



# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

February

2002

## BERNI GASTRICH

**FEBRUARY 16, 2002 AT BARTLETT ARBORETUM, 1:00 PM**

Last March, *Berni Gastrich* demonstrated a technique to radically bend a heavy trunk on a large Scots pine, The tree was a raffled demonstration tree at MidAtlantic’s 2000 Spring Festival won by *Rhoda Kleiman* and was donated to Yama Ki, on the condition that *Berni* would restyle it. A reprint of the article describing the technique is enclosed.

At our February (this time, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday) meeting, *Berni* will complete the styling, pruning and detailing to make it ready for the last stage - repotting. He will discuss his vision of the final bonsai and review the techniques and procedures to be applied to attain the end result.

Similar to the procedure used at MidAtlantic for presenters, he will move to the side and proceed with the pruning, wiring, etc. while we all watch a video-tape After the tape we will inspect the bonsai while *Berni* tells us of any changes made that were not anticipated and details any problems he encountered.

## JANUARY’S MEETING WITH THE ROSADES

*Melba Grieshaber*

Bright and early on January 12, 2002, YAMA KI began the new year with a demonstration and workshop by *Solita and Chase Rosade* of New Hope, Pennsylvania. Working on a large *Microcarpa* "Kingman", or tigerbark, ficus with established air roots, *Chase* did pruning and styling (using aluminum wire) while *Solita* explained about acclimating tropical material to our climate zone.

*Solita* said that any *Ficus* can adjust to an indoor location **if it is not moved**. Once you pick the place where your plant will spend its indoor time, switching it from here to there will result in dropped leaves and a new period of adjustment. Temperatures between 59f and 70f degrees are good, and the more light, the better



for these indoor specimens.

*Solita* gives her tropicals a monthly dose of *Superthrive*, but discontinues her

weekly fertilizing routine from mid-November through March. The plants should be on a humidity tray and given a shower two or three times a week to get rid of dust. Early stages of aphids can be controlled with a spray of one spoonful of white Ivory dish detergent in a gallon of water.

Between the middle of May and early June, the plants are taken outside and put in partial shade. Then they can be re-potted, defoliated and, when the new leaves are one inch long, put in full sun.

Both *Chase* and *Solita* spoke of the work of *Mr. Chen* of Taiwan, where the Tigerbark ficus originated (Taiwan and China). *Mr. Chen* does much grafting to create branches and roots where he wants them, and will also bring aerial roots against the trunk to increase its diameter. Pruned branches can be stripped, cut short, and rooted for shohin. *Mr. Chen* also wraps the trunks of his trees in spaghnum moss to force buds.



The YAMA KI members who took advantage of the opportunity to have *Chase's* and *Solita's* expertise at their fingertips in the afternoon workshop were well rewarded. The Ficus that were supplied had good trunks, good branching, and aerial roots. Both *Chase* and *Solita* gave lots of specific advice on styling and wiring. We are looking forward to having some impressive specimens when they are put into bonsai pots this spring.

## **BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI**

*Berni Gastrich*

### **GUY WIRES**

Winter is, of course, an ideal time for pruning and wiring. All bonsai people are familiar with the spiral wrapping of wires around trunks and branches. We all use this constantly. Many times such spiral wrapping just doesn't hold the branch down. The temptation is to flex the branch down far beyond the position we actually want, in the hope that it will spring back part way, and then stay in the ideal position. Sometimes this works, but often we end up with a broken branch in hand.

A safer alternative is to wire the branch in a normal way and then attach a guy wire to pull the branch down slowly. This way there is no need to bend the branch beyond the desired point. It can even be pulled down part way, left for a week, and then pulled further. Such a guy wire can be anchored to a heavy branch further down the tree, or sometimes to a jin. If it is a low branch you can bring a wire up through the soil mass from a hole in the pot. The reason for doing the spiral wire wrap first is that we usually want the bend to happen right where the branch meets the trunk. The spiral wrap transfers the bending force to the desired location. Without it we get a branch that has a bow in it. Only the outer part of the branch bends down.

### **EMAIL OR SNAIL-MAIL?**

We received a request to send the monthly NEWSLETTER to a member by email instead of through the postal system. It would save paper and postage -- advantages to the environment and our treasury. Another advantage to the email attachment is that all photos are in color. Many times when we zoom in to photograph a styling technique, it is difficult to tell the difference between the stylist's finger and a branch, when printed in black and white. However, it isn't worth the effort unless there are enough members involved, e.g., at least ten members. If you would like to receive the NEWSLETTER by email, send us a message at: [irkleiman@rcn.com](mailto:irkleiman@rcn.com).

## BERNI RESTYLES APPLYING A DRAMATIC BEND TO THE TRUNK

Last year *Berni Gastrich* demonstrated a technique to radically bend a heavy trunk or branch. He cut a long narrow notch in the hardwood of the branch where he desired the change in direction. He stuffed plastic tubing (the type used with fish tank pumps - actually two different diameters of tubing, one inside the other) inside the notch. He then wound gauze (or raffia) around the branch and bent the branch almost 90 degrees.

He applied this technique to the demo Scots pine. Everyone looked



Bark beginning to cover notch created last year to change trunk direction



*Berni* studies the Scots pine

carefully at the tree, seeking the front. The plant just didn't "talk". Hence, the decision for the radical treatment.



Off with the heavy top



Grinding a cut to make room for the bend



The tubing is placed in the notch



The trunk wrapped with gauze (or tape)



Bending and wiring the trunk to its new position with the help of *Adam* and *Leonard*

The “hard” part is done,

### MIDATLANTIC BONSAI SOCIETIES

The turn of the New Year has brought us to within three months of MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' 2002 Spring Festival.

Some bonsai practitioners have difficulty getting material to flower. Even more rare is the presence of prominent bonsai artists who are women. Once again MidAtlantic is proud to present *Ms. Katherine Shaner* of San Jose, California, who is internationally recognized as one of the outstanding contemporary bonsai teachers. For nearly 20 years she has studied and taught in the field. At the outset, she spent five years in Japan as a student and apprentice of *Mr. Yasuo Mitsuya*. In 1999, at MidAtlantic's Spring Festival she designed an outstanding Seiju elm bonsai. On April 19, *Kathy* will offer the first critique of the Exhibit material, then on Saturday, April 20 she will present a lecture/demonstration using material imported from California. Sunday afternoon you may participate in her Chinese elm Workshop. If this seems like too slight a program for her, you will enjoy her translating throughout the weekend for *Mr. Mitsuya*.

Did you register for this exciting weekend - or part of it? If not, call *Rhoda Kleiman* at (212) 724-7840 or email her at [irkleiman@rcn.com](mailto:irkleiman@rcn.com). for a registration form.

### INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT TIPS

*Scott Aker, IPM Specialist*

The following appeared in the January 2002 issue of PBA Clippings (Newsletter of the Potomac Bonsai

Association) which was edited and condensed from USDA web-site <http://www.ars.grin.gov/ars/Beltsville/na/> for December 2001.

Cold winds this winter could cause winter burn injury to your broadleaf evergreens. Needles or leaves may be discolored or develop a burned appearance, especially on windy sites. Winter burn injury is caused by wind blowing across the leaf or needle surface and drawing moisture out into the air. When the ground is frozen, roots cannot absorb water to replace the lost water and the leaf tissue is burned. This problem is especially noticeable in winters following a dry fall where plants were not watered adequately. To help prevent winter burn injury, water your plants whenever there is a thaw. If your plants are in a particularly windy or vulnerable site, you may want to consider protecting them by wrapping them with burlap.

The use of anti-desiccants is another possible way to protect your broadleaf evergreens such as hollies, azaleas, and magnolias. Anti-desiccant sprays create an invisible, watertight film on the leaf surface reducing the amount of water lost to the wind and the sun. Anti-desiccants should only be applied when temperatures will be above freezing for 12-24 hours. More than one application over the winter may be required. Be sure to follow all label instructions for the brand you purchase.

Winter is a good time to look over your bookshelves and see what you need to add to your bonsai and gardening library. Look for books on plants you have wanted to grow or on how to diagnose disease and pest problems. Books with color photos can be especially helpful in identifying problems. Landscape design books are great not only for designs, but also as a source for new ideas and plants to try. Also you can go through your bonsai books to study photos of completed bonsai and get ideas on how to better create and style your trees. It's funny how many things you are reminded of when you open up one of your old bonsai books.

Inspect the twigs, branches, and trunks of your trees for insect egg masses. Gypsy moths, eastern tent caterpillars, and fall cankerworms all lay egg masses that overwinter on trees. Gypsy moth egg masses are fuzzy and buff-colored and can be located on any part of the tree. Eastern tent caterpillar egg masses can be found on cherries and crabapples encircling small twigs and have a black, varnished appearance. Fall cankerworm egg masses are located in neat rows on small twigs. Hand-pick individual masses off branches and trunks.

## GLEANINGS

- , From the same PBA Clippings: Did you know that 90% of the insects around your home are beneficial to or do not harm your plants? They eat pest insects, recycle organic debris, or feed on plants without causing any noticeable damage.
- , Don't try to sharpen your bonsai tools with an electric bench-grinder. The tools are too light in weight to dissipate the heat generated during grinding. The excessive heat will take the hardness out of the blade. If your tool is so bad that it requires bench grinding, take it to an experienced tool sharpener, who has special grinders and the expertise to do the job properly. (Patrick, John. "Care of Bonsai Tools," New Orleans Bonsai, Feb/Mar 1989.)

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COMING EVENTS

Feb 16 *Berni Gastrich( note date change)*

Mar 16 *Steve Peterson, repotting*

Apr 27 *Kathy Shaner & Mitsuya*

WEATHER HOTLINES

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