

# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

December

2011

## HOLIDAY PARTY AND AUCTION – SATURDAY DEC 10<sup>TH</sup> AT THE GEC



Come celebrate the season at YAMA KI's Holiday Pot-Luck Lunch and Semi-Annual Auction!

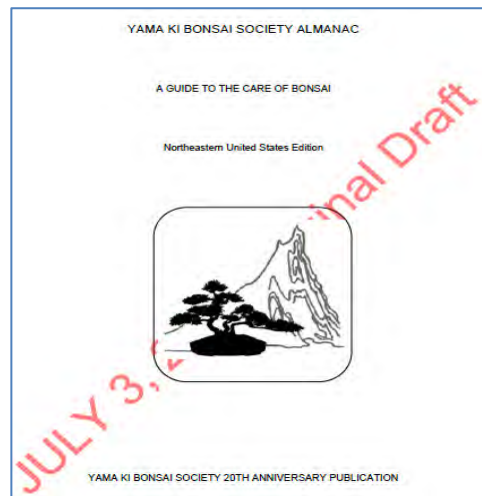
**MIKE has volunteered to organize the holiday party.**

**Volunteers are needed to help setup at 11AM.**

Lunch will be about noon. Hands will be needed for cleanup later on. Please help, we have no paid caterer! For the pot-luck lunch, no green thumbs are needed, bring a dish: hors d'oeuvres, a dip with dippers, breads with spreads, veggies, salads, side dishes, main dishes, desserts, beverages (non-alcoholic), You don't need to bring a dish for a sushi chef, or provide food for 50. Just bring a dish you would serve at home for a few people. Tell Mike Pollock, [mikepollock@me.com](mailto:mikepollock@me.com), what you are bringing.

After lunch and a brief meeting for announcements, you will have a few more minutes to review the auction material and determine bidding choices. Go through your bonsai collection for material you think someone else would enjoy styling, tools you thought would be useful, that you know you don't use, books you've memorized, magazines that filled your needs and need a new home, accessories, etc. Our auction is successful when materials are brought in for others to buy and for you to treasure. Be prepared to bid on some of the trees that were styled by our visiting artists during the year. This is the event where every purchase is an incredible bargain!

**Remember the regrets when you let a \$1-\$5 bid walk away with what you wanted? Good luck!**



## YAMA KI ALMANAC UPDATE

Joan Thomas

**WE NEED YOUR EXPERTISE AND INPUT!**

**Take some quiet time over this holiday season to provide editing to this book.**

The club is looking to re-publish and update the Almanac (example: add an epilogue, club history, or other new content). A PDF version of the book is available for online commenting. Hand written markups/comments are welcome. To stay on track with the project, please send comments to Joan by Dec 31<sup>st</sup>. Contact Joan. [joanmariethomas@yahoo.com](mailto:joanmariethomas@yahoo.com), Joan Thomas, 89 Great Ring Road, Sandy Hook CT 06482, 203-300-2199

# NOVEMBER 2011 Winterizing Workshop Notes

*Mike Pollock*

November's meeting, led by Mike Pollock, was a group discussion on how we over-winter our bonsai here in the tri-state area. The group together discussed why we protect our trees in the winter. Here are some of the things we identified.

## WHY DO WE PROTECT OUR TREES? WHAT DAMAGE CAN THEY SUSTAIN?

**Desiccation** - Sun and wind can dry out fine twigs. Loss of ramification (that took years to build).

**Spring** is a very dangerous time. Drying of plant tops while root still frozen is damaging.

### Watering

- Although less frequent, trees still need water in winter.
- Trees can easily dry out when inside. Especially in Spring.

**Physical damage** - Snow and ice can bend and break branches - as we know from our latest storm!

**Death by severe cold** - Know your trees' low winter temp requirements.

### Root damage

- Thawing root tips can absorb water, and then burst as they refreeze.
- Root rot can occur in older, broken-down soil.

### Pest damage

- Deer, mice, etc. can eat twiggy.
- Rodents can sharpen teeth and girdle a tree
- Insects and fungal spores can damage trees

### Light

- Deciduous trees need none.
- Conifers below 40 degrees need little; below 32, none.

Type of trees – Tropicals are Temperate, Less hardy, More hardy

Tree size - Size affects susceptibility to winter's effects. As a tree gets smaller it requires more protection.



## WHEN DO WE PROTECT OUR PLANTS?

- Most hardy trees require a dormant period, and will weaken and may even die if not given one. Often, dormant hardy trees can survive very cold temperatures.
- Trees hardy to Zone 2 can survive temperatures of -50 degrees above ground. The process of going dormant requires time, weeks of shortening day length and cooling temperatures triggers the tree to start making its own anti-freeze of soluble sugars and proteins.
- Allow your hardy trees to go dormant before putting them away for Winter.
- Do not prune trees until trees are clearly dormant. Late season pruning may cause late season growth that will not harden before frost hits causing winter kill.

## PREPARING FOR WINTER

- Clean soil
- Remove moss
- Remove leaves (in some cases)
- Remove old needles
- Spray with fungicide and insecticide

**NOTE:** The attached wintering article is reprinted with permission from the President of the Springfield, club.

## DVD REVIEWS

*By Norm Geisinger*

Yama Ki's VCR tapes and DVDs are located in our storage closet on second floor at the GEC. DVD's should play in DVD player or computer, but may not work on both. Please sign titles out then in using the blue note book. The following two DVD titles are available in the club's collection:

### **THE ART OF TRAINING DWARF POTTED TREES**

This is an introductory to bonsai and includes bonsai basics. The DVD covers bonsai history, characteristics, process, and styles. Pruning and repotting of juniper, spruce, pine, and deciduous trees is discussed. Soil mix information is somewhat out of date.

### **GOYOMATSU-JAPANESE WHITE PINE**

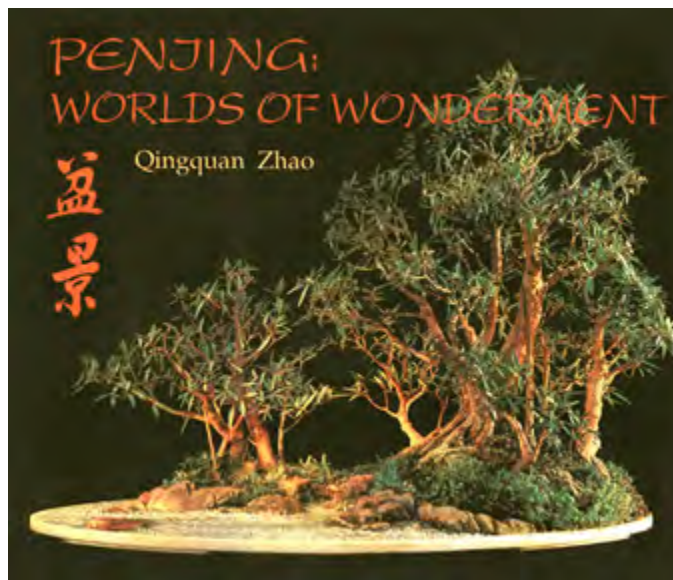
As you can tell from the title this video focuses on white pine. It covers characteristics, styling, creating Jin, wiring, bending, repotting, care and maintenance. A nice demo and has many photos of finished trees for inspiration.

### **SATSUKI AZALEA**

Principles and techniques for the development of the Satsuki azalea are presented. This azalea can produce different colored flowers on the same plant. Topics include: characteristics, "Art of the Flower", maintenance after flowering, re-styling demos, wiring, refining, and repotting. There are many finished examples and the techniques discussed are applicable to most azaleas.

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT

Check out this book on Penjing: <http://www.venuscomm.com/Penjingchoices/Author.html>



## Bonsai Winter Care in New England

1. Know your plant
2. Hardy, Semi-Hardy, Semi-Tropical, and Tropical designations
3. Understanding to process of going dormant
4. Ground, different then Bonsai pot
5. Winter Storage location requirements
6. Over wintering locations
7. Monitoring your stored trees
8. Waking your hardy trees from dormancy
9. Semi, and Tropical tree winter Care



### Know your plant

When I buy or collect a pre-bonsai or bonsai plant, I try to get as much information as I can about the specific plant I am considering buying.

Before I would consider buying any plant, I like to have the Genus, Species and its hardiness zone rating. Then I research the plant look up what all the authors of my reference books have to say about the plant and its requirements, and bonsai suitability. This I believe is the key to successfully caring for Bonsai trees, I only lost two trees last winter, and two out of 200 is not bad.

### Hardy, Semi-Hardy, Sub-Tropical, and Tropical designations

Many bonsai sellers and book authors use the false terminology, Indoor and Outdoor Bonsai. All trees are outdoor trees. I prefer to use the categories listed below and sort trees by their hardiness zones.

#### □ Hardy

Trees Hardiness zone rating: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. some examples of bonsai plants in this category are: Larch, Apples, Hawthorns, Elms, Japanese Black & White Pines, False cypress, Boxwood, Juniper, Wisteria, Spruce, Hombear, Cherry, Yew, Zelkova, Japanese Maple and some Azaleas

#### □ Semi-Hardy

Hardiness zone rating 7. Some examples of bonsai plants in this category are: Silver Thorn, Kumquat, Fushia, Japanese & Chinese Privet, Buddhist Pine, Bay Laurel, Chinese Elm, Trident Maple

#### □ Sub-Tropical

Hardiness zone rating 8. Some examples of bonsai plants in this category are: Serissa, Rosemary, Crape Myrtle, Gardenia, Texas Ebony, Rosemary, Pomegranate

#### □ Tropical

Hardiness zone rating of 9. Some examples of bonsai plants in this category are: Ficus, Bush Cherry, Black Olive, Fukien tea, Malpighia, Jaboticaba, Orange jasmine

### Understanding to process of going dormant

Most **hardy** trees require a dormant period, and will weaken and may even die if not given one. Once dormant hardy trees can survive very cold temperatures, trees hardy to zone 2 can survive temperatures of -50 deg. above ground. The process of going dormant requires time, weeks of shortening day length and cooling temperatures triggers the tree to start making its own anti freeze of soluble sugars and proteins. Allow your hardy trees to go dormant before putting them away for Winter. Do not prune trees until trees are clearly dormant. Late season pruning may cause late season growth that will not harden before frost hits causing winter kill.

### **Ground, different then Bonsai pot**

Trees with their roots in the earth can withstand negative temperatures because their roots are kept warmer then the air by the insulating and heat sink capability of the earth surrounding them. Plants with their roots above ground in a pot can have their roots almost at the same temperature as the air surrounding the pot. Hardy Bonsai root systems need protection from the wide fluctuation and low temperature extremes we get here in New England. Most hardy trees can survive root zone temperatures down to 18 deg. with no damage if allowed to normally enter dormancy.

### **Winter Storage Requirements**

Hardy trees in Winter storage require cold constant temperatures, most trees dormancy requirements are met when they are stored 32-40 deg. for at least 2000 hours (two months) if possible. If you can't keep them above freezing it is OK to let them freeze but try to keep the root zone of the plant above the deadly temperature of 18 degrees. The location should give the tree protection from wind damage, desiccation. Easy access is ideal so you can monitor your tree for moisture needs and work on them while in storage.

### **Over wintering locations**

Every location is unique, and requires monitoring. The location should protect your dormant hardy trees roots from temperatures above 50 and below 23 degrees. Some locations that have worked for members of our club are: Green house / hoop house, cold frame, cellar way, unheated garage or shed, and three seasons porch, Another way is to just bury your hardy bonsai in the ground (soil), over the rim of the pot, in a location with some wind protection. If your pot freezes, know that ice helps maintain the safe temperature range of slightly below freezing, ice is our friend when overwintering bonsai here in N.E.

### **Monitoring your stored trees**

Trees stored under cover, green house, cold frame, etc. need monitoring for moisture needs especially when temperatures rise above freezing. Before watering check if root ball is frozen, do not water when roots are frozen. If you are going away or think that the tree needs water but it is too cold to water, snow or ice can used. The snow or ice will provide water when the temperatures rise above freezing. Water the trees well before putting them away for the winter. I find that the trees I have stored in my bulk head and cold frame only need water two or three times during winter. The ones in the ground usually get all they need from snow and rain but I do recommend checking them if we get a warm spell. You also should check your trees regularly for rodent damage if you find any wrap your tree's trunk with hardware cloth or tree wrap. Dormant trees do not require fertilization but a Fall application before leaf fall will help them prepare for Winter.

### **Waking your hardy trees from dormancy**

Trees lose their ability to withstand cold rather quickly in the spring so try to keep them cold, below 50 deg. as long as possible. I believe more trees die in spring because of exposure to warm temperatures then the cold winter temperatures. Extended warmth wakes them from dormancy, and then a cold snap hits them while their natural defenses are down. Be patient. Leave bonsai in winter quarters until night time temperature is reliably above 40 degrees.

### **Sub-tropical, and tropical tree winter care**

I over winter my Sub-tropical trees under lights in my cool (45 - 60 degrees) damp basement, they seem to like it there. My fluorescent lights are very close to the tops of the plants, touching almost. The 3 foot fluorescent Shop Light fixture has one cool white bulb and one full spectrum bulb both are 40 watts with 1600 lumens. I like to keep a small fan running to keep the air moving and the inherent bug problems down to a minimum. I have to water them almost every other day.

My tropical trees I keep in my sunniest window I have and they survive the winter but don't really thrive. To properly care for them you really need a heated green house/sun room or very expensive to run full spectrum metal halide lighting system. They need watering almost daily. I carry them to the sink and spray them from above with the water wand. I believe this keeps them clean and helps wash away the pests that inevitably show up on house plants. I enjoy having the tropical trees to play with while my hardy bonsai are resting.

Further Reading/Sources: [www.Evergreengardenworks.com](http://www.Evergreengardenworks.com) article Freeze Damage of Woody Plants, Winter, Ground is Different than a Pot, [www.internetbonsaiclub.com](http://www.internetbonsaiclub.com) knowledge base, seasonal care  
Levitt, J. (1980) "Responses of Plants to Environmental Stresses". Li, P.H. and A. Sakai (1978) "Plant Cold Hardiness and Freezing Stress". Long, S.P. and F.I. Woodward (1987) "Plants and Temperature". Moore, T.C. (1979)  
"Biochemistry and Physiology of Plant Hormones". Whitcomb, C. (1984) "Plant Production in Containers".

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**Editor** - Joan Thomas

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**COMING EVENTS**

Date	Time	Event	Location
Dec 10	12:00	Holiday buffet and auction. 11:00 to setup.	<a href="#">GEC</a>

For updates and the latest information, check your email or our website: [www.yamakibonsai.org](http://www.yamakibonsai.org)

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