



YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

“Learning from each other Sharing with the community”

October

2006

GUY GUIDRY LECTURE/DEMO & “BYO” WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 14, 2006 - 10:00 AM @ BARTLETT ARBORETUM



Guy Guidry's first visit with us was in July of last year and we immediately asked him to return this year. He is a born teacher, enthusiastic, artistic, horticulturally knowledgeable, and with a great sense of humor. He is the owner-operator of Bonsai Northshore, a full service bonsai nursery in Covington, LA. *Guy's* world recognized and has several of his bonsai on permanent display at national museums around the USA. “He is very articulate and has the ability to teach while styling and pruning - which results in a very informative and entertaining session.” (Your editors’ own quote from last year’s Newsletter.)

Member’s cost for the workshop is based on allocating *Guy's* workshop fee among the workshop participants (approximately \$30 - \$40 per person).

SEPTEMBER’S CRITIQUE & WORKSHOP WITH COLIN LEWIS

COLIN LEWIS ON DISPLAY

This season’s opening meeting was well attended in spite of the early hour. *Colin Lewis* began with the comment that the majority of bonsai presentations focus on material development, yet most of us will display a tree at one time or another and we must explore the elements that will show our trees to best advantage. If we follow these precepts, it will also raise the level of the entire exhibit. This concept prompted your Program Committee to ask *Colin* to devote a meeting to examining all aspects of display including refinement. We dropped the planned “juried exhibit” in favor of examining the trees with this specific focus.

We were “in class” until past normal lunch time when we took a brief break and resumed the session as a workshop to design our trees to prepare them for future display. Learning didn’t stop as *Colin* helped us with styling and most of the members stayed about until late afternoon.



Ten members brought trees which served as the subject matter for the morning’s discussion. Each tree was presumed “display ready.” *Colin* studied each entry, first pointing out display issues, then the overall strengths and shortcomings emphasizing those which were remedial and trying to mask those which were problems. He laid out the steps which would improve the presentation for display, noting that sometimes it is best to keep a tree in a training container and only move it into its suiban for display. The scrutiny for each tree brought comments such as “a sacrifice branch for a length of time would have widened this tree”; “do not use a pot with a lip in this case”; “you can only trim this two-tier cascade with scissors.” Reading these remarks without the trees in front of us would not enrich anyone’s knowledge of bonsai development or display so the balance of the article is a summary of *Colin's* wisdom from this session. A juried member show must wait for another meeting when we’re all spruced up!

A display includes ALL elements which create the unity we call a bonsai: tree, container, soil, moss/lichen, stand, accent material and its placement.

SOME OF THE DISPLAY NO-NOS that are generic

- ☹ do not use a drip tray underneath a tree which is on display, even if it is not a “judied exhibit”
- ☹ do not oil an unglazed pot; spruce it up by brushing it with a shoe brush (the residual polish which comes off looks good on an unglazed pot, but pay attention to color)
- ☹ never show a tree that recently has been doctored (fresh wired, etc.)
- ☹ do not let wire be glaringly seen; it should only be visible on close scrutiny and must be immaculately placed
- ☹ moss should not look like a lawn
- ☹ prefer pots without script
- ☹ accent should not be on stand with bonsai but may have its own stand or mat
- ☹ never place bonsai flat on the table, use a stand (preferred) or mat

FOR EVERY TREE YOU DISPLAY, not to be overlooked:

- √ clean the trunk of moss and algae; lichen if healthy, adds to aged look depending on species (not on Shimpaku)
- √ evenly dress the soil with moss or consistent top-soil one to two weeks before the show; this includes removing all old moss or at least refreshing it
- √ place moss up to roots but not over; use two-three types, keep low, and not on trunk
- √ if not using moss, soil should be uniform in color and texture, and in scale with size of the bonsai
- √ play with the arrangement seeking best under piece (tray, mat, etc), do not just plunk down the bonsai and presume that it's line will carry the prize
- √ stands may be of any material, color, texture, shape which you find enhances the bonsai
- √ small tree leaning toward viewer gives subconscious sense that it is larger than it is
- √ conifer wire should be copper
- √ accent, whether plant material or accessory, must be in proportion to space in which it is exhibited
- √ place accent slightly back from front of main stand except for very large trees
- √ accents should be in keeping with season/mood and should echo context of tree meaning native material (e.g., lichen good accent for a sub-alpine tree)
- √ dry out wet trunks a week before showing trees and shelter from rain

GLEANINGS FROM COLIN LEWIS

- ✿ If you are going away and want to ensure moisture for your trees, plug the drain hole with peat moss and put the entire pot into peat.
- ✿ Root rot is a misnomer, it doesn't exist. The problem lies in the amount of water a plant's soil will hold before it dries out. Do not water to point where water comes out of drainage hole. (Editor's note: *Yuji Yoshimura* stated that if water does not drain out, the minerals in the water will accumulate in the soil.)
- ✿ Put lime sulphur on dead wood 4-6 weeks before display then put tree outside. No acrylic paint with lime sulphur
- ✿ Round-up® may be tried on moss BUT NOT ON LEAVES or in bonsai soil.
- ✿ Arinaria moss is hard to get rid of; it clogs drainage holes and germinates in three weeks.
- ✿ Inexpensive roller blinds now come in natural, cherry, or dark oak. You can cut sections for mats. Home Depot, for one, carries these blinds.

There were three groups of members in attendance: exhibitors, workshop participants, and observers - overlapping groups. The exhibitors were *David Castro, David Cowles, Berni Gastrich, Norman Geisinger, Maggie Limberg, Lucille Miller, Lavanya and Charles Muller, Mike Pollock, Gail Therrien, and Herb Yanowitz.*

On the next pages are some of the exhibited trees and some photos of the workshop session. Unfortunately not all entries are included because of photo quality or distracting backgrounds.

SNIPPETS OF COLIN'S CRITIQUING



Natal plum

The trunk is slim for its height. It missed development growth - needing a sacrifice branch to create a wider framework. Should be in a larger pot for quicker development and growth. Let all the branches grow long then cut them back by half. For exhibit, the pot is too deep for the tree.



Shamrock ivy

Good design! The soil dressing should be finer and mono-tonal. The pot should be shallower, about 1" deep, glazed, but not ornamental.



Cascading Natal plum

Too many branches - make it more compact. Since the tree is not yet strong enough, the pot is too strong a color (bold orange) and the stand is too tall.



Ficus nerifolia

Proportions are good! There are varied mosses mixed with lichens up to the roots, but not over them. The pot is wrong, fruit bowl style. The stand is too heavy and too shallow.



Chinese elm

Let top explode for growth. If no moss, soil should be uniform in color, texture, and in scale with the tree. Nebari is nicely cleaned. The stand is too small for the pot. Pot is a good color, but should not have a design.



Chamaecyparis

The tree is too high in the pot and has too much heavy moss. The pot is too dark and thick and should not have a lip. (Out of view was an accent of lichen, excellent because it was local (sub-alpine) related.)

The following are more of the trees exhibited, but this reporter could not keep up with the critique comments:



Kingsville boxwood



Natal plum



Azalea



Azalea



Thuja occidentalis



Chamaecyparis
(Unconventional planting)

WORKSHOP PHOTOS



Colin studies and scalps John's bargain (Home Depot) tree



← Colin draws a sketch of his vision of the finished bonsai on the only material available at the moment - *Charles Muller's* palm.



MEMBERS' BONSAI FOR SALE

DAVID COWLES:

David has relocated to Minnesota and has left his bonsai collection behind. *Mike Pollock* and *Gail Therrien* picked up his trees pots, wire, soil, tools, etc. His collection will be sold/auctioned at the October meeting, so bring your checkbook!

Gail estimates that there are approximately 35 to 40 trees, some are quite big. They are all hardy and should be put to bed for the winter. There are probably at least 60 pots, plus the usual accessories. Some of the trees will be marked for direct sale, others will be sold at a silent auction.

LUCILLE MILLER:

Lucille has a Ponderosa pine which she wishes to sell. She collected it in Colorado approximately 15-20 years ago. The tree is 32"H x 34"W x 31"D. The container is 18.5" x 13.5" x 5", and appears to be by Tokoname, with chop. Her asking price \$500.

She also has a White pine for sale. The tree is 29.5"H x 27"W x 5"D. The container is 18.5" x 13.75" x 5", appears to be by Tokoname, with chop. Her asking price is \$300.

OFFICERS

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COMING EVENTS

- Oct 14 *Guy Guidry* all day “BYO” workshop
Nov 11 *David Easterbrook* lecture/demo & workshop
Dec 9 Holiday party and auction

YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY, INC.
165 West End Avenue - 12D
New York, NY 10023-5509