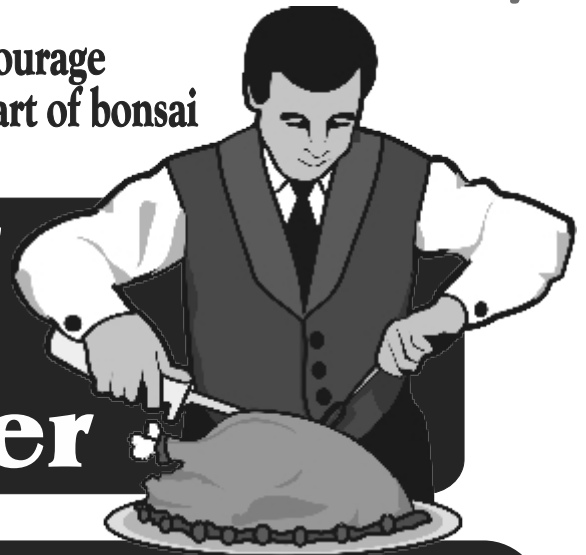




# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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



## Nov. 2007 Newsletter



### Winter Care And Elections

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 7:00pm

**NOTE: Second Wednesday**

You knew that the mild weather couldn't last! It's bonsai winter survival time, and storage, spraying and watering tips will help you through, till spring.

Oh by the way, no nominations for Clay Potts and Rose Bush will be accepted during the Annual Elections!



## BONSAI HOLIDAY DINNER!

Wednesday, December 5, 2007 6:30pm

You'll find your reservations form elsewhere in the newsletter, but please note that it is the **FIRST** Wednesday in December. The usual gourmet fare, teeny tree-hugging folk and the wrapped White Elephant Exchange will be featured, so get your reservation in now!

# The Annual Bonsai Picnic At The Grealish's

August 18 was a beautiful day, especially if you made it to our Annual Bonsai Picnic at Rose and Bob Grealish's Farm! Great food, loads of sweets and wonderful company. Everyone got a chance to see what Bob was up to with his trees this year, talk, purchase trees, buy pots, wire and other supplies, eat, drink and after all, what else is there?



## The Chips Fall At The September Demo!

Bob Grealish opened the September 19th program with remarks about the earlier Phoenix Graft examples he brought along. He showed that careful preparation can encourage movement in a dead trunk.

You cut the trunk roots flat and drill screw holes in the resulting base for eventual wiring. Various ways of caring for dead wood, curving the living tree, routing live branches through dead wood are secondary to finding a tree that fits the trunk.

Bob pre-carved a "route" that took over 5 hours. He used carbide router bits because regular Dremmel bits would "take

forever". The sawdust flew as he reduced the trunk to a flowing taper. Then while Bob mated the donated tree to the trunk, Keith Scott reduced the branches on his first bonsai (1956) originally purchased in a coffee can.

Bob said you can leave ties on 2-3 years, but don't wire the tree until you've attached it to the trunk. The result was a dramatic meld of pre-planning and artistry; and left the audience feeling that they might try this most creative area of bonsai.



# Mike's Corner

## Tips and Suggestions from Mike Stern "Shaping An In Ground Tree Part II"

When working with trees that are in the ground I rarely will coil wire around branches as they grow so fast. However, you may wish to do that if you keep a close eye on them. Also it is very difficult to wrap wire around branches that are close to the ground. I guess the young does and bucks might be able to do it. I can still get down, but I'm slow getting up.

Rather than use traditional wiring techniques, I use sod staples and anchor them in the ground at an angle as you would for a tent. (You can get sod staples at most nurseries.) I anchor the wire to the staple and then the wire is looped over a branch to be bent. I have also used garden twine instead of wire. (Wire is faster. Twine is cheaper.) Over the years, I have learned to bend the branches to a greater degree than I originally did. New growth on the bent branches will grow vertical and be part of the final branch. This will compensate to a small degree for that.

There are other strategies for bending branches that do not require staples. With garden grown trees, I used to cut off very low branches early on. Now, I will leave lower branches that I will sacrifice later. Not only do they assist with thickening of the trunk but they also provide an anchor other than a staple. Because lower branches can become too long or draw too much strength from what will be the tree, I will cut them off. However, I will leave a stump for anchoring purposes. If it is an evergreen, you can consider it as jin. You can always cut it off later. It is more difficult to glue it back. (More about that in another newsletter).

Bald cypress has a tendency to grow straight up. It also forms numerous branches. Wiring each one to a staple would have been time-consuming. So I took a piece of 4 foot tall wire fence a few feet long and made a circular cage. I then put it above the tree and forced it down over the tree and branches. This forces all of the branches to grow downward. Also, any of the new branches that form can be forced to grow at an angle when they are long enough to be bent down and forced under one of the horizontal wires. Once the branches have established their shape, I will open the cage without having to break branches by pulling it up.

Because I have so many in ground trees, I do not have the time to work with all of them with the same attention. I will use dead branches, bricks, tomato sticks or any other objects that I can merely lie across a branch or a group of branches to bend them. Obviously there is less control over the direction and amount of bending. Not only does this work but sometimes this technique created some very nice surprises.

After you bend the branches in late spring or early summer, the tree continues to grow. Not surprisingly the ends of the branches will start to grow northward. After they have grown for a little while, the wires can be moved further out and the ends can also be bent downward.

I have also used as an anchor off relatively straight dead branch which had side branches. I pruned the side branches leaving 3 to 5 inch lengths. I will force the top of the dead branch into the ground beside the tree. I will then take the live branches of the tree bend them by placing a live branch in one of the crotches of the dead branch.

Try to get the major bends in before August 15 before the trees start starts hardening off.

Please e-mail me any other strategies that are cheap and easy. [mstern55@comcast.net](mailto:mstern55@comcast.net)



## Who's Sending Me E-Mail?

Jay Miller

The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society communicates with the membership in a variety of ways, newsletter, email or phone calls. Anyone with internet access is concerned about "spam", identity theft and privacy. You may recently have received emails from [suisekifan@yahoo.com](mailto:suisekifan@yahoo.com) addressed to [bonsaikichigai@yahoo.com](mailto:bonsaikichigai@yahoo.com) with the "cc" and "bcc" address lines blank, and have hesitated to open that email. It's safe to do so. Several members requested we begin to shield their email addresses, so now all member email addresses are placed on the "bcc" address line.



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society  
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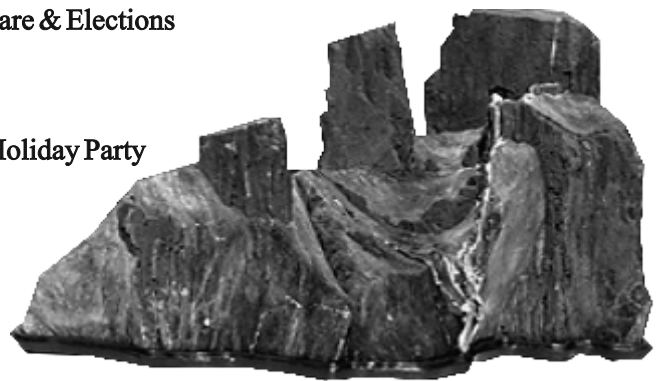
# Calendar of Events

November 14.....Wed. 7pm .....Winter Care & Elections  
Note: This is the  
SECOND Wednesday

December 5.....Wed. TBA .....Annual Holiday Party  
Note: This is the  
FIRST Wednesday

January/February.....No Meetings

March 19 2008.....Wed. TBA



All PBS meetings, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm.  
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