



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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



September 2008 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

“The Twists & Turns of Wiring”

7:00 pm Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside.

This months meeting will be on wiring. Not that any of you need it. “Ha Ha Ha” myself included. Keith Scott will be leading the demonstration. As usual wire and “some” tools will be provided.

There will be a tree provided for each paid member. You may also bring one of your trees, but remember there is only so much that can be done in the time allowed.

Take what you learn from Keith’s presentation and from the help that is given at the meeting and apply it yourself.

Wiring can be very time consuming however the more you do it the easier it gets.

On Wiring By Keith Scott

The purpose of this article is to discuss wiring. Like most elements of bonsai, it is easy to talk about and hard to accomplish and even harder to master. With the limitations of the printed page even the simplest wiring procedure becomes confused and convoluted. Also, wiring is almost always essential even with the smallest specimen. Therefore, talking about wiring is ineffectual, while actually doing it boggles the mind.

I found, all those cloudy years past, that not only does one have to apply the wire smoothly, consistently, as well as aesthetically, the practitioner has to know which branches need wiring. John Naka told me when I asked which branches to wire, “all branches, even twigs and dead wood must be wired.” It wasn’t the answer I had hoped for. I poured over books, diagrams, talked with knowing people who in reality knew less than I did only then hid it better. The list of techniques becomes long and dreary: learning what size wire will bend the branch to its proper position, creating the most drama, ad infinitum.

Lots of people, myself boomed with the worst, avoided wiring because I had not developed the vision, foresight, “ability to see” the completed tree before I started. It seems so many novices, and experienced growers as well, think that the tree can be trained by mere pruning alone: not true. Sooner or later wiring will be necessary. However with experience, devotees will learn how to wire more effectively therefore cutting down on the numbers of branches to be wired. If I were to encapsulate all techniques into one succulent drop of truth, I would conclude that wire speeds up the training process: I don’t think it is any better than methods I’ll mention shortly. Wiring will save many years of growing and pruning. However, nothing should tamper with the compulsive behavior. Purists I find so tedious.



See the rest of Keith’s article on page 2

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

On Wiring By Keith Scott

Continued From Page 1

Back in the early fifties, when I first went to Japan and was startled by bonsai that had survived the war and its carpet bombing. Training by wiring was rarely seen. Most Bonsais were trained with string, bits of fiber, raffia, and the occasional piece of tiny diameter galvanized wire usually found in junk, reclamation yards. I even saw small bonsai with silk threads going from one spidery branch to another. But no matter how the branches were manipulated, they produced an effective result.

Copper, with the new prosperity, came along and was the ideal training material. But what with soaring copper prices, aluminum became the wire used to train the branches. Purists still persist and some professional artists have gone back to copper, most of it reclaimed, recycled from previous applications. Something about reclaimed wire appeals to purists. I think it is the color. Burning or stripping off the insulation and then annealing it in a fire of dry grass, leaves, twigs. Some aficionados even use charcoal braziers and home fireplaces to soften the wire. Nothing should interfere with natural eccentricity.

Some wiring will have to take place. My only suggestions are to wire then critique your work; and "this above all" remember you will have to take that wire off before the current year's growth begins to close over the wire. I always liked to put on wire but hated to take it off. However uncoiling wire is just as much a learning experience as putting it on. Usually when removing wire, I wonder who the incompetent fool was who put it on in such a slapdash manner.

Many years ago I had two occasions to see some really advanced wiring; the results were both amusing and predictable.

Should you come to my demonstration, you'll hear how wiring went mad one day and the bonsai world has been all the better for it. Bring your trees, wire, tools. As John Naka said, but not profoundly/you cant play ball without a bat.

A Note From Bob

The society wishes to thank Bob and Rose Grealish for allowing the picnic to be held at their home once again.

The weather was very cooperative, the pool was invigorating and the food was irresistible, those of you with a sweet tooth, lucked out, there was an overwhelming amount of goodies.

Bob's trees as usual were, simply outstanding.

Those of you that were not able to attend - you missed a great day.

Both Bob and Rose recently had knee replacements, it had to be quite a challenge to have the picnic with Rose's surgery only a week before.

So again thank you.

Bob Dietz

Check Out The Picnic Pictures On Pages 3 & 4

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



Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771
Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

Monthly Question And Answer Box

Do you have a bonsai related question?
Mail or E-Mail your question to:

Bob Dietz
1525 Connor Rd.
South Park, Pa.15219
dietz4771@comcast.net

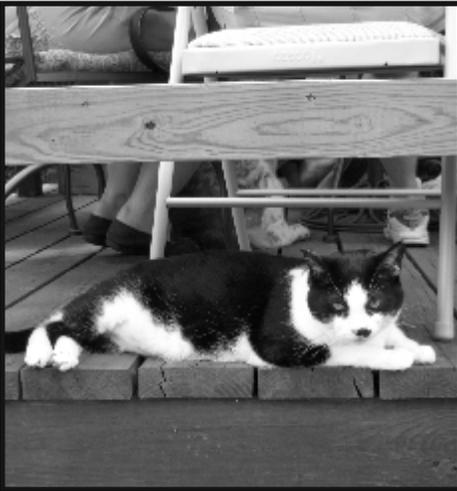


Your question and the answer will
appear in the next news letter



The 2008 Bonsai Picnic At The Grealish Farm





"Fertilizing with a Proportioner"

By Bob Dietz

Boy am I sold on this method of fertilizing. Until recently I mixed fertilizer with water in a bucket and fed each plant. This took me hours and to be honest, I did not always do it often enough.

I know that Keith Scott and Bob Grealish and others have used proportioners, so it is not new.

I started it mid summer of the year and over a short period of time I could see a difference in my trees. They look healthier, greener, and are growing better that they had before.

So, what is a proportioner? It is a tank, normally plastic that you put your fertilizer and water in and attach it to your house water faucet and hose. So that every time you water you are also feeding the trees. You can also control the rate of feeding with different settings on the tank.

Bonsai In the Burg now has 1.3 gallon and 3.0 gallon units in stock.

Hose/Drip Systems

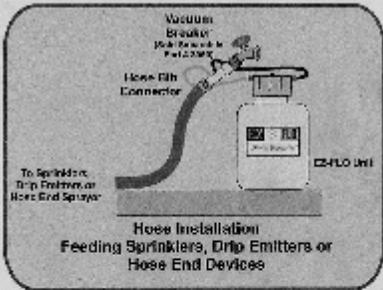
EZ-FLO Hose/Drip Systems normally connects to a garden hose, drip system or an irrigation zone and feeds automatically, every time you water.

EZ-FLO Hose/Drip Systems normally connects to a hose faucet (hose bib) to feed through a drip system or any standard hose end device. They can also be connected to one zone of an in ground irrigation system to feed through a single sprinkler or drip zone. *The system cannot be installed where it is under pressure when not in use.*

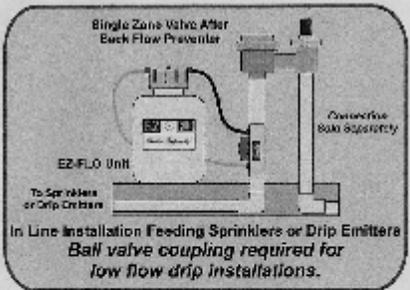
The system is easy to connect and easy to use.

The system can be connected in minutes to any standard hose bib. Any non-hazardous liquid or water soluble fertilizer or supplement can be used. This unit can be used for quick application or slow feeding every time you water. It can easily be moved between locations.





Hose Installation
Feeding Sprinklers, Drip Emitters or
Hose End Devices



In Line Installation Feeding Sprinklers or Drip Emitters
Ball valve coupling required for low flow drip installations.

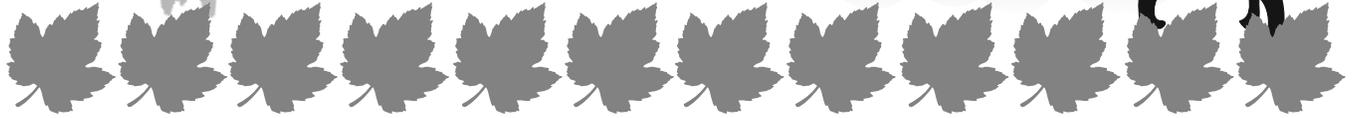


Model Number	Gallons to Empty - Hose/Drip Connection				Capacity	
	Slow 1000 : 1	1 600 : 1	2 250 : 1	Fast 100 : 1	Liquid All tank capacities are accurate	Water Soluble
2005HB	750	375	188	75	1.5 Gallons (5.6 liters)	5 Pounds (2.3 kg)
2013HB	1,333	667	333	133	1.33 Gallons (5.0 liters)	8 Pounds (3.6 kg)
2030HB	3,000	1,500	750	300	3.0 Gallons (11.4 liters)	15 Pounds (6.8 kg)

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Early Autumn

In The Bonsai Calendar



September is a welcome change after the “Dog Days” of August. Warm days and cooling nights signal changes in your bonsai maintenance, too. Reduce your water volume to the trees to match the reduction in your tree's activity. Don't over-water. September rains are generally heavier than summer showers, and your trees may require some protection.

Consider modifying your feeding schedule to one application containing no nitrogen. Keith Scott used to advise the old Tuesday classes that the no-nitrogen approach will harden the current growth for winter protection.

You love the ripening berries on your fruit-bearing bonsai; so do the

birds! Time for protection, perhaps plastic mesh over a lightweight frame.

While your deciduous trees begin their displays of autumnal colors and hues, you can still play with the pines. Removing old needles by hand just accelerates the process of “old needle drop”. Trim off downward growing needles, and check the wiring.

Remove any wires cutting into the bark. If you can improve the foliage pads, now's the time to rewire those branches. (Need wire? Call Bob Dietz before the meeting and order some!)

Finally, take a walk in the autumn woods. Observe the color changes. Think about the possibilities of native species for bonsai.

Mike's Corner

Tips and Suggestions from Mike Stern

Look and See

My trees have been out on benches since late March where they routinely are watered and trimmed. A number of my trees were wired in the spring and have recently had the wires removed as the branches are beginning to swell. Luckily many of them held their shape. Unfortunately some were wired into positions that now do not look so attractive. I get sidetracked. Suffice to say that I have been looking at my trees at least daily since March 2008.

By looking at my trees each day one would think it would be easy to notice problems or changes. However, I am often impressed with how often I miss problems with disease or insects as well as with yellowing of the leaves. Because of the changes are very gradual I just do not see the difference. Though I look at them each day I do not see them. For instance, a couple of my trees had wire removed and right before removing it I realized that the branches were not in the most attractive positions. When I wired them in the spring, they were fine. However, as foliage grew some of the branch positions could have been mildly altered to place the foliage cloud in a more attractive space. I find myself rewiring branches to make these mild artistic modifications. Had I seen my trees more clearly, I could have made the adjustments during the growing season.

As a result of my experiences I have been thinking about how I can better see my trees. A couple of ideas will be offered. The first is a having pair of fresh eyes. Having friends who ask questions and point out things allow me to more clearly see the tree. Often times, their appreciation of a tree can create a renewed enthusiasm for a tree that became boring. Obviously, having someone over who knows bonsai is also effective. It would be important to give your bonsai guest the freedom to comment and critique. Before you seek their honest opinion mentally prepare yourself to hear and listen. Do you truly want a critique or are you seeking appreciation. If it is the latter, don't ask.

A second idea is to take a photograph of the tree. Before I photographed a tree, I have an illusion about how the tree will look. I imagine it is going to look like one of the trees that I see in the magazines and books. Disappointingly, they rarely come close to the professional images in those books and magazines. However, it allows me to look at them and draw comparisons. By doing this I have been able to alter positions of branches that have created a more attractive silhouette.

Finally, I built approximately 14 pedestals this summer. Let me briefly digress. It took much longer than expected. It took a few weekends of woodwork, water proofing, digging post holes through sandstone and clay. The post hole digger was useless and a 20 pound prybar was required. Following that I had to set the pedestals plumb and build a privacy fence behind them. The privacy fence was not planned but was an unforeseen problem. Finally the project was completed and the trees were set on the pedestals. This allowed each tree to be highlighted, something that cannot be achieved as well on benches. I was very impressed with the way the Arts and Crafts Center displayed our trees for the show. It encouraged me and motivated me to finish the project, especially the digging. The money, time, and effort were well spent. By moving the trees I was able to see them again. Some of the trees look much better being set alone. Others have had their defects highlighted.

I have promised myself to move them around every so often so that I can see the tree from a different angle and with a different background.



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)
335 Newburn Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Calendar of Events

Sep 17.....Wed. 7pmWiring demonstrationPhipps Garden Center

Oct 15.....Wed. 7pmAlpinesPhipps Garden Center

Other Events

Oct 3-4.....Cincinnati“Understanding the Art of Bonsai” Krohn Conservatory
www.cincinnati Bonsai.com/

Oct 13-14.....RochesterBonsai 2008 1st National Bonsai Exhibition
www.internationalbonsai.com/nbe08/



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

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

Severe Weather & Emergency Information

PBS Meetings and Special Events at Phipps Garden Center will take place as scheduled except in the event of severe weather or emergency. Unsure? Call their Emergency Phone Number: 412 441-4442 for updates.