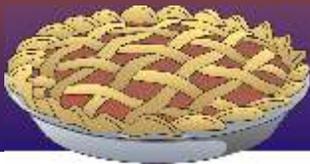




# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

## November 2010 Newsletter



### NEXT MEETING

November 17, 2010 Wednesday, 7pm

## ZEN & BONSAI with Bob Grealish



*photo by Cindie Bonomi*

Bonsai is more than a hobby, and more than an art.. It can be a state of mind. It can be a way to experience nature and reality in a fresh, freeing way. Bob will talk about the Zen approach to bonsai, and how we can get something different from looking at and working with bonsai.

We'll discuss how our everyday thinking works, why our thoughts are usually preoccupied, and what lies beyond the usual "brain cloud".

### NEXT EVENT

## The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society's



The Holiday Dinner will be held at the Phipps Garden Center on Wednesday December 15 at 6:30 pm.

**Details and Registration Form on Pages 3 and 4**

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



# The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

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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 one month prior to issue date

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

## A Note From Bob:

November is the time to start dreaming about Spring again (while we're putting the trees into cold storage, of course). Here's a list of things I wish I would do in November instead of procrastinating until it's 10 below, or until April 1st when it becomes non-stop potting time:

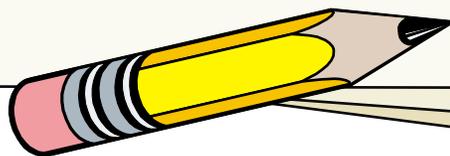


*photo by Doreena Balestreire*

- ➡ Get that cover on the Poly house before it's so cold it cracks going up
- ➡ Put tags on the trees that aren't draining too well so I know to repot them
- ➡ Rake the leaves off of the trees and pots
- ➡ Take some pictures of fall foliage
- ➡ See if any wire is cutting in
- ➡ Make enough dry, sifted soil mix so I don't end up using gravel out of the driveway
- ➡ Get some screen and copper wire for the pots
- ➡ Speaking of pots... Make some potting sticks
- ➡ Sharpen my tools and put them somewhere dry for the winter

Maybe I'll get these things done today so I won't be scrambling later. Or maybe I'll just throw a couple of defunct bonsai on the fire, make some tea, and dream of Spring.

Bob Grealish



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



## Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771

Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

# Kelley Adkins On The Raft Style

## October's Meeting/Workshop

By Dave Steidl

The raft style in bonsai is one of the less common forms of the art. Its natural inspiration is from a fallen tree, where over a long period of time, the branches facing upward have formed the trunks of new trees. This circumstance creates a relatively straight line of trees growing from the original trunk. In nature a more sinuous form can evolve from a lower branch that has been weighted down by snow and taken root. Kelley Adkins brought several raft-style trees that he has developed including one that was done several years ago at a previous demonstration here at PBS. It was fascinating to see this style done with several different species. Kelley showed examples with Smooth Leaf Elm, Hinoki Cypress, Shimpaku Juniper, Bird Nest and Alberta Spruce. Following his demonstration, Kelley conducted a workshop for members.

In all of these raft-style creations, Kelley emphasized the need for patience and that the style requires a long period of time to develop. Just to get adequate root development from the fallen tree can take a number of years. He showed how to encourage the new root growth by cutting a narrow strip of bark off of the side of the trunk that will be touching the soil and painting a paste of water and root hormone along the exposed cambium layer.

Kelley showed how to select the branches that would become the new trunks of the raft composition, and how to use single branch wiring techniques. By wiring each branch with a single strand you

can eliminate wire that would normally wind its way along the trunk between two branches. When it comes time to remove the wire it is much easier, since the trunk, now horizontal, will have developing roots along its length that should not be disturbed.

The tree is buried shallowly in a long flower box with the trunk barely or not at all exposed. There is no special care for the original root-ball of the tree which is now only about half buried. As the ball is watered, soil will wash out over time and the roots that are exposed can be cut off to develop the style. As the new roots along the underside of the trunk become more developed, you can slowly remove soil to expose them and the original trunk as desired for your particular design.

Inspiration for the raft-style bonsai can be challenging to find in nature. Creating one can offer great rewards over time. It will be unusual and rare.



photo by Dave Steidl

Photos from the meeting can be seen on page 4

## The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society's

# HOLIDAY DINNER!

The Holiday Dinner will be held at the Phipps Garden Center on Wed. December 15 at 6:30 pm. The event will be catered so that everyone can enjoy the evening with no work.

The menu will consist of chicken Parmesan, delmonico steak with bourbon mushrooms and tuna filets with basil and lemon butter. You can sample all of them buffet style, along with a tossed salad, roasted red skinned potatoes, a vegetable medley, rolls and butter.

A cake and cookies will be served to satisfy the sweet tooth.

We will also have the traditional White Elephant Exchange where you bring an item from your home that you no longer wish to see around the house. Wrap or disguise it so some lucky person will be surprised when they pick it.

Please send your reservation in with a check for \$12.00 per person by December 13.

Make checks payable and mail to:



Photograph and Photo Manipulation by Cindie Bonomi



**Cindie Bonomi**  
335 Newburn Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

**Reservation On Page 4 Phone: 412 561-2057**

# Some Photos From Kelley Adkin's Raft Style Meeting/Workshop

photos and captions by Cindie Bonomi



Bob opens the meeting



Kelley has brought examples of Raft Bonsai and goes on to show us how to get started on ours



After Kelley's Demo we all pick our trees



The workshop begins as a lot of our very young members seem to have gotten the hang of it



Kelley comes around to make sure everyone knows what they are doing



All in all it was a very informative meeting

## BONSAI HOLIDAY DINNER!

Reservation Form

**\$12 Per Person**

Name ..... Number Attending .....



**TOTAL**

**\$**



an article from  
**TRICKS THE BOOKS NEVER TOLD US**  
*By Keith Scott*  
**...On Roots**

Repeating the theme occurs at once in an obvious context. The authors and masters have made plain that the surface roots are to be evenly spread, radiating around the trunk. What of the Cascade? Does it not follow that the force to cause the tree to cascade would also cause the surface roots to pull out of the soil? Stripping the bark off a larger root contributes to the illusion of age. Keep in mind the roots exposed are the larger roots, not the hair roots.

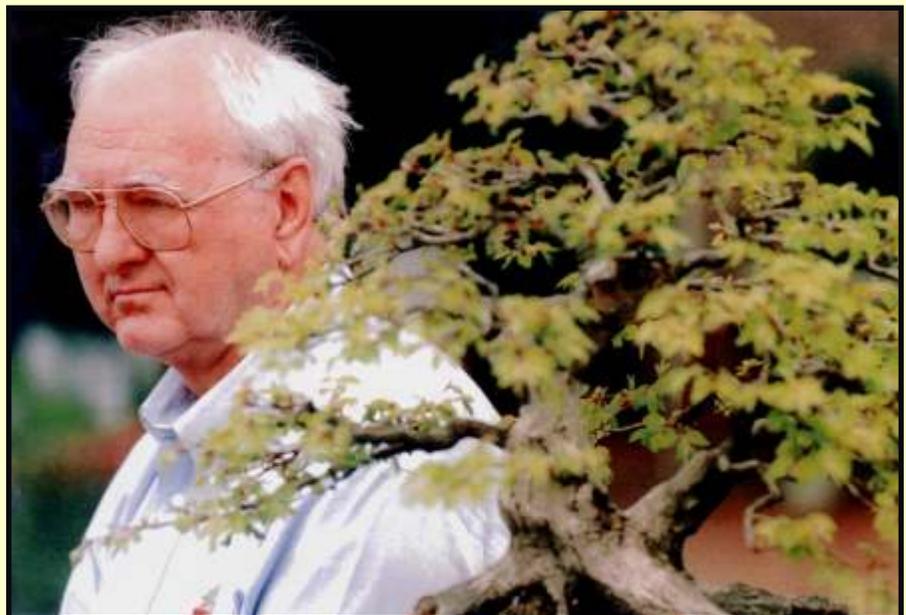
The surface roots should be promoted but many years must pass before the buttress will develop. One way of encouraging heavy surface roots is to pull the soil away from the trunk until the roots are visible. Choose the larger ones cut the smaller hair roots that lie like a mat between the major roots. A further corollary to this procedure concerns cutting pie shaped sections which lie between the major roots. This method of root pruning will satisfy the need for repotting with cutting the entire root mass back a third. If a pie shaped piece is removed each year, say a piece one fifth the total pot mass, in five years the roots have been cut back but the major radiating surface roots grow longer and refine the tree adding to the aesthetic value.

The preceding leads up to another method of getting roots to display properly. This rests with the way the young seedling or cutting is grown. As is commonly known, the young plant will thrive better in the ground unfettered by alternating wet and dry conditions of a pot. When putting the plant in the ground, spread the roots out evenly. Cut the tap root, if evident and place a flat rock under the roots. Be sure to plant the subject deep enough so it won't dry out. Check the tree's progress yearly, trimming any roots that do not contribute to the radiating buttress. Slate is a

good type of stone to put under the roots. Quite obviously the city dweller can't tear off a roof slate so use other kinds of stones; even wood or plastic will work.

Perhaps this is a good place to include a bit of propagation since this technique is related to root pruning. With larger deciduous specimens, particularly elms, when cutting back roots that are one fourth inch in diameter or larger, either pull the severed root out of the root mass and pot in a separate container about an inch above the soil level, or bunch several of the roots together in a pot. Place roots in the shade and keep well watered. In a week or two new leaves will form from the root stump. The plant can be made into a Broom Style Mame or allowed to grow into a larger plant of varying styles.

Another way of handling the root cutting when the specimen is in a bonsai container is to cut the root at the trunk and prop up the root so it lies beside the original trunk. Be sure not to disturb the end of the root sticking in the soil. In a few weeks the root will have sprouted and training as a second trunk can begin.



Photographer Unknown



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