



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

Feb-Mar 2007 Newsletter

NO FEBRUARY MEETING!

It's too darn cold to bring trees out, despite "global warming"! Get a hot beverage, thumb through your bonsai books and catalogs, and remember that the Spring Show is only 11 weeks away.



NEXT MEETING

Workshop: Wednesday, March 21, 2007, 7:00 pm at Phipps Garden Center. Botany, Chemistry and how they relate to your tiny tree obsession!

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



Time of Hope... And Mufflers

After the unusually warm temperatures of December and January, you may be wondering why bonsai enthusiasts are happy (well, somewhat) with this February freeze? Because our little trees require a period of dormancy for next season's growth. You may want to check Keith Scott's past articles at our website. While non-bonsai folks are celebrating the Washington's Birthday sales, we note, with hope, the beginning of the sap season.

Even though February is Late Winter in the bonsai calendar,

there is still plenty to do. Look, really look at the form of all your trees. Decide which branches need pruning. Mark them with twist-ties so you don't forget this spring. Don't ask me how I know this. The healing rate of pruning wounds is greater in the spring.

Look at your supplies: Plenty of wire, and bonsai soil for spring repotting and training? How about your tools? Freshly oiled and sharpened, right? If you need any of this, call Bob Dietz at Bonsai in The Burgh, 724 348-4771

-Jay Miller

NEWS OF MEMBER'S ACTIVITIES

PBS members are teaching bonsai techniques this spring:

- Dr. Norbert Pietrzak has three sessions scheduled for Phipps Conservatory

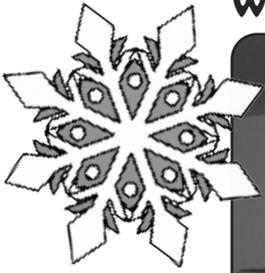
Sat April 14th Bonsai Basics
Sat April 21st Studio Work (intermediate)
Sat April 28th Forest Planting
Materials Fee. Pre-registration required

- Kevin Haughey, Bonsai Manager at Phipps Conservatory, presents Introductory Bonsai at Phipps

Sat May 19th Two sessions
Materials Fee. Pre-registration required.

Pre-register at Phipps 412 622-6914

This Year's Holiday Dinner Was Awesome!



Our annual Holiday Dinner was held at the Phipps Garden Center on Wednesday Dec. 6.

Everyone got to choose one of three of delicious dinners.

Bob Dietz graciously donated three \$25 gift certificates for "Bonsai In The Burgh" as door prizes.

Toward the end of the evening, while everyone was enjoyed their desert we had a White Elephant Exchange.

All in all it was a really nice time. Here are some of the pictures.



Mike's Corner

Tips and Suggestions from Mike Stern

Bonsai In The Ground

This spring consider growing one or more trees in the ground. The advantage of growing trees in the ground is that there is unlimited root space. With roots having unlimited area in which to expand, the tree will grow much more quickly. The difference between growing a tree in a training pot and in the ground is incredibly dramatic. Such a process will thicken the trunk much more quickly and create the illusion of age. Therefore, you can start with a seedling, cutting, or young trees/shrub and have it look old in your lifetime.

It is important that you not merely dig a hole and plant a tree in the ground. The quality of soil within which you plant your future bonsai will have a significant impact on the quality of top growth and root system. Most of the soil in your yard is heavy clay and does not promote a fine root system. There may be an inch or so of topsoil if you are lucky. Even that amount topsoil still is inadequate for optimal results.

When I started growing trees in the ground I followed

ideas taught in organic gardening. Soil that is significantly made up of humus creates a light aerated soil with a great deal of nutrients. Soil made up of organic matter will keep the tree well fed and allows a fine root system. Don't forget that roots not only need soil and water but also require air. Trees that are grown in unamended soils develop a few thick roots that do not transplant well. Trees grown in organic garden soil have numerous fine roots. They transplant more readily and survive more frequently. I have been able to dig trees out of my garden and immediately place them in a bonsai pot.

For good results create organic soil that is 8 inches deep. Also place it in an area of your yard that is sunny and well trained unless the tree likes wet soil such as a bald cypress. For conifers such as pines, junipers, spruce, consider adding more sand to the mix as they grow best in a sandy well-drained soil.

In the next installment, I will address other issues related to growing future bonsai trees in the ground.

Second Annual Early Spring Tree Sale

GARDEN GROWN TREES

March 24, 2007 Saturday 10:00 am

These trees have not been restricted and slowed in their growth by having their roots limited by the confines of a pot. The trees branches and roots grow unrestricted in open ground for a year and then are trimmed back with a future Bonsai in mind. Unlike trees collected in nature, these trees have excellent taper and multiple low branches. (They do not compete with grass and weeds.) Additionally, each tree has an excellent root system. They are root pruned every year. A number of trees have had their branches wired down.

In the spring they can be dug up, placed immediately in a Bonsai pot, and enjoyed.

Available Trees

Flowering Crab apple

Scots Pine

Blvd. Cypress

Boxwood

Elm (American, Zelkova, Chinese, Siberian),

Sweet Gum (excellent fall color)

Bald Cypress



Juniper

Honey Locust.

There are a few other trees. There are over 300 trees.

This is the second year that I have offered a sale to the Society.

The prices are significantly less than you will find at Bonsai nurseries or on the Web.

Each tree will have been root pruned. Bring a training pot, burlap or whatever works to take your tree with you.

If you have questions email me at mstern55@comcast.net. I can email directions. I can email some photos.

Easy to find. I am in New Castle, an hour north of Pittsburgh and less than 3 miles off of Route 60.

Mike Stern

Page 3



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)
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2007 Calendar of Events

- Wed Mar 21** **Workshop 7:00 pm Phipps Garden Center
Shadyside**
- Wed April 18** **Azalea Workshop, 7:00 pm Phipps Garden
Center, Shadyside \$10 materials fee**
- Sat/Sun May 19-20** **Annual Spring Show, 10-4, Free & Open to the Public!
Exhibition of bonsai, Vendors, Demonstrations
Drew Mathieson Center**



All PBS meetings, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00 pm. Emergency Phone: 412 441-4442.

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.

Since the schedule at the Convention Center is in flux, we'll let you know when or whether PBS will have a booth at the Pittsburgh Home & Garden Show.