



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

Jul. • Aug. 2006 Newsletter



JULY FREE FOR ALL!

Here's the opportunity to fix your bonsai's problems. Whether you have midsummer maintenance questions, want to refine the line, or merely desire a "second opinion", you'll benefit from advice from bonsai veterans. Bring your tree, tools and other bonsai gear.



Wednesday, July 19, 2006 at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside, 7:00 pm

AUGUST GATHERING AT THE GREALISH FARM (The Annual Picnic and Flea Market)

This is the best way to buy, sell or trade bonsai trees, training stock, tools, pots, soil, wire and countless other bonsai-related items.

- ➔ Bring a table and the modest \$5.00 fee if you want to sell stuff.
- ➔ Bring chairs and a bathing suit
- ➔ Free and ample parking.
- ➔ Snacks and beverages will be available (However, please feel free to bring something to share with your friends, old and new.)
- ➔ Directions to the Grealish Farm will be mailed to all current members.

Saturday, August 12, 2006; 10:00 am until?

MIKE STERN FINALLY GETS AN ANSWER

Trunk Splitting Technique

I sent this question to Bonsai Today on Trunk Splitting and received this answer. I thought it might be something to put in the news letter.

Michael Stern

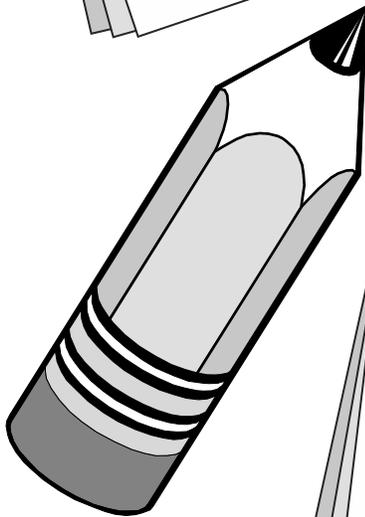
I have been a subscriber of BT since 1993. That says something about what I think of your magazine.

I am curious to see up close photos a year or two later and an article as to what the branches look like where half of it was eliminated. Specifically trunks and branches are split from top to bottom, core wood is ground out, a couple of lengths of wire are placed against the cambium to hold shape, it is all wrapped with raffia and then bent and wired into position.

The tree is miraculously transformed into a work of art. How long is the raffia left on? Does the half pipe branch cover over the internal wire? When it heals over, what do the scars look like? I think you get the point.

I would like to try a similar approach to a problem tree. I would also like to know about after care and what it will look like later.

Keep up the good work.
Michael Stern



Michael:

This is still a highly experimental and controversial approach initiated by Masahiko Kimura many years ago. You may remember that Bonsai Today magazine broached this to the bonsai community via an article in which Kimura split a large *Pinus parviflora* into multiple trunk segments. Notice that I used the word "segments": these are not trunks and, in my opinion, are unlikely to resemble trunks for many decades.

I have performed this technique with success, but this technique should only be used on substandard, problematic material that cannot be successfully styled via more traditional methods.

The hardwood removed from the trunk segments creates a very flimsy structure. While the inserted wires serve effectively as an armature, the process of regenerating wood to effectively support the hollowed segment can take a decade or more.

The healing looks as you would expect: the tissue on the sides of the trunk segment form a swelled lip: the hollow is virtually forever (at least within the span of the artist's lifetime).

Unless you are hollowing an extremely small trunk segment, which I would not recommend, there is not going to be a healing over the pipe. The only exception would be if you were able to completely connect the two sides of the hollowed trunk segment. This possible outcome I have yet to see.

The raffia should be left on the tree until it literally starts to breakdown-a period of at least 1-2 years. When removed, it should be picked away and the wiring should be left in place.

With respect to care, the hollowed segments should be coated with lime sulfur to mitigate fungal problems and to bleach the remaining wood. Subsequently, a light coat of Minwax Wood Hardener can be applied to seal the hollow.

When you execute the technique, do not split the trunk down to the soil line. This will result in a constant battle to prevent the wicking of water into the exposed hollow. If this occurs, you will most certainly encounter decay.

My recommendation would be to use this technique more commonly in situation where you need to split away a branch from the main trunk and drop it into a lower position. In this instance, the result will be more natural.

I hope that this explanation sufficiently answers your question. While new techniques are always exciting to learn and apply, this particular technique should only be used on materials that would otherwise be ignored for bonsai culture.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Cordially,
Michael Persiano

SUMMER HAIKU

A cicada shell;
it sang itself
utterly away.

Basho



NEWS OF MEMBERS



Former PBS President Dr. Norbert Pietrzak recently participated in a spring exhibition. The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation presented "Yuuga; Contemporary Botanical Watercolors from Japan", on the fifth floor of the Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University.

YUUGA means elegant and gorgeous and aptly described these contemporary botanical paintings. The exhibition included 43 works-the majority of them donated-by 33 artists. On a weekly

basis, Norbert provided a bonsai from his collection, plus a suiseki. Norbert, in the exhibition text, explained that "The Japanese Islands are composed of various rock formations, such as igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic, ranging from the Silurian and Lower Paleozoic to the Recent Era. The Japanese have traditionally enjoyed the beauty of nature and so they searched for stones resembling steep mountains, rapids, waterfalls and seascapes. They called these stones 'suiseki', sometimes adorned with tiny clay or metal homes,

bridges or boats. The Japanese place the stones in categories such as hut stones, figure stones, distant mountain or chrysanthemum stones. They are never altered; they are viewed as found. In Japan, suiseki are used for meditation, thus taking us away from everyday life. An old Japanese man might carry a small stone in his pocket. He feels the stone for its shape and texture. This keeps him in constant contact with nature."



WATERING

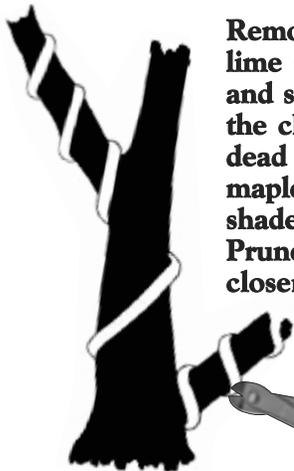
Put three bonsai enthusiasts together, ask how they water their beloved trees and you'll probably get three different answers. The answers are based on a lot of factors: temperature, humidity, health of the tree, location, wind, altitude, etc.

Frequency also depends on the depth of your pots. A deeper pot with its greater volume of soil provides a moisture reserve cushion. If you find you'll be away frequently in the summer, consider planting the bonsai back in the ground for a few days.

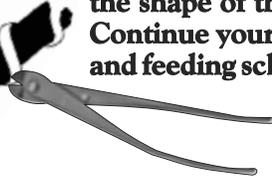
Generally you can use a "Rule of Three". Mist the soil on the first pass and leave it alone for a few minutes. The second watering can be a thorough soak. Wait an additional ten minutes and water again, thoroughly. If you wander in the morning around your trees, use your thumb to assess the moisture level.

JULY

Midsummer Tips

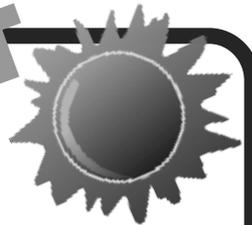


Remove wire from pines. Use lime sulphur to treat your jin and shari. Summer heat helps the chemical to penetrate the dead wood. Make sure your maples have afternoon shade. Watch for leaf-scorch. Prune for compact growth and closer internodes. Maintain the shape of the bonsai. Continue your watering and feeding schedule.



AUGUST

Late Summer Tips



Relax. It's the dog days. Remember your bonsai need to enjoy the balance of the summer. Plenty of water, afternoon shade for the deciduous trees, and remove the yellowing needles and leaves. Switch toothbrushes, and use your old one to remove algae with a diluted solution of lime sulphur. You can repot your tropicals, such as ficus on the hottest day, usually in the first week of August. Remember, August 15 is about the end of the growing season in Western Pennsylvania (Zone 5) and autumn is around the corner.





Pittsburgh Bonsai Society
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Pittsburgh, PA 15216

2006 Calendar of Events

July 19 Wed. 7 pm July Free For All! Bring your Problem trees.
Phipps Garden Center

August 12 Sat. 10 am-"on" Annual Picnic & Flea Market
The Grealish Farm

Sept. 20 Wed. 7 pm TBA Phipps Garden Center

October 18 Wed. 7 pm Wiring; Also PBS 2007 Nominations



Other Events

Sept. 8-10 International Bonsai Symposium "Blossoming Bonsai 2006"
Holiday Inn at the Airport, Rochester, NY
Registration: < wnv@internationalbonsai.com