



# YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

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

May

2002

## NURSERY FIELD TRIP TO SHEPARD HILL FARM MAY 18, 2002 AT 10:30 AM

On Saturday, May 18th, we will resume a meeting type which was a very successful annual event during the years when *Yuji Yoshimura* was our mentor.

We will go to a nursery which specializes in hardy evergreens and especially dwarf conifers, e.g., 28 species of dwarf pines plus azaleas, junipers etc. All are small and prices typically run \$35 to \$55. All have wintered in Putnam County.

We'll meet at 10:30 am and choose trees under the guidance of *Berni Gastrich*. After a lunch break at noon (bring a picnic lunch or sandwich, etc) *Berni* will quickly discuss and rough out his suggestions for the design of each tree (for those members who would like a first or second opinion).

The nursery will provide a space for us to work, but bring a folding chair. If it rains we can work in his garage.

### DIRECTIONS:

Take the Taconic Parkway North (or South, depending on your starting location) to Route 6. Take Route 6 West from the parkway. Turn right onto Mill Street at a light. Turn Left onto Peekskill Hollow Road. The nursery, **Shepherd Hill Farm**, is #200 on the left. There is a sign. Follow a long driveway past an old house up the hill to the end. The phone number is 845-528- 5917

### BERNI TURNS PRO

Incidentally, for those who were not aware, *Berni* turned pro this past year and is now available for private instruction and personal help in all aspects of bonsai at your home or at his studio. His maximum is two students at a time, beginners to advanced.

### MEMBERS TREATED TO WORLD'S GREAT BONSAI ARTISTS YASUO MITSUYA & KATHY SHANER ON APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>

*Yasuo Mitsuya* styled a large Hinoki cypress, surprising us by very quickly cutting off a major portion of the tree. After determining the front, he continued cutting and pruning with little hesitation. *Kathy Shaner*, translated his comments while she kept a running commentary and talked about potting techniques and other styling and maintenance issues when *Yasuo* was not noting things he wished to bring to our attention as he progressed. The “finished” tree was smaller than he had originally anticipated. As a result, the container brought for the tree was over-sized. The tree will be auctioned this summer, and the owner will then continue to compress the branches and repot in a better proportioned container.



Checking the "Front"



Top gone, now what?



Another reduction



Creating jin at temporary apex



Wired & potted



Ready for repotting



### THE SHANER/MATSUYA WORKSHOP

The suggestions and guidance was priceless





## GLEANINGS

- ✿ *Kathy Shaner* warns us to make sure to tie a bonsai in the container very tightly . Roots grow much faster when there is no movement of the tree.
- ✿ *Kathy* also indicated that bonsai branches and foliage in the back of the tree should be fuller than in the front, to create added depth. She said that most bonsai could be improved by this technique.
- ✿ *Yasuo Mitsuya* spoke about taper: a shorter tree requires greater taper.
- ✿ Remember the discussions over the past few years about the necessity for using cut paste or other wound protection? At MidAtlantic EVERY artist used some variety of protection. *Mr. Mitsuya* actually did so as he worked rather than coating all cuts at then end of the styling session.
- ✿ *Kathy Shaner* noted that the lime sulphur which we purchase these days is not as effective for preventing rot as had been true. Min-wax wood hardener is an effective product to use instead and it keeps the wood dry wherever applied. Ignore its initial sheen which will disappear with time, brush it with a wire brush to create a matte finish.

### TRAY LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP FOR JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> ?

*Jim Doyle* will be doing a tray landscape at our June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, probably using maples. If there is enough interest, he will do a workshop. If interested, call Irv or Rhoda Kleiman (212-724-7840 or [irkleiman@rcn.com](mailto:irkleiman@rcn.com)) and reserve a place. The workshop will be held if we receive at least six reservations by May 23.

## **BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI**

*Berni Gastrich*

### **AZALEAS**

The ideal time for doing major pruning on azaleas is immediately after bloom. The timing here is quite important. As soon as the flowers wilt, the plant produces seed. This requires an immense expenditure of energy on the part of the plant. If you allow this to happen, you are weakening it just before the stress of pruning or repotting. If you are not repotting this year "dead head" your azalea, i.e., remove all flowers as soon as they wilt. An easy way to dead head is to simply cut off all the small twigs on the entire plant. This is completely safe. Now that there is no foliage you can really see the structure of your tree thereby making major pruning decisions much easier. Go to it! Now is the ideal time.

Glazed pots, particularly blue, go especially well with the pink or white flowers of azaleas. Fortunately these are generally readily available and less pricey than unglazed pots. When you remove your tree from its pot you will find a mass of very fine, fibrous roots. If the tree has not been repotted for two years or more, the pot will be entirely filled with such roots. It is not satisfactory to simply trim away the peripheral soil and roots. If you do this, within a few years this central area will become hard as a rock, and no longer contribute in anyway to the nourishment of the plant. It is vital to make numerous "pie shaped cuts" into this area. The apex of these should go all the way to the base of the tree. This way you get new soil and therefore new young roots in the center area.

Ideally your soil should be a little more humusy and acidic than ordinary bonsai soil. I add hemlock needles from the forest floor near my home. Using acid fertilizer will also solve this problem. Don't go up too high on the nitrogen or you will end up with a vigorously growing very green azalea which produces no flower buds. Schultz makes a 10/60/10 fertilizer called "Bloom" which also contains iron and other good things. The iron helps to nullify the effects of low acidity in your soil.

### **YAMA KI IN THE PRESS**

YAMA KI is mentioned in an article on the philosophy of bonsai appearing in the May issue of the prestigious Greenwich Magazine. As a result of the editors viewing of our last New York Botanical Garden show, *Berni Gastrich* was asked to write a major article, complete with many of his photographs. The essence of the article is that bonsai is a sculptural art form which is only slowly gaining appreciation in the U.S.A.

### **MIDATLANTIC BONSAI SOCIETIES**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Spring Festival of the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies is now history but what a satisfying symposium it was! This annual weekend has developed a reputation within the bonsai community as an outstanding event – so much so that five renowned east coast artists registered for the full Festival and one even elected to take a workshop with one of the artists. Two of the vendors registered in order to have the opportunity to observe the artists. All participants observed bonsai artists working on both indoor and winter-hardy trees, sizes from shohin to "too tall for me to handle", grown from seed to collected in the wild. All the specimens were challenging from a design standpoint, and all were so successfully styled that the raffles produced more money than at any previous Festival.

The artists began the trees in the main lecture/demonstration area and then did the detail wiring "off stage" in a breakout area. Participants had freedom to wander from stage area to breakout at will. This allowed time to talk one-on-one with the artists about their techniques.

Once again, the vendor area provided choice materials for sale – from pre-bonsai to elegantly styled “completed” trees, tools, soils, pots that were so distinctive that the artists were purchasing some for their own use.

The exhibit of club trees attracted many outsiders who cannot get to the major sites where one can view world-class bonsai. The artists who conducted the critiques were complimentary about the quality of trees exhibited. In fact, *Mr. Mitsuya* remarked on how dramatically the styling had improved since he was last here six years ago. His prime suggestion is that we now work on improving how we display our work – from stands to accent materials. Photographs of the exhibit trees can be viewed on the MidAtlantic website: [Midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com](http://Midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com).

The Ramada Inn has improved its food service so both the luncheon buffet and the evening banquet were satisfying. The auctioneers, *Jim Doyle*, *Julian Adams*, and for the first time a woman, *Kathy Shaner*, provided a few hours of humor and amusement along with some good bargains.

All five workshops were fully subscribed. Everyone who left had a smile and/or a comment of satisfaction. Before the Board left the Inn on Sunday afternoon, they reviewed all aspects of this 19<sup>th</sup> Festival and began the groundwork for next year’s 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA FESTIVAL. Two international artists, one from Japan and one from Italy have already agreed to participate (both are first-times at MidAtlantic). The June Board meeting will select the other artists, some unusual activities, and some changes in procedures for the celebratory weekend.

Each member society is entitled to two voting members on the Board and one alternate. YAMA KI has seldom had this full complement of participants. *Jim Glatthaar*, our Program Chairman, has agreed to attend along with *Rhoda Kleiman*. Anyone want to volunteer for the Alternate slot? Meetings are only five times a year with the fifth one on Sunday afternoon at the close of the Festival.

### **DUES ARE DUE**

YAMA KI dues are nominal and cover only part of the cost of our programs and newsletter. Membership dues remain at \$20 for individual members and \$30 for family memberships. Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. If you joined YAMA KI after October 1, 2001, your membership is extended until April 30, 2003 and no dues are required now.

This notice should have been in the April issue, so please, before you forget, complete the coupon below and mail it in with your check.

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**YAMA KI BONSAI SOCIETY**  
2002/03 Membership Renewal Application

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for:

**G** Individual membership dues @ \$20.00

**G** Family membership dues @ \$30.00

Signed (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address:: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any changes to your address or phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Co-Editors: Rhoda & Irv Kleiman	
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<b>COMING EVENTS</b>		
May	18	Field Trip to Shepard Hill Nursery
June	8	<i>Jim Doyle</i> : Tray landscape
July	13	Annual Meeting & Auction