



YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

Learning from each other. Sharing with the community”

April

2008

SPECIAL BUFFET DINNER MEETING WITH MIN HSUAN LO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2008, 5:30 PM @ BARTLETT ARBORETUM

SPRING FEVER STRIKES YAMA KI

Wednesday night, April 9th, YAMA KI members will again enjoy our popular occasional mid-week meeting with a major internationally-known bonsai artist's lecture/demonstration, preceded with a buffet dinner. Reservations are required for the free dinner - call *Lucille Miller* (914-934-0613 or email: lucyym@msn.com). *Mr. Min Hsuan Lo* of Taiwan will be our featured artist. Our dinner bell will ring at 5:30 pm with *Mr. Lo's* presentation starting at 6:30 pm. Late comers will find food available if they have made a reservation. *Lucille* would appreciate your calling her to let her know that you will show up by 5:00 pm to help with set ups.

Min Hsuan Lo was born in 1956 in the central Bonsai Garden (Taiwan) where his father founded the family nursery business in 1947. The family is large, but *Min Hsuan* is the only one to follow in his dad's footsteps. His interest in bonsai began in early childhood and the only time he seems to have put it to the rear was when majoring in Chinese Literature as an undergraduate. He began teaching bonsai in 1992 and founded the Taiwan Bonsai Creator Association with his friends in 1997.

Rhoda stated: "You are going to find this lecture demonstration very satisfying, informative, and possibly challenging some deeply held training ideas. I spent more than half an hour going through his blog site and was amazed at the clarity of the photos, how much can be gleaned from them. Every page has a link for your comments or questions. I'm looking forward to discussing some of them with him at the MABS Spring Festival." Visit his website: http://www.knowledgeofbonsai.org/min_hsuan_lo/index.php, before our meeting to make the most of the meeting. Plan to attend part of MABS' lecture/demonstrations by *Mr. Lo*.

MARCH 8TH MEETING WITH COLIN LEWIS

After *Norman Geisinger's* announcements and reminders of the upcoming special April dinner meeting and the MABS weekend, *Colin Lewis* discussed the advantages of this season's three workshops where participants would work on their same bonsai as the growth season progressed.



The morning's general meeting *Colin* devoted to bonsai soil and repotting - because "bonsai design starts with repotting" and March is an ideal repotting time. He reviewed the various components for a good soil mix for different species and special requirements or exceptions for some specific trees. He believes that too many of us use more turface, bark, and other water absorbing materials than we should, resulting in "less than we believe" is reaching the roots.

Colin stated that a common fault when repotting is that too much soil is left directly under the tree, resulting in a mound. This practice does not provide space for root growth and, when watering, causes the water to flow rapidly to the circumference of the container, rather than to the roots. It can result in exposed roots - which will eventually die.

Repotting is not necessary annually - timing is based on the species and environmental conditions. *Colin* indicated that you should not need wiring to stabilize a tree in its container after one growth season. The roots should be able to secure the tree, if the soil is right.

Colin discussed the benefits of fungi - *Hypae* and the use of myceleum which provides nourishment to the roots. However, too much mycrosizer can inhibit root growth!

Before lunch, there was still time for *Colin* to constructively critique a few member's trees. All members benefitted from his suggestions, utilizing his design talent and horticultural knowledge.



Pete Halm's Larch



Kevin Collin's Bald cypress



John Cotoggio's Hornbeam

After lunch *Colin* worked with each of the 8 workshop participants on the tree they had chosen for the workshop series.

25 YEARS of MIDATLANTIC BONSAI FESTIVALS

April 11- 13 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY, you will have the opportunity of spending the weekend, or a day, with bonsai artists. This column, for the past three months, has told you of an artist who will be presenting. *Min Hsuan Lo* of Taiwan, who is the headliner for the weekend, has won many awards, including the prestigious grand prize at the JAL World Bonsai Contest in 1999. He has refined his own style to include the essence of old trees, the flowing lines of Chinese calligraphy, and the influence of ancient Chinese philosophies.

Saturday, you may attend Mr. *Lo*'s lecture/demonstration using a San Jose Juniper and on Sunday his demonstration will be with a Chinese Elm. On both days he will continue working on the trees in a breakout room where you can watch the artists refining their demo materials and probe their ideas on developing materials. As one of the weekend artists, he will present a critique of the juried bonsai trees presented by members of all the MABS' societies in the Exhibit Room. The critique will be on Saturday afternoon. Sunday afternoon, following another lecture/demonstration, he will conduct a workshop (bring-your-own tree).

If you have misplaced your registration form, email bkobyne@yahoo.com and register with him. Remember the vendors will be able to fulfill your needs; the contacts and friends you make will enrich your bonsai world and beyond; and the scenery will stretch your bonsai eyes.

BONSAI COMMUNITY SERVICE

HELP NEEDED: each member club comprising MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies participates to create this outstanding symposium. Each club is responsible to provide various services. YAMA KI's specific responsibility is creating and assembling the Festival Brochures, including name tags and event tickets, for all preregistered attendees, and helping at the registration desk for a few hours. In addition all clubs are required to provide 2 members for 1 hour to cover security and docenting at the Exhibit Room.

Slots still to be filled:

Exhibit Room:	1 person;	Saturday from 4-5 pm.
Registration Desk:	1 person:	Friday evening 4-6 pm.
	2 persons	Saturday morning 8-9:00 am
	1 person:	Sunday morning 8-9:30 am

Call *Rhoda Kleiman* (212.724.7840) or email – irkleiman@rcn.com

BENDING WITHOUT WIRE*

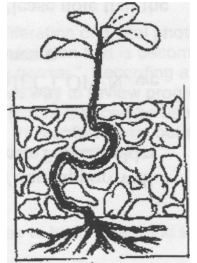
Les Dowdell

On winter evenings, when you are comfortably ensconced in front of a warm, glowing fire, pick up a bonsai book or magazine and take a look at the many wonderful bonsai that other people have produced. Most of them will be medium sized trees with some nice, interesting curves in the trunks. You can easily imagine that those curves developed while the tree was growing in a field or on a mountainside. Take a further look through the pages of classical bonsai until you come to the section showing shohin or small bonsai. These small wonders also have nice natural curves. As you sit there drinking your hot chocolate (or other favorite beverage) and contemplating the trees in front of you, you start to puzzle over the methods used to produce such nice curves in such small trees, especially the bunjin styled shohin. There are no pruning scars, and the curves are too variable to be the result of wiring (at least my wiring.) Hmmm ... must be some special technique (trick?) that will make curves like that without using wire. Well let me tell you about one such technique.

A Great (??) Name

Since the method I am about to describe has no official name, I think I will christen it the Gravel Bed Technique (GBT). The GBT will produce naturally curved bunjin shohin without touching a single strand of wire. Instead, the twists and turns of the trunk will be formed from the root of a seedling as it negotiates the various spaces between small stones.

The illustration to the right shows the basic set up for growing GBT trained bonsai. The training pot should be tall with good drainage. The bottom layer should be regular bonsai soil. On top of this layer add some gravel. The amount and type of gravel will determine the size of the bonsai and the quality of the curves. By adjusting the depth of the gravel layer you control the length of the root that will form the trunk of the bonsai. Varying the size and roughness of the gravel will give character to the trunk.



As an example, you could use 10 centimeters of pea gravel for a 15-centimeter bunjin with gentle, rounded curves. Or you might want to use 15 centimeters of larger, broken stones to produce a 20- centimeter bonsai with a more angular appearance. Experiment a little to see what you can produce.

After adding the gravel to the pot, pour some sand on top of the gravel and shake the pot to make the sand sift down between the stones. Keep adding sand until no more will penetrate the gravel and a shallow layer has formed. The sand will retain a bit more water than the gravel, and the seedlings will not dry out. Plant the seeds in the top layer of the sand and keep the sand moist. When the seeds germinate, the new roots will only be able to grow and extend between the stones. Add weak fertilizer about once a week to maintain the health of the seedlings. Eventually the roots will reach the bottom layer of the bonsai soil where they will start to act like normal roots by spreading out and producing side roots. Leave the new bonsai candidates in this pot for at least two years to let the roots thicken a little. During this period, let the top growth continue to extend unchecked. This will also speed up the thickening of the root. If the trunk gets to straight and thick, consider trimming it back close to the sand occasionally.

When it's time to transplant the young tree to either a regular training pot or a proper bonsai pot, carefully remove the gravel/sand mix, check the condition of the main root, trim off small side shoots from the future trunk and pot into the new pot. If the trunk is too weak to support the foliage, make a wire support to hold it up until the trunk thickens sufficiently to do its job properly. If there are two or more major roots, you can either trim back to one or train the tree in the "raised root" style.

Now that the trunk has formed, begin work on the rest of the tree. Develop the branches and remember to aim for a nice bunjin style. After a couple more years, your new shohin should be ready for a few photographs of its own.

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COMING EVENTS

Apr.	9	5:30 pm 6:30 pm	Dinner @ Bartlett Arboretum <i>Min Hsuan Lo</i> lecture/demo
Apr	11-13		MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies' 2008 Spring Festival
May	17	10:00 am	<i>Pedro Morales</i> lecture/workshop
June	14	10:00 am 1:00 pm	<i>Colin Lewis</i> Critique workshop Part II of Special Workshop

Remember to check our website (www.yamakibonsai.org) for updates and latest information

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