



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

2022
NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY

At our February meeting, Terry Monroe plans on presenting a short 10-15 minute program especially focused on new or novice members regarding the care of freshly repotted bonsai. Since the roots have been disturbed and cut, the tree is more vulnerable. The care of freshly repotted trees is not the same as a tree that has a healthy and recovered root system. The program will inform members of what to do regarding watering, sun, wind, rain, and temperature extremes. Members will understand how to improve their ability to make sure the tree survives its most recent surgery.



~Photo by Cindie Bonomi

Josh Buynak will demonstrate how to thread graft a deciduous tree. This involves taking a long thin branch that has been allowed to grow. A small hole will be drilled through the trunk in an area where a branch is desired and does not exist. The branch will be carefully threaded through the hole and stabilized to increase the chances that the new branch will graft to the trunk and become a new branch.

Repotting the tree is the procedure which poses the most risk to a tree. This procedure, if performed in an untimely manner, poorly executed, and/or not receiving appropriate aftercare causes more death with bonsai than any other procedure. Mike Stern will demonstrate the strategies of removing the tree from the pot, reducing the root ball in a safe and strategic fashion, securing the tree in the pot, replenishing the soil, and chop sticking the soil to ensure integration of soil and roots while leaving no air spaces.

Tuesday • February 15 • Parish Hall of the Church of the Redeemer

MARCH

In March, Terry Monroe will provide a 10-15 minute program on styling/repotting. He will then follow that up by demonstrating the techniques of bending large trunks and/or structural branches. Often trees that are collected in the wild or purchased at nurseries would be more aesthetically pleasing if branches were growing in a different direction and/or had more movement. Bending thick branches creates challenges as older wood is not very flexible. Performed incorrectly, bending a branch will cause slow and/or immediate death. A certain amount of damage and stretching can be tolerated and the tree branch will survive, thus improving the quality of the tree. There is a saying in bonsai: if you have not broken a branch through wiring and bending, you are not trying hard enough. Come and see how far Terry is willing to push it.



Based on the weather conditions, we plan on having a program at the bonsai growing field at the Grealish homestead. Dave Metzger will be coordinating our bonsai field-growing -trees program, regarding the appropriate strategies for collecting field grown deciduous trees- and immediate aftercare. Members will have a hands-on experience collecting as well as learning how to ensure the stability of the post collected root ball and stably healing it in a growing medium for its recovery. Bob Grealish will perform, a repotting of one of his trees



~Photo by Cindie Bonomi

highlighting the nuances and differences of repotting conifer versus a deciduous. Many species have nuanced differences in when and how they should be repotted. Trees in different stages of development also have nuances that impact re-potting technique.

Tuesday • March 17 • Parish Hall of the Church of the Redeemer

Haven't Renewed Your Membership Yet? (Please See Membership Form On Page 8)

Now follow us on Instagram: www.instagram.com/pitt.bonsai/
Please check our ever-evolving website for updates: <http://pittsburghbonsai.org>
Also visit and "like" us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PittsburghBonsai



The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

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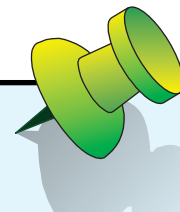
Treasurer:
Ed Baginski

The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society (PBS) was organized July 10, 1957 to disseminate knowledge, encourage others, and create interest in the art of bonsai through meetings, workshops, newsletters, and guest speakers. It's our seventh decade of advancing the art of bonsai in Pittsburgh and the Tri-State area. The membership year is January 1 to December 31. For details on events, Society membership or general information, see the Society's web page at: <http://pittsburghbonsai.org>. Our newsletter is published periodically, 10 issues per year.

Deadlines:
Generally two months prior to issue date

Submissions:
Submissions are encouraged. Please submit photos or artwork in JPG format and copy in Microsoft Word.

A Note From Mike:



In 2021 the Pittsburgh Bonsai Society (PBS) renewed activities in early May after a significant stretch of dormancy.

We started the year with only three out of five officers, no committee directors, and no Phipps Garden Center. The officers embraced technology with ZOOM meetings to restart some of the regular PBS activities. We plan to continue to utilize in-person as well as digital activities going forward.



~Photo by Mike Stern

Josh Buynak agreed to step up from the VP to fill the vacant Presidency in the process of renewal.

Ed Baginski, Treasurer, paid bills and kept on top of finances from 2019 to present. He explored and found a regular space to meet at the Church of the Redeemer. We then established regular meetings with programming, albeit flying by the seat of our pants. We had a successful auction and an enjoyable picnic and holiday celebration. We ended the year in a financially stable position but also were unable to have any workshops or show. As a bonus, members were not charged membership fees for 2021.

Ed also provided baked ziti for the holiday celebration.

This year, though still not at full strength with officers and committee directors, we are in a better position to move forward with a full schedule. The officers have put in numerous hours with phone calls, emails, meetings, and visiting venues to put together the calendar of in-person events. Included are workshops (Jennifer Price in April and Mike Lebanik in October), show, auction, picnic, garden tours and holiday celebration.

Continuation of Mike's message: page 3

For your Bonsai supplies, support

the store that exists for the society



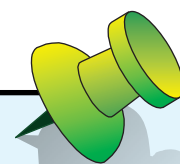
Bob Dietz



Bonsai In The Burgh

Home: (724) 348-4771
Cell: (412) 592-3271

Pots, Wire, Tools, Soil, Trees



Larry Lamonde volunteered to be the Recording Secretary.

Doug Baker, Publicity Technology Officer, has begun the process of coordinating our digital presence through our webpage, Facebook, Instagram, email, and Google documents to better publicize and respond to members inquiries.

We have a President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Publicity and Technology Director. The Vice President's position remains vacant.

Terry Monroe volunteered to be the Education Director focusing on new members and their education throughout the year. He has put together a program of seasonal educational topics as well as will be implementing ZOOM Q&A meetings. He will also be coordinating tours at member's gardens.

Dave Metzger volunteered to be Field Director and has put together bonsai field growing educational programs that will be conducted at the growing field throughout the year. These programs will highlight seasonal work on trees that is directly translated to bonsai. It will also provide hands-on learning activities. Dave is purchasing seedlings on behalf of PBS to place in our growing field for future workshop trees. He coordinated a seedling purchase from a wholesale nursery for paid members to give them access to bonsai seedlings at incredibly reduced rates. Over a dozen people have taken advantage of this.

At one of our last meetings of 2021, we brainstormed ideas for a show as we had no venue at that time. Numerous ideas were generated, and the venues were explored. Most of the venues were too expensive or not conducive to a show. However, Dave Metzger volunteered his time to explore retail space and found the show venue at the Monroeville Mall.

Because of Dave's efforts, we will have a show in 2022! Our show tends to be one of the highlights for our members and visitors. Since there will be a zombie convention that weekend, we will consider a zombie themed component to our show.

Jim Crawford volunteered to be the Supplies Director. For the first time, we have someone coordinating the supplies and materials that PBS owns. There are books, magazines, tools, wire, turntable, table cloths, and backgrounds for the show.

Cindie Bonomi continues to volunteer her time to create the newsletter that members receive on a regular basis. Just a reminder the newsletter will only be sent out to paid members starting March 2022.

Rick Erkstom continues to volunteer his time sending emails to keep members informed with the newsletter and any updates.

Robert Dietz continues to donate pots, plant material, and bonsai related items to the PBS to be auctioned off for the Society's benefit. He also provides supplies at cost or usually below cost by not including his travel and mileage.

Mark Mohler donated a pot to auction off on behalf of the society.

Robert and Rose Grealish continue to volunteer their home and supplies for the picnic. They have also graciously allowed PBS to have the bonsai growing field on their property. Dozens of workshop trees have been left there after collection that require watering and care until the workshop.

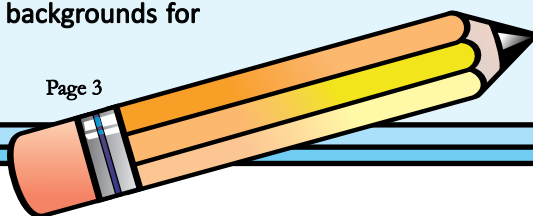
There were specific times and events where volunteers were needed, such as during the Show and Auction. At this year's Auction and Home and Garden Show, volunteers included Debbie Brys, Karen Means, Gilda Arroya, Bob Dietz, Josh Buynak, Jim Shultz and Cindie Bonomi.

Throughout this message I have repeatedly utilized the word "volunteer". The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society exists and will continue to exist as long as people are generous with their time and talents. How much PBS does and how well we do it correlates with the number and quality of our member volunteers. I am grateful for all the effort.

I am sure that I have left out members who have volunteered their time and talents this year and to them I apologize. Let me know if I forgot you or you know a member I missed.

I also understand that people's lives and circumstances do not provide them the time and opportunity to volunteer as they would like. Work and families come first. When the time and opportunities to volunteer arise in the future, we will welcome your involvement.

Mike Stern
mstern55@outlook.com



Holiday Celebration

December Meeting Photos





~Photography Cindie Bonomi and Pranag K. Nag

Late Winter Thoughts And Spring Preparation

~ By Michael Stern



~Photo by Mike Stern

January temperatures have been below 0° more than once. Bonsai trees are especially vulnerable to subfreezing temperatures because of their small size and refined root and branch systems. The colder the temperatures and the longer they last, the greater the risk of damage to the trees. The roots constitute the most vulnerable part of the tree when considering cold temperatures.



Under normal circumstances, trees growing in the native environment can have roots to a depth of 6 feet (most are about a foot below.) Obviously younger trees are shallower however; the earth provides significant insulation and buffering capacity against subfreezing temperatures. The nursery industry has determined that the root kill temperatures of many trees and shrubs is approximately 20° F. When temperatures hover in this area and/or below for an extended period, bonsai trees are especially vulnerable. They do not have a foot of soil above them to buffer cold temperatures. During winter months, the cells in trees maximize the sugars and starches they contain to act as a antifreeze during cold temperatures. If temperatures get low enough, the intra-cellular water freezes and destroys the cells which form the roots and every living cell in the tree.

We can only hope that our winter shelters, and healing in process, as well as having several inches of snow acting as insulation have reduced the risk to the trees. We will not know the impact of this brutal January winter until spring. We also might not know the impact in the early spring as many deciduous trees have stored sugars and starches that will allow the tree to elongate with new growth. When the first warm sunny day arrives requiring the leaves to be hydrated, there may be no healthy roots to

perform that function. That new flush of growth suddenly dies.

We do know that some species of trees are more tolerant of subfreezing temperatures than others because of genetic differences. Trees that naturally grow in colder zones tend to be more tolerant than trees that grow in more temperate zones. For instance, Trident Maples will be less tolerant than the American Red Maple. Scott's Pines are more tolerant than Japanese Black Pines.

For now, let's be hopeful that our trees survive the bitter cold days.

As your trees are beginning to awaken in the spring, buds start to swell. This is the best time to perform re-pots and root pruning to increase the tree's survival following these processes. There are exceptions to the rule. In general no one would disagree that the vast majority of trees have great survival rates following root pruning and repots at bud swell.

I suggest to people that the time to start looking for bud swelling coincides with the appearance of crocus and/or daffodils. Some trees will be ready at that time and some will be later. Try not to learn how to time bonsai tasks with set dates on a calendar, but rather with indications from each tree.



Caring for a tree in late winter and early spring can be challenging. "The Bonsai Shuffle" bringing them in for a frost, taking them back outside when its over.

If the tree is still dormant and it had **significant** problems with fungus and/or insects, a horticultural oil could be considered as well as lime sulfur. **Read the labels carefully.** Both chemicals can cause phytotoxicity. Both chemicals can damage or kill the leaves and/or the needles. For example horticultural oil is not recommended for blue spruce and junipers, to name a few. Dormant sprays are designed to suppress spore growth and kill insect eggs. Oils smother and lime sulfur's Ph is toxic to the fungus or organism. Use them judiciously and carefully. Lime sulfur is toxic to humans.

When moving your trees out of their winter shelters, continue to pay attention to predicted temperatures, wind, and rain. If trees are beginning to open their buds and expose new leaves, frosts or temperatures below 32 can be damaging. From my experience frosts have been especially damaging to yew, ginkgo, honey locust, and Japanese maple. My elms and crab apples are tolerant of mild frosts. You can place trees in a garage or under a shelf or roof to avoid frost. If temperatures are going below 32, you may want to pull them inside.

Pay attention to watering as trees are coming out of dormancy. Water the tree as needed. Having a healthy balance of water and oxygen is the most critical component of health in your tree. Sometimes spring can be very wet, not allowing enough oxygen into the soil which leads to root-related problems. Strategies to deal with too much rain would be to tilt the pot on its side and leave it that way, but only if there is a drainage hole drilled into the pot to let the water escape. If there is no escape hole, tilting the pot for a brief period on one side and then tilting it to the other can reduce the volume of water in the pot. Putting it under shelter such as the porch would also be helpful.



TILTING THE POT IN THE RAIN TO PREVENT THE TREE FROM GETTING TO SATURATED

If there are exceptionally strong winds, new leaves can be damaged. Find a windbreak for the trees. Pots can be blown off shelves. Consider sitting them on the ground or tying them to the bench.



WIRING YOUR TREE TO A BENCH

~Photo by Louise Means

Immediately after a tree has been repotted, it is thoroughly watered to wash out small particles from the air spaces. For freshly cut roots to heal, they need a balance of water as well as oxygen. Don't let the tree completely dry out but also don't over water the tree and keep it too wet. A freshly repotted tree does not have a fully functional root system that can hydrate the leaves/needles that the tree will produce in the spring. Freshly cut roots also cannot absorb as much water as untouched roots. Therefore, consider keeping a freshly repotted tree out of the wind and avoid afternoon sun. Keep the tree on the ground where the evening temperatures are warmer and there is more humidity. The leaves' or needles' demands for water will be less in the shade and therefore will not demand more water than the healing roots can provide. Slowly move the tree back into increasing amounts of sun as it can handle it.

If you suspect your tree has freeze damage from this winter, you may want to handle it similarly as you would a freshly repotted tree. Don't fertilize it, water it carefully to maintain a healthy balance of water and oxygen. On cool days have it in full sun. Avoid full sun on hot days. Keep it on the ground as it increases humidity and provides heat on cool evenings. It would be helpful to keep the roots warm because heat stimulates growth.

This Month's New Members: Albert Hines and James Sinegal



Membership Year: January 1 to December 31
Your continuing support is greatly appreciated

Name

Address (Number and Street, Rural Route or Post Office Box)

City or TownState

Zip

Phone

100

Individual Membership.....\$30.00

Family Membership.....\$40.00

E-Mail Email address is used for membership database and member correspondence only. The Society will keep this info **CONFIDENTIAL**. (Please include)

Date _____

Signature

5

I am a New Member

1

☐ I am Renewing my Membership

Pittsburgh Bonsai Society
P.O. Box 8236
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Page 8

Order your PBS items now:

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Mugs

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Pins

Magnets



Wear Your Pride...

And your enthusiasm for Bonsai! Golf shirts embroidered with the Tricolor PBS logo are available in white, tan and taupe for \$25. You

can also supply your own quality shirt and embroidery will be a modest \$10.



*-photos by
Cindie Bonomi*

For more details, contact Cliff or Anna Domasky at: annaclaus55@hotmail.com

Yard Tours

Would anyone be interested in hosting a Yard Tour at your home? We need 5 volunteers.

The idea is that you open your garden to the society for a few hours on a Friday evening. During this time, members can see your trees, ask questions, take photos, learn, and get ideas for their own trees.



~Photo by Cindie Bonomi

We intend to have a Yard Tour once a month between May and October of 2022. I am also going to host a Yard Tour in my garden as one of the locations.

Please contact me if you would be willing to share your garden with the society for an evening.

Terry Monroe

Haiku Corner

On a branch
floating down river
a cricket, singing.

-Issa

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Meeting and Demonstration Ideas:

If you have a topic or subject that you would like to see PBS present in coming months, please contact Mike Stern for consideration of your idea. This means NEW members, too! PBS wants to help you grow in your knowledge and skills as your bonsai grow.

Meetings and Workshops:

Bonsai is a hands-on art that benefits from hands-on educational opportunities. The slate of topics for meetings and workshops has been created. We are going to work hard to do seasonal work at the meetings when we do not have a guest demonstrator or speaker. We want members to bring in their trees to work on as well as get advice and suggestions. Early in the season we will try to work on potting as well as pruning, trimming, and wiring. We hope to make the meetings more like a workshop.

Working on Bonsai at Other Member's Homes:

We will be having some members host a one-day gathering to work on bonsai at their residence to have more time to work on projects as well as improve camaraderie.

Bonsai Growing Field Days at Grealish's:

The Bonsai Society grows trees in the field to provide reasonably priced, quality pre-bonsai for our workshops. The growing Field Director, Dave Metzger, will be scheduling dates throughout the year for members to come together and have hands-on experience with these trees. The timing and technique of setting structure, pruning, wiring, bending, and trimming of these trees is the same as your bonsai. Many members do not have lots of trees on which to practice. The field provides the opportunity to see how and when specific techniques are applied on multiple trees and different species. To improve one's knowledge and technique, repeated experience is the best teacher.

Bonsai Mirai:

This subscription online platform allows you to observe, ask questions, and experience bonsai education remotely. It maintains a library of hundreds of videos that you can access on addressing everything bonsai from seasonal techniques and aesthetic considerations to horticultural knowledge.

Eisei-En Nursery, Nashville, Tennessee Bjorn Bjorholm:

Intensive learning opportunities.

<http://www.bjornbjorholm.com> Eisei-En Nursery, Nashville

Brooklyn Botanical Garden:

CV STARR Bonsai Museum

30 Trees on Display Year-Round

National Bonsai & Penjing Museum:

Washington, DC. 10 am to 4 pm



Compiled by:
Michael Stern

Newsletter Information:

It's easy to make an announcement or contribute to the PBS Newsletter. If it is text only, email Mike Stern at: mstern55@outlook.com. If it is a sketch or photo, email Cindie Bonomi at: cindiebonomi@gmail.com.

**Submissions for the March Newsletter
are due no later than February 25th, 2022**

Pittsburgh Bonsai Society 2022 Events

The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Board is excited and proud to have put together a year-long program that provides seasonally based experiences, education, and topics for new members as well as experienced members. This is the first time that we will be integrating with our monthly meetings remote learning via ZOOM, the bonsai growing field, and Garden Tours. We will be offering comprehensive learning experiences and opportunities for all members.

We did our best to schedule when specific techniques will be seasonally appropriate to teach and demonstrate; however, these will be subject to change based on weather conditions and the developmental phase of the available trees. Applying techniques at the appropriate time are critical to creating healthy and quality trees.

The proposed schedule for experiences and demonstrations at each meeting are subject to change. We will announce those changes prior to each monthly meeting. We will announce ZOOM Q&A meetings as well.

	New Members Program First 15 minutes post business meeting	Meeting Program	Field Growing Bonsai Program Dates to be announced.
January		Zoom Presentation. Aftercare of Collected bonsai material. Feb. 3. 7:00 PM. Mike Stern.	
February	Care of bonsai and freshly repotted trees during significant weather fluctuation. The Bonsai Shuffle. Watering nuances. Zoom Q&A	Meeting Tuesday 15th Thread graft deciduous Repot of shohin sized tree	
<i>Affective March we will be meeting on Thursday for the remainder of our schedule</i>			
March	Potting and/or styling Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 17th Bending back branches and structural wiring.	Collection and aftercare of field grown trees. Repotting demonstration.
April	Fertilization strategies Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 21st Styling. Secondary and tertiary wiring. Pinching pines and elongating species. Pro Workshop (fee based and bring your own tree) April 23rd-24th. Jennifer Price.	Putting movement into branches. Avoiding reverse taper from branch collar growth. Potting seedlings to prepare for field growing. Flaring roots for nebari. Pinching pines. Garden Tour #1
May	Building ramification. Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 19th. Air layering. Larry Lamonde Pinching pines and elongating species. Bob Grealish	Pruning and branch bending to create movement. Strategic trimming to avoid reverse taper problems. Air layering field tree. Pinching pines. Garden Tour #2
June	Pest recognition and management. Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 16th. Partial defoliation. Shoot pruning. Short needle single flush pines. Spring Show June 11th-12th	Post flush harden pruning of deciduous and conifers. Partial defoliation. Garden Tour #3

July	Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 21st. Members bring in tree for group critique #1. 10 trees. Auction July 23rd.	Post flush harden pruning. Big cuts on trees. Garden Tour #4
August	What are trees doing in August? Increasing vascular growth. Zoom Q&A.	No meeting. Picnic August 7th.	Bending branches to create movement. Re-wounding scars to increase healing. Garden Tour #5
September	What to look for when searching for nursery material. Fall fertilization. Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 15th. Wiring conifers such as spruce or juniper.	Bending branches to create movement.
October	Tool maintenance Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 20th. Leaf drop pruning on deciduous and fall wiring. Pro Workshop (fee based and bring your own tree) October 8th-9th. Mike Lebanik.	Leaf drop pruning and fall wiring on field trees.
November	Winter storage and care review. Zoom Q&A.	Meeting Thursday 17th. Members group tree critique #2.	
December		Meeting Thursday 15th. Holiday celebration and winter silhouettes.	

All meetings will be held in the Parish Hall of Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15217. The church has an off-street parking lot available for our use and is one mile from our former meeting site at the Phipps Garden Center. All meetings will begin at 7:00pm and will reoccur every third Tuesday of the month unless otherwise specified.

