

# Columbus Bonsai Society

June, 2023 Newsletter  
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Columbus Bonsai Society  
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Meetings start at 2pm unless otherwise noted

**COLUMBUS**

**BONSAI**

**SOCIETY**

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What's up for Sunday, June 18, at 2:00 pm

We will have a very interesting meeting this month. We'll do some bring your own tree coaching and advice for anyone planning on showing next month. In addition, Kevin Faris will be sharing some photos and stories from his two recent trips to Japan. He'll give us a tour of some of the sights and experiences he had while there, and also tell about why bonsai shows are important.

We will be meeting in the classrooms behind the ticket desk.

Down the Rabbit Hole by Mark Passerello, President

It's always a great time when you're able to talk small trees. One of my favorite places to be and things to do is be involved in a beginner's bonsai class. I still have vivid memories of the first class I ever took- at the late, lamented Burwell's Nursery on East Main street. I don't have the tree from that class, though I still have the pots!

The 2023 installment of the Conservatory's beginners class- Bonsai Demystified began on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and I had the privilege of leading along with co-instructors Rebecca 'Mouse' O'linn and Ryan Huston. We had a bumper crop of students, a total of 20 new folks who as part of their swag package for taking the class receive a complimentary membership to this club. You may see them at upcoming CBS meetings and events, like our show in July. Do make them feel at home!

Speaking of shows, I spent a great week end vending and taking part in the Cleveland Bonsai Club's show during the first weekend of June. The Cleveland always put son a good show. Their venue is a vintage public greenhouse in one of the city parks, and the trees on exhibit are actually out doors in a lush, grassy courtyard. The weather was ideal and there was a great representation of trees from many levels of experience.

The club members had a great show of force - lots of folks making

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things happen, and impressively, all were wearing CBC logo ware.

They don't do any workshops or a set demo, per say, but have several folks working on trees and a question & advice table going through out the open hours. When I walked out to see what was going on in this demo area, I saw a club member assisting a visitor with a small bonsai. It was a *Portulacaria*, which caught my eye and I really liked the pot it was in. Stepping closer and getting a better look at the bonsai in question told me why: I'd sold the plant and pot to him at last years show! I was glad to see the tree was still alive.

A further word about shows: our own club show is coming up at the end of next month, July 29 and 30 at Dawes Arboretum. The show is a high-point of the club's year and is our primary outreach and education opportunity. Plan on participating by showing a tree, by donating a raffle or silent auction item and most importantly, by volunteering some time. There are a variety of jobs that need done to get the entire show production ready for the public. The old saying is "many hands make light work" The more people who help, the easier the task is for everyone. Discussion of volunteer roles and duties will happen at the June meeting, please attend and lend some time to your club! More on this below in Coming Attractions.

The commercials for a certain financial service company want to know "What's in your wallet?", but I'm asking you "What's in your tool kit?" There are some items you may want to consider that will make your bonsai practice easier and more effective.

- Individual alcohol swabs. Great for cleaning gummy sap and potential pathogens off your tools. A small spray bottle of alcohol is easy to use at the work bench, but isn't easily possible, and can be problematic if it leaks. A box of individual alcohol wipes-the kind used when doing a medical injection-is easily portable and always ready when needed.
- A folding wagon. If you starting going to any sort of events from shows to club meetings, you'll soon be toting around lots of various bonsai supplies. Its always a worry that the venue you're headed to will have carts or willing helpers available. Solve the problem before you leave home - bring your own cart! There are a variety of folding wagons available at discount clubs, big box stores and the ubiquitous internet sellers. These cost around \$50 and soon pay for themselves. They are pretty capacious and fold away into an easily stored unit when not in use.
- Sanding blocks made of firm but flexible foam, and coated with a variety of sandpaper finishes are also a handy item to have in a tool kit. They're very useful for cleaning tools and pots of a variety of messes.
- Does the standard issue chop stick not do the job when you re-pot? If you need something with a bit more heft, pick up a few gutter nails at the hardware store. Big pots full of heavy soil have met their match. ( thanks to Z.Clayton for this tip).

Random Thotz by Zack Clayton, Editor

The four bullets above are important, especially the alcohol for cleaning your tools for plant pathogens. There are many things that will cause

wilt, die back, or outright kill a tree that can get passed on the cutting surface of a tool. I bought hand sanitizer in a spray bottle last year and it is easy to use, plus I can spray it on the cut end of a branch stub to be doubly safe. My packets of swabs tended to dry out and were not as effective as they might have been originally. Sap and hardened resin are more easily removed with a small spray can of WD40. It is sold as a penetrating oil/lubricant and dissolves sap easier than alcohol (polar vs. non-polar chemistry for any chemists out there.)

Another tool that is handy for repotting is a root scythe. These tend to be expensive, but are worth it for separating root bound roots from the side of a pot. Or, you can get a carpet or linoleum knife at a good hardware store. The shape is similar and they cost way less.

Do you ever shop garage or rummage sales? Our church had one last weekend and I got two very nice bonsai pots with screens and hold down wires. One was a standard rectangle about 8 x 12 x 2" and one was a small land/water divided pot. \$2.00 and \$0.50 respectively.

An article by Ken was planned as a pictorial report on the Ashville Arboretum Show. This is a show that had 16 clubs participating last year under the guidance of Arthur Jura. He has retired and his vision and driving force are sorely missed. There was one club with trees on display. Even more worrying, several of their trees were auctioned off for a fundraiser. Most went in the 200 to 500 dollar range. The outlier was a Trident Maple that Bjorn Bjornholm styled that went for \$3,490. And probably darn well worth it, but it is now private and not available for public viewing. Due to random outages by our service provider, this was replaced by a maple article from our archives.

## Articles

### June Bonsai Care Tips - Blue Ridge Bonsai

#### Placement

As the heat of summer comes into full effect, most deciduous bonsai will benefit from a bit of midday and afternoon shade. Watch for sun damage and move your trees if necessary and before their leaves are damaged after it is too late. Continue to rotate each bonsai regularly for even growth.

#### Watering

Summer heat means your bonsai needs to be watered more frequently. Monitor soil conditions closely; as sometimes it will be necessary to water twice daily.

If it rains, remember you still may need to water, especially if you don't know how much rain you got.

#### Defoliation

Thanks to Boon Manakitivipart for his monthly tips which he sent to his students and clients for many years, on which many of these tips are based.

Defoliation is performed in May or June, after the first growth of leaves have hardened off. Defoliating early gives the tree enough time to produce a second growth. Only defoliate established, vigorous trees.

Trident maples - Strong growth on developed trident maples may be defoliated or partially defoliated.

Japanese Maples - You can partially defoliate strong trees. Remove large leaves in the strong areas and leave smaller leaves alone. Another technique for more mature trees is to remove one leaf from every pair. For shohin, after removing one leaf of a pair you can cut the other leaf in half. Cutting the leaf in half will keep the new bud smaller.

Broadleaf Tropical Bonsai (except Ficus and Buttonwood). Defoliate finished trees only. If you defoliate the trees in training, they will not grow correctly.

### **Decandling & Balancing**

Japanese Black Pines. Developed and healthy Japanese black pines are decandled in June-July. Decandling may be done all in one day or spread out over several weeks to balance uneven growth. Remove fertilizer from strong pines after they have been decandled.

Red Pines. Because these are not as strong as JBPs, red pines usually are only decandled every other year, around the middle of June, but only if very healthy.

Per Danny Coffey, for both black and red pines, decandling generally should not be done after July 4. Also, whether or not decandled, assure that the energy of these pines is spread evenly by removing needles from strongly-growing areas to allow sunlight and energy into weaker areas.

### **Wiring**

Early to mid-summer is the best time for wiring; this is when your tree's branches are most pliable. Wire after pruning (or defoliation) for fewer obstructions. Check all old wires, and remove any before they damage the bark on your trees.

### **Weeding, Feeding & Mossing**

Weeds. These will be multiplying in your bonsai in June and should be removed, roots and all if possible, as they appear. Oxalis (Yellow Woodsorrel) and Pearlwort (Sagina procumbens) are two of the worst.

Feeding. After weeding, fertilize your bonsai. Danny Coffey likes Biogold Japanese organic pellets, and Bjorn Bjorholm uses Gro-Power tablets (12-8-8). For a liquid fertilizer, use fish emulsion.

Moss. Any live moss that made your bonsai look so good last year probably did not survive winter and should be replaced with either (i) fresh moss such as silver or "sidewalk" moss (Bryum argenteum) or

(ii) a mixture of screened dried sphagnum moss and screened fresh live moss which will turn into a beautiful uniform layer of live moss later this year.

### **Pruning**

Continue pruning throughout the summer; remove branches and foliage that are overcrowded or clash with the aesthetic you're trying to achieve. A simple rule from Danny Coffey is to "cut to the silhouette."

### **Satsuki Azaleas**

Boon Manakitivipart recommends that after about 3/4 of the flowers on a satsuki azalea have opened, you should remove all of the flowers from the tree. Then, on each terminal in strong areas (lower part and exterior parts of the tree) cut back to 2 shoots and on them cut back to

2 leaves. Also remove shoots growing straight up or down.

June is the best time to wire azaleas.

If the new shoots are very small, it indicates that your satsuki azalea is weak. Do not let it bloom next year as this will help it to regain strength.

### Repotting

If you missed the window to repot before your temperate climate tree's leaves opened, you can carefully repot once the leaves have fully matured. Try to keep the root ball together as much as possible and trim fewer roots than you would in spring. Tropical trees can usually be repotted during summer months.

### Fungal and Pest Problems

Phomopsis tip blight is a common fungal problem in junipers. Spores are produced throughout the summer, and infection can occur whenever young foliage is available and moisture or humidity is high. The fungus turns the needles or other foliage brown, and most infections occur in April through June and again in late August through September. A good treatment is to spray with Mancozeb and Cleary 3336.

Black spot fungus can attack any plant with fleshy leaves if the conditions are right. Deciduous Hollies, for example, can easily be infected. It begins to develop in the spring when temperatures reach into the sixties and the garden has been continuously wet for six to nine hours. By the time temperatures reach into the seventies, the disease can be running rampant. Treatments include baking soda, Neem oil and chemical fungicides like Mancozeb and Immunox. If you have seen this disease on any of your bonsai in the past, spray those bonsai before the disease takes hold.

Needle Cast is a broad group of diseases that affect the needles of conifers. It is common fungal problem for pines, including Japanese Black Pine and Ponderosa, as well as spruce trees. It shows up as a discoloration or uneven browning of the needles. Michael Hagedorn suggests spraying with Daconil or a copper fungicide when the new needles are coming out. Also try Cleary 3336 systemic fungicide.

Spider mites are a common insect problem on evergreen bonsai such as junipers, cypress and spruce. To test for their presence, simply shake some foliage over a solid white sheet of paper; if you see tiny specks moving around on the paper it's spider mites. If present, first pressure spray all the foliage several times with the garden hose. If after a day or so, spider mites are still present, you can use Malathion or a less harsh product like Neem oil or insecticidal soap.

### Not All Maples Require the Same Leaf Management by Ken Schultz

I actually found this on the Richmond Bonsai Society pages with credit to CBS from 2012. It's still good information.

I know that this article should wait until the spring when you can immediately put this information into practice but I've been watching video clips called the Bonsai Art of Japan with Owen Reich, Dmos by Ryan Neil and Bjorn Bjornholm. From these I learned that it is important to trim your maples to allow light in to the trunk of the tree to encourage buds that will add to the ramification of your maples. At our show in July 2012, Ken Huth mentioned that he removes the larger leaves on maples so that the tree develops more small ones. When Linda and I were in Japan, we saw workers cutting the better part of maple leaves off, leaving a small portion of the leaf and petiole. I assumed this was to allow light in. This cutting allows inner buds to develop and prevents branch dieback. It also improves air circulation and prevents



mildew. (It did seem humid in Omiya Village.) I recently learned from these videos that Japanese maples and Trident maples require different techniques of leaf management. And within the group that we call Japanese maples, the cultivars of Shishigashira require slightly different care. Owen and Ryan noted it in their videos; Ryan's was a critique of the Midwest Bonsai show in Chicago. A great deal has been written about the care of maple bonsai. This article only presents leaf management. There is an article on Trident maple care on our club website. They are also candidates for air layering and trunk chop.

As with all maples, Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) leaves grow in pairs. One leaf in each pair should be removed. Use sharp scissors to cut the stem holding the leaf in half. This method does not weaken the tree like total defoliation does. Ryan Neil said you should never defoliate a tree as it weakens them too much. Leaf removal should be confined to the leaves growing on the outer edges of the foliage mass, not the leaves growing in the interior of the tree. If removing a single leaf of a pair does not allow the light to reach the interior, then half of the remaining leaf may need to be removed with sharp scissors. Fold these leaves in half along the vein in the middle and cut at an angle, the results should look more like a normal maple leaf. Special scissors are sold for just this purpose. This pruning of Japanese Maples is usually done sometime in May, depending on how early the buds opened in the spring. Remember that you will get die back if you prune at the wrong time and you will get die back to the first healthy bud behind where you cut. Ryan Neil also stated that he is a big fan of cut paste use on maples to prevent die back from moisture loss. It also prevents fungus from developing at the wound. When you select the leaf from the pair and remove it, your next bud and hence the direction of branch growth will be on the side with the leaf as the leaf is feeding the bud at its base.

Shishigashira Japanese maples actually consist of two cultivars, *Acer palmatum* 'Mejishi' and *Acer palmatum* 'Ojishi', whose names are based on the mythological female and male lions in Japanese drama. Shishigashira Maples have the typical paired leaf growth pattern; however, their internode lengths are shorter than other Japanese maple cultivars. If the branches are not properly trimmed they will develop unsightly bulbous branch tips. So cut the branch tips back to the second set of leaves rather than the first set as recommended for other *Acer palmatum* cultivars. Use tweezers to pinch off the first set of leaves so that only the second set of leaves remain. It is not necessary to remove one of the leaves from the pair, or to cut individual leaves in half as Shishigashira leaves are naturally smaller. The small leaves and limited availability usually mean that these cultivars are quite expensive. *Acer buergerianum* (Trident maples) leaves harden off in late April through May. The new elongated growth should be trimmed back to the first pair of leaves, unless you're developing length in that area. From late May until July, depending on the weather, you can defoliate a healthy Trident maple. Defoliation can vary from complete, to outer canopy, or individual branches. Leaves are removed by cutting the petioles in half. Though plucking them all off with your fingers reportedly doesn't hurt the tree. (We did not see the finger plucking method used in Japan.) This defoliation and pruning allows light and air in to the inner buds and creates shorter nodes and smaller new leaves. I understand that there is a fine science to the timing, so that the new leaves will be in place by our show in July. New leaves reportedly sprout in 2-3 weeks; this means the end of June should work this year. If it is rainy after your new leaves sprout, watch for fungus. While it wasn't mentioned, I suspect that the same direction of growth by leaving a leaf on would occur with Trident maples as for Japanese maples. It was mentioned that complete defoliation should only be done once in any year, and not in consecutive years on the same tree to allow it to rebuild its energy. Do not remove leaves on any maple varieties once it gets really hot, in 2012 this was late June or July, as it may cause dieback. Failure to cut new growth back to one set of new leaves will result in longer internode distances, less ramification and less taper in the branches or trunk. Healthy properly fertilized maples may need to be trimmed as described three or four times each growing season to maximize ramification and refinement.

Water, watch for pest symptoms, shade trees that need protection, weed and apply something like Preen that prevents germination for weed control. For existing weeds, pull them by hand. Every so often you will hear about someone trying to “help” a family member or the waterer for a vacation that applies an herbicide to control weeds. This almost never goes well.

Continue a balanced fertilizer of your choice. I like a monthly application of time release garden vegetable starters or something for roses in granular form. I will supplement these with a liquid application every other week of a balanced formula. Just stay away from anything with a high nitrogen content.

You can still leaf prune deciduous trees to promote ramification and to get smaller leaves for the rest of the season. Contrary to the advice from Boon in the Blue Ridge article, Tropicals like ficus will tolerate leaf pruning and most will respond well to complete defoliation. If you are skeptical review some of the Adam Levine articles in Found on the Web. This varies by species so try a couple of your development projects to see how they respond to defoliation. There is confusion about many ficus species identification so try out a couple of trees before you defoliate all of one type. if you have a mist system or a humid location you can repot at the same time. Plastic storage bins with gravel in the bottom and High sides will work well for this. Tropicals thrive in hot weather but like humidity to go with it.

It was really time last month to be working on what needs to be done with your tree to get it ready for the show in July. This month is not too late, but you will need to be careful with your work. What you leave to grow on for next spring can repeat for several years depending on what stage the tree is in and development time needed for your vision.

## Found on the Web

Do you visit these links? Remember if you visit a link that provides an insight, solves a problem, shares a technique, or is of general interest then please share. I explore sites but I don't see everything that is out there. For instance I miss sites specializing in subjects I don't think of following. You may want to see these mentioned and should send an email with a link I can share.

I'm leading off with a new site, <https://www.evergreengardenworks.com/articles.htm> The home page has a lot of areas to explore. Just remember this is in California so adjust their advice accordingly. The article index runs from Air layering to Wire, annealing copper. It is fairly inclusive for subjects. I'm not sure why the URL doesn't show as a link, I copied it from the website.

From BonsaiTonight, Review: Mastering Shohin Japanese Black Pine Bonsai. <https://bonsaitonight.com/2023/06/09/review-mastering-shohin-japanese-black-pine-bonsai/> Eric Schrader and the team behind Bonsaify.com released an online course this week. 3 1/2 hours and 29 lessons.

Cutback and Leaf Pruning European Beech. Comments on work done with a forest. <https://bonsaitonight.com/2023/06/02/cutback-and-leaf-pruning-european-beech/> Jonas ends with planned care and work for the rest of the year.

A visit to Bonsai Mirai Ryan Niel's garden. Featuring Ponderosa Pine and Juniper deadwood. <https://bonsaitonight.com/2023/05/27/a-visit-to-bonsai-mirai/>

## Coming Attractions

Hello all.

For those of you I haven't met yet, my name is Dwight Maxwell. As you are aware, the annual CBS club show is coming up July 29th & 30th. We have appreciated your help in the past and hope you can help again. The success of our show is dependent on the support of our members. Please consider volunteering to help ensure another successful show.

We will need some volunteers Friday afternoon, July 28th for set-up, but primarily we are looking for individuals on the 29th & 30th for the duration of the show, including tear down. If you are willing to help, please contact me @ [dwightmaxwell@gmail.com](mailto:dwightmaxwell@gmail.com) with your full name, phone number and availability (preferred option). I can also be reached at (614) 634-6423. If you have friends or family interested in volunteering, this could be a good opportunity to learn about our club.

Below are some of the areas & tasks volunteers will be needed, but we will not know where everyone will be working until the actual show. Also, we will likely rotate volunteers through the different areas as needed throughout the show.

Set up (Friday afternoon)

Raffle table/ club table

Exhibition hall - docents and security (Please don't touch the bonsai)

Bonsai Courtyard – docents and security

Educational display

Demonstration area

Vendor support (setup/teardown and relief during event)

Tree watering (after hours Saturday)

Show teardown (after close Sunday)

It may look like a lot, but broken down into small pieces and the opportunity to circulate between tasks the time goes fast and you get a closeup look at the show.

## Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

Our normal schedule is meetings at Franklin Park on the third Sunday of the month at 2:00 for general meetings, and 10:00 for scheduled workshops. Please stay tuned for new developments as we often get short notice from FPC of location changes. Thanks for your understanding and patience!

June 1-30 Schnormeier Gardens in Gambier. These Japanese gardens are open to the public this month. It's a once a year event in June. Tickets are sold out for 2023 so mark your calendars in April for next years tickets.  
[Www.Schnormeiergardens.org](http://www.Schnormeiergardens.org)

June 17 COCSS 12-3 pm

June 18 BYOT and Show Prep.

July 15 COCSS 12-3 pm

July 16 CBS Final show preparations, staffing and duties, tree polishing, and emergent issues.

July 28 Show set up - time TBD



July 29-30 Show venue at Dawes Arboretum, see [www.ColumbusBonsai.org](http://www.ColumbusBonsai.org) for details.  
7770 Jacksontown Rd, Newark, OH 43056 <https://dawesarb.org/>

July 30 Show teardown 5:00

August 18-20 Mid-America Bonsai Exhibition at the Chicago Botanical Garden This is a regional show. 1000 Lake Cook Rd, Glencoe, IL 60022  
<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/>

August 19 COCSS 12-3 pm

August 20 Tropicals – Guest Artist TBA

September 16 COCSS 12-3 pm

September 17 TBD

September 25-26 Open House at Wildwood Gardens 10-5 both days. \$20 BYOT with styling help/per tree. 20% off all indoor bonsai. 14488 Rock Creek Rd, Chardon, OH 44024

October 15 Picnic, pot luck, member sale

October 21 COCSS 12-3 pm

November 18 COCSS 12-3 pm

November 19 Election and ?

December 16 COCSS 12-3 pm

December ? Holiday Gathering

2024

January 20 COCSS 12-3 pm

January 21 CBS TBD

January 26-28 Shohin School Winter Seminar. <https://www.shohinschool.com/winter-seminar>

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### **Membership Information**

Our dues/membership policy has changed to the website online, with a credit card or paypal. There will be no further paper forms. The website is <https://columbusbonsai.org/product/memberships/>

The new system has a structure that should solve historic problems. To go with this new procedure, all memberships will expire with the January issue of the following year. After that you can still renew, but you will not get the newsletter to remind you about it. You can go to the website, or the facebook group to link to the website.

The newsletter delivery will run January to January with the exception of class participation membership and early joining members at the show or after. These exceptions will include the current year and the next.