about pinching new growth back to stimulate back budding. (I have had a podocarpus for 3 years and it has done well) Another of my sources says that the growth is too tough to pinch, so cut it back to prevent die back. Similarly they give different advice on wiring. One author says that you can wire new green growth, but keep it loose. Old wood does become rigid and difficult to bend. Wire may need to be removed in 60-90 days, so watch for cutting in. Also, needles trapped under the wire will brown and die.

All authors agree that Podocarpus do not take kindly to root pruning. Colin Lewis warns against taking more than 1/8th of the root mass off when repotting. Repotting is suggested at 2-3 year intervals. Lesniewicz says this is best done in the spring, Colin says late spring. When repotting the experts also have their own favorite soil blends. John Naka says 1/2 scoop soil, 2 mulch, 2 medium sand and one small sand. Another says 1 part loam, 1 part peat moss and 1 part sand, and a third says 35% compost, 35% Akadama, and 30% course sand. All warn against "wet feet". Colin Lewis says over watering turns the leaves grey. Crespi and Lesniewicz agree that the root

ball should not be allowed to dry out. Crespi suggests daily spraying. Something I haven't managed to do.

The Internet provided the most interesting tips on fertilizing. All say spring to October. Colin suggests ½ strength, Peters 20-20-20 and fish emulsion at least every 2 weeks, every six in the winter. I usually fertilize once each month in the winter, ½ strength. Because Podocarpus like their soil slightly acid one author suggested Miracid, including chelated iron twice a year and 2-3 applications of 1 Tbs per gallon of Epsom Salts a year to aid your plants in taking up Magnesium. I have read this tip before and always find it interesting. You should see 2-4" of new growth a year.

Light and temperature are the last items to discuss. Apparently Podocarpus can handle temperatures down to 41 degrees in winter, but prolonged cool weather slows growth, so I treat mine as a tropical. They can handle direct sun. But this can cause leaf burn on larger needles. Conversely they can also survive with as little as 800 LUX. This must be why mine doesn't seem to suffer as much as my other tropicals when I take it to the basement and keep it under a 4' shop light all winter. However, the experts' say protect them from frost and give it a bright location. While indoors protect it from heat sources that can dry them out.

August Care Tips

By Ken Schultz

While it was hot I needed to water every day. If you have a number of trees in various sized pots you will notice that some dry more quickly than others. Some trees, usually deciduous with thin leaves may wilt mid afternoon. Are they pot bound? If they are you should make them for future repotting if you missed them this year. Japanese maples leaves may burn along their edges. Move them to a shadier location. If they wilt you may have a viral infection. Japanese maples will die quickly if left untreated. If you remember when my friend, John Harris lectured to us about Japanese maples he warned us that our area had this problem, and he told us to spray them with Daconel. Daconel is now marked by Ortho as Garden Disease Control.

This year Japanese beetles have been really bad, so I have used Orchard Spray. Be careful, some plants may react badly if their new growth is sprayed, so read the label. Also, remember that some sprays contain fungicides and pines need their microrhyza to keep their roots healthy. So when spraying, avoid runoff into the soil.

Remember, dark pots get hotter quicker, and roots, especially Ficus, trident maple and other fleshy roots can be easily damaged. Junipers and pines can take more sun than azaleas. You may need to rearrange your trees. Watch where the sun falls in the mid afternoon. Avoid this area, except as noted.

Water in the early morning, if you can; otherwise wait until about 7PM. Watering a hot plant can cause leaf scorch or root damage. Also when you fertilize you should water first, then go back and fertilize. Fertilizing a thirsty plant can burn the roots. Remember you need to stop fertilizing in September, as you don't want tender new growth going into the fall.

With your fertilizer regime you should be seeing a lot of new growth on your trees. Junipers will need regular pinching. On more mature trees you should pinch or cut the growth after a few leaves to encourage ramification. Some trees can be wired or styled, but it is best not to repot unless you have an emergency, such as a squirrel knocks your tree over. Be especially careful not to knock off buds or damage new tender growth.

August is also a great time to shop for new material. Most nurseries have marked down the stock that they have had since spring. I have seen 25, 33 and 50% off on select stock. We'd love to see your purchases, so if you find something interesting bring it to the August meeting.

Book of the Month

Bonsai Techniques by John Yoshio Naka

I have had *Bonsai Techniques* and *Bonsai Techniques II* for quiet some time, but I have never reported on either of them before. Frankly, I haven't read them from cover to cover as I have some of the other books in my collection because they are quiet thick. They are over 200 pages each. However, when Bonn Manicativapart was here for our workshop in April he treated the candles on the Black Pine differently than I remembered John Naka suggested in *Bonsai Techniques*. I commented on this and he said, "Old idea, this is newer." As a result I went home and started leafing thru *Bonsai Techniques*.

During my bonsai readings, John Naka is referred to as the "Father of American Bonsai." As I read various sections from *Bonsai Techniques* and *Bonsai Techniques II* I found them packed with information. Why had I ignored these treasures? Two reasons, the first as already mentioned is that they are too lengthy to report on them in such a short article and do them justice. The second reason is that there is no index of species. There is a table of contents, but it lists three pages of subject matter by bonsai technique...go figure. However, the chapters are not numbered either. This makes using the books as a quick reference difficult.

Bonsai Techniques was first published in 1973. John Naka who was raised in Colorado had moved to California and the book was written for his friends and students at the Bonsai Institute of California. *Bonsai Techniques II* was written later when his students and other readers asked for more detail.

At least 50% of every page is devoted to drawings or black and white photos showing what Naka is trying to explain. The steps are logical, unlike some of the newer books where many steps in between the start and the finish are left out. They try to make up for this with nice color photos.

Sprinkled throughout *Bonsai Techniques* are tables and charts summarizing repotting schedules, soil mixtures by species and size, and a care calendar by month. Naka spends several pages on each bonsai tree style; most new books give a photo and maybe a short paragraph. And as I remembered *Bonsai Techniques* contains ten pages on developing a Japanese Black Pine bonsai.

John Naka passed away a few years ago after a long and well-documented career as a bonsai artist. "Bonsai Today" ABS and BCI all devoted a memorial article to him. Goshen, a forest

planting of Shimpaku, now in the care of the National Arboretum in Washington D.C. was pictured in these articles, and on John Hill's website, <http://www.bonsaibeginnings.org/>. The original 1964 planting is pictured in Bonsai Techniques on page 221 and in on color plate 11. This national treasure has been in training for 52 years.

You will not find Bonsai Techniques and Bonsai Techniques II in a regular bookstore. Depending on condition and edition you may pay any place from \$50 for the set to over \$200 for a first edition. Perhaps more if they are signed. Good Reading. ~ 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.

August 20: Tropical workshop – Podocarpus - and elections.

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