



YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

Learning from each other Sharing with the community”

February

2005

MIKE POLLOCK’S MULTI-MEDIA TRIP TO JAPAN PLUS A DESIGN A TWO-DIMENSIONAL BONSAI WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 12, 2005, 1:00 PM AT THE BARTLETT ARBORETUM

Mike Pollock will do a powerpoint presentation of his trip to Japan and a bit of show and tell of things he bought there. If time permits, he will lead a discussion of “What to think of when going to Japan” which we can then print as a resource checklist.

Colin Lewis is preparing a design course with sketches of various tree trunks which we had planned for this meeting. However, he is working with severe time constraints and we may not have it in time. Please bring a soft pencil (#2) with an eraser. We will draw branches and foliage on the trunks and the unsigned drawings will then be critiqued. Drawing skills are not necessary.

JANUARY’S MEETING PROGRAM CHANGED - BERNI SAVES THE DAY!

The second Saturday in January dawned (if one could see it) in a dreary mode – foggy, cloudy, patches of ice here and there, intermittent drizzle—in all a day to stay abed. But 16 hardy YAMA KI members unsnuggled and came to our first meeting of the year.

It was decided that not one of our members was familiar enough with the material to fairly present *Walter Pall’s* Power-point slide presentation. We had the visuals, but no text. The program has been postponed for another time. Instead, *Berni Gastrich* brought his slides of the bonsai on exhibition at the American Pavilion of the National Arboretum.

Berni first gave a brief history of the National Bonsai Foundation and its collection of outstanding trees. To honor our bicentennial in 1976, the Japanese government and bonsai societies donated a group of trees for the core collection. Subsequently United States bonsai groups donated money for an American Pavilion including classrooms and an amphitheater and donated trees for the permanent collection. YAMA KI helped fund a classroom area in honor of *Yuji Yoshimura*

Berni illustrated the presentation with slides from his collection which he had taken on the morning of the opening of the American Pavilion. Donors were still trimming their gifts prior to the formal ceremony and several trees didn’t get their haircuts until the following day. It was most interesting for many who have seen the trees over the intervening years because, although mature at presentation, they have developed further. Some have lost limbs and needed partial restyling, others did not survive.

After viewing the slides with a critical eye, we all felt better about some of our own trees. Because of our training with *Yuji Yoshimura*, we thought that many of the plants in the Pavilion’s collection needed more pruning. *Berni* reminded us of *Yuji’s* design critique, “You must leave room for the birds to fly between the branches”.

After the screening, *Berni* presented three pine trees to illustrate needle pruning. He walked us through preparations for Black pine



growth. Removing candles of different ages and following the strength of limbs in this de-candling is the key to needle ramification. Deciduous trees require a different technique - - defoliation in the late spring (except for Quercus Oak trees which will die if defoliated).



Getting close to look at the details



Plucking needles

GLEANINGS

Some of *Berni's* gleanings on healthy black pine are:

- * starting in late November remove two-year-old needles;
- * look at each candle individually:
 - * if it is strong, remove all but three-four pairs of the needles of that year. Note! This means there will be only six-eight total needles right behind this candle;
 - * if the candle is medium strength, pull all but five-six pairs;
 - * if it is small, leave more needles;
- * as you remove the needles, pull them in the direction in which they grow or you risk tearing needed sheath.
- * five-needle pines do better if you cut the needles.

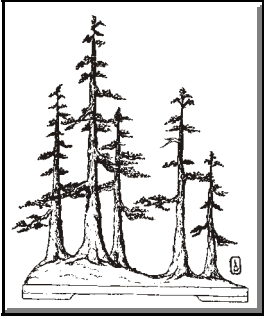
At our March meeting *Berni* will do an in-depth program about Pines - all kinds, selection, care, soils, fertilizers, etc.

MEMBER DISPLAY TOKONOMA

The January meeting started the new year with a new YAMA KI custom, which we hope will become a tradition. Each meeting a member will bring a bonsai to be displayed as in a tokonoma, preferably with an accent plant and stand or mat. As a start, *Gail Therrien* brought a Lemon tree (*Citrus limonia*) which was given to her by *Helen Hasselriis*. *Helen* indicated she "started" it in 1960. The stand is a beautifully crafted one made of mahogany found in an antique shop.



MIDATLANTIC BONSAI SOCIETIES



Your calendars are marked for April 15-17, 2005. You've either sent in your registration form or it is on your desk awaiting a check and a stamp. But you've forgotten why you want to attend? For starters, your Friday night (April 15) raffle ticket, might let you take home a Black Hills spruce tree collected from the Black Hills of South Dakota. *Mr. Andrew Smith*, a professional forester of "those parts", will present a lecture/demonstration using a tree he collected. His bonsai studio, Golden Arrow Bonsai, sells *Andy's* collected trees and is a vendor in the vendors' sales area if you don't win the demonstration tree.

In addition to talking collecting and bonsai with him, you may want to attend his critique of the Exhibit on Saturday afternoon and/or his workshop on Sunday morning which will feature Phoenix Graft techniques (since nature doesn't always produce iconographic bonsai) using Black Hills spruce. Trees are included in the cost of this workshop but you must bring your own tools, wire, etc..

If you can't fit Friday night into your schedule, start with Saturday morning when *Ms. Cheryl Manning* of California will lecture and demonstrate using a California juniper tree. Late that afternoon she will offer a critique of the Exhibit and on Sunday morning she will present a workshop. The supplied material will be imported Itoigawa Shimpaku and the focus will be Shohin styling.

There's more, but that's for the next issue of your NEWSLETTER.

BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI

Berni Gastrich

Moisture Meters

How often should I water? This cannot be answered by giving a time schedule. Did it rain? How windy was it? How sunny? What kind of soil? Size and depth of pot? How much foliage does the tree have? Is it a moisture lover, (large, Visalia, etc.) or does it prefer some dryness (some pines, junipers etc.)? Soil size and composition? Season of the year?

One way to judge is to dig into the soil to a depth of approximately 25% of the total soil depth. If you find moist soil, don't water. If it is still dry at this depth, water. Another way is to use an inexpensive moisture meter. This does require a little experience however. Fine soils, or soils rich and organics can be read easily with such a meter. Those with larger soil particles and air spaces will read only half wet even when you have just watered. This is okay once you know about it.

The most important thing the meter will tell you is that the moisture in the soil mass is not uniform. Of course the surface is drier, except for moss. Then comes the main soil, which is what counts, and should be moist. In a large pot the bottom drainage layer may read drier again. Most important, unless you water multiple times or use a slow sprinkling system, the soil near the outer edges of the pot will be wet, while the center core of soil can remain bone dry. This will happen even if water is running freely out of the bottom holes. The moisture meter shows this beautifully. You can mark these trees with plastic stake or put them in a group, and water three or four times, or even plunge them into a large tub of water occasionally. If this is not done, as little as 30% of the soil is holding water and nutrients. The remaining soil is relatively useless in this situation.

BEGINNER BONSAI COURSE
The Creation, Care and Maintenance of Bonsai
Tuesdays, March 29, April 5 and April 12

It is assumed that you have had some degree of interest in bonsai, but would now like to get more seriously involved. The course will cover the design, aesthetics and horticulture of bonsai. How to choose them. How to make them, beautiful. And how to keep them alive.

Each student will create his/her own bonsai to take home. YAMA KI is providing this course free to all interested members. You pay only for the plants and pot, estimated at \$40.

The dates are March 29, April 5, April 12 - three consecutive Tuesday evenings at 6: 30 or 7:00 p.m. at the Bartlett Arboretum. *Berni Gastrich* has given this course, three times in the past, and it has been filled each time. The class is limited to a maximum of 10 students.

Please notify *Irv Kleiman* (212-724-7840 or irkleiman@rcn.com) as soon as possible if you would like to attend. The first 10 members to apply will be accepted, others will be wait-listed in date order.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BONSAI?*

by Linda Brant

Recently, because of the deaths of several prominent bonsai artists, and because of a situation with a close bonsai friend, I have been thinking about what happens to bonsai trees when owner dies or becomes unable to care for them. Too often, we hear horror stories of beautiful trees that are lost for-ever or severely damaged by neglect in these situations. This topic is even being discussed online, on Bonsai forums

If you have a relative or close friend who has a deep interest in your trees, you should mentor them and make sure that they understand that you want them to take your trees if you become unable to care for them. If not, consider the following:

Recently a member of the Garyu Bonsai Club in Bally, PA passed away, He and his wife made plans before his death and the Garyu members organized by Ron Solt and John Constantine, also PBS members, will be holding an auction of trees, pots, tools, etc. The proceeds are to be donated to Bonsai Clubs International, which is a 501(C)(3) organization and can issue receipts for tax purposes. This gentleman had a desire to help BCI because of his friendship with Ron (BCI Board Member) and Soli Rosade (BCI Past President), but his widow will also receive tax benefits. Often bonsai are donated to the National Bonsai Foundation for the same reason.

If taxes are not an issue, local clubs can step in and auction or sell the bonsai trees and items for their own benefit. One of our own members left Pennsylvania Bonsai a sum of money several years ago and the money was used to bring in *David DeGroot* for an entire weekend at a very modest cost to individuals. The money can be used for improved programs, scholarships for members who wish to further study the art of bonsai (California has a program like this) and other club benefits. Sometimes the monies are shared by the club and the estate.

The main benefit to these ideas is that your trees go to "Bonsai people" who have the desire and skill to care for and to improve them.

* Reprinted from the September 2004 issue of The Pennsylvania Bonsai Society Newsletter.

Note: YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY is a 501(C)(3) organization and donations to it are fully tax-deductible.

NEW LIBRARIANS

Pete Halm and *Craig* and *Anita Hawkin Cowing* have agreed to share the Librarian's duties, alternating months. They will try to bring the video/digital collection to each meeting. If you wish a specific bonsai related video, call them. If it's in our collection, you can pick it up at the next meeting. If not, then we will purchase it for our collection and notify you when it's received. They can be reached at:

Pete Halm (203) 969-0345
pete_halm@yahoo.com

Craig & Anita Hawkin Cowing (845) 496-1393
Ccowing@frontiernet.net

Our thanks to *Nicki Wallhofer*, for her nineteen years of devoted services to YAMA KI, serving in many capacities, as a director, committee chair, and librarian. *Nicki* has resigned her membership because she believes it is in conflict with her interests in Feng Shui

COOPERATIVE BULK SOIL PURCHASE

We have an opportunity to buy bonsai soil at a very low bulk rate. The following is a list of the bags of soils (approximately 25 lbs.) available and the price. If you wish to place an order fill in the coupon below and mail it with your check. The price is based on a total order of 100 bags. If our combined order is less, then the cost of shipping will be added (approximately \$100) which will be shared on a per bag basis among purchasers. This offer is based on a total minimum order of 50 bags.

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

Please include my order for bonsai soil. I have enclosed my check in the amount of \$ _____

Type	Quantity	Cost	Total
Shohin		\$25.00	
Tropical		\$22.50	
Prof Main		\$22.50	
Prof Coarse		\$22.50	
Aggregate		\$22.50	
Akadama		\$20.00	
Kanuma		\$20.00	
Total \$			

Name: _____ Date: _____

OFFICERS

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COMING EVENTS

- Feb 12 *Mike Pollock's* Japan Trip & Bonsai Design Workshop
- Mar 19 *Berni Gastrich*: Workshop, Lecture, & Demo on Pine
- Apr 15-17 MidAtlantic Spring Festival
- Apr 23 TBA

WEATHER HOTLINES

Connecticut	<i>Melba Greishaber</i>	(203) 840-1942
New York City	<i>Rhoda Kleiman</i>	(212) 724-7840
Westchester	<i>Gail Therien</i>	(914) 244-1320

or check our website online

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