



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

...to disseminate knowledge, encourage others and create interest in the art of bonsai

April 2012 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

April 18, 2012 • Wed. • 7pm at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside

Potting or Repotting CONIFERS!

With Dave Ruffaner

Bring in your own trees. Whether they are nursery plants in soil or trees already in bonsai pots, now is the time to get them into new bonsai pots.

Note: A few Procumbens nana junipers will

be available for sale. The society will provide soil, wire and the use of tools to paid members, and Bob Dietz will have materials to sell. If you need additional soil, wire, tools or pots for at-home repotting, call

Bob at 724 348-4771 by April 11th for delivery at the April meeting.

Don't forget to check the Tree Calendar on the Website for additional tips!



NEXT EVENT

WIRING OF SCOTS PINES



Scots Pines are hardy, available from nursery stock, collectible in the wild and great bonsai material. Trees provided at cost.

May 16, 2012 • Wed. • 7pm at Phipps Garden Center

Please check our newly revamped website: <http://pittsburghbonsai.org>



The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

Editor:
Cindie Bonomi

Copy Editor:
Jay Miller

Graphic Design:
Cindie Bonomi

Contributors:
Jay Miller
Dave Metzgar
Dave Steidl
Mike Stern

Photography:
Cindie Bonomi
Dave Steidl

Publishing & Circulation:
Jay Miller

Published periodically (10 issues a year) by PBS for members and other bonsai enthusiasts. It's our sixth decade of advancing the art of bonsai in the Tri-State area.

Deadlines:
Generally two months prior to issue date.

Submissions:
Please submit Photos or Artwork in JPG format and Copy in Microsoft Word.

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A Note From Dave:

You Can't Always Go By The Calendar....

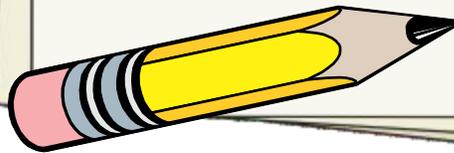
This year proved that you can't go by specific dates to do your bonsai chores. A warm winter followed by a summer-like spring seemed to wake trees from their sleep almost a month earlier than normal. Many deciduous trees were budding in mid-March. Just as the buds are swelling is the best time to re-pot. Look for the same with conifers, when the buds start to move and white tips are showing in the roots.



Photo By Cindie Bonomi

If you are re-potting, place the trees in a protected, shady spot for a few weeks to recover, especially if deciduous trees have leafed out. Your own microclimate may be very different from your neighbor's, so watch your trees for signs of what needs to be done. Not the calendar.

Dave Metzgar



Dues Renewal (Almost Painless)

The PBS Membership Year is January 1 – December 31. You'll notice a Membership Application/Renewal Form is included in this issue. Please send in the form and your renewal check by April 30th to insure delivery of future newsletters and email notices.

Dues are unchanged for 2012, despite the steadily rising costs of mailings, nursery stock, speakers expenses and meeting site rentals. We appreciate your continuing support.

For your Bonsai supplies support
the store that exists for the society



Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771
Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

Potting/Repotting Deciduous Trees Meeting



Some Words From Mike Stern



Photo by Cindie Bonomi

I became interested in bonsai when I was in Texas doing graduate work at Baylor University in 1979. One of my fellow graduate students, who was from Connecticut, brought his trees to Waco Texas in Volkswagen van. I learned of his Bonsai collection when he asked me to water

them. I have been doing lots of watering ever since.

During one of my spring breaks, I returned to Pittsburgh and dug some wild crabapple trees. One of them went to Texas and one remained in Pittsburgh. Needless to say that original tree I left in Pittsburgh is now compost. In fact, many of my trees over the 30 years are compost. It seems that each year brings pests, weather, or human error that lead to the demise of a few of my trees. When they are young and starters, the pain is minimal. However, when you have been working with the tree for a number of years and lose it, the frustration increases.

Often, I have no idea why the tree died. I often ask other members of the society for their opinions. I will ask Joe Stupka. I go online and rarely discover the answer. Sometimes they just die.

On a few of the small leafed elms, I have discovered that regularly treating them with fungicide in the spring can avoid leaf curl and leaf drop. I also keep them on the porch out of the rain in the early spring. This has kept them alive. Two decades ago I lost a number of them.

Occasionally I have had problems with red spot with my Sweet Gums and treat them the same way. The use of a fungicide and keeping the leaves dry has been helpful.

I have had trident maples and they will grow well in the ground. However, when I put them in a pot they never survive the winter. I live in New Castle which is a little further north and a little colder. Blue Atlas Cedars also are not hardy up here.

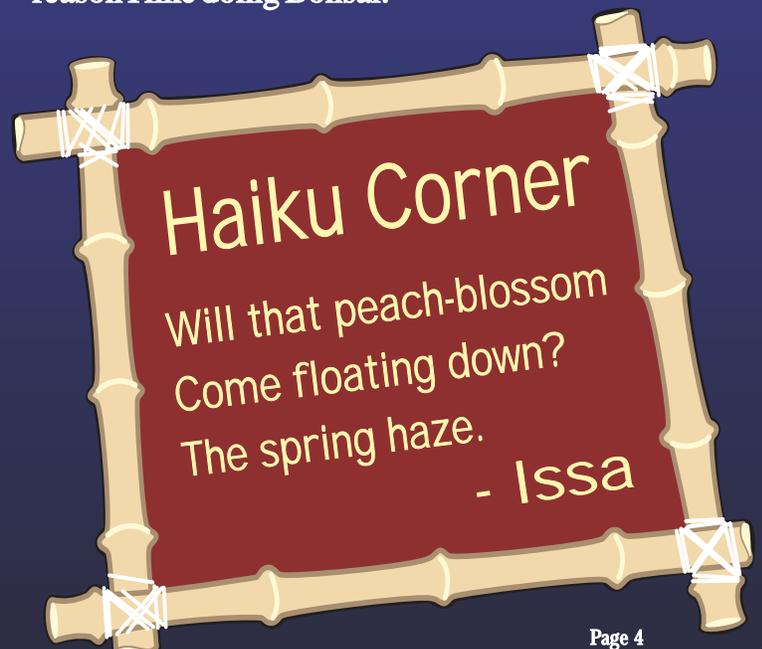
I have had borers kill hornbeams that were growing in my garden. They make tiny holes in the trunk about the size of a needle and leave sawdust at the base of the trunk. I did not discover that until a dozen of them were dead. That can be treated with lindane.

One year we had numerous Japanese beetles and they nearly ate all of the leaves on an Elm tree. I feared the worst. However, a few weeks later a second set of smaller leaves emerged. The tree looked better with the smaller set of leaves. I had found a natural way to leaf prune my trees. If you do not want your leaves pruned by the beetles you can use systemic.

I killed a number of horn beams by heavy leaf pruning. The technique works pretty well on Japanese elms and American elms. When the second set of leaves emerge, they are smaller and the tree is more attractive. Why not horn beams? Because they die! Now I will selectively cut larger leaves with leaving 70 or 80% of the other leaves intact.

Learn from your mistakes. Better off learn from other people's mistakes. However, sometimes the lesson is death is inevitable. They just die.

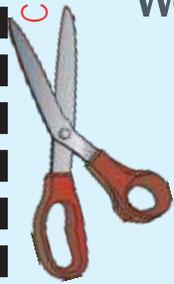
The death of the tree provides the opportunity to occupy the pot with a new tree. It provides the opportunity to create art which is the primary reason I like doing Bonsai.



CUT HERE

Member Survey

Please take a moment and help us with your comments.
We want to make your membership year as productive as possible



How did you originally learn of The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society?

- from a friend newspaper article PBS website the Internet
- Bonsai Classes at Phipps a flyer from a Garden Center

Would you like to receive your newsletters electronically? yes no

If yes, Name E-mail Address

Are your bonsai skills: beginner intermediate advanced

Please tell us what programs you'd prefer:

- lectures workshops with your trees demonstration & workshops Bonsai Basics

Questions:

Pittsburgh Bonsai Society 2012 Calendar of Events

- April 18.....Wed.....7pm.....Potting or Repotting CONIFERS! BYOT or Juniperus procumbens nana for sale
- May 16.....Wed.....7pm.....Wiring of Scots Pines/Trees provided at cost
- Jun 1-3.....Fri-Sun.....Spring Bonsai Weekend (ActivitiesTBA)
- Jul 14.....Sat.....Time TBA.....Slab Workshop at Bob Dietz'
- Jul 18.....Wed.....7pm.....Tropicals
- Aug TBA.....Sat.....11am.....Picnic at the Grealish Farm
- Sep 19.....Wed.....7pm.....TBA
- Oct 17.....Wed.....7pm.....TBA
- Nov 14.....Wed.....7pm.....TBA plus
- Dec 6.....THURS.....6:30pm.....Annual Holiday Party



All events, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm *Wisteria complements of the internet*

Phipps Garden Center is located at the edge of Mellon Park in the Shadyside section of Pittsburgh. At the Phipps Garden Center sign on Shady Avenue, just south of the intersection of Fifth and Shady Avenues, turn into the cobblestone driveway. Park in the metered lot. Walk 50 yards farther down the cobblestone lane. The Garden Center is the red brick building on your left.

Severe Weather & Emergency Information:
PBS Meetings and Special Events at Phipps Garden Center will take place as scheduled except in the event of severe weather or emergency. Unsure? Call their Emergency Phone Number: 412 441-4442 for updates.

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Potting/Repotting Deciduous Trees Meeting

Demonstration by Bob Dietz to the Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Wed. March 21, 2012

By: *Dave Steidl*

Bob Dietz began his presentation with a small Elm tree that yielded several small trees for members when the first surface roots were pruned. He said in the early spring when buds start to swell, but have not yet opened is the time to repot deciduous trees. This may or may not include root pruning. Root pruning is necessary when the potted tree has grown so much that its roots have filled the container using up all of the available space and nutrients. In a pot they always will, some species faster than others. For most deciduous trees, repotting is needed every 2-4 years. Conifers can go longer. Pruning the top of the tree at the same time its roots are pruned also adds some balance to the demands of repotting on the tree.



photo by *Dave Steidl*

A time for repotting can also mean just putting a tree in a larger pot and not significantly touching the roots. It is also a good time to prune deciduous trees. With the tree just starting its growing period, you can see its structure and branching much clearer without leaves making it easier to decide what needs to be trimmed.

Bob also mentioned that most maples in general don't like the hottest parts of summer. They prefer partial shade and actually slow or even stop growing when temperatures reach the upper 80's. Right before cooler temps arrive at the end of summer, growth picks up again. The beginning of this period of renewed growth in late summer can also be a good time for repotting and root pruning... but its not as desirable as early spring.

Repotting stresses the tree and should be done at a reasonable pace and not in the hot sun. Prepare ahead for repotting by attaching new screens and anchor wires to the pot and have new soil and tools ready. Tools should include a pair of regular or needle-nose pliers for twisting the anchor wires tight. It is also handy to have a spray-bottle of water in case your creative decision making takes longer than expected and the roots start to dry out before you can get the tree back in a pot. In addition to shaping the surface for drainage, cutting away errant roots, combing out the overgrown roots, trimming off dead roots, repositioning roots to improve the shape of the buttress, you will be deciding how the bonsai will sit in the new pot. After you have finished making a big mess and have everything below the ground line trimmed like a new haircut (not a buzz-cut - do not trim away more than 1/3 of the roots), you are ready to repot and create the new look for your tree.

The first step is to fit the tree in the pot at the right height above the rim. Make a mixture of new and old soil. The old soil contains beneficial fungi (mycorrhizae) that has grown with the tree's roots. Mound the soil so the newly trimmed roots are all touching the soil. Also its position in the pot (right, left forward, and back) needs to be determined. You may also want to examine or change the angle of the trunk at this time. You may want to rotate the tree around its center to show off the front if the pot is not round. Once you have looked at it from all angles and you are happy with the new position, use anchor wires to hold the tree firmly in place. This anchoring of the tree is important for the healing process like a cast for a broken bone. The last step is to fill in with more soil, carefully pushing it into all areas that seem to have air spaces, make any final adjustments to the trees position and water it well. The tree should be kept out of direct sun and wind for at least 2 weeks.

According to Deborah Koreshoff in her book, *Bonsai - It's Art, Science, History and Philosophy*, with root pruning... "trees can have a perpetually young system of roots. Trees, in fact, can probably come closer to immortality than any other life form on Earth."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whether you want to buy, sell or trade any bonsai-related material, take advantage of the "Bonsai Barn" on our website pittsburghbonsai.org You can also list regional/national bonsai events that your fellow PBS members might find interesting.

Bonsai Stamps!

On January 23, 2012, the Postal Service™ issued *Bonsai* stamps (Forever® priced at 45 cents), in five designs in a pressure-sensitive adhesive (PSA) double-sided booklet of 20 (Item 688000). With these five stamps, the U.S. Postal Service® celebrates the beauty of bonsai, a horticultural art form that has become quite popular in the United States. The word "bonsai" is Japanese for "plant in a pot." It also refers to the practice of cultivating plants -usually trees- in trays, pots, or other containers. One of the common styles of bonsai is depicted on each stamp: (1) a Sierra Juniper in semi-cascade style, (2) a Trident Maple in informal upright style, (3) a Black Pine in formal upright style, (4) an Azalea plant in multiple-trunk style, and (5) a Banyan in cascade style. John Dawson painted the stamp art. Ethel Kessler was the art director.

Coming Events:

20-22 April 2012 Grantville, PA:
MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' 29th Spring Festival, Holiday Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey.
Featuring Isao Omachi/Japan;
Mario Komsta/Spain; John (JT) Thompson/California;
<http://www.midatlanticbonsai.freesevers.com/fescurr.htm>.

May 4th, 5th and 6th, 2012 9:00am to 5:00pm May 2012 Potomac Bonsai Association Spring Festival Washington, D.C. at the National Arboretum
www.potomacbonsai.com or
www.usna.usda.gov

21-24 June 2012 Denver, CO "Visions of the American West" ABS Convention & Learning Seminar; Denver Marriott Tech Center More information and registration forms can be found at
<http://www.bonsai2012.org>

May 2012 Issue Deadline:

Submissions for the May 2012 Newsletter are due no later than April 18, 2012.

Compiled by Jay Miller
suisekifan@yahoo.com



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)
335 Newburn Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

