



# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

September

2004

**SIMULTANEOUS TEAM STYLING DEMONSTRATION  
GLENBROOK COMMUNITY CENTER  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2004 AT 1:00 PM**

We moved our meeting from our “normal” meeting date because so many YAMA KI members attend *Bill Valavanis’* International Bonsai 2004 Symposium. Since the Bartlett Arboretum’s annual plant sale conflicts with our changed date, we are meeting at our alternate site, the second floor of the Glenbrook Community Center. The afternoon should be both educational and entertaining with two teams of members styling similar material. Directions are on page 3.

There will be a Board of Directors’ meeting at 11:00 am. Board members should bring their lunch . Board meetings are open to interested members, but bring your lunch. The regular meeting will start at 1:00 pm.

The program format is new for YAMA KI (other clubs have done it with great success). The demonstration material is *Juniper rigida*. We have two similar trees and two teams that will style their assigned tree. Each team will decide by consensus the front, height, and style, and will then proceed to implement their design. The team participants are: *John Cotoggio, Kevin Goveia, Rupen Kiskanyan, Steve Peach, Mike Pollock, and Gail Therrien*. If we can obtain a third similar tree, we will add another team from member volunteers.

**AUGUST HOUSE VISIT AT GAIL THERRIEN’S**

This year’s August home visit took place at *Gail Therrien’s & Kirk Dolby’s* in northern Westchester. During an otherwise rainy weekend, we were the lucky beneficiaries of an ‘almost’ sunny afternoon, the better to enjoy a lovely setting and a walk through the property to *Gail’s* nursery. Several YAMA KI members brought their best bonsai to be critiqued for the New York Botanical Garden exhibit in October, others brought raw material (including some potential future knock-outs!) for design suggestions, and a few members walked away having purchased new material from *Gail’s* stock. All-in-all, it was a very well-rounded day of bonsai fun for all who attended.

**JERRY MEYER  
MARCH 20, 1909 - JULY 26, 2004**

*Jerry Meyer* passed away Monday, July 26, 2004. Here are *Berni Gastrich’s* words, spoken at the funeral:

“My relationship to *Jerry* came about through the world of Bonsai. *Jerry* loved nature and plants. He saw plants as beautiful living things entrusted by God to his care. His love for his fellow man made him want to share this joy with others. He was active in and president of the Men’s Garden Club.

About 30 years ago he founded the YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY and served as president and newsletter writer for many years. He even published a very successful book on bonsai. His horticultural knowledge helped of course, but here was a new challenge. I can best explain it by telling you that when we taught an ongoing beginner’s course in bonsai, *Jerry’s* first lecture never mentioned plants. It was a lecture on form and balance. He was teaching us that bonsai is a sculptural art.

Last, I want to mention a quality in *Jerry* that everyone here knows very well. *Jerry* was the ultimate gentleman. He did not live the “Golden Rule” because this is what one should do. He didn’t ever do it in a condescending or manipulative way. It was the essence of *Jerry Meyer*. It was as much a natural part of him as breathing.

May we all remember that wonderful quality and think of *Jerry* when we are tempted to do otherwise.”

## REACHING FOR THE STARS\*

*Jerome Meyer*

There's something about bonsai that gets in your blood. I don't quite know the reason. Maybe it's the challenge to keep a difficult task going. Maybe it's the groping for the masterpiece - to try once more for the perfect result that becomes a beautiful thing to behold. Perhaps the analysts can give us the answer.

But one thing I know. The perfectionist instinct must be present. Otherwise a tree in a pot is just that. It's the perfectionist's touch that makes it bonsai.

Just the other day I visited with a friend who created a magnificent spruce forest planting consisting of twelve to fourteen trees. He berated himself for having several trees of the group "too parallel" all the way up when, actually, they should have been a little farther apart at the tops. The aberration could easily have been corrected during potting by inserting small wedges between the trees to separate them until they became fixed and, perhaps, even after potting, it would not have been too late to make the alteration. But no. This minor fault gave him a negative feeling about the group and he promptly proceeded to plan another - and this one would have the trees well separated at the top to simulate a forest in nature. It's the perfectionist reaching for the stars. The next one will surely be better - and so will the next.

I, myself, suffer a malady I call "potting panic." I study a tree for weeks or months in anticipation of the potting class. On the appointed day, I work on the tree for hours on end in perfect tranquility. All the major pruning has been done. Surface roots have been exposed. Every unnecessary branch has been removed. Each remaining branch wired and bent to perfection. It tapers beautifully. The pot is perfect for the tree's dimensions. This is going to be it:

Alas, just as I am about to get the tree into the container, I fall apart. It's not that I am concerned about the roots drying out - or the material not fitting - or that I am anxious to bring the session to a close. I become gripped with terror.

The planting is finished; I gape at the result with dismay. If only I had potted the tree turned another 15°; if only it was tilted forward just a little more; why didn't I get it closer to the left? Well, next year these things will be corrected and just wait until you see it then!

I have the feeling "potting panic" is just another stage of the perfectionist syndrome. It's a very contagious malady. Maybe this is the thing that gets in your blood. Maybe that's how it should be.

\* Reprinted from the YAMA KI NEWSLETTER, March 1977

### YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY & NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN BONSAI EXHIBIT

The dates for our exhibit at the New York Botanical Garden are Friday, October 15th through Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, with set-up on Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. All members should visit the exhibit and volunteer a few hours as docents. Please call *Gail* to indicate the days and hours you can serve. Her phone number is 914-244-1320 or reach her by e-mail at [galtbon@aol.com](mailto:galtbon@aol.com). If you have not already brought a tree for critiquing for a place in the exhibit, please bring it to the September meeting.

This year's exhibit will be more pro-active. *Berni Gastrich* will be demonstrating on Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> (while members will be at our regular meeting at the Bartlett Arboretum with *David Easterbrook*) and again on Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, *Walter Pall* will do an all-day demonstration using show quality material picked out by *Walter*, *Jim Doyle*, and *John Cotaggio*. He'll start between 10 and 10:30am, break for lunch at noon, and at 1:00 pm he will do a presentation on bonsai basics, complete with his own slides for about an hour and a half. After that presentation, *Walter* will resume the styling demonstration. If weather permits, *Walter* will conduct his bonsai styling demonstration near the pond just outside our exhibit. Otherwise the demonstration will be downstairs in the Conservatory. The completed bonsai, by both *David Easterbrook* and *Walter Pall*, will be auctioned in December at our annual Holiday Party and Auction.



Shohin display

Photos from last year's NYBG exhibit



One of many tokanoma



Spruce



Black pine



Cotoneaster

### **BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI**

*Berni Gastrich*

#### **ONE MORE NITROGEN FEEDING**

Labor Day weekend, give or take a week or so, is an excellent time for one more feeding with a high nitrogen fertilizer like Miracle Gro or Miracid. This applies to all evergreens except blooming plants like azaleas. It is important to use a liquid chemical fertilizer because this is instantly available and will be leached out very quickly. We do not want a fertilizer which will have a long residual effect because this could produce late-season growth. The logic of this quick shot of nitrogen is to stimulate the production of growth buds, particularly back buds for next spring.

After this, only low or zero nitrogen fertilizers should be used. This is to avoid stimulating these new buds into growth this autumn. Such late growth would be very susceptible to frost damage.

#### **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. 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.

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**COMING EVENTS**

September	18	Member Teams Styling Presentation
October	15-24	Yama Ki /NY Botanical Garden Bonsai Exhibit
October	16	<i>David Easterbrook</i> Lecture/Demonstration and Workshop
November	13	<i>Michael Persiano</i> Lecture/Demonstration

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