



YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

“Learning from each other Sharing with the community”

March

2003

“BYO” REPOTTING WORKSHOP GLENBROOK COMMUNITY CENTER MARCH 8, 2003 1:00PM

Please note that the next meeting will be at the Glenbrook Community Center, at the second floor’s smaller room. Directions are included on page 7.

You may bring as many plants as you wish. Please bring your own tools, YAMA KI will provide wire and bonsai soil. The club owns extra tools which will be available, if you need tools. Of course, most club members will be helpful with anything else you may need. This is an opportunity to get alternative suggestions for styling, potting, container, and/or maintenance questions.

KEVIN GOVEIA’S HANDMADE BONSAI POTS FOR SALE

Before repotting, check out *Kevin’s* handmade pots which he will bring to the March meeting for display and sale. Some of them may be better suited than the container presently used by the plant to be repotted.

FEBRUARY NOTES ON BERNI GASTRICH’S PRESENTATION

Berni first outlined his procedure for the maintenance of a collected tree. Initially, place the tree in a large training container and feed it plenty of water and fertilizer to develop vigor. Deciduous trees can be pruned back hard in the fall and winter when the energy is all stored in the roots. Needle evergreens, however, still have energy in the branches and cannot be pruned heavily. Nitrogen helps bud back.

When the tree has achieved good vigor, cut the roots on opposite sides of the tree. This can best be done using a keyhole saw (inexpensive and available at any hardware store). In the early spring cut the roots on opposite sides of the tree. In the fall, around Labor Day, cut the other two sides. All of this is done without removing the tree from the container. Just saw down vertically through the soil, thus cutting the roots. This process will result in the growth of fine hairy roots at the end of the root cuts by the following spring.

The following year the tree can be repotted in an “approximation” container. This is to shape the root mass to fit a final container. Use fairly coarse bonsai soil to encourage vigorous root growth.

The following spring, when ready to repot to a bonsai container, bring the plant to a nursery/supplier to view your selected pot in front of the tree. *Berni* indicated that there were times the container he purchased, when brought home, diverted the eye from the tree to the container. This container should be slightly larger than normal. In the final pot, the bonsai soil should be finer and fertilization should be less frequent to induce shorter internodes and less vigorous growth.



Mugo & Bristlecone pine

Berni brought four trees to help illustrate his presentation. He purchased the Bristlecone pine at a 40% off end-of-season sale, which he wished to keep exposed outdoors all year in a bonsai display. He kept the pine exposed to the wind and freezing temperatures to check on its hardiness, before he would invest the time to style it. He brought the tree to style at

this meeting, noting that although it looks distressed, it meets his hardiness test and is healthy. The Mugo pine will also be part of his outdoor bonsai display. This tree has been trimmed, but the branches will be cut back in the spring and will be encouraged to bud back.

FIRST PHASE STYLING THE BRISTLECONE PINE



Mike Ivany suggests where to cut

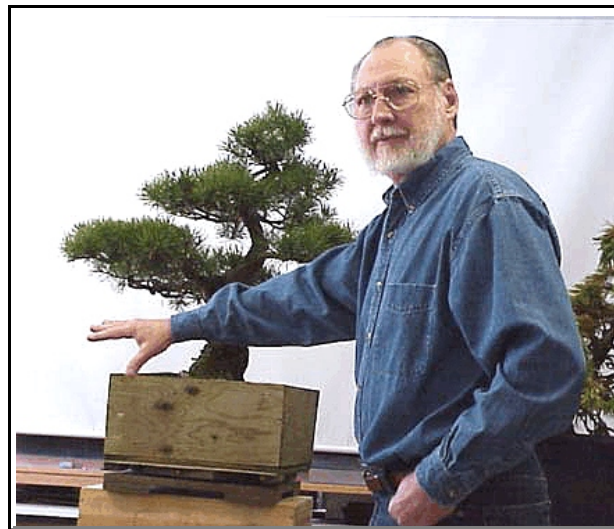
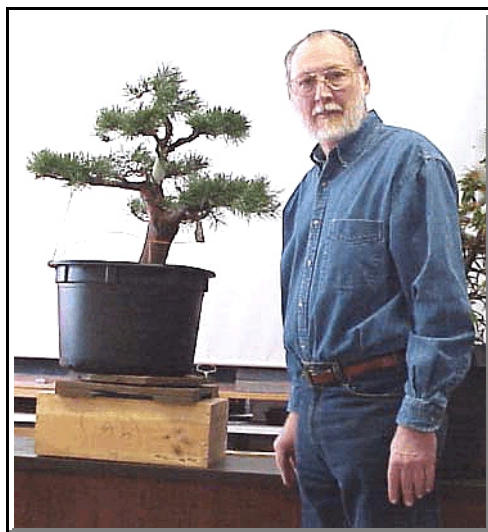


Berni cuts and trims



End of phase one

The two Scots pines photos below both had radical trunk bending. The tree on the left was dramatically restyled two years ago at a YAMA KI meeting and further styled at a meeting last year. The tree to its right is further developed and is ready for a bonsai container. *Berni* will “paste” bark from another tree to cover the wounds from the hollowed out trunk which was stuffed with plastic tubing and then bent almost 90 degrees.



Berni continued with a demonstration of the effect of water retention and drainage based on the ingredients and coarseness of the soil and shape of the container. This visual presentation dramatically reinforced the notes in the last two issues of the Newsletter. Using three identical containers with different soils: coarse, fine, and half-and-half, he filled the containers with water to the brim. The bottom holes had previously been covered with tape to hold the water. He then removed the tape and measured the amount of water that poured out. The degree of the water retention was surprisingly very significant. Most surprising was the mixture of half coarse and half fine soil - the water retained was almost equal to that of all fine soil. It became obvious that the fine soil filled the spaces between the coarse soil, resulting in the equivalent of all fine soil.



GLEANINGS

Reprinted from the September 2002 issue of the Long Island Bonsai Society, *Marty Haber*, Editor

- ✿ When preparing to wire, use a rule of thumb for copper wire of a thickness $\frac{1}{3}$ the diameter of the branch to be bent. For aluminum wire, $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter. If the desired thickness is not available, cut a piece of narrower gauge wire twice the length required and double it over. You may then wire using two strands at once.
- ✿ Always anchor wire before applying it to a branch. Usually there is a nearby branch available for this purpose. If not, apply at least three turns on the trunk before starting on the branch. Turns should normally be at a 45° angle, but for small changes in direction, especially on slender branches, a larger angle is OK.
- ✿ When deciding on a new position for a branch, look below and above it to be sure not to shade a lower branch or be shaded by a higher one. Viewed from above, the branching should resemble the spokes of a wheel.
- ✿ Very thick wire, even if well annealed, can be quite stubborn. If a large loop develops which is too difficult to manage, use pliers to close the loop. This will not only look better, but will hold the branch better, too.
- ✿ Remember not to cross wires, primarily for artistic effect. If you crack a branch, leave the wire on, but move the branch back to its original position and protect it with cut paste. Many of the world's best bonsai have cracked branches on them. Eventually the damaged surfaces heal themselves. Now that you know all about wiring, stash this page away 'til spring, when you can pull it out to review.

BONSAI BEGINNERS PROGRAM

Berni Gastrich will be conducting a basic bonsai program consisting of three evening sessions on March 31st, April 7th and 14th at the Arboretum. Each session will run approximately 2½ to 3 hours. The curriculum includes: design and aesthetics, choice of plants for bonsai, wiring for design, pruning for design, tools necessary and how to use them, potting and choosing pots, healthcare (feeding, watering, insects, diseases, etc.) The Society is covering all costs except for plants and pots which will be provided at cost. Soil and wire will be provided free. The Society has some tools which can be borrowed for the course. Call *Berni* (914)764-5022 or gastrichba@juno.com. There still may be some openings.

HORST KREKELER "BYO"WORKSHOP - MAY 3, 2003 GEORGE LEBOLT TROPICAL TREE WORKSHOP - JUNE 14, 2003

Please mark your calendars for the two upcoming workshops. The number of participants must be limited to provide adequate time for each member. The cost will be nominal since YAMA KI will be subsidizing part of the workshop costs. Coupons will be included in the next issue of the newsletter with full details. If you wish to participate in the workshops, therefore, it is essential that you return the coupons promptly. In the meantime, note the dates!

BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI

Berni Gastrich

WHEN TO WIRE

It is the universal practice in bonsai classes to have students trim and wire and immediately root prune and pot. While this frequently does succeed, especially with very young material, this is really a very bad practice. The reason it is done is simply that students want instant bonsai. The worst time to trim and wire is just before re-potting.

When we wire and bend branches to any significant degree we are tearing tissue, especially cambium. This weakens the health of that branch. In spring, branches are very turgid with sap and snap easily when bent. Since this is the season when fluids move upward in a plant, cambium is very swollen and loosely attached to the surrounding tissue. When we wire and bend, the bark and cambium slip and tear very easily. All of the above stresses a tree. If we pot immediately after this we are very much interfering with the plants ability to repair itself. It is much better to defer root pruning and repotting to the following year.

A much better time to do severe pruning and radical wiring is in late winter. The branches are not turgid, and cambium is not swollen and slippery. Normal bending is very safe now. In extreme cases where radical bends are needed you can wire now but make the bends in midsummer or early autumn when the cambium is normal.

THE RUDIMENTS OF REPOTTING

Jean C. Smith

Reprinted from the January 2003 issue of the Lake Charles Bonsai Society
which was reprinted from the November 1992 issue of the Florida Bonsai

I have had great success the past few years in organizing my repotting on an assembly line basis! Last spring, just before it was time to repot, I gave a program for my club on some of the procedures and reasons for same, and they said it helped. I hope it will do the same for you. Much of the procedure you probably already know, but maybe something will prove to be a "hot tip."

I mix my soil ahead of time in a huge (30 gallon) trash container. I use 1/3 each potting soil, Turface, and sharp gravel, plus about two tablespoons of "Perk" for every four or five gallons of soil mix to give added trace elements. I also keep a bucket of sharp, small gravel (or very coarse sand) close by, as well as a bucket of Turface. Some plants require more sand (like pines), and some require more moisture retention (like jaboticaba and azaleas), and the basic mix can be altered to suit at the moment of repotting. Mix for cascades should be very coarse.

Always let your plants to be repotted dry out for a few days before repotting, then choose a place out of the sun and wind. Loosen the root ball from the walls of the pot with a dull knife blade. Soften the root ball mass with your fingers, gently comb out the roots, shaking the old soil loose. Clean out and even gouge out the area directly below the trunk. Trim off old, heavy, or dead roots and cut back approximately one-third.

Conifers, pines, all evergreens usually need repotting every two to four years. Deciduous trees need it more often, usually annually; it is impossible to be exact. Each tree is different, and you must learn to look for telltale signs. Let the condition of the bonsai be your guide.

If leaf color fades, lower leaves wither, the root ball swells, pushes up out of the pot and hardens, or the root ball does not absorb water well, it is certainly time to slip the plant out of the pot and examine its

condition. If, on the other hand, it does not seem to be in any trouble, do not repot. Repotting sometimes causes problems like new shoots and juvenile foliage, and trunks can even lose their ancient appearance. When you are repotting you are given an opportunity to study the condition of the roots, bugs, root rot, and other things to correct.

Transplanting is best done in the fall and the spring. Be more careful in the fall. Repot around the equinox both times. The proper time varies, of course, but is in the spring as buds are swelling but not yet sprouting. A rule of thumb for the priority is: fast growers first, slower (conifers) later.

Use sharp scissors when cutting off the roots since dull scissors can cause root rot. Cut roots off where they start to hang downward, about 1" to 1½" below the new soil level. Apply tree seal to any large cuts. Cut the roots directly below the trunk at right angles, then spray the root ball with a heavy Super Thrive solution and place in a plastic bag or in a basin of 40 to 50 drops of Super Thrive per gallon of solution.

Clean the pot well, replace the screen if necessary and put long, fine wires through the holes to tie the root ball in the pot. Place medium gravel in the bottom of the pot (unless it is a very shallow tray), then a layer of coarse soil mix mounded at the spot where the cleaned root ball will be placed. Push, with a twist, the root ball into the mounded soil. Spread the roots out straight in a radial pattern. Shake dry soil mix in, using a chopstick. Watch out for air pockets! The soil must stay loose so that oxygen may circulate. Make it firmer for conifers. Stabilize the tree now with your tie down wires ... not too tight . . . allow for expansion. Tap on the pot to settle the soil. It should stay below the pot edge so that soil won't wash out. If the pot is extremely shallow, mound if necessary to keep the base of the trunk higher than the top of the pot. The mound should be the same height or a little higher than the depth of the pot.

Trim the tree, hopefully, the same amount as the root ball was trimmed. Place in the shade out of the wind for three or four days, then bring gradually into morning sun, but still out of the wind. Spray the foliage during this period. Check for drying, but do not water the root ball unless it gets dry on top. Newly trimmed roots will not require as much water, and over-watering can cause root rot

Do not replace wire for about ten days after repotting, and do not fertilize for at least 30 days. In fall repotting, it helps considerably if you give a good fertilization about two weeks ahead

Repotting time comes rather like Christmas. It is a year away, and then suddenly it is here! Take this opportunity to prepare your soil mix, wires, and a good comfortable spot. Mark your trees for repotting, and, when the time comes, just line them up in order and get busy. It is amazing how many you can repot in just a little while if you have it organized. Be sure to fix up a sink or basin close at hand with Super Thrive solution, and when you have repotted a tree, place it in the solution to let it soak up well from the bottom.

Florida Bonsai editor's note. A suitable substitute for potting soil is sieved pine bark or redwood bark. We now use ground, washed, sieved flower rock in place of sharp gravel.

All of the above applies especially to sizable trees with thick trunks and branches. With very young flexible material you can get away with what is really very bad horticultural procedure. (Sometimes)

MONTREAL BOTANICAL GARDEN BUS TRIP SEPTEMBER 5 - 7, 2003

The Bergen Bonsai Society (that's Bergen New Jersey) is planning a bus trip to Montreal and has invited YAMA KI members to join them. The details are as follows:

- ✧ Round trip transportation on luxury touring bus
- ✧ Two nights (Friday and Saturday) lodging in Montreal at the Hotel Le Chablis (two- bedded room)

- ☒ Saturday: Tour of four bonsai pavilions-conducted by the Curator, *David Easterbrook*
- ☒ Also Saturday: Bonsai Club of Montreal 25th Anniversary program with lecture/demonstrators from Japan, China, and Canada
- ☒ Sunday morning: Tour of *David Easterbrook's* personal bonsai collection (over 1,000 trees)

The total cost per member is \$175. This includes all transportation, lodging, taxes and admission fees. No food is included and the cost is based on two persons per room. (Single rooms can be available at \$65 extra for the two nights). For more information call *George LeBolt* (201) 768-7455.

To secure your registration, send a deposit check in the amount of \$75 per person, payable to Bergen Bonsai, to: Mitchell Becker, Treasurer, 778 Downing Street, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Remember to include your name, address, and phone number and that you are a member of the Yam Ki Bonsai Society.



Spring Festival

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies



Featuring

Kunio Kobayashi - *Japan*

Patrizia Cappelaro De Martino - *Italy*

Colin Lewis - *United States*

Dr. David Andrews - *United States*

Chase Rosade - *United States*

William Valavanis - *United States*

April
11-13,
2003

Ramada Hotel
E. Hanover, NJ

Lecture/Demonstrations

Workshops * Critiques

Vendors * Exhibits

Banquet and Auction

Contact: Brian O'Byrne, 234 Sagamore Road
Millburn, NJ 07041 (973)379-3386

bkobyrne@yahoo.com
or visit our website at
www.midatlanticbonsai.freeseervers.com

DIRECTIONS TO THE GLENBROOK COMMUNITY CENTER

The Glenbrook Community Center is at 35 Crescent Street in Stamford, telephone: (203) 324-1301. The meeting room we will be using is on the second floor (an elevator is available). If you are coming from I-95, take exit 9, to Route 1 (one right turn from 95 south, 2 left turns from I-95 north.) Take the first right turn onto Courtland Avenue. At the second traffic light, at the foot of a bridge, turn left. Follow the road around to take the first right, which is Crescent St. The Community Center is an old school halfway down the street on the left. If you get to the railroad tracks, you've gone too far.

If you are coming from the Merritt Parkway, take exit 36, Route 106, and turn right onto route 106 from either north or south, towards Darien/Stamford. Follow the road approximately 3 miles until you come to an all-way stop and turn right onto Glenbrook Road. At the next light, turn left until Courtland Avenue, (you are following Rte. 106 so far). At the next light, turn right, and then take the first right onto Crescent Street. The Community Center is an old school halfway down the street on the left. If you get to the railroad tracks, you've gone too far.

COMING EVENTS

March	8	"Bring Your Own" Workshop
Apr	5	<i>Chris Peterson</i> : Repotting
Apr	11-13	MidAtlantic Bonsai Society Spring Festival
May	3	<i>Horst Krekeler</i> : Lecture/Demo & Workshop

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