

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter - July 2007

I think summer is here. After a weird spring and cool season, we are starting to get heat and thunder storms. Not that I mind, we need the rain for other plantings and, as is noted in the horticulture section, rainwater is best. And, once again, its that thime of year. I'm sending out membership forms with this newsletter. Please take a moment to fill it out and put it in your wallet or purse so you have it, and your dues, with you at the meeting. Elections are coming up in August and you need to be a member to run or vote. Please be sure you fill out paper, because it is the only record I have that you've paid. Scribbles on a random piece of paper don't always connect to membership in a meaningful way.

Coming Attractions

July 15 - Potentilla – Ten are already signed up. Which matches the number of trees that I have found so far. The fee for this workshop is \$15. I don't recommend repotting in the middle of July unless you are a really good horticulturalist and have managed to repot out beyond the end of the season with success in the past. Regardless, we have some nice pots to pick from whenever you do repot. This month's tree article features Potentilla. The trees I've found are 3 different kinds, two are upright, one is a weeping variety, and all seem to be yellow. Sonny told me about some variety that has pinkish flowers, but I've only seen them on the Internet. Zack said he'd pick up more.

August 19 - Jose' Cueto will lead a Sheffalera workshop. He said that he has secured some very nice plants. Again the fee will be \$15. Since Sheffalera are tropical, it will be OK to repot them in August. If you want to see some great Sheffalera bonsai, visit the Fuku Bonsai website. Hopefully, you all appreciate that Jose' is a well know regional bonsai artist. We're lucky to have him as our resident expert. Jose' has taught bonsai for thirty years.

September 16 - Jack Wikle will be our guest artist. Unlike past appearances when he has only lectures, this time you will have an opportunity to work on Kingsville Boxwood with Jack. Due to already high interest, it looks like we will need to schedule two sessions of 10 each. Stay tuned on the times for each. Don't forget this event will be at Da wes Arboretum. Franklin Park is not available to us in September so this is our annual picnic event. We hope to hold the fee to \$45. This will help to defray the guest fee, and hopefully we will provide some very excellent Kingsville stock to work on. For those who are new to bonsai, Jack Wikle has been a well-known bonsai artist for over 40 years. He authored the Indoor lighting chapter in the Brooklyn Botanical Indoor Bonsai book. He is widely known for raising mame' bonsai – indoors under artificial lights and has lectured on this subject at earlier club meetings. But I know Jack to be an authority on conifers; I was truly impressed at MABA in Cincinnati when I saw the Pyracantha root over rock bonsai that Jack had started from seed, thirty-seven years earlier!

November 18- Randy Clark, owner of the Bonsai Learning Center in North Carolina. Randy is a well-known bonsai professional - and he's providing the stock. My understanding is that each participant will receive three different trees. Randy mentioned hornbeam. The workshop cost is tentatively \$45. Eleven have already signed up. And he really doesn't want more than 15. I first became aware of Randy Clark many years ago when I purchased his book, Outstanding

American Bonsai. It featured trees and American Bonsai artist at a BCI show in Minneapolis. Randy is actually a Minnesota native who moved south. I met Randy at the Bonsai Show of the Carolinas at the North Carolina Arboretum several years ago. Randy has authored a number of articles for the American Bonsai Society, one on the appropriate use of figures with bonsai. We received permission and ran that article about two years ago.

Raffle: Feeling Lucky? It's been awhile since the Club has held a raffle during one of its meetings. With that in mind, bring a little extra cash with you to the next two meetings, because we're going to tempt you.

Tree Sale: There were some Black Pines left over after last year's workshop. They have had some styling done and will be offered at the meeting for \$12 each.

Is the Tree Doctor In? or: Individual Help

Several of the Board members suggested that we need to re-instate the Kwestions Korner. This is where a couple of Board members make themselves available 20 minutes before the meetings states, or at the end of the meeting to assist you with a tree that you bring to a meeting with you. I recommend that you e-mail us at Columbusbonsai@hotmail.com so that we can research your specimen and be better prepared. Denny Sackett, suggested that we might start a Doctors House Call service. This would be by appointment only. You would ask one of our resident experts to visit your collection. This would allow you to get advice about location or watering, or possibly over wintering. Any Comments?

President's Message - Mark Passerello

First off, a big "Thank You" to those how helped make the Show turn out well. I know that Ken Schultz, our show chairman, will be making some mention about this, but I just want to echo those words of praise and thanks. Especially to those spouses, partners, family members and friends that allowed us the time and opportunity to spend Father's Day weekend with the trees.

To judge by the weather, the hot dry time of August is here already, but by the calendar there are few weeks to go till we get to the actual month. One of the important milestones for August as far as the club is concerned is the election of a new slate of officers. The club exists and improves over time because of the membership. It takes time and effort to organize programs, set up workshops, and get the things done that make a club worthwhile. If you enjoy the club, and have some interest in not only maintaining its existence but contributing to its growth and improvement, consider being part of the board of directors. The prime qualification is being interested in helping the club and having the time to contribute. Being involved in bonsai for a long time is not necessary, or being a so-called "expert" about bonsai is not required. Sometimes helpful but not needed, what's more important is being willing to give some time. Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at the Conservatory. If you'd like to find out more, contact me directly or get in touch with any of the other officers.

Where help is needed:

Newsletter Editor/ Web Site curator. These are looked at as two separate positions, but could be

combined if a person had the right skills and time available to do the work. Our current Newsletter Editor, Zack Clayton, has expressed an interest in being Web Site guy, but his switch to that job means we'd need a new Editor. Newsletter editor should have some skill with writing and editing ability and a bit of computer savvy with email and word processing programs. The web site curator should have some of those same skills as well as knowledge of photo programs. It should be mentioned that if someone had the will to do one of these jobs, the stuff, especially the computer stuff they need to know is really not that difficult!

2nd Vice President-Ken Schultz is currently First Vice President, and Ben William is 2nd VP. If Ben changes slots and becomes a Board Member (there are three) we would need a 2nd VP. Vice Presidents are the programming heads, arranging the calendar of workshops and other events and getting the human talent and plant stock to make these events happen.

Your club can use your help!

A Smooth Show

Turn out may have been light – and we at the Board discussed getting away from Father's day and Juneteenth next year. Family conflicts have been discussed and we keep coming back to the issue of the show being on Father's Day weekend. But enough about that issue. Mark Passerrela did get the word out, I saw newspaper listing for our show in several publications.

I have been the show Chairman now for the past four years, and have helped set up the show for a lot more. This year went so smooth that it was almost dreamlike Set up was smooth thanks to a couple of handy men in our ranks, Denny Sackett and Mike Thornhill. And our new member, Keith Stevens, who is a Dawes Arboretum professional, made my life simple by brining the backdrops from Dawes for our use. Dan Binder, returned them after the show. Denny created a special extension cord with plugs to run our lighting. Mike and his power saw made quick work of adding to our collection of table leg extenders. Others who helped were Thaddeus Bell, Zack Clayton, Jack Smith, Ross Lebold, Doc Gurevitz and Mark Passerrella. A special thanks to Jose' Cueto for his artistic arrangement of the show trees; and to Dan and Sara Binder for having our table coverings cleaned and pressed.

Tearing down also went quickly, Steve Bechtel, Ben William, and Rich Uhrick, joined many of those who had also helped with the setup. Our Vendors, Ken Huth, John Brannon, Tom Holcomb and Russ Merit were also assisted by club members Mike Holbrook, Jack Smith, Ross Lebold, Shelby Conrad, Ben William, Wendy Fissal, and Jack Wiggin

And assisting in the feeding of the Show workers were Erma Pierce, Zack, Shelby, Ben William, Doc, Laura Beardsley, Dan and Sara Binder and my charming wife, Linda.

John Young handled security, and I suspect he's thanked those volunteers on his own. The efforts of everyone are greatly appreciated! Ken Schultz

Horticulture and Style

Terrific piece about "watering" Ken. While it is on my mind, I thought I'd send a couple ideas along:

- 1) Rain water is good; water from the koi pond is even better.
- 2) Dunking is the best; this is how the "seasoned" Japanese bonsai are watered.
- 3) Healthy trees are very forgiving when it comes to their being watered - they do not object to tap water. As a matter of fact, the few trees that I have left in pots are on an irrigation system, because of the fact that I am out of town so much of the time. It is a drip system, five minutes, twice a day. It really makes little difference when this is; by some accident of the timer, mine is watering at 3:30 AM and PM.
- 4) Most critical to good watering practice is good drainage - it is my firm contention that it is virtually impossible to over-water a well drained bonsai. Root rot is a soil problem, not a water problem.
- 5) It is crucial to remember that, for all intents and purposes, bonsai should not be in the sun. In the best bonsai nurseries, they never are.

Also bear in mind that the nurseries that use irrigation systems, fertilize their trees with every watering. The sun has an important impact on watering trees out of the sun in several ways - quantity, time, frequency required, etc.

Yours,
Bill Webster

Tree of the Month
Potentilla Fruticosa

The trick to finding a plant that is "Potensai" is finding one in a nursery pot that is single stalked. I found the ones we will be using for the workshop, so I know it can be done; but I feel like I looked a hundred to find these. They ranged in price from the \$10 to one that was \$19.95. You may even find one planted in your own flowerbeds. Ross Lebold says a neighbor planned to dig up three when he re-landscapes an area. One of my reference books says that it is suitable for all bonsai styles but literati. At a MABA show Sara Rainer won best of show in the professional category with a group windswept planting of Potentilla. Nursery stock trunk size tends to be on the twiggy side, and the craggy bark attracts moss, which detracts from the old looking character.

Positioning: Full Sun, but another book cautions "it must be protected from direct and prolonged exposure to sunlight in the summer (after 1:00 PM). I keep mine in an area with dappled mid-day sun. They are outdoor hardy to Zone 4.

Watering: Daily during the growing season, the soil should not be allowed to dry out completely at any time. Water foliage at least weekly. However, if you use a heavy soil it may retain too much water and your tree will die from root-rot. If you do miss a watering and the foliage wilts and dies, don't give up; a healthy plant will re-sprout new leaves in a week or two. This happened while we were on vacation and the plant is making a good comeback.

Feeding: Every two weeks from early to late spring and every 20-30 days from summer to late autumn. Slow release fertilizers are a good supplement to liquid feedings.

Repotting: Every 2 years in early spring before the buds open. Use a basic soil mixture (one reference says 60% soil, 10% peat, and 30% coarse sand). Check drain holes frequently, as young roots grow quickly and may block them. The roots tend to be fibrous like rhododendrons. Therefore you may want to add a little extra compost to your soil mix to keep it from draining too quickly, especially right after you repot.

Pruning: Continually prune back new growth to maintain a neat compact growth. Initial root pruning should be carried out when repotting. My other reference says to shorten new shoots in autumn after flowering. This is because Potentilla flower on this year's growth, pinching to retain their shape usually means that you are removing the flower buds. Unwanted branches should be removed at anytime. Wiring can be carried out spring to autumn; but be careful, Potentilla tends to be brittle and may split at the branch base. As with other deciduous plants, note the position of the buds, this will allow you to decide which direction the branch will grow. There may be some die back when hard pruning, and sometimes a large number of branches will sprout as a result, usually having one that will grow strongly upward!

Pests: The plant's new growth is susceptible to aphids, whitefly, thrips, mites, mealybugs and other soft-bodied insects looking for a source of sweet sap.

Other comments: If you find a Potentilla with a strong trunk, buy it. Now. The natural growth habit is multiple twigs from the soil line and while you can find individuals with stronger stems, they are the exception, not the rule. If you find one with a single strong trunk it is worth the price.

Info sources were: Simon and Schuster, RD Home Handbooks: Bonsai, and Gustafson's "Keep Your Bonsai Alive and Well". I also used a gardening reference called; "Illustrated Guide to Home Gardening". Oh, and keeping them alive in pots for the last 7 years. ~ Ken

Book of the Month

The Beginner's Guide to Bonsai

By: Ken Norman, with photographs by Peter Stiles

I actually found two Ken Norman books at the local Half Price Bookstore. I will report on the other one in a month or two. This one is copyrighted 2004. Ken Norman is an English bonsai artist. The book is only 96 pages, but they are covered with photographs of very nice bonsai, Peter Stiles has done a noteworthy job. However, this is not a coffee table picture book. The book has a General Techniques chapter, a Creating Bonsai chapter and a chapter on Advanced Techniques. The details for the full-page photos that appear before each chapter and in the photo gallery at the end of the book are detailed on the copyright page, not too convenient, and if I hadn't run into this phenomenon in some older books, I would never have figured it out. These twelve photos could easily be framed as bonsai art.

The General Techniques chapter makes this book worth the \$9.98 I paid for it at the ½ price Bookstore. It has subsections that detail Clip and Grow, Pruning for Shape, Wiring, Root Pruning and Watering. Each section though only a few pages have three to seven photographs to illustrate the concept. The Clip and Grow section says that you will end up with dense foliage pads, similar to a Chinese styled tree, which may or may not be the appearance appropriate for the tree. The Watering section mentions occasionally watering the foliage, but to water the soil with a fine watering rose directly, taking care not to wash away your bonsai soil.

My personal taste is for life histories like the Martin Treasure book, so I found the quicky styling of four varieties of trees in the Creating Bonsai chapter a bit too beginner, however this works to an advantage on the Creating Gin and Shari pages. I ended up ginning two branches on a spruce that I'd been thinking were poorly placed. ~ 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.

July 15 Flowering Bonsai – Potentilla workshop - BYO or supplied

July 28-29 2007 Middle Tennessee Regional Show

<http://freelone2.openia.com/abs/Members/bonsailouisville/2007-middle-tennessee-regional-show/?searchterm=None>

August 19 Schefflera workshop with Jose Cueto

September 16 Picnic at Dawes – Jack Wickle on Long Term Development Mame.

September 23 Field trip and BBQ at Ken Huth's

October 21 TBA

November 18 Randy Clark on Shohin

December Holiday Dinner

And a final word -

President - Mark Passerello

Summer rain, Past President - Dan Binder

clearing up enough 1st Vice President - Ken Schultz

for the larks to sing. 2nd Vice President - Ben William

Then again. 1 year Board - Denny Sackett

Shiko 2 year Board - Wendy Fissel

3 year Board - Chris "Pootsie Conomy

Treasurer - Richard Gurevitz

Secretary - Ross Lebold

Librarian - Merida Weinstein

Columbus Bonsai Society Newsletter Editor - Zack Clayton

PO Box 1981 President Emeritus - Jose Cueto

Columbus, OH 43216-1981 Refreshment Coordinator - Erma Pierce

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