



# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

June

2002

## **JIM DOYLE LECTURE/DEMONSTRATION ON TRAY PLANTING SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2002 AT 1:00 PM AT THE BARTLETT ARBORETUM**

*Jim Doyle* of Harrisburg, PA. is our featured artist this month. All YAMA KI members who have gone to MidAtlantic Festivals know him as the owner of Nature's Way Nursery. He started his horticulture business in 1973 after graduating from Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture. Bonsai became a hobby; then in 1980, through *Chase Rosade's* influence, he changed the focus of the business to a bonsai specialization. *Jim's* resume includes travel in Japan, founding member of the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, Director of the American Bonsai Society, author (of both articles and haiku), lecturer and teacher of bonsai. Along with a deep interest in Japanese garden design, he is particularly interested in conifers and Japanese maples. Those of us who attended the 1985 Atlanta Bonsai Conference or the 2001 MidAtlantic Festival have seen his fine work and enjoyed his delightful, wry sense of humor.

At this meeting *Jim* will narrate a slide presentation he has prepared for us, followed by a demonstration of a tray planting. He is planning to use a variation of dwarf Cypress, commonly known as white Cedar, Sasuki azaleas, various accent plants, rocks, and ground cover.

## **OUR FIELD TRIP TO THE SHEPHERD HILL FARM NURSERY**

*Melba Grieshaber*

Well, it wasn't quite rain, sleet, snow, and gloom of night, but the weather definitely was not cooperating for our May YAMA KI meeting. Six hardy souls made the trek to the Shepherd Hill Nursery in Putnam County, New York for a hands-on workshop presided over by *Berni Gastrich*.

*Berni Gastrich, Melba Grieshaber, Len Douglas, Ivan Surmik, Kevin Goveia, and Jim Glatthaar* arrived after the worst of the rain had eased, but there was a nasty wet wind blowing as we went through the poly-houses where the evergreens and flowering bushes were displayed. The owner, *Gerry Bleyer*, was on hand to discuss whatever plants we were interested in, and *Berni* stood ready to consult on appropriate styling. (Both were wearing mountain type protective gear.)

A large selection of rhododendrons, azaleas, and pine were available. Popular choices were mugho pine and azalea. *Pinus contorta* and miniature hemlock were also among those purchased. We then spent several enjoyable hours in rather cramped quarters in *Mr. Bleyer's* garage, pruning and wiring the new trees. Because of the small number of members, we were all able to get significant work accomplished as well as benefitting from *Berni's* suggestions and assistance.

Despite the autumn-like weather this was an excellent meeting. Our thanks to *Mr. Bleyer*, for providing space for us to work, and to *Berni* for his expertise and willingness to share his talent.

You can check their web site at [www.shepherdhillfarm.com](http://www.shepherdhillfarm.com).

## ELECTION NOTICE

Our July meeting will include the election of YAMA KI board members and officers. Each year the five officers are elected and the terms of two directors expire. Please call Melba Grieshaber (203-327-4255) to indicate your willingness to serve as a candidate and to suggest members who may be shy about putting themselves forward.

If you are called by the Nominating Committee, please respond affirmatively. Your service is a vital component of YAMA KI's continued existence and growth.

## REDUCED PRICED COPPER WIRE

*Mike Pollack* is planning to coordinate a bulk purchase from *Julian Adams* for September delivery. If you wish to purchase wire, call *Mike* at (914) 764-5557 or by email at the [webmaster@yamakibonsai.org](mailto:webmaster@yamakibonsai.org) address. *Mike* will consolidate the requests and place the bulk order with *Julian*. *Berni Gastrich* will pick up the order at *Julian's* vendor booth at *Bill Valavanis* Bonsai Fall Symposium (avoiding the shipping shock that *Kathy Shaner* mentioned). There will more details in the next newsletter and on our website.

## BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI

*Berni Gastrich*

*Kathy Shaner* recently told us that several of our standard bonsai materials are less than ideal. She compared these to similar materials available in Japan.

The first of these is heat annealed copper wire. She told us that in Japan such wire is available much softer than what we are used to here. I have no doubt that this is true, but the wire available from *Julian Adams* is by far the best available in the eastern United States. It is much softer than the shiny electrically annealed wire that is generally available. In the higher number (thinner) wires its leaves nothing to be desired. Only in the thickest wires is there any problem. As you may know by now, I much prefer copper to aluminum for anything except very smooth bark species such as maple. Both the aesthetics and the mechanical holding power of copper is far superior. Aluminum, since a much thicker diameter must be used, is best for the smooth bark species because it does not bite into the bark as quickly.

Next is Akadama, soil. The greatest weakness of commercially available bonsai soils here in the east is their low cation exchange capacity (CEC). This means that their very good water drainage is accompanied by the fact that nutrients leach out of the soil very easily, requiring frequent fertilizer applications. Akadama is a porous hardened clay, screened to different sized particles which holds both water and nutrients. It is not readily available here in the east but I have managed to get a small personal supply and have used it mixed into our present soil. Needless to say, a soil imported from Japan, is considerably more expensive. I will look into the possibility of buying a quantity for club use.

*Kathy* also told us that the lime sulfur solution available to us in the U.S. is not equal to the more concentrated product available in Japan. I'm sure this is true. She did not say that it is useless. I believe that if it is applied several times each year it does the job very nicely. I am firmly opposed to mixing acrylic paints with the lime sulfur. These produce a coating on the surface. What we want is a penetration into the wood. I am planning to try the Minwax wood hardener and will report on it in the future.

Please do not think that I am in anyway comparing my bonsai knowledge to that of *Kathy Shaner*. We must however work with the soils, wire etc. available to us here in the east.

## GLEANINGS FROM MIDATLANTIC'S 2002 FESTIVAL

- ✿ *Kathy Shaner* says: a bare trunk doesn't draw you into the tree so leave enough on the limbs to draw up strength but not so much that it is too full for too long.
- ✿ *Yasuo Mitsuya*: Climate and choice of fertilizer both affect soil mix: colder climate calls for less inorganic soil mix
- ✿ *Mitsuya* noted for black and red pines:
  - ✿ trim before winter storage and leave 8 pair of needles per top branch, then for the lower ones leave up to 12 pair. This stimulates new growth and budding.
  - ✿ When candle cutting, cut top stems a little longer than lower candles. If the tree is very weak, only cut the lower candles; when the tree strengthens cut the balance of the candles. For candles at mid-level, cut them at a height equal to the diameter of the candle. For candles at the upper level, cut twice the height of the diameter and for the lower candles, cut half the height of the diameter
  - ✿ Fertilizer timing is related to the age of the tree: fertilize older trees after the candles begin to stretch; younger trees fertilize as candles begin to appear. This is also true for deciduous trees. Under NO circumstances do you fertilize in hot weather.
  - ✿ Shorten needles before styling.
- ✿ From *Julian Adams*:
  - ✿ Be certain to use a root cutter for roots, NOT a concave cutter
  - ✿ Tis the season: gnats and flies a problem? Hang flesh colored packing tape, sticky side out to trap the pests
  - ✿ To remove sap from your tools: use turpentine, or butter, or corn oil, or nail polish remover. Coat with baby oil before putting away for the season.
  - ✿ Stuff chamaecyparis foliage into training pot holes to retain soil
  - ✿ Use colored picks to remind you of what needs care next spring
  - ✿ An ordinary #2 pencil writes very well on white plastic tabs when you are making repotting notations
  - ✿ No raffia about? Before wiring and bending a heavy branch, wrap it with string, then wire
  - ✿ Put sandpaper on the top of your turntable to prevent pot slippage
- ✿ *Dan Barton* noted that bonsai is really a four dimensional art because you must include time which creates change.
- ✿ *Dale Cochoy*:
  - ✿ likes to use hadite and pine bark in equal proportions for training soil for yews.
  - ✿ adds plantone ® to his fertilizer; following instructions on the package.
  - ✿ When coating jins, he uses a brown acrylic paint with lime sulphur to get a color close to that of the bark, not a white or grey cast.

## SOME OF THE MID-ATLANTIC ARTISTS



Cochoy styling a Taxus



Shaner critiquing



Mitsuya styling a Juniper

## ARE YOUR DUES OVERDUE?

Many members still have not paid their annual dues. There is a number on the upper right corner of your address label - if it has a number 5, you have not paid your dues. Number 6 represents paid membership, number 9 indicates an exchange membership with other bonsai societies. Dues have not been increased in many years, please send in your check today!

SPRING IS HERE, and it's the busy time for bonsai people.

*Mike Ivany*, a Certified Landscape Designer and Yama Ki member, is available to help you work with your bonsai if you need assistance with repotting, re-styling, plant selection, pruning, etc. *Mike* has assisted several Yama Ki members with their bonsai and their gardens. References are, of course, available. *Mike* can be reached at (914) 968-3381, or by e-mail at: [mivany@aol.com](mailto:mivany@aol.com).

### OFFICERS

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 Gail Therrien . . . . . Recording Secretary

Co-Editors: Rhoda & Irv Kleiman

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### COMING EVENTS

June	8	Jim Doyle: Tray planting
July	13	Annual Meeting & Auction
Aug	10	TBA