

Columbus Bonsai Society

December 2021 Newsletter
Vol. 51, No. 12

Columbus Bonsai Society
PO Box 7741
Columbus, OH 43229

Web: <https://columbusbonsai.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColumbusBonsai/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/248412035864133/>

Email columbusbonsai@gmail.com

Meetings start at 2pm unless otherwise noted



COLUMBUS
BONSAI
SOCIETY

What's up for Saturday, December 18, 2021

Our holiday dinner was selected at Sushi.com. Unfortunately, the allocated space is now full and no other space is available. The Board will be more proactive in selecting a venue earlier next year to accommodate club members, but there is no time or space available for this year to change the venue.

Dues reminder: All 2021 members should have gotten a reminder notice at the end of November about the change in dues and a new renewal/registration form. It was sent out before I got the renewals that came in "postmarked" December 1 or before, so do not panic. If you were already prepaid, or joined at the show your dues paid at that time included 2022 so you should have gotten the version of this email/newsletter that looks normal. If you got a reminder notice as part of the email text for this newsletter, then I do not have your registration information prior to the dues change. Please contact the club email with a copy of the electronic transaction. If you used the postal service a picture of the canceled check prior to Dec 10 should be sufficient. In this case, I suggest you send a Thank you note to the Postmaster General for his stellar performance.

From the President

Happy December!

As this year winds down, so does our Bonsai activity. The December Christmas Party is our final activity for the year. Unfortunately space is now sold out.

Our schedule for 2022 is starting to firm up and will include visits from Sergio Cuan and possibly Jim Doyle. The annual show is still looking for a home, as Franklin Park isn't allowing any shows in 2022, hopefully this is a one year hiatus only!

Table of Contents

Article	Page
What's Up	1
Presidents Message	1
Down the Rabbit Hole	2
Random Thotz	2
Articles	3
Monthly Care	10
Found on the Web	11
Coming Attractions	11
Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt.	11
Show Pictures	13
Membership Form	14

Club Officers

Jack Smith Past President

jsmith4753@aol.com

Mark Passerello President

mpasserello@rocketmail.com

Rob Hoffman 1st Vice

President

rhoffman2382@gmail.com

Ken Schoenfeld 2nd Vice

President

schoenfeld7@yahoo.com

Amy Mourot Treasurer

amourot@aol.com

Wendy Mizanin secretary

wendymiz1@att.net

1st Year Director

Kevin Faris 2nd year Director

kevinfarispnwbonsai@gmail.com

William Holterman 3rd year

Director

william.holterman@gmail.com

Ken Schoenfeld Tree Curator

schoenfeld7@yahoo.com

Zack Clayton Newsletter Editor

zclayton@yahoo.com

Daniel White, Web Master

Cable22001@gmail.com

Ryan Huston Librarian

Ry2tree2@gmail.com

Columbus Bonsai Club email

columbusbonsai@gmail.com

So have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Please be safe and healthy in 2022 and don't forget to Bonsai on!

Thanks,
Jack

Down the Rabbit Hole returns with President Elect Mark Passerello

Hello!

As we move towards the New Year, you'll notice a new slate of officers on the masthead. Some familiar names continuing in service as well as some new ones signing on for the first. Welcome aboard and welcome back to all of them, here's to an active and energetic CBS in 2022!

Starting out this new President's column, it is fitting to recognize the work of outgoing President Jack Smith. Jack kept the club afloat and on course during the roughest time of the pandemic. Well done, Sir!

Things to look for and plan on in the New Year:

CBS will be holding meetings at Franklin Park Conservatory, but pandemic related financial and staffing issues at the Conservatory mean that FPC will not be hosting any shows in 2022. This affects ALL plant societies, not just us. At this time CBS board members are looking into several options that would allow us to have a show next year—no one wants to skip another year. If you know of a space that would be appropriate for a bonsai show, please let me know. We're open to most any possibility and can be creative about how we set up.

Let's have a serious conversation: We (the club) has gotten some feedback from several recent guest artists, and what they've had to say wasn't always complimentary. We as a club—and especially as an audience member at a demo or workshop we need to be aware of certain things. Presenters hear when we're talking in the back of the room. They notice when we're walking into the meeting late. When we host these artists we need to be conscientious and remember the respect due to these guests.

Plans for the first quarter of 2022 are pretty set. Our January, February and March meetings will be about some fundamental bonsai topics. Good review for experienced growers and excellent opportunities for newer hobbyists to learn. Check out the Coming Up column elsewhere in this newsletter for meeting dates and topics, as well as listings for other relevant bonsai events. If you have ideas for meetings or a topic you would like to see covered, please let me know. Also, if you feel able to present on one of the listed topics, or one you think should be talked about, also let me know.

Random Thotz ~ Zack Clayton

Email has some odd characteristics. It is easy [sic] to incorrectly record the link. I still have an active member who does not give us an email to send the newsletter and has no physical address or phone number.

Then there is the issue of I don't automatically get the emails from the spreadsheet or website. This means I have to go in and scan the data by hand. Sometimes things get missed. I just found a couple that had been missed. It is less than efficient. If you have more than one email address, that gives an added degree of difficulty. Please choose one and email the club which email you prefer. Preferably from that address. Also, if you pay by cash, get a separate receipt for the membership payment, I paid at the October meeting in a bulk payment for pots and it didn't get reported. I don't know if it was missed or not itemized. I know that I did not fill out a membership form, which was stupid of me, but there were none at the meeting when I bought the pots and had the cash.

Lets talk weather weirdness. We have had a couple of days where the high was below 32, nights down to 21. Obviously any tropicals you missed are dead. I would worry about any half hardy, zones 6 and 7, trees that are still out. Twenty degrees can kill a zone 7 plant even with a short exposure. BUT, this weekend temperatures are forecast in the mid to high 50's with lows down to 40 degrees. Um, does that mean the vermin that eat my bark are dormant yet, or do I need to use a repellent? Sigh.

Other than that, the snow on my trees was beautiful.

Articles

On Nov 19, 2021, at 10:38 AM, Jack Wikle <jwikle@comcast.net> wrote:

Hello Ken (Scultz),

Good to hear from you and be reminded of many positive experiences with Columbus bonsai people.

I have no problem with your club republishing this article. Of course, it might be good to credit the Fukubonsai website <http://www.fukubonsai.com/2b2a2a.html> and applaud David Fukumoto for continuing to make this information available. If you feel it's appropriate you might also want to note that this is just one of the several articles Jack has written on this subject over the years and there are others still available on the internet.

I'm hoping too that, if your club members are not already aware, some mention might be made of a fund raising campaign I and some local bonsai friends are initiating in support of the Bonsai Collection at Michigan State University's Hidden Lake Gardens where I've been responsible for the bonsai display for more than 50 years. To learn a lot more about this effort, see our new website: jackwiklebonsailegacy.com If you have questions feel free to contact me.

How I've been Growing Bonsai Indoors under Fluorescent Light

By Jack Wikle (Ann Arbor ,Michigan)

[Editors note: This was written before the advent of LEDs. Most of our club switched from Fluorescent work lights to LED work lights several years ago following these procedures and the results are equivalent or better. LEDs also have the advantage of a flat light output over time.]

Twenty five years ago, when my first experiments with growing little trees under fluorescent light began, I had one distinct advantage over today's bonsai beginners. At the time, I hadn't read a lot of books and articles making the whole project sound almost impossible.

I hadn't been told you have to mist the foliage regularly. I hadn't been told I'd need a humidifier or cool mist vaporizer. I hadn't been told you have to run a fan to circulate air. I hadn't been told cheap, cool white, fluorescent tubes need to be supplemented with incandescent bulbs. And, I hadn't been told most plants grown indoors still need a cold rest period with temperatures below 50° F. for several weeks each year.

READ THIS CAREFULLY! I am not following today and have not followed any of the procedures listed above. This is not to say some of those practices might not have helped my indoor bonsai grow faster, flower more or look healthier. I don't know. Not being able to offer broader experience, I can only record what has worked "well enough" for me.

When I began hearing then reading that one could grow plants adequately well indoors without special or expensive "grow lights," my winters for ten years had been spent dreaming about bonsai I would grow outdoors come spring and I had a shelf cluttered with attractive little bonsai pots, pots too small to keep anything alive in outdoors with only the once a day attention I was willing to give. AHA! This might be a way to use those tiny pots and grow bonsai --- and grow as a bonsai enthusiast --- year around. Two small rooted cuttings of pyracantha were brought in from outdoors. The "shop light" was dropped down over my workbench next to the furnace. And the experiment, the indoor fun that continues today, began.

It soon became apparent that fluorescent light bonsai growing offers a number of advantages. It is a very controlled situation with no weather extremes. Trees grow year around so one can practice and make bonsai progress year around. It is great winter therapy available even when it's cold and dark outside. It is good use for those irresistible little pots one tends to accumulate. And, it makes possible growing a surprising number of small bonsai close at hand in a very limited space.

Suppose you are compelled to try fluorescent light bonsai too. What do you need to know? What will you need to do? Actually, a tree's basic requirements are few. Provide light, water, fertilizer, suitable growing medium and protection from extremely hot or extremely cold temperatures and success is highly likely if not guaranteed. Of course, starting with healthy plant material tolerant of indoor growing conditions will be a big boost for your growing project too. Let's discuss each of these issues in turn.

LIGHT. Usually, the first question that arises is "*do I have to use fluorescent light?*" "*Can't I grow my indoor trees near a window?*" Well, yes. Most kinds of plants people grow as indoor bonsai can, if rotated regularly, be grown successfully using only the light from a nearby window. If African violets or other house plants grown for their flowers --- rather than foliage plants which are, generally, more dark tolerant --- survive near your window, growing indoor bonsai in the same location should be no problem.

You can find out what you can do in window light by experimenting. Plants commonly recommended for indoor bonsai will survive well enough. Common plants are common because they are tolerant; they take abuse.

Although some adjustment must take place when trees come in and go out, moving these window bonsai outdoors --- if you want to do that --- during the warm months will strengthen them and increase growth.

Having said you can grow bonsai in window light, I still feel you make it easier for yourself and your indoor trees --- especially if window space is limited --- if you substitute even the most economical kind of fluorescent lighting for window light. The major advantage here is that light availability is very consistent without fluctuations due to extremes of sun and cloudiness; temperatures are more even also.

What you can do is simple enough. A standard four foot, two tube, 40 watt fluorescent unit --- we are talking about the shop light with reflector costing less than \$20 at the local discount store --- is suspended or supported from below in such a way that the tubes are very close to --- almost touching --- the tops of your tallest bonsai. The tubes are cool white, cheaper than most others.

You can't picture this? Imagine two, three-gallon size, plastic, nursery containers upside down on a table, their centers about four feet apart, and the ends of the shop light reflector resting on these containers. You can build supports requiring less space but I've used this nursery pot setup repeatedly when I needed quick extra lighting. Keeping your bonsai close to the tubes is important because the light energy available to plants drops off dramatically moving away from the source. The mistake beginners most often make is not keeping fluorescent light bonsai close enough to the tubes. Although I have fluorescent units mounted at different heights, most are not more than nine inches above the surfaces on which my little bonsai sit.

When I began experimenting with fluorescent light bonsai, I read some U.S. Department of Agriculture publications suggesting 14 to 16 hours of fluorescent light daily is adequate for growing plants indoors. So I thought why not try 16 hours as a compromise. This has worked quite well. I have experimented with longer light periods, but keep coming back to 16 hours. An economical timer is handy to avoid having to remember to turn your lights on and off. The kind of device some people use to control a light and make their home look lived in when they are away will work.

The publications I read also suggested replacing fluorescent tubes used for growing plants annually if they are on 16 hours a day. The reason for this is that light output diminishes gradually over time. Since light intensity will be increased significantly by fresh tubes, it is best to change one of the tubes in a two-tube unit one day then wait a day or two before changing the second tube to avoid damage to delicate growing tips. This is what I've done.

WATER. My practice has been to check each tree daily --- nothing more than once a day --- to see if it needs water. Those that are dry or becoming dry on the soil surface are watered. Those that are not dry will usually be healthier if they wait another day. Avoid keeping your soil constantly full of water. Not being in strong sun or wind slows the drying of these little trees dramatically compared with the same size pot outdoors. Even so, some species dry much more rapidly than others, Experience will soon tell you which ones get extremely dry --- even to the point of wilting --- in a day if not watered at the first hint of surface drying. At the other extreme are those kinds that dry the soil very slowly and will go several days before the soil mix begins to look dry at all.

Incidentally, a sudden reduction in water use, a sudden slowing of soil drying, by any tree is a warning that it is struggling and this is a time to be very careful in watering. Make sure you let the soil of a weak tree dry between waterings but do not let it stand dry.

Watering of my first few experimental fluorescent light bonsai was done with a spray bottle like some people use in applying cleaner when washing windows. Each tiny tree and its soil were misted thoroughly until water ran through the drain hole. As the indoor bonsai collection grew in number, this process became unacceptably time consuming and my hand got tired. I then found I could water more efficiently using a small watering pitcher with a fine spout.

Unfortunately, the pitcher that functioned well was metal and eventually rusted out. The plastic replacement widely available, about one and a half quart capacity, didn't work nearly as well because its spout had a much larger opening and the heavier water stream tended to wash soil mix out of little pots. After struggling with this for longer than one likes to admit, the thought occurred that it might be possible to alter this spout to limit the water flow. Ultimately, a small, four-hole, shirt button was secured to the tip of the spout with epoxy. This has worked very well; enough water flow and not too much.

While watering with the mister and later the succession of pitchers, I always held my little trees over an open container to catch the drainage water. One evening when watering more hurriedly than usual I was suddenly inspired to immerse the pot of the tree being watered in the drainage water in an effort to accelerate the process. A few bubbles rose to the surface and as I lifted the tree from the water, I understood immediately that this watering was more thorough and much quicker than what I had been doing with mister and pitchers.

From that day on I began watering all my indoor bonsai by immersing the soil. This went along well for a while, then an accumulation of whitish material began to appear on the soil and the moss of some trees was beginning to die. Thinking about this a bit, I concluded that minerals (salts) the trees couldn't use were probably beginning to accumulate since they were not being leached, or flushed away by running water through the soil. And, if I didn't begin leaching again my trees might suffer.

Rather than discontinue watering by dipping, what I began doing was to dip then follow up with a very weak fertilizer solution applied with the modified watering pitcher thus leaching and fertilizing at the same time. This is what I still do. This fertilizing process will be described in more detail below.

It seems important to note here that although I've gotten by using our town's very hard, well water on my outdoor bonsai, I use soft water indoors. This is not water that has been treated by a water softener. In the past, during the humid months, we have run a dehumidifier in our basement. The mineral free water it collected was used in watering the indoor bonsai. More recently, I've found that water discharged from our new central heating and air-cooling equipment works fine too. When water released by combustion and air conditioning processes runs low, rainwater caught in a large trash container set under the eaves is carried to the basement to water the indoor bonsai. Snow also has been brought in occasionally and the melt water used.

This is not to suggest that you can't get by watering indoors with hard water. I am convinced you can. It's just more difficult and regular leaching becomes more important.

Note: To water freshly potted trees without washing all the soil mix away, a basting syringe or similar bulb syringe works very well until enough roots have grown to secure the soil mix when dipping.

FERTILIZER. Of course trees do not rely on fertilizers, so-called "plant foods," as energy sources. Their energy, held in the tree as carbohydrate, comes directly from the sun. Typically soil, decomposing organic matter and fertilizer are the sources for plants of some 20 mineral elements (nutrient elements) now considered essential to their health. Use of soil-less mixes to grow our bonsai makes regular fertilizer application essential.

My indoor fertilizing practice has been intentionally kept simple. I have used commercial fertilizers such as Miracid, Miracle-gro, Peters 20-20-20 or Rapid-gro in very dilute solution applied almost every watering year around. When in a big hurry, an application may be skipped. This fertilizer solution is made up five gallons at a time by adding one level teaspoon of fertilizer to five gallons of water; so the concentration is one-fifth teaspoon per gallon.

After watering well, some of this weak fertilizer solution is run through the soil. So, as stated earlier, this process leaches and fertilizes at the same time. One caution. Experience shows that even this weak solution can do a lot of damage to some trees when applied on dry soil. Make sure you water first then apply the fertilizer. However, fertilizing with this weak solution can be done immediately after watering without damage.

I do not fertilize newly potted or repotted trees until they begin to produce new foliage. I also withhold fertilizer from sick trees since it seems to do more harm than good.

GROWING MEDIUM. Most people who persist as bonsai growers agree that choice of soil mix, "growing medium" if you prefer, is very important. But then confusion arises. Beyond the general principles that wonderful garden soil is inadequate in a pot and high porosity coupled with good moisture retention are desirable, we don't agree on what to do.

A bonsai growing doctor tells me that in medicine when many different remedies are being used in treating a problem you can be sure none of them work well. Makes one think.

This is certainly not the last word on soil mix. It is merely a statement of what I've been doing. Actually, this is going to sound suspiciously like the old story of the college professor who confided to a colleague that he'd used the same test questions without change for thirty years. His astounded friend was compelled to ask, "*Didn't your students catch on?*" The professor's response was, "*No, I just changed the answers.*"

The mix I used longest and felt very comfortable with was one part, by volume, starter chicken grit (small particles of granite) available at stores dealing in livestock feed, two parts sphagnum peat (not sphagnum moss) available in bales at our local garden centers and three parts baked clay. Baked clay?

Early in my experiments, the baked clay was clay cat litter. I soon discovered clay cat litter can be quite variable and that it was necessary to put a handful of the material in a jar of water and shake it up to see if the particles disintegrated before using it in my soil mix. What I wanted were stable particles that did not turn into mud when wetted.

I have also used with success several of the baked clay products sold for scattering on floors to soak up oil and grease where automobiles are repaired. Again, these products are somewhat variable and it is good to shake a sample in water before incorporating the material in one's soil mix.

Although more expensive, the baked clay I use now is the product Turface used in constructing golf greens and athletic fields. I have not had a problem with Turface particles disintegrating. I buy the particle size now labeled "MVP" and screen this over an eight-mesh screen (eight openings per inch). Material retained on the screen goes into a coarser mix used for large trees outdoors and for a drainage layer in a few of my bigger indoor bonsai containers. Turface passing through the eight-mesh screen and retained on window screen (sixteen-mesh) is what I use in my "regular" 1-2-3 indoor mix.

Even though the starter chicken grit particles are mostly a good size, screening them over window screen eliminates some dust.

The sphagnum peat is whisk-broomed through a four-mesh screen to break up clumps and remove larger chunks of debris. Then it is shaken through a five-mesh screen to separate the useful material into two sizes. Larger peat particles passing the four-mesh and retained on the five-mesh screen are used --- with the larger Turface --- in my coarse mix. It is peat that passes the five-mesh screen then is retained on a sixteen-mesh screen, used to remove fines and dust, that goes into regular, 1-2-3, indoor mix.

After screening, the three ingredients --- grit, peat, and clay in 1-2-3 proportions --- are then blended until the mix looks uniform. Too much mixing just generates more dust. In recent years, tiring of screening peat and feeling that a faster drying mix might be superior to the 1-2-3 ratio, I have experimented with a 1 grit, 1 peat, 3 clay mix and been very happy with it. At one time, I experimented with a peatless mix of 1 part grit: 3 parts baked clay then gave it up because it dried too quickly. Most recently, I have begun trial use of a mix of 1 grit, 1 peat, and 4 parts clay. It is still too early to say how this is working out.

inate fine particles and dust, thus opening up the spaces between the larger particles, should always be beneficial.

If you are wondering how different in water retention and aeration after watering your soil mix is from my 1-2-3 mix, there is a quick way to make some comparisons. All you will need are a measuring cup of water and an eight-ounce foam cup completely full of your dry soil mix. From the measuring cup, add water slowly to your soil mix until you have filled all the space between and within the particles. Note the amount of water used. Compare this figure with water amounts ranging from 4.25 to 4.75 ounces required to fill the space in the same quantity of my 1-2-3 mix.

Now, holding the foam cup --- full of water and soil mix --- over the measuring cup, slash the bottom edge in several places so water can drain freely. Note the amount of drainage collected. Compare this number with 0.85 to 1.24 ounces of drainage from my mix.

Not being able to add at least 4 ounces of water to 8 ounces of soil is reason to be skeptical. Drainage amounts much less than 0.75 or much more than 1.25 ounces are also questionable.

TEMPERATURES. I am often asked what temperature I maintain in the basement where I grow my indoor bonsai. Actually, this temperature changes slowly in response to outdoor temperatures. In periods of extended warm weather, it has risen as high as 84 F. Extended cold results in a chilly basement with temperatures in the 64 F to 66 F range. I have not been particularly conscious of growing problems at either temperature extreme. However, repotting warm climate plants during the warm season does seem to work better than repotting during cold months.

KINDS OF TREES, Theoretically any tree, shrub or vine that doesn't require a cold, dormant period to thrive is a possibility. I have personally experimented with plants from more than three dozen genera growing them as bonsai indoors year around with no outdoor vacations. In doing this, it was soon apparent that some are easier to keep healthy than others. Generally the easier ones are those mentioned most often as indoor material in bonsai books and magazines.

Some personal favorites, kinds I have found very rewarding, are dwarf forms of boxwood (*Buxus* spp.); small-leaved kinds of cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* spp.); figs (*Ficus* spp.), especially creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*); Greek myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), especially the dwarf form (*Myrtus communis* 'Compacta'); firethorns (*Pyracantha* spp.), especially the dwarf variety 'Teton'; azaleas (*Rhododendron* spp.), especially 'Hino Crimson'; Chinese sweetplums (*Sageretia theezans*); and serissas (*Serissa* spp.), especially some of the snow-rose clones.

Also, do not ignore small-leaved clones of English ivy (*Hedera helix*) They are exceedingly difficult to kill, cuttings are guaranteed to root and nice trunks develop much more quickly than most people expect.

Now, how about needle evergreens as fluorescent light bonsai? I have heard again and again that junipers (*Juniperus* spp.) cannot be grown indoors for any length of time. I know that even if I swear here that my two oldest indoor junipers have grown inside under cool white fluorescent light for 21 and 19 years respectively with no outdoor vacations, there will be those who read this and continue to assure their friends that it cannot be done. Admittedly juniper growth is slow under fluorescent light, but they survive and are healthy.

I am convinced that most people, trying to be nice to their trees, over water junipers indoors. Let the soil surface of the established juniper get definitely dry between waterings. Incidentally, boxwoods, cotoneasters and serissas respond well to this treatment too; most azaleas also in my experience.

Other needle evergreens that have done well for me indoors under fluorescent light are true cypresses (*Cupressus* spp.), false cypresses (*Chamaecyparis* spp.), and surprisingly, little gem Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Little Gem').

Now, some kinds tried indoors which lived for a while but gradually declined, seeming to need a cold dormant period and/or changing day length, must be noted here too. They are pines (*Pinus* spp.), maples (*Acer* spp.), quince (*Chaenomeles* spp.) and spirea (*Spiraea* spp.).

I suggest that you make an effort to get some of the kinds of trees I've especially enjoyed, but be adventurous and experiment too. The more species you try, the more fun you will have, and ultimately you will have more bonsai too.

OTHER ISSUES. We need to talk about clear "plastic," actually polyethylene, bags. Caution! Do not put a plant enclosed in a poly bag in direct sun. It can get very hot, what scientists call the greenhouse effect. However, the same poly bag --- I use Baggies purchased at the local supermarket --- can be very useful to the fluorescent light horticulturist because this light doesn't cause the extreme heating inside the bag that sunlight does.

My understanding is that there are microscopic pores in these bags, pores small enough to prevent water molecules from escaping yet large enough to allow oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange between air inside and outside the bag. A bonsai enclosed in one of these bags cannot dry out. The humidity inside is 100 percent. After watering thoroughly, I enclose any newly potted or repotted tree in a poly bag. The bag is dropped over the tree and its pot then folded underneath the pot so the bonsai is completely enclosed. This gives the disturbed tree time to make internal adjustments in a relatively stress free environment.

I usually leave the tree bagged under the fluorescent light about a week, not much longer. Swelling buds and new growth are signals that it is time for the tree to come out. This abrupt change from extremely moist to drier air can be quite a shock to a weak plant. What I do to ease the transition --- I call it programmed re-entry --- is to remove the poly bag for just half an hour the first day I take it off. In the case of an unusually sensitive or weak tree, this first outing may be only 15 minutes. Then next day the bag is taken off twice as long. The next day the out time is doubled again. This doubling each day continues until the tree is out for eight hours. When the tree comes out the next day, it stays out, usually without curling a leaf.

The same technique can be used during vacations. Before I accumulated too many indoor bonsai for it to be practical, I watered my trees well, bagged them and left them under the fluorescent lights for as long as two weeks without problems. Well, some trees did die when I pulled the bags off before I realized it was necessary to go through the programmed re-entry again.

How often do I repot my indoor bonsai? I've let some trees go as long as six years between repottings and some of them died. My goal now is to repot on a two or, at the most, three-year cycle because it seems less stress on the bonsai.

Dean Bull's "The Capillary Siphon" article --- BCI Magazine, Vol. 31, No. 57, Sep-Oct 1992 --- opened my eyes. His suggestion was to use cord from a rayon mop head as a drainage wick. Somehow, Dean's idea had not occurred to me. This certainly would be simpler and probably more effective than techniques I'd tried in an effort to pull water from wet-standing pots to save weak and dying bonsai. The first cord mop head I found was cotton and not nearly as active in wicking as I expected. So I went back for a rayon mop head and did find its strings wick much better.

Using curved tweezers, I push about 3/4 inch or so of mop string, depending on pot size, through the waterlogged pot's drain hole and past the screen covering the drain hole so the string's end lies in that very wet zone where soil mix rests on the pot floor. The rest of the foot

or two of cord runs to the table edge and hangs over, Water from the saturated layer runs down the wick quickly. This leaves the soil above moist but with much more of its pore space air-filled so the tree's roots are not suffocating for lack of oxygen.

This is in contrast to the sick tree standing abnormally long in water-logged soil because being weak it is not using much water, and because roots need oxygen to be efficient in taking up water even though it is all around them. Remember that soil physicists tell us oxygen diffuses 10,000 times faster through air than through water! Better set a container beneath the dangling string if you don't want a puddle there. I call these mop strings "bonsai life savers." I am sure they saved the lives of several weak trees for me.

If you are a beginner and have read this far without being too intimidated, finish this article and go get yourself some plants --- more than a few --- that you don't have too much invested in monetarily and emotionally, then start your own experiment to find out what it takes for you to keep them alive. Oh yes. If you really want to grow bonsai under fluorescent light or any other way, don't give up too easily!

* This text is an update of Jack's "*Growing Fluorescent Light Bonsai as Winter Therapy*" article published in: International Bonsai, Issue No. 4, 1996; and in Bonsai [British], Issue No. 34, Summer, 1997.

Additional © Jack Wikle & Fuku-Bonsai Inc., 1992

See Also:

Handreck & N. Black, 1984, *Growing Media for Ornamental Plants & Turf*.

Monthly Care

If they are not down yet, put your trees on the ground, under the bench or other place protected from the sun. The north side of any building, shed, fence or hedge that will block the sun and provide some protection from the wind will do. Some people will bury the pot up to the edge with mulch or compost. I don't do that but under my benches it doesn't get too windy. Wind will dry out your tree and cause severe damage or death. If you have a pump sprayer keep it inside and use it to water your trees during long dry spells. Don't let it freeze, it will trash the valves.

Inventory your supplies. Soil components and pots are easy and it will save you time in Spring if you know what you need. Wash any pots that need it, I put mine in the dishwasher and run them as a separate load. You probably don't need detergent. If something is stubborn, try using a half cup of Tang (the orange drink) as the citric acid in it will break up stubborn crud and won't hurt your trees with pot residue. This can remove the patina on older pots, so be careful.

Sharpen your tools while you are watching a bowl game or a Hallmark movie. It's a mindless activity and your tools will work better after the care. Hit them with a puff of WD-40 to keep them free of corrosion after cleaning, or to get sap off before sharpening. I read this next bit recently in an article on sharpening so take it with a grain of salt, but it confirms my experience. Use water as your sharpening fluid. It works better with the abrasive while flushing the fine metal particles away. Oil provides too much lubrication, and can gum up the particles in the stone making it less effective. To clean out gummy oil, use WD-40 and wash with soap or a detergent.

Found on the Web

On selecting trees ahead of time for best display.

<https://bonsaitonight.com/2021/11/19/selecting-trees-for-exhibit-one-year-out/#comment-13842> . I doubt that many of us are doing this already for next years show. It is a thought to consider to up our game for outstanding trees.

Three Point Displays <https://bonsaitonight.com/2011/02/01/three-point-displays/> . This is mentioned in the tree selection article above. There are example pictures and a question about left or right movement in a particular tree (shown) and Jonas' answer. It would be lovely to see more three point displays of this type in the show.

So, what do you think about these ideas? I'm going to up my game – will you up yours?

And Adam Livigne brings us Buying a tree for the pot (the tree ain't bad either)

<https://adamaskwhy.com/2021/12/01/buying-a-tree-for-the-pot-the-tree-aint-bad-either/>
Reflections on member sales and work on a *Ficus salicaria*.

Jack Wikle Bonsai Legacy https://jackwiklebonsailegacy.com/?page_id=1087 Jack is donating the balance of his personal collection for his 90th birthday celebration and auction to fund his Legacy Fund.

Coming Attractions

January will be a traditional talk – so you got a bonsai for Christmas – (and it died). Hopefully it didn't, but getting a new tree in winter can be challenging even for established hobbyists. If you have friends who have a new tree, invite them to come and learn how to keep it alive until spring.

There will be a tool sharpening class and workstations to sharpen your tools.

And pots need maintenance. Learn how they are made, how to maintain them, and how to pair them with your trees.

Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

Currently, limits are off at Franklin Park Conservatory, so our schedule is back to meetings at Franklin Park on the third Sunday at 2:00 for general meetings, and 10:00 for scheduled workshops. Please stay tuned for new developments as we get short notice from FPC of location changes. Thanks for your understanding and patience! Remember that Masks are required in Columbus.

December 1 Last chance to renew at this year's rate of \$25, yes that is past. December 2 the new rate of \$35 kicked in for individuals, \$40 for families.

December 18 Saturday, Dec. 18 at 6:00, Holiday Dinner at Sushi.com.

January 15 The Phipps Conservatory Orchid and Tropical Bonsai Show scheduled opening. Ticket Pre-Sale Coming Soon, **Orchid and Tropical Bonsai Show tickets will be available for advance order in January.** Stay tuned to this page for details!

<https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/exhibits-and-events/calendar/orchid-and-tropical-bonsai-show/>

January 16 We will cover three interesting topics:

#1 So You got a Bonsai for Christmas...guidance for the brand new bonsai owner. Answers to questions and helpful care advice from experienced growers.

#2 Tool Care and sharpening. An artist and craftsman is only as good as their tools. Keep yours in tip top condition. Tool care and sharpening class. there will be several stations with stones and members to advise you.

#3 Bonsai Pots Care & Feeding. A complete primer on bonsai pottery, what it is, how it's made, how to care for and maintain it, and most importantly how to choose which pot goes with which tree.

February 20 A Bonsai Fundamentals twofer- Soil and Wiring.

March 20 Its that time of year-we cover repotting from start to finish.

April 24 Note: this is the 4th Sunday.

May 15 TBD

May 27-30 2022 Brussels Bonsai Rendezvous and Memphis Bonsai Society coordination of the next ABS Learning Seminars. Shuttles will run the entire weekend. This is still in the early planning stages and information may change.

June 19 TBD

July 9 Jack Wikle collection auction at MSU Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, MI

July 15 Show Setup 3:00 Tree drop off 6:00

July 16 Show at Franklin Park Conservatory 10:00am – 5:00pm

July 17 Show 10 – 5 and Tear down at 5:00pm

August 21 TBD

September 18 Club Picnic at Oakland

October 16 TBD

November 12-13 Pacific Bonsai Expo, Bridge Yard event space, Oakland, California

November 20 Officer Elections, and something late fall and early winter

December - TBD Club Dinner

Information in this newsletter is freely re-publishable. Bylines and Articles may be republished with appropriate attribution to the authors and reciprocity with the newsletter or magazine issue.

Some Photos from the NC Arboretum Silhouette Show. Photos by Ken Schultz.



Never before seen display arrangement - barrel staves and bands. Note berries from Hollies and Beauty Berry as an accent . This won the Arthur Joura Award.



Is there any rule about breaking the display stand line? And does anyone really care?



Mushrooms as part of the display.

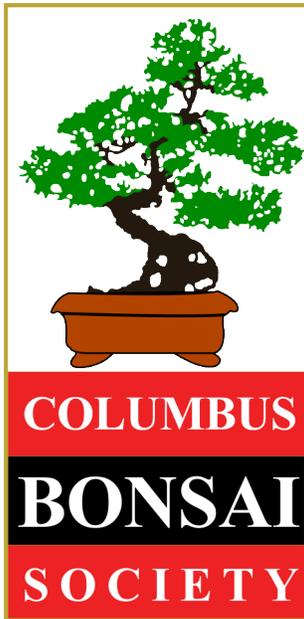
Membership Registration

Please fill out all information in the form. Including the address. If you want a club member to give you a ride, pick up and deliver your tree to the show, or water your trees while you are on vacation, we need your address to match you up with someone close by. The same goes for people willing to provide these services. In any case we must have your correct email for you to receive your newsletter. We get several people at the meetings each year wanting to know why they don't get the newsletter. Failure to provide a correct email is almost always the answer, and if you don't give us your phone or address, we can't contact you to ask why its bouncing back to us.

Payment can be made by check or cash at the meetings, Stripe on the website with a credit card, Paypal Friends and Family at ColumbusBonsai@gmail.com. Or, if you trust the mail service with timely delivery:

Columbus Bonsai Society
PO Box 297741
Columbus, OH 43229-7741

Please include your phone number! I still get new members with no email or phone number. And we don't do dead trees and ink.



Columbus Bonsai Society Membership Registration

Individual \$35 ___ Family \$40 ___ Date: _____

NEW ___ Renewal ___ Joined at event _____

Check # _____ Cash Receipt # _____ CC ___ PayPal ___

Please Print This information neatly..

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____ - _____ - _____ In case your Email bounces

Address _____

(optional)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

IF Family Membership, Please list other members
