

Columbus Bonsai Society

November, 2022 Newsletter
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Columbus Bonsai Society
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Meetings start at 2pm unless otherwise noted



What's up for Sunday, November 20, 2022

There is a change in Venue. Due to programs at Franklin Park Conservatory, there are no rooms available for plant society meetings. Our location for November is the Columbus Public Library Shepard Branch. Still at 2:00. Still on the 3rd Sunday.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Meeting location this month is the Shepard branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library. 850 N Nelson Rd, Columbus, OH 43219

WE ARE NOT MEETING AT FRANKLIN PARK THIS MONTH



If the image is not enough information, map 850 N Nelson Rd, Columbus, OH 43219 for directions on your phone.

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Our agenda for this meeting:

* Elections and ratification of new officers. Nominations are taken from the floor!

* Propagation by seed. How to source, prepare, store and germinate seeds, and how to start seedlings off as bonsai. This is probably the best time for this topic as many seeds require some form of cold/damp treatment and winter is the best time to do this in preparation for spring.

Down the Rabbit Hole ~ President, Mark Passerello

We have an interesting meeting topic coming up for November. Hope to see you there and remember-our November meeting will take place the Shepard Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library located at 850 N Nelson Rd, Columbus, OH 43219. This is not far from the Conservatory, at the intersection of Fifth and Nelson, just off of 670. Take the Fifth Avenue exit from 670 and turn toward down town.

If you have not participated in the Member Survey, please take some time and do that now.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd7gYNoUJR2lxhgPTBbHpy2874YW7nHdUy3u_CRY5rNi86y2w/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1hzlxYc8utRYNdCOoA6QtgZ4ZOBs83lvS7SPt-q1Sn1p2yFOIYyScYRhg

Your responses are anonymous, so please be as candid and detailed as you can.

Random Thotz ~ Zack Clayton, Editor

So, all my tropicals are in, I have some half hardy trees that will go in my garage. I think there is enough space. If not I have a cold corner in the basement on the floor. It gets a lot of light from the succulents and tropicals in that same corner. A lot of light can be a drawback if it gets too warm. Early bud break can be a pain.

The hardy trees will stay up on my benches for awhile, many of them have not turned yet. I have a fair number of yard trees and even bare branches can hold a lot of heat in at night. I can have ice on the hot tub cover and water under my yard maples. Go figure.

The Proposed Slate of Officers

President Mark Passerello

1st Vice President Rob Hoffman – Program Chair

2nd Vice President Dane Kirk – Show Chair

Secretary Brent Douglas

Treasurer Ryan Huston

Director A Kevin Faris – Membership Chair

Director B Ralph Landers - Hospitality

Director C Karen Bailey – Purple Pot Society Chair

Webmaster Daniel White

Newsletter Editor Zack Clayton

Tree Curator Ken Schoenfeld

A non-elected position:

Past President Jack Smith - Ex Officio

Articles

Cutting Back by Leslie Buck ~Report by Mark Passerello

Winter is coming. Maybe that's a signal for you to gather in a book or two to help you spend a cold evening at home. One that you may find most suitable and very interesting is called Cutting Back by Leslie Buck. The subtitle is an excellent capsule description of the book: My apprenticeship in the gardens of Kyoto.

That may sound pretty straight forward, but it isn't and that's what makes the book even more interesting. The vast majority of apprentices working for Japanese garden firms are of course fairly young, male and Japanese. When Leslie Buck determined that she would apprentice she was over thirty, American and female. Another variable-she would apprentice less than a year. There is an old Japanese adage that goes 'the nail that sticks out will get pounded down' a warning to fit in and go with the group. It's clear that Leslie Buck was going to get pounded down. She certainly does-but also she is accepted by some of her younger and more modern minded coworkers, and even her much older, much more traditional boss comes to have a grudging respect for her.

As you may expect this book is an interesting fish-out-of-water story. Buck was an experienced landscaper and what she calls aesthetic pruner when she went to Japan. She was a garden designer and plant-worker experienced in what we would call *niwaki* and, though she wasn't a bonsai artist per se, she had studied that art with Maz Imazumi.

This is a fascinating window into a much different culture. As a woman and an outsider Buck was prepared for the treatment and uncertainty she received, though that preparation doesn't always make it easy to endure. Though she did indeed endure-the company she worked for had in fact hired one other woman prior to Buck's apprenticeship. That woman was reduced to tears every day and left in less than two months. Buck took some reasonable pride in the fact that she never cried-in public.

What struck me is how differently the work is regarded in Japan and the US. The Japanese regard garden workers as skilled craftsmen, not as mere laborers, and they are treated with respect and are paid accordingly. This level of regard is seen in how they present themselves: Buck's boss wore a clean pressed uniform everyday, complete with a pair of white cotton gloves which were disposed of at the end of each 10 hour day. The boss chided Buck for her dirty leather gloves and called her *binbo* (poor person) when she merely washed them, rather than replace them.

The Traditional Rules of Styling Bonsai By Ken Schultz

I can remember taking a workshop from Colin Lewis many years ago, he said, "You need to know the rules of styling bonsai, so that if you violate one of the rules; you can explain why." I was reminded of the rules by Frank Mihalic last year when I asked for some styling guidance for a Japanese White Pine that I've had for 14 years. He said that I needed to use the Rule of 1/3rds. This rule says, the trunk shouldn't have any branches from the lowest 2/3rd of the trunk. Those in the middle need to bend down to show age and those in the top can even cross the trunk line. This is an over simplification but I had kept two lower branches that made sense when the tree was new to me, as they were not too low, but over time as the tree developed, they were now too close to the soil.

Many of the books on bonsai styling have some version of the guidelines/rules. Over time you've probably heard them many times. But as noted, you need to look at your bonsai with fresh eyes periodically. Sometimes this happens when a branch dies, or you repot the tree. Other times, you might think, "it just doesn't look good to me any more". What happened to it? Notice that I call the rules, guidelines too. I now see many bonsai that "violate" the rules

as the styles of bonsai are evolving. But the rules were developed by the Japanese over a long period of time to give some measure of judging good bonsai from bad. The Japanese style is focused on making bonsai look like miniature trees as they appear in nature in Japan. Penjing from China is more fangular as wire is used less to form the shape. And pot placement is more free form artistic. Currently styles are emerging that are a blend of these two schools of thought and growth patterns from other parts of the world. Each country seems to have its own style emerging. Though the Internet has now made it easy to see what's going on worldwide.

These guidelines/rules for trees focus on the Trunk and branches. There are more rules that include the pot and even enter into the soil and care of your bonsai.

The Trunk

The trunk of your bonsai should lean towards the viewer. This makes the tree appear larger and it is bowing towards you.

The base, or Nebari should flare and be wider than the trunk. This gives the appearance of age and stability.

Roots should clasp the soil and radiate out in all directions. Roots above the soil line were tell tales of repotting and frowned on. Radiating roots lend to the stability and aged appearance.

The trunk should show taper from the base to the top of the tree. Taper shows age. Trees that don't taper look young. Reverse taper is considered to be a fatal flaw.

Curves in the trunk should not cause a "pigeon breast" towards the viewer. Particularly near the soil.

The apex should finish in the direction set by the base to maintain harmony.

The apex of formal and informal upright trees should be over the tree's base to create a stable appearance.

Too many curves in a trunk do not appear natural and should be avoided. (Currently, a new style has emerged that allows some trees to have an extremely twisted trunk.)

If you develop a "Twin Trunk" tree, the trunks should separate at the Nebari, not higher up as a large branch.

Branches

No crossing branches or branches that cross the trunk from the front point of view. This rule is harder to follow than many others. Sometimes there isn't a branch where a space needs to be filled with foliage and you'll fill it by wiring a branch across the trunk line. This is best done, behind the trunk whenever possible. Sometimes the artist will leave extra foliage to hide this flaw.

The 1st branch should emerge about 1/3rd of the way up the tree. Over time if you allow the tree to get taller, it will appear to be below the 1/3rd mark. I have many trees with low branches. Sometimes I end up shortening the tree, on others the low branches are Jinned. In theory a mature tree sacrifices its lower branches, which no longer receive sufficient sunlight. Your cover story can be, that the tree is growing on a cliff, seaside or stream. Maybe out in an open field and this allows light for the lower branch. You can tell, I have my story ready. [Editor note: All trees should have a story, it makes styling consistent from one area to another on the tree.]

Branches should emerge on the outside of a trunk curve. Sometimes nature doesn't cooperate and wiring or grafting may be needed. I recently removed an inside curve branch on a Scot's Pine and Jinned the stub. Such branches get shaded out in nature on old trees.

Branch caliper should be no thicker than 1/3rd the diameter of the place on the trunk where it emerges. This is a tough rule to follow. Sometimes branch thickness can be

controlled by pruning, while the trunk is encouraged to thicken. If your tree has good taper, you may find branches near the top that are way too thick. It takes a leap of faith to cut them off. I know I have many trees that should have such branches removed. I find myself thinking, "maybe next year." [Editor note: this is where a BYOT or workshop is useful. The advice you get from someone who is not "attached" to the tree can say what needs to happen and then let you agonize over the advice.]

1st branch, Second Branch and 3rd Branch. 1st and 2nd are right left or left right. The 3rd is normally a back branch to provide depth so your bonsai doesn't look flat.

Branches should alternate. Bar branches that form opposite or in a whirl on some trees create a knob or bulge in the trunk. Bjorn told me that as you work on a tree, each junction only needs 2 leads or branches. One lead may be the trunk. If you have more, you need a style reason to justify it. It really does make styling bonsai more simplistic, but again takes a lot of will power and discipline to implement. Azaleas, Maples, Spruce and Pines develop branches in a whirl.

As mentioned above, branches should be thinner as you move up the tree, as they grew later than those lower down on the trunk. Thick upper branches occur on young trees or give away trunk chops.

Branches should have space between them to allow for the "birds to fly through". We've all heard this one. Close branches cause inside dieback and fungal problems. Also dense trees have a younger appearance.

The first and second branches should come forwards from the trunk toward the viewer to embrace or invite you in. This improves the illusion of size and age.

The back branch should not be directly behind the trunk. It prevents the viewer from seeing the depth of your bonsai.

Overall, your tree should have the shape of an irregular triangle. Most books call this a "Scalene" triangle. They are triangles that have different length sides, none are parallel to the ground surface. This rule while always presented, does not take into account dome shaped trees, such as boom style or many tropical. Also very old trees may develop a snag at the top, giving their apex a rounded appearance. Remember, most trees are not shaped like pines. [Editor note: This triangle shape can also be applied to the top view in a rounded way. The front of many prize winning Japanese is shallower than the back which gives the tree a helmet shape when viewed from the side.]

As your tree ages it will develop secondary and tertiary branches that need to follow the movement of their main branch. Branches should also have movement up and down and side to side. Occasionally a top smaller pad should be allowed to develop on a branch to give you a place to cut back to if and when the branch becomes too long.

Branches on a cascade follow these rules, except in reverse as the trunk moves down. And branches on a twin trunk tree should not cross the other trunk.

Bonsai Pots

The style of your tree influences the style of the pot and the species influences the color of the clay or glaze. Pot selection is an entire article by itself.

Placement of your bonsai in the pot should be behind the midline and to the right or left of the centerline. The tree's placement is dictated by the movement of the trunk; good placement gives the appearance of stability. A tree should not look like it will cause the pot to tip over.

The depth of the pot should be the caliper of the tree. I violate this rule all the time. Deeper pots are more forgiving to watering schedules. Some species just do better in a deeper pot; like Serrisa. Cascade pots are an allowed exception.

Glazed pots are normally used for deciduous, flowering or fruiting bonsai. The color complements the flower color. This guidance is way short of all the nuances of color selec-

tion. Leaf color, bark color or fall foliage color should be considered.

The width of the pot should be $\frac{2}{3}$ rd the height of the tree. For short trees, $\frac{2}{3}$ rd the spread of the branches.

Trunks with a lot of movement look best in oval pots, trees without much movement – rectangular. Again there's much more about this than this article covers.

Maintenance

Generally bonsai soil should be well mixed. A lot can be said about various formulas. I note that the older books use natural media such as sand, loam and compost. I often wonder why we bought into the expense of imported and hard to find components? Naka didn't.

Watering should be from above. Submerging as many books suggest should only occur after a new repotting. Using it always allows salts to build up in the soil. This is also why you water until water seeps out of the bottom "eye" of your pot.

The right humidity may be critical to leaf health. Too moist means mold, too dry can desiccate your tree. Wind and a fan indoors help distribute moisture.

Water only when your tree needs watering, not on a schedule. After awhile you develop a sense, but you might buy a moisture meter or use a chopstick to probe the soil to determine if it's dry. Soil color may be an indicator, but rain may not have been sufficient to do more than dampen the soil surface. Bonsai grown under trees may not get any rain in their pots. So much to say here. It's why we use the same soil mixture in all of our bonsai; it's easier to judge when you need to water. I have some trees I call my "Canaries" that let me know that it's time to water.

Know your tree's climate limitations and give them the placement they need to survive. Tropicals inside when it's cold. Tender need frost protection. And Hardy may stay outdoors all year.

Editor comment: This is required reading of the Tennessee club beginner classes Ken is part of. It may be more valuable in an intermediate class if there is one available. Also—reading this before trying out the BonsaiTonight links to judging criteria for Kokufu Ten trees may help see why some trees get higher scores than others. Those links are in Found on the Web.

Seasonal Care for Central Ohio

Tropicals – Inside, under as much light as you can provide. Thirsty species can actually sit in some water – ex. Parrots Beak, and most others need lots of water and or high humidity. Ficus can stand in water but need to dry out once a week. YMMV. Mediterranean plants such as rosemary may have special water requirements. They often like their roots on the dry side in well drained soils and do well when they are misted to simulate HIGH humidity. Water them lightly once or twice a week. Water should NOT run out the bottom of the pot. Succulents and cactus as companion plants may need special care. Not all are the same. Search Google. This is also a good time to confirm identification.

Half hardy plants can come in when they have dropped their leaves or before a hard freeze. Low 32 to 28 degrees is not usually considered a hard freeze. After that they should be dormant and can go into your winter storage. An attached unheated garage is a good spot as long as you can access them to water once a week or so to keep the soil from drying out. They should stay dormant until early spring.

Hardy/temperate trees can stay out all winter. Protect from direct sun. If sun is a problem morning sun is better than noon or afternoon sun. Also protect from wind. Some people mulch or bury their pots. I have not done this but I have decent wind protection and good shade. Don't mulch over the pot rim as vermin will nest in it and eat your bark. Some club members will apply a balanced fertilizer now to their evergreens because they see better

growth in the spring. A balanced fertilizer is one where the numbers are the same or have lower nitrogen. Evergreens will photosynthesize above 32 degrees F and the fertilizer may give that a boost that affects the spring growth.

If the temperatures warm up for a week, check your pots for moisture and water if needed. If they are under cover rain may not be enough.

Found on the Web

Pacific Bonsai Expo – Part 3 Commentary by Bill Valvanis

<https://valavanisbonsaiblog.com/2022/11/12/pacific-bonsai-expo-part-3/>

Parts 1 and 2 chronicle his journey cross country. Part three shows trees, part four will show trees and vendor area – to be posted “tomorrow”.

Bonsai Tonight – Jonas has been a little busy getting the show put on, but I also lost his bookmarks during a reinstall of Windoze. Here are some judging criteria for some exhibitions that we can all use to evaluate our trees and improve them.

Kokufu scoring exercise part 1: coniferous and deciduous bonsai <https://bonsaitonight.com/2022/08/20/kokufu-scoring-exercise-part-1-coniferous-and-deciduous-bonsai/> The 5 point Kokufu scoring system with kokufu trees.

Kokufu scoring exercise part 2: multi-point displays <https://bonsaitonight.com/2022/08/26/kokufu-scoring-exercise-part-2-multi-point-displays/> The 7 point Bay Island Bonsai scoring system with Kokufu trees.

Kokufu scoring exercise results <https://bonsaitonight.com/2022/09/03/kokufu-scoring-exercise-results/>

Coming Attractions

Bring any friends you have that got a bonsai for Christmas to the January meeting. One of the sessions is devoted to helping them keep that tree alive. Actually if you know someone who gets a bonsai as a gift or personal choice invite them to a meeting any time of the year. Meetings are free to attend and they may be one of the lucky ones who keep their first tree. We can help. If they are interested they can join.

And in the other session Ryan will be talking about Yamadori: Urban, Suburban, wild caught, and permit collected. The emphasis is on keeping them alive. The wonderful thing about Yamadori is you can have a well developed trunk that would cost a premium for the cost of digging it and possibly a permit for collecting in public areas.



Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

Our meetings are the third Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm general meetings, and 10:00 for scheduled workshops, unless otherwise noted. Meetings are free to the public and visitors are welcome. Our venue for the next several sessions will be changing so watch the What's Up lead article for last minute changes. The anticipated locations will also be listed here.

2022

November 20 Shepard branch of Columbus Public Library at the corner of E 5th Ave nue and 850 N Nelson Road. The agenda is Elections (see slate of officers above) and a presentation on Propagation by Seed. There is more to learn here than you might think to get the best results.

December ? Holiday Gathering TBD the Board is wrestling with this as to function and location. There will be one.

2023

January 15 You got a tree for Christmas aimed at new folks that were gifted, or decided to jump in. It's about how to keep them alive and healthy. And, Ryan Huston will lead a discussion on picking Yamadori, where, when, opportunity, and care of the newly dug prize.

February 19 Workshop session at Kiln Room Columbus. This is scheduled for 3 hours and projected cost is \$50 including building, glaze, firing, and finished work at the next meetings.

March 19 Repotting – preparation, tools, techniques, wiring in, and finishing.

April 16 ? Huth-A-Palooza? Pending confirmation.

May 21 BYOT and Show Prep. We Upped our game in 2022, Lets keep it going.

June 18 BYOT and Show Prep.

July 14 Show set up - time TBD

July 15-16 Show venue TBD

August 20 Tropicals – Guest Artist TBA

September 17 TBD

October 15 Picnic, pot luck, member sale

November 19 Election and ?

December ? Holiday Gathering

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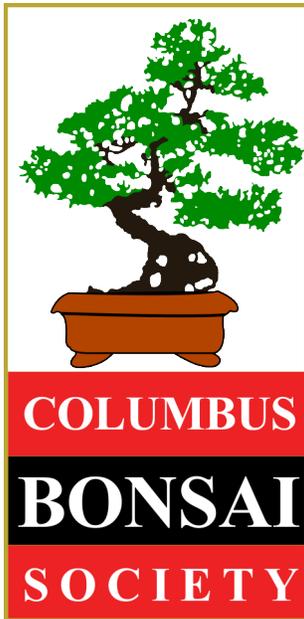
Membership Registration

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, 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
