

Columbus Bonsai Society

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

What's up for Sunday, September 17 at 2:00

Two travel reports to share with the membership-Trey Gilmore will share photos & info on his recent trip to the west coast, visiting among other destinations Ryan Neil's nursery. We'll also hear from several members who attended the 8th Bonsai Nationals in Rochester.

As always, guests are welcome, and we'll have plenty of time for bonsai questions and advice.

Meeting location: Franklin Park Conservatory, classroom A&B

This is the last meeting of the year at FPC. See Coming Attractions for more info for October and November.

And Saturday, September 16 at 1-4 PM.

We still have space in this Saturday's yew styling workshop! It will be suitable for beginners and intermediate students. We will focus on how to pick and set a trunkline, primary branches, and foliage pads and all the nuances that come along the way!

Lesson Plan preview:

<https://www.ry2tree2.com/2023/09/the-humble-yews-first-styling-case.html>

Sign up here:

<https://web1.myvscloud.com/wbwsc/ohupperarlingtonwt.wsc/iteminfo.html?module=AR&fmid=46260772&InterfaceParameter=WebTrac-NewBrand>



COLUMBUS
BONSAI
SOCIETY

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Down the Rabbit Hole by Mark Passerello, President

Even when you know its coming, bad news is never easy to take. Long time CBS member and officer Ken Schoenfeld left us at the end of last month, after a tough fight with cancer. Calling Ken a mainstay and pillar of the club might be an understatement, considering how long he's been involved with the organization, and the time and effort he gave to make the group better.

So often working in tandem with his wife Sandy, Ken was a tireless advocate for the bonsai hobby, sharing his knowledge, his insight and opinions as a class instructor, program presenter and at many, many outreach events. His ability to freely share an opinion that might be contrary to what you thought but wasn't intended to be mean spirited was a great asset, whether giving styling advice to another grower or getting to the point in a board meeting.

An example of Ken's commitment to the club and to the bonsai hobby came just this spring, as CBS again prepared to lead the beginner's class at Franklin Park Conservatory. I put out the call for volunteer instructors, and Ken-though he was getting beat up pretty hard by his cancer treatment-was the first to reply back "I'll do what ever I can!". We were glad to have us along in spirit for those Jun classes, even if he couldn't be there in person.

Because of Ken's overwhelming energy in participating in so many outreach and education events, the CBS board thinks a fitting remembrance of Ken and an appropriate way to honor his memory is to establish a scholarship fund in his name. Exact details are being decided on, but the fund would help deserving applicants attend workshops and other distinctly educational events or programs.

Cha-cha-cha-Changes. Turn and face the strange . . .

As fall approaches mark your calendar for a location change: The September club meeting will be the last time we gather at FPC in 2023. The October Picnic/swap meet will happen at Jack Smith's place, and the November meeting location has not been nailed down yet. Meeting location goes back to Franklin Park in January 2024.

Speaking of the November meeting-if you are market for books, pots or stones, this will be a do-not-miss Event. The club has been fortunate to acquire two very large lots of bonsai items, and they will be offered for sale at the November meeting. The collections of books is a pretty definitive reference library of bonsai volumes both classic and more recent. The pot selection ranges from plastic trainers to chopped Japanese and Chinese items, and some are quite LARGE!

I missed the August meeting because I was in Chicago vending at the Midwest Bonsai Society's August Exhibition. This is very large regional show held in a spectacular venue, the Chicago Botanic Garden. This is a very impressive show, not just from the perspective of what you see on display, but also how well it is put together "backstage". It got me thinking about the ways to motivate a group and get them to work together. As a club member and officer, the continued health and future growth of our organization is something I consider often. I have a few ideas about how to strengthen the club "spirit" and I'm very interested in your thoughts on that subject.

What makes a group like ours a priority in a person's life? If you're a

member who attends now and again, what would flip the switch to motivate you to come to every meeting? What would make the Club something that you plan on and would decline invites or other plans to make sure you were there?

I'd be interested to hear your thoughts. Bend my ear at any club meeting or shoot an email my way if that's easier.

Planning for next year's meeting topics is building up momentum, and if you've got a suggestion, the Board would like to hear it. The make a pot ceramic workshop went over very well and we'll likely do that one again in 2024. We have the possibility to bring in a scroll artist for a make a scroll workshop as well.

If you have a particular artist you'd like to invite, or a topic you'd like covered-now is the time to speak up. Some topic suggestions already received include bending with rebar/heavy duty bending; forest plantings; pine specific class; in depth discussion of watering and grafting.

If these sound good, or you have other suggestions, please let me or another board member know!

Random Thotz by Zack Clayton, Editor

You never know. I thought I had reliable watering lined up for my August – Labor Day vacation but when I got home, the watering wand was still in the same place, and half of my trees are brown. The first impulse in this situation is soak them all abundantly. NOPE. They have at least gone dormant if not near death. I watered lightly until we got a day of soaking rain last week. By that time the survivors had gotten used to a little moisture and were probably, hopefully, ready for more water. The reason not to soak immediately is in dormancy, the tree is not using much water, and too much can lead to root rot as the water stays in the pot.

It's still too early to tell how many are permanently crisp, but I am hopeful. Hanging in the balance are some forest plantings. Losses include every trident I got from Huth this spring, half the oaks and maples I potted up from volunteers this spring and some others. Anything that was showing some green will probably make it, but the Japanese larch, parrots beak, several of the oak seedlings, and some ficus are gone. Not surprisingly, the jade, portulacaria, and other succulents came through just fine. The soil in the pots got dry enough that squirrels knocked some over and they lost soil, but otherwise they all look good.

Ficus are funny, you think of them as a water loving species, and for the most part they are, but I only lost one *F. salicaria cutting* that wasn't well rooted yet and some other *microcarpa* that were in smaller pots. I could have left them in standing water the whole time and my experience is they would have thrived.

Articles

We usually think of nursery purchases in Spring. The clearance sales in Fall are also good times to shop. The prices may go as low as 50-60% off the normal price. The plants are on sale so the nursery does not have to dedicate space to store them over the winter. It is to their advantage to have you do that. Your advantage is you get a tree to study over the winter and make plans for styling in the spring. You also have a chance to check the soil and be aware of any health problems that may need attention when you do start your work in the busiest time of year 6-8 months from now. If you are unsure about some of the considerations mentioned below – ASK! The true nursery has staff that can answer your questions. Big Box stores have staff that can water and keep the stock alive. These usually have the deepest discounts as they have no winter storage, but you are on your own to know the answers to your questions. Google, or phone a friend. ~ Zack

Selecting Nursery Plants for Bonsai Use

By Ken Schultz

Specimen bonsai take many years to develop and are therefore, expensive. Here are some ideas you should keep in mind before making a potential bonsai plant purchase from a nursery. These guidelines also apply to collected material.

1. **Hardiness:** Select material that is hardy to your area. Central Ohio is in zone 5 to 6 moving toward 6 over time. In Eastern TN its Zone 6B or 7 depending on your location (Altitude is something we don't need to worry about.) Don't buy plants that require you to make special arrangements to care for it during the winter, unless you have such capability.
2. **Physical size:** Think of what style bonsai you wish to create. Don't be afraid to buy a tree that you will end up cutting off most of it, to get the size bonsai you want. Also, consider the size of the root ball. It may take several years to reduce the rootball to a manageable size, if ever. Consider the expense of large bonsai pots and their weight.
3. **Back budding:** Some deciduous material is harder to style and may take longer to develop into bonsai in some cases. Some Conifer species do not back bud on old wood. Chamaecyperis family trees for example. This includes Hinoki
4. **Nebari:** The place where the tree emerges from the soil is called nebari. There is little that we can change about the tree's appearance here, as it took the longest time to develop. The spread of the root base shows age. Find the best nebari when you begin styling your trees. At the nursery, use a finger to dig down if you can't see where the roots flare out. Many growers over pot trees, burying the Nebari below the soil surface
5. **Taper:** The trunk should show taper, movement and an interesting bark. If there isn't natural taper you may be able to develop it, but it will take many years. In some cases you can wire up a lower branch to create a tapered trunk. Check the flexibility if you aren't familiar with the species. DO NOT BREAK a plant and pretend you didn't!) Some plants have rigid or brittle wood at an early age. Older plants become more rigid and difficult to bend easily. Consider whether you can add trunk interest with carving Shari or hollows.
6. **Leaf Size:** Consider the scale of the leaves, or needles to the size of the size of the tree that you are envisioning. (This is why you'll never see a sycamore as a bonsai.) Remember, fruit and flowers do not reduce even with bonsai horticulture, but leaves and needles do to some extent.
7. **Branch Location:** Are useable branches available in the "right places?" Are the larger diameter branches near the lower part of your envisioned bonsai tree? This will speed preparing your tree to be show ready. With training, ramification or twiggy-ness will develop on plant material suitable for bonsai.
8. **When in Doubt:** Before you go shopping, arrange to have a bonsai friend you respect prepared for photos of your potential purchases, so that you'll be able to get a "second opinion". If you are at a show or bonsai nursery, remember that the best are not for sale, so look to make sure the tree doesn't have fatal bonsai flaws that you'll take years to overcome.
9. **Plant Health:** Select healthy material if possible. If it's on sale, consider whether or not you can bring it back to health. Try not to take a diseased or insect laden plant home. You'll rue the day you did.

10. **The plant's horticultural needs:** Do you have a place at home where the tag says the plant will grow best? Sun/Shade. Is it a thirsty plant or does it tolerate dryer soil?

Bonsai Shopper's Checklist

1. Hardiness
2. Size and style the plant's potential bonsai – set by-
3. Foliage size
4. Trunk - does it have taper and movement? Can you envision a trunk line?
5. Nebari- can you find a good front with flare?
6. Rootball, is it manageable?
7. Does the material back bud on old wood?
8. Good branching – can you see branches that will result in a good composition?
9. Is the material healthy? (Don't put diseased/insect-ridden trees near your other bonsai.
10. Do you have a place for it when you get it home?

Have you arranged to have a bonsai buddy on standby to get a second opinion?

List of potential material to consider: Azaleas, Boxwood, Camellia, Crepe Myrtle, Hedging plants, Maples, Junipers, Taxus and Pines, Tropicals if you have indoor space? And Accent Plants.

The list below does not include accent plants and doesn't take into account hardiness in a pot vs planted in the ground. Some material have freeze sensitive roots. Or May lose finer branches during severe cold.

Azaleas: some cultivars are more sensitive to cold than others. Good for a variety of sized bonsai.

Boxwood: there are a wide variety of cultivars available. Some backbud easier than others.

Camellia: freeze sensitive roots, look for smaller leaves, check hardiness zone,

Crepe Myrtle: shallow potted CM bonsai May suffer root freeze. There are a variety of sized cultivars. Smaller seem to have smaller leaves. Vigorous growers, bonsai can be quickly developed.

Gardenias: Bjorn says they are easy, I haven't had luck with them. Care is similar to Azaleas. Look at hardiness.

Hedging Plants: there are a wide variety of material under this category, from grubs to small trees. This category includes material that responds to shearing by branching and back budding. I have seen Hemlocks, Privet, Elms, Maples, Yew, Junipers, Barberry, Pyracantha, and many more listed by nurseries under this category. Some have thorns, but make wonderful bonsai.

Junipers/Conifers: Again this is a sinfully large umbrella that a lot of good and bad bonsai material can be found. Keep in mind that dwarf/smaller needled specimens grow much more slowly, but make better smaller bonsai. Fast growing varieties can be developed more quickly but likely have longer needles or foliage. Some material is very flexible, others are hard and brittle. Test bend but don't break any item you're thinking looks good. And there are a number of these that WILL NOT back-bud on old wood. Chameacyparis are in this group (Hinoki, False Cypress, etc.) While long needles will reduce, some have needles up to 7" long! And

some have pokey foliage that is painful to work on. Ask a more experienced member if in doubt.

Tropicals and non hardy to our Zone: I personally enjoy Tropicals but if you bring plants into the house and you have pets, you need to check if they are harmful if eaten by your cat or dog, unless they are out of their reach. Tropicals develop more quickly but have indoor lighting requirements, humidity, etc.

Accent plants: what bonsai show display is complete without a nice accent plant? Look at Perennials that are small. They may look scruffy now and are not in flower, this means they are likely to be on sale.

The Humble Yew's First Styling - A Case Study for Trunk-line, Primary Branch, and Foliage Pad Development by Ryan Huston

Hello all, many projects have been in the works in recent weeks since the CBS show concluded. Today I share a small project styling a nursery stock yew. I don't normally work with nursery stock these days as I prefer to dig from the wild and grow from seed and that gives me plenty of material for myself and my nursery already, but I decided to style this humble nursery stock yew to provide an example for my upcoming beginner-intermediate styling workshop. In this Saturday's workshop, we will be using the same material to practice basic elements of styling; these yews are young enough that their trunk lines are still malleable, but also old enough to have substantial primary branch options and even smaller secondary and tertiary branches which we can use to begin to form foliage pads. After a bit of creativity and technical know-how is applied, you can transform this humble material as I did below into a variety of styles. The tree below also shows some of the main topics we will be covering in the workshop. I am still developing my lesson plan, but the topics we will cover are listed below.

Lesson Plan for Beginner-Intermediate Yew Styling Workshop, 9/16/2023 1-4pm in Upper Arlington, OH

1. Benefits of Growing Bonsai Outdoors & How to Keep Them Alive (15 min)
2. Wiring 101 & Exercise for Beginners (15+ min)
3. Yew Styling
4. How to pick and develop the best trunkline for a variety of styles.
5. How to apply raffia to avoid cracking when bending large branches/trunks.
6. How to attempt to save a cracked branch if raffia was not applied.
7. How to pick and develop primary branch lines.
8. How to develop foliage pads including pruning to induce density and fine wiring of small branches.

Note: Loaner pruners, wire cutters, raffia, and recycled bonsai wires will be provided in the workshop fee in addition to the yew stock material. Students who have their own tools or wire to bring are encouraged to do so.

You can see that the initial trunk was too rigid for much bending, but when combined with a change in angle we could get this upright yew into a cascading style. Also with this chosen front, some distance of the trunk is made less noticeable as in the 3-D view the trunk goes away from the viewer at one point and then comes back at the bottom towards us. In the long run, I intend to have the apex continue growing towards the right to fill in the space above the cascade. Then the other two main branches will continue growing outwards and downwards so they are subordinate to the main top section.



Also if you look closely you will see there are two parts where I cracked the trunkline and applied grafting tape overtop. I used to apply cut paste to such wounds but had mixed success (best with liquid cut paste, solid cut paste failed most often). This year I began using grafting tape on these wounds and it has worked well so far.

[Editors Note:] See the Michael Hagedorn link for another idea. Don't know if it works for all cracks—try it on your experimental trees first.

A Look back at Ken Schoenfeld

Photos by Ken Schultz

Captions by Zack Clayton

Ken documenting the Reception the club hosted in recognition of Kieth Scott in 2000. Also pictured is Jose Cueto and Sandy Schoenfeld. Ken and Sandy were a collaborative force in most of their activities.

Ken was active in all aspects of the club, being a long serving Board member, Vice President, and President, willing participant in and leading workshops, classes, meeting demonstrations, and Q&A discussions.



Ken and Sandy at a Kieth Scott BYOT workshop, probably in 2000. Even though this is not his tree, Ken was always willing to learn more about the art. He had what is called "beginners mind" in wiliness to take information when it was offered.



Ken working on a Ponderosa Pine at what I believe was a Demo he provided to the club. Ken provided his expertise freely and was always willing to share his knowledge for the benefit of others.

This willingness to share extended to helping other members of the club with big jobs. Here they are at Ken Huth's nursery in late fall to help out with setting up for winter and related chores.



Ken and Sandy observing an Owen Reich demonstration on 2013.



Ken and Zack discussing styling at a different Owen Reich willow workshop.

Ken and Sandy, doing what they loved doing together.



Seasonal Care for Central Ohio

With the temperatures moderating, we can get back out and work on both our tropicals and temperate plants. It is not too late to apply pesticide to any trees that need it. It seems to help in spring and is a definite help for tropicals coming in to cut down on the hitch hikers you bring into your house. Apply now and apply again in October especially any systemics that work long term in winter. Imicloprid is safe to use as a preventative as there are no polinators in your house – I hope.

You can still fertilize with a low nitrogen fertilizer to beef up the stored nutrients so they are available in spring. It helps.

Tropicals can still benefit from pruning and defoliation as they will loose many of their leaves when you bring them in for the winter. It is not time for that yet, but many members will be starting the shuffle in October. I am a heretic about this as I wait for regular night temperatures forecast in the low 40s and just bring them in to stay.

Check wire on all your trees, take off any that seems snug even if it isn't cutting in. Tropicals will continue to grow over winter, and temperate trees will start to swell quickly in spring and if wire is snug now it will cut in when you are busy with repotting.

Do you like you benchwork? If not now could be a good time to start rebuilding it. Treated lumber will have a chance to weather properly so that in spring you can apply your finish to the seasoned wood before you get trees on it.

And lastly, take pictures of your trees in their fall colors. It is a beautiful thing to show off. And don't forget to take pictures after leaf fall. The silhouettes against a contrasting background are both fascinating and can show areas for refinement when leaves aren't covering the area up.

Found on the Web

Carmen Wires a Scots Pine <https://crataegus.com/2023/09/11/carmen-wires-a-scots-pine/>
Michael Hagedorn Showcases one of his apprentices and a large Scots Pine

A Weak Branch Trick <https://crataegus.com/2023/09/04/weak-branch-trick/> Michael Hagedorn shares a method of saving or strengthening a weak branch on a bonsai.

Welcome to Tropical Northern . . . Virginia??? Adam Ask Why - Adam's Art and Bonsai Blog <https://adamaskwhy.com/2023/08/25/welcome-to-tropical-northern-virginia/> Adam works on several trees in a Demo/workshop.

LeAnn's Buttonwood <https://adamaskwhy.com/2023/09/06/leanns-buttonwood/> As promised in the above post. Adam rambles a bit more than usual, but there is some good buttonwood information here.

Coming Attractions

October's meeting will be our club picnic and member sale. It will be at Jack Smith's house and there is plenty of room for plants food and games. I think the best club picnics have been at member houses and Jack's is right up there.

The November meeting location has not been nailed down yet. Meeting location goes back to Franklin Park in January 2024. If you have an idea, let a Board member know.

Speaking of the November meeting - if you are in the market for books, pots or stones, this will be a do-not-miss Event. The club has been fortunate to acquire two very large lots of bonsai items, and they will be offered for sale at the November meeting. There will also be an election for next years Board.

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 Sunday workshops. Please stay tuned for new developments as we often get short notice from FPC of location changes. Thanks for your understanding and patience! Note that **September is the last 2023 meeting at Franklin Park**. The regular schedule will resume with the January meeting

September 16 - Beginner and Intermediate Styling Workshop—raw stock or early stage styling. 1-4 pm in Upper Arlington. See Whats Up for signup and location link. There is space.

September 17 Travel reports: Trey Gilmore trip to west coast bonsai locations, and several members trip to the 8th Bonsai Nationals exhibit in Rochester, NY

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. At Jack's house. Directions will be provided.

October 21 COCSS 12-3 pm

November 18 COCSS 12-3 pm

November 19 Election and ? Location to be determined.

December 16 COCSS 12-3 pm

December ? Holiday Gathering. Location to be determined.

2024

January 20 COCSS 12-3 pm

January 21 CBS Returns to Franklin Park— agenda TBD

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

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.

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.