

# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

October

2011



## **OCTOBER 15, 2011 Meeting with Norm Geisinger Extreme Branch Bending Presentation**

**11:00, Saturday at the [Garden Education Center](#)**

[Norm Geisinger](#) has been attending the [Andolfo Bonsai Design School](#) and one of the topics covered was **Extreme Branch Bending Techniques**. Norm has created a presentation on those techniques covering the preparation; execution, and after care. He will bring his juniper that was used to demonstrate those techniques. Come join us!



## **OCTOBER 15, 2011 Meeting with Graham Potter 12:00, Saturday at the [Garden Education Center](#)**

**Graham Potter** is an immensely talented and humble teacher and supplier of Bonsai in the UK. His videos are watched by thousands of bonsai enthusiasts all over the world. Graham will be doing a demo for us. The material is to be determined, but Graham is talented in all areas of bonsai, so whatever he does, you won't be disappointed. Graham has a particular skill at carving deadwood. If anyone has a big carving project

and would like to have their tree considered for Graham to work on, please email [Mike](#). Of course, don't forget to bring trees as there is always time to get advice and opinions at every meeting.

For more on Graham (and a way to lose a few days online), do not miss <http://www.kaizenbonsai.com>

## **AUGUST 20, 2011 Meeting with Colin Lewis**

*Lavanya Muller*

Our September meeting was a BYO workshop with Colin Lewis, held at Shanti Bithi Nursery. The following tips are gleaned from his comments as he considered the trees brought in by members.

### **GENERAL TREE HEALTH**

- Prune trees in November if you don't want new growth. If you want new growth, then prune in late spring.
- Use cut paste on cuts that are new in late autumn.
- Avoid using bark in your bonsai soil mix. Also avoid haydite. It is best to mix your own bonsai soil; then you will know exactly what goes into it.
- Turface is a good recovery medium for potting bonsai, but it has a tendency to lock in nutrients from fertilizer. After a maximum of 3 years, transplant into soil with no Turface at all.
- A mixture of Akadama and lava is an excellent potting mix for maples.

### **DESIGN**

- When you look at a tree, your eye tends to move up the trunk. Therefore, it is important to establish your tree's branch structure before doing design details.
- If you have an extreme curve at the base of the trunk, you shouldn't have gentle curves farther up the tree. Your tree should be either all extreme curves or all gentle curves.
- The trunk of a windswept tree should lean in the same direction that the branches are moving.



### PROPORTION

When repotting a tree that has a large amount of deadwood and a proportionately small amount of living material, the live part of the tree is the part that you will match to the size of the pot.

### KINGSVILLE BOXWOOD

- Shohin size is best for these trees, because they put out buds so robustly that maintaining a large size bonsai is extremely time-consuming. The production of new foliage tends to be almost uncontrollable.
- To remove bark from old deadwood before creating jin, soak the deadwood with water. Then the bark will come off easily. The best way to get natural-looking jin on a Kingsville boxwood is to twist the deadwood until it splits, then break off bits.
- Kingsvilles are prone to spider mites.



### LARCH

- Allow the branches to grow, even if the tree loses its shape over the course of the growing season. If you pinch new growth constantly, you will get clusters of buds at the point where you are pinching, but you will not get any branch taper or ramification.
- Angular growth looks more natural on a larch, rather than smooth curves.
- Larches heal very quickly. To improve taper, you can shave away part of a branch to create taper artificially, and the wound will heal completely within a few years.
- Wire should be removed before larches are put away for the winter. Wired branches have a tendency to die during the winter.
- The larch is a deciduous tree; therefore it lays down sugars and starches in late summer and early fall for spring growth.
- Keep roots cool in hot summer weather. Covering the soil surface with sphagnum moss can help.

## ZUSHO PINE

- This is one of the few pines that can be successfully air-layered. Approach grafts can also be used with zuisho pines.
- When allowed to grow naturally, they will grow a very long lowest branch.
- Where there are several branches growing from one spot, reduce to 2 or 3.
- Pines should be in freer-draining soil than maples.



## BLACK PINE

- Black pines tend to grow long needles. Long needles should be removed when you cut the candles. Leave only 2 or 3 pairs of needles at each shoot. Then your new growth will have shorter needles.
- Choose your basic branch structure first, then cut off the candles in late fall. In spring, new buds will appear at all those cuts.
- Not extremely cold tolerant.

## WHITE PINE

- White pines are high mountain trees. They are extremely cold-hardy, and need a very cold dormant period.
- Put a plastic bag over the entire pot when weather is very rainy.
- To check the health of a pine, look at the buds, not the foliage. Healthy buds mean a healthy tree.

## JUNIPER

- Some juniper varieties will always have a mixture of juvenile and mature foliage. You can approach-graft Shimpaku or Blaauw's juniper foliage onto these in order to improve the appearance of the tree. Shimpaku and Blaauw junipers are also less susceptible to insects and diseases.
- When you cut off a large branch, always leave enough to make a jin, because junipers don't heal over at wounds. Shari will gradually appear below the cut-off branch naturally.
- Peeling and then gently brushing off flaky bark will reveal the live veins and actual "sinew" of the tree.
- Bark should be brushed twice a year to maintain an even texture. Doing this also helps you become familiar with the tree.

## AIR LAYERING

- When you make an air layer, it is best to wrap the sphagnum in clear plastic, so you can see the roots when they develop. When you see white roots, these are too tender to be planted in soil. Wait to transplant until the new roots turn brown and begin spiraling around inside the plastic.
- When you first plant your new air layer, don't try to comb out the roots. Just put the whole clump gently into your soil mixture and let it grow for a year before touching the new roots.

## REPOTTING

- When you repot, if you leave thin delicate roots exposed on the surface of the soil, they will die. Add an inch or so of sphagnum moss on the surface, and some soil on top of that. This will encourage new surface roots to grow.
- It is important to clean out the underside of the root ball when repotting. This will allow you to plant your tree lower in the pot.

## WIRING

- Pulling a branch downward with a guy wire creates a gentle curve in the whole branch, but it takes many years for the branch to harden into position, because the gentle pressure of a guy wire does not create any tissue damage in the branch. The healing of tissue damage that is caused by bending a branch with wire is what hardens the branch and sets it in position.
- Weeping varieties of trees are generally less robust than upright ones, and need to be treated more gently. It is also more difficult to train their branches to remain in a desired position.
- Remove wire from a stressed tree.
- If you bend the apex of a tree to one side to make it into a branch, and then choose a branch to become the new leader, the original apex is always going to be thicker than the new one.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Native American conifer varieties can make excellent bonsai, and should be used by American bonsai artists. Some conifer varieties that Colin likes best: Scots pine, American red spruce, Colorado blue spruce, and Pitch pine.

## HOW TO GROW SPHAGNUM

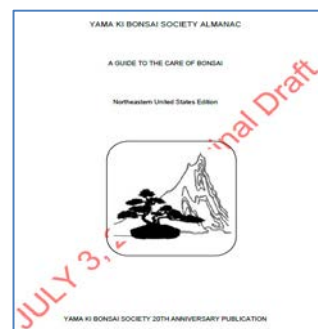
Put 1 – 2 inches of peat in the bottom of a non-draining container. Put some live sphagnum on the surface, add water, and keep it wet.

## YAMA KI ALMANAC UPDATE

*Joan Thomas*

### **WE NEED YOUR EXPERTISE AND INPUT!**

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



## **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!*

**We're looking for a coordinator and volunteers to help set up about 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 your 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!***

**OFFICERS**

Mike Pollock.....President  
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Len Douglas.....Treasurer  
Lavanya Muller.....Secretary  
Norm Geisinger.....Immediate Past President

**DIRECTORS**

Rima Chatterjee, Al DeAngelis, Charles Muller,  
Layne Rodney, John Ruggio, & Nick Sajda

**Editor** - Joan Thomas

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**COMING EVENTS**

Date	Time	Event	Location
Oct 15	11:00	Norm Geisinger Extreme Bending Presentation	GEC
Oct 15	12:00	Graham Potter Workshop	GEC
Nov 12	12:00	Preparing for winter – presentation and a hands-on workshop prepping member trees for winter.	GEC
Dec 10	12:00	Holiday buffet and auction. 11:00 to setup.	GEC

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

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