



# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

Learning from each other. . . . . Sharing with the community”

October

2008

## OCTOBER IS A VERY BUSY BONSAI MONTH - BUT NO FORMAL YAMA KI MEETING!

*October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (Saturday and Sunday):*

Our October “business” meeting has been cancelled so that members can spend as much time on bonsai “in the field.” Black and white photographs are usually enhanced by color. And no color photo can match the live three-dimensional view of a mature, healthy, prize-winning, styled bonsai tree. The high price of fuel for the auto trip is insignificant compared to an airplane flight to Belgium! Take advantage of our proximity and see the first National Bonsai Exhibition at the Historic Monroe Community Hospital in Rochester, NY.

*October 18<sup>th</sup> - November 2<sup>nd</sup>:*

Every member should not miss the return of the Kiku (The Art of the Japanese Chrysanthemum) exhibit at the New York Botanical Garden. “The cascades of flowers, single plants with hundreds of flowers, and others with an enormous flower atop a single; an elaborate flower show and cultural exhibition.” A fourth kiku style, shino-tsukuri (“driving rain”) has been added as well as a new exhibition, The Chrysanthemum in Japanese Art, depicting the use of the chrysanthemum as a visual motive in prints, textiles, etc.

In conjunction with the Kiku exhibit will be the YAMA KI bonsai exhibit, which will be further enhanced by many selected bonsai created by professional bonsai artists. The NYBG has arranged for *Berni Gastrich* to conduct paid guided tours for visitors. If any of our neighboring bonsai clubs visit as a group, a YAMA KI docent will conduct the group on a tour which will take the time to accommodate the data queries and questions of the bonsai enthusiasts.

If you have not yet signed up for your time as a docent, please check the time slots that are open on our website ([www.yamakibonsai.org](http://www.yamakibonsai.org)) and send an email to *Lavanya Muller* ([lmuller@optonline.net](mailto:lmuller@optonline.net)) indicating the hours you will help. As club members, we are all committed to “ - - sharing with the community” As Norm has said in his email, “It’s a great experience and will also give you the opportunity to see the entire KIKU exhibit **FREE!!**”

The following article written by one of YAMA KI founders, is appropriate:

“Just as the Bonsai art itself is replete with standards of perfection calculated to duplicate a tree of beauty growing in nature, so too, the display of Bonsai requires the same taste of proportion, spacing and artistry - all designed to give the tree an environment pleasing to the eye . . . . The appreciation of Bonsai is not a “do it yourself” proposition. If you simply want to contemplate a tree in solitude without deriving the pleasure of sharing it with someone else, then almost any setting will do. But if your Bonsai is to be admired by friends or neighbors - if your creation is to be part of an exhibit - then more thought must be devoted to the window dressing. “

Meyer, Jerome. “Yoshimura-On Bonsai Display”, BONSAI, March 1978

## NOTES FROM SEPTEMBER’S MEETING

*Norm Geisinger* opened the September meeting with a few announcements and requested that members go online, check the open spots and sign up as docents for our EXHIBIT at the NYBG. There are two sessions per day (10 am - 2 pm and 2 pm - 6 pm) plus three late evening openings which require coverage from 6 pm - 9 pm. With a heavy schedule for the NYBG exhibit, we are skipping an October meeting.

Concluding the first of our new-style artist-teachers at triple-meeting, *Colin Lewis* concentrated the first part of the September program on winterizing our bonsai. Tropical material is not within his realm of expertise so he did not attempt guidance for such species.

Touching upon semi-hardy plants/trees as bonsai, he noted that they will survive frosty temperatures but NOT freezing ones. They are marginal material as far as winterizing goes. Some species which fit this tag are Kingsville boxwood, Chinese elm, Olive, and Crepe myrtle. We suggest you check your **BONSAI ALMANAC** if you are in doubt about a plant's hardiness.

Stop nitrogen fertilizer before mid-September. Pines are also kept nitrogen free in spring. When you have pinched the candles back in July or August you provide them with high nitrogen until the end of October.

On to winter hardy bonsai. Your very first step is to be certain that each plant is clean! Remove old foliage, pot debris, coarse moss, etc. Many bugs remain active throughout the winter or have laid eggs which will feast when you remove the plants from dormancy. Junipers may pick up tip blight (a fungus) while in storage. This can be removed by applying copper fungicide. Do not store too early; late November early December at the earliest because they do need a little frost. AND be wary of removing your trees too late in the spring.

If you have an uninsulated exterior cabinet, it can be adapted for winter bonsai storage by picking up sheets of 2" thick styrofoam and using it to line your cabinet. Alternatively save the styrofoam packing from shipping boxes and recycle it in this productive way. *Colin* suggested a home-made inexpensive temperature-controlled heating unit for the cabinet. A future issue will include a sketch of the "device" and a list of the materials and suppliers. But know that it involves a 20-watt light bulb in a tin can as the heating source. *Throughout the winter months while trees are in storage, you must check them.*

Possibly in early April you can begin to awaken your plants. You MUST keep them out of the wind. For in the ground plants, you can use hardware cloth around the base of the trees. DO NOT use leaf mulch or bark chips; critters, vermin, etc. feed well therein.

Weed bonsai containers by hand! You can use Roundup® *very sparingly* since it is potentially dangerous if you get it on the foliage. Some of the weeds for which you must be constantly alert for removal are Oxalis (red leaf which you might want in your herb garden), Sandwort (arenaria – which resembles a mini-grass) because its extensive and quick-growing root system will clog drainage holes, and Selaginella.

### GLEANINGS FROM COLIN

- ✿ Bonsai design starts at the roots. If you have many jins, don't remove the bark. Let the tree self-determine its shari. If you are uncertain about the life line of a tree, PULL back the bark, do not use a knife for shari. You can also test the hardness of bark with your fingernail since dead wood is hard while live wood is thick and fleshy.
- ✿ Beware of grafting paste. It is not as satisfactory as cut paste. Do use cut paste to protect the cambium around a cut. You do not need two colors of cut paste; the grey is satisfactory and you can use a magic marker to cover the spot when it is dry.
- ✿ Bonsai soil need not be pure Akadama® but avoid Turface®. Colorado Red Lava® is an excellent growing material and unlike Akadama® it is reusable.
- ✿ Eucalyptus does not tolerate root tampering.
- ✿ When pruning deciduous material, go back a little farther than your instinct dictates. Probably go from bottom to top twice as you do the pruning.
- ✿ Many species can grow for 100 to 200 years in nature, but even longer as bonsai. Hinoki cypress is an example of one which will last about 100-120 years in the ground but can last about 300 years as a well cared for bonsai.

## CRITIQUES AND WORKSHOP

Before the afternoon's workshop, *Colin* reviewed trees which members brought in for guidance:

*Lavanya and Charlie Muller* had a Cotoneaster for discussion. The species is semi-deciduous and slow to thicken. It tolerates pruning and is best for clip-and-grow.

*Irv & Rhoda Kleiman* brought in a Juniper with a heavy linear look accented by heavy branches and a heavy prominent root system.

A good looking American Hornbeam belonging to *Berni Gastrich* had too many weak branches which were sapping energy from potentially good ones. It will do well in long-range development.

Then came a pretty *River birch* which *Gail Therrien* has been training. This species needs a great deal of water. Its vascular system *can be* compact but this is not likely in a bonsai container because it is constantly regenerated.



## MIDATLANTIC SPRING FESTIVAL - 2009

You already know that the upcoming Festival will be held at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY – April 17-18-19, 2009. All of your suggestions about the facilities have been addressed over the past few months.

At September's Board meeting, we finalized the artistic lineup for this exciting festival. You will meet an exciting young artist from Japan, *Mr. Isao Omachi*. *Farrand Bloch* (Netherlands), publisher of *BONSAI FOCUS* will be with us for part of the Festival. *David Easterbrook* (Canada) will introduce his collected Larch forests. A New Yorker, *Sarah Amoy* will open the session on Friday night with a presentation of *Busera fagaroides*, a semi-tropical material. As always, there will be a hospitality get-together on Friday evening. You will spend time with the artists in breakout sessions, critiques, and at limited-registration workshops. A range of vendors, in a spacious area, will provide plant and accessory materials, tools, soils, distinctive containers, books, and adjunct items. You will find the specimen trees in our EXHIBIT on display in a larger room with better lighting and ventilation.

Mark your calendars now to reserve the weekend. At our December Holiday Party you will be able to pick up your Registration Form and take advantage of early-registration rates.

OFFICERS

Norm Geisinger. . . . . President  
Mike Pollock. . . . . Vice-President  
Irv Kleiman. . . . . Treasurer  
Lavanya Muller. . . . . Secretary  
Gail Therrien. . . . . Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS

David Castro, John Cotaggio, David Cruz,  
Charles Muller, and John Ruggio

Co-Editors: Rhoda & Irv Kleiman

© YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY, INC.  
<http://www.yamakibonsai.org>

COMING EVENTS

Nov. 8 10:30 AM Board meeting  
12:00 pm *Marty Schmalenberg*: forest lecture and  
slide presentation  
Dec. 13 12:30 pm Holiday party & Auction

Remember to check our website ([www.yamakibonsai.org](http://www.yamakibonsai.org)) for updates and latest information

Yama Ki Bonsai Society, Inc.  
165 West End Avenue - 12D  
New York, NY 10023