



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

January • February "06" Newsletter



NO MEETINGS

In January or February!

And Here Are Some Reasons Why:

It's too cold to move plant stock from storage in the PBS greenhouses to Phipps Garden Center! The cobblestones are "slippy"! Attendance is usually way down. You'd rather be reading old bonsai magazines by a warm fire!

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE

The Privet Workshop

This will be a hands-on start to the 2006 Bonsai season, featuring healthy, hardy plant stock. The privet is pretty bulletproof for our Zone 5 conditions, but you'll pick up some useful care tips while you learn basic styling techniques.

Bring your tools!

Wednesday, March 15, 2006 at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside, 7:00pm



A Message From Our President

To my fellow Bonsai enthusiasts, I hope that you and your plants have survived this winter and that it's not too soon to start thinking about your plants and what you will do to them this year. They also are looking

forward to being: cut, bent, wired, shaped, dug up and put into all kinds of different positions

Again this year the society intends to bring plants to most

meetings. You only learn by picking up your tools and getting your hands dirty. So, bring your tools and your questions and your enthusiasm and don't miss a meeting.

See you soon.

Bob Dietz



The Bonsai Society once again has celebrated the holiday season with a dinner at the Phipps Garden Center. Forty two members and families came together to share good food and fun. We all hope that the new year will bring health, wealth and a good growing season to come. Hope to see everyone in the 2006 season. Claudia Shields



Photos By
Louise Means



Early Spring Tree Sale • March 22, 2006 • Saturday • 10:00am

When I became interested in Bonsai and joined the Society in 1981, I wished I had started Bonsai 20 years earlier. Assuming that I would stick with these miniature trees, I began planting seeds and seedlings in a garden. I followed the recommendations provided in the magazines followed by Japanese bonsai nurseries.

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. Obviously they will require pruning,

wiring, and fine-tuning to be works of art.

Available Trees are: Flowering Crabapple, Scots Pine, Blvd. Cypress, Boxwood, Elm (American, Zelkova, Chinese, Siberian), Sweet Gum (excellent fall color), Bald Cypress, Juniper and Honey Locust

There are a few other odds and ends. There are over 300 trees.

This is the first year that I have offered a sale to the Society. In the last 2 years I have sold trees to a few members.

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

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

If you have questions email me at msstern10@adelphia.net. 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

Carol Adams

Bonsai member Carol Adams recently passed away. She asked that her Bonsai collection be given to the Society to be used at their discretion.

Thank you Carol.



January Sips and Tidbits from Keith

What can be said of bonsai in January? Since I have two polyhouses, on a sunny day, I open them up; I sometimes have to dig the snow sway from the doors. The snow scrapes under the door and as I step in I inhale spring. Even with everything frozen the air seems fresh but earthy and alive.

On other days, during a thaw, for example, I like to see the water condensed on the poly. Should the wind blow, the poly shudders and thousands of drops fall on the sleeping plants. How they glisten! Hoar frost grows on every needle and twig.

These thoughts make me feel sorry for any bonsai enthusiast without a polyhouse.

Bonsai Care Sheet

Species: Common name: Winter flowering Jasmine
 Botanical name: Jasminum nudiflorum
 Japanese name: Obai
 Yoshimura reference: #224



Varieties: In the northern tier of states jasmine is not hardy enough for conventional bonsai culture except in a tropical greenhouse. However, the nudiflorum jasmine is marginally hardy

Advantages: A small viney shrub, winter flowering jasmine when kept in a polyhouse until February then brought in will hold its blossoms for several weeks. Its four petal yellow blossoms on rather angular twigs brighten up a drab winter day

Disadvantages: The winter jasmine grows only into a small twiggy plant, unlike larger flowering forms. Large specimens can be found from Virginia south. Also it tends to send out numerous shoots from the buttress. These must be cut off as they appear.

Bonsai Potential: As a classic: As a subdominant planting and for a few weeks in winter it performs well but as an archetypal bonsai, it isn't.

Growing location: Keep in full sun but moderate shade in July and August.

Watering: The jasmine requires ample water. In hot weather it must not be allowed to become dry. Its leaves will drop and branches will die back.

Propagation: By cuttings and by division or by ground layering.
 Fertilizing: Even, balanced application May to September every two weeks.

Over-wintering: Mulch closely around the buttress and keep out of sun and wind. A polyhouse with the jasmine nestled under larger plants would be ideal.

Styling: Clump style but extremely effective as a forest on large rocks or saikei.

February Sips and Tidbits from Keith

I chose willow as one of this month's trees because February 15 has come and gone and willow will be one of the first trees to show signs of spring, along with non-trees skunk cabbage and coltsfoot. As stated so many times, in Pittsburgh's temperature zone, the sun has risen in the sky since December 21 and thus by February 15 the days are longer and a signal goes to the roots from the dominant buds that the roots may start growing and sap may again start to rise. Maple syrup producers in the northern tier have for so many centuries used the date to start attaching spiles and buckets to collect the sap to make sugar. Usually the temperature goes below freezing at night and the sap stops running, allowing the people making the syrup a chance to get a little rest before sun-up when the sap starts to run again as the temperature goes above freezing.

By Washington's birthday, February 22, everything is ready and the sap season begins --- so does the bonsai. Notice that the weeping willows take on a strong, vivid yellow color. The buds swell, fat and promising. The weeping branches are swollen with water making the tree weep far more than it did in fall. Keep in mind that it is the water the willow contains that makes it weep. The stems and branches have a punkey almost balsa wood consistency with an

open cellular structure that stores huge amounts of water, thus it weeps.

Just as a sidelight, the willow possesses a chemical in its cellular structure that causes the willow to root rapidly. Some years ago Dr. Kawase of Ohio State University isolated the rooting hormone, but as yet it has not been successfully marketed. Some bonsai growers water newly repotted bonsai with water into which willow twigs and branches have been placed. No one has proven it works or even helps but no one has proven it hurts either

Care sheet introduction:

The two plants chosen for this issue's scrutiny, willow and juneberry, were picked because of their appearance in late winter-early spring and also for their being so readily available. Also, both species grow wild in the northern tier making them potential plants for collecting.

Many myths and folklore have grown up around the willow, beginning as far back as Greek mythology's, Niobestory, and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to Japanese folk tales of the weeping willow's inherent sadness and its connection to the "Willow World" of the Japanese pleasure sections of old Edo, now Tokyo.

The juneberry, with its names: service berry, sarvis, is most unique in that it, not the dogwood, is the first blossoming tree in spring. Often times people for some reason think the dogwood with its connection with Biblical lore is the first flowering tree, usually allied with Easter and Passover. When looking out across bare, deciduous forests, a flash of delicate white breaks up the drab woods. It is the juneberry. Its flowers don't last but a few days and for this reason the Japanese include it as a sakura or cherry but it isn't. Its brief blossoms fall like late winter snow but by June dark plum red fruit have formed.

Bonsai Care Sheet

Species: Common name: Juneberry
 Botanical name: Amalanchier
 Japanese name: Shide-zakura
 Varieties: Asiatic, Laevis, Alaghenensis,

Yoshimura reference: #265

Advantages: The juneberry grows wild but rarely in concentrations. While it produces ample seed



often occasionally does it germinate. hybrids have been developed and are better catalogs. It flowers profusely on growth and possesses a smooth flowing compound curvaceous habit and rarely above 20'. It tends to be multiple be trained as a single. Its leaves turn a yellow in autumn but by then birds the soft plum like fruit. The

Disadvantages: If collecting juneberry you'll have to hike some distance to find any quantity of plants.

Bonsai Potential: Not a classic "pine" style bonsai, it is better suited to tall, thin, delicate plantings.

Growing location: Under taller trees; a lower story planting filtered sun.

Watering: In a bonsai container, juneberry soil must be kept damp, being a tree that grows well in woodland settings with ample leaf mulch around the buttress. If necessary keep the juneberry on the ground and let the roots grow through the drainage holes. Then, cut back the errant roots in late winter.

Propagation: Seed, cutting, layering, dividing.

Fertilizing: In containers, feed once or twice a month 15-15-15 e.g., May to October.

Over-wintering: Mulching helps the juneberry greatly. Keep it out of winter sun and wind. Further protection is not needed except from rabbits and deer.

Styling: Informal upright, clump, perhaps a grove.

Call Phipps Garden Center for Registration Details at 412 441-4442

Fee: \$15 Phipps Members \$20 Non-Members
Materials fee: \$15

Kevin is the Bonsai Manager at Phipps, a longtime PBS member whose classes are always well received. If you have a friend who is considering bonsai, this would be a great start.
Kevin Haughey's "Beginning Bonsai Workshop" Phipps Conservatory, Schenley Park, Oakland

Special Event: Saturday April 1, 2006 1-3:00pm



March 15	Wed	7pm Privat Workshop
April 22	Sat	10-12 Elms & Maples (Guest Speaker)
May 9	Tue	7pm Azalea Workshop
June 3-4	Sat/Sun 9-4	25th Annual Spring Show
July 19	Wed	7pm Tropicals Workshop
August ??	Sat	Picnic (Location, Time TBA)
September 20	Wed	7pm TBA
October 18	Wed	7pm Wiring
November 15	Wed	7pm Elections & winter care

2006 Calendar of Events
(A full calendar will appear in the March-April Newsletter)



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