

# Columbus Bonsai Society

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Columbus Bonsai Society  
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Meetings start at 2pm unless otherwise noted

What's up for Sunday, Nov. 19, at 2:00 pm

Our meeting is at **1540 Gerrard Ave, Columbus, OH 43212**, Map it.

Remember that our meetings for the rest of the year will NOT be at Franklin Park Conservatory. Our November meeting will be hosted by one of our members Trey Gilmore at the church that he pastors in Grandview. The address is 1540 Gerrard Ave, Columbus, OH 43212, it is just off King Avenue near Natalie's Pizza.

The meeting will be the annual elections, and discussion of winter protection of our outdoor plants (if you have tropicals out still, it's too late unless they are really well protected) for our newer members. Older members have the opportunity to share their tips and tricks for a healthy spring. It's always better to learn this information from someone else than from bitter experience.

Thanksgiving is usually the point on the calendar when its time to put hardy bonsai into winter storage.

We'll be setting time aside at the November meeting to talk over winter care and take questions from anyone who's in need of answers.

One over wintering tip I always offer at this time of year-you'll need mulch to get your trees settled in for the winter. You cant spread frozen mulch, so now is the time to pull that bag of mulch into the garage so it's ready for use!

Down the Rabbit Hole by Mark Passerello, President

Board members are putting together a calendar of events for next year. We are planning another year of interesting and informative meeting



**COLUMBUS**

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topics, and that planning isn't complete yet. There is plenty of time for you to make suggestions on subjects you'd like to see covered, OR space for you to present on a subject you've found interesting or been brushing up on.

Last years pot making class was very popular, and were probably going to do that one again. Also, were hoping to bring in a scroll expert for a create a scroll workshop. Both of these will be happening toward the first of the year, when it's a hard time to work on live plants.

One thing that the club hasn't done for a few years is our annual spring-time beginner's class. Membership Chair Kevin Faris is working on an idea for a beginner's class that is plugged into two more sessions over the course of the summer and fall. This concept is designed to help those folks we see after every beginners class—they have a new bonsai in one hands, a a stack of notes and handouts in the other and one question on their mind " what do I do now?" . The idea of having a progression of classes will hopefully aid these fledgling bonsai growers into flying on their own. Look for more details to come.

## Random Thotz by Zack Clayton, Editor

New members often end up looking for answers on the internet, even in our FB Group. Often the advice you get there is worth what you paid for it – Nothing. How do you tell the good advice from the bad? You can ask a club member what they think of it, or if the site is a Blog or YouTube channel that is usually a good sign. Be aware of where the presenter is from. Different climate zones or radically different environments may have good advice, but may not match up with our time of year. Sources from Oregon, Sothern California, and Florida are examples of this. Sites listed in Found on the Web are considered reliable with good information, but the climate advice still applies.

## Articles

Blueberries as Bonsai (*Vaccinium corymbosum angustifolium*)  
by Ken Schultz

Various cultivars of Blueberries are used as bonsai. The scientific name above is for Top Hat, considered to be the best by many for bonsai. Top Hat is a cross between High Bush (*V. corymbosum*) and Low Bush (*V. angustifolium*). Top Hat aren't as easy to find as several of the other cultivars, but are favored because they tend to develop a thicker trunk and are slow growing with other good characteristics.

**Description:** Blueberries are found in eastern North America from Nova Scotia to Alabama and east to Wisconsin, Zones 3-8. Yet, in a bonsai pot you are advised to protect its roots during extended cold periods. There are four different cultivars found in eastern Pennsylvania alone. In nature Blueberries grow as a bush, with 'bluish/grey green leaves that are lanceate, about 1 ½-2" long. In the ground non-dwarf varieties will grow up to 6' tall in the fall they turn yellow, orange and red. The bark exfoliates with age, but is light grey. The wood is brittle. The flowers are small white bell shaped and hang downward. Blueberries are self pollinating but if you're expecting a good crop its best to plant 2 or

more. It bears blue fruit up to ½” in diameter in early August after its three years old.

**Location:** as Bonsai, morning sun with some afternoon shade to prevent over heating and leaf scorch. Top Hat is more heat tolerant than some of the other varieties.

**Watering:** don't let it dry out, including during the winter. In winter check it at least once a week. Try not to overwater or root rot will develop. Leaves will dry out along their edges if you aren't watering enough.

**Pruning/Wiring:** It's likely to try to develop multiple stems, remove all but 5-6. Straight canes that sprout should be removed as uninteresting. It is possible to have fewer, but the plant may not be as vigorous. Because the wood is brittle, any wiring needs to be done early before it lignifies. Wire loosely to prevent wire marks on its thin bark. Pruning is best done during your Blueberry's dormant season, late winter to Early Spring. Branches should be trimmed to 2 or 3 buds, except for your leader. Direction of buds effects direction of the new growth.

**Repot:** Repot every 2 or 3 years. I read in two different references in Mid-Summer. But a third said early spring before leaves emerge. I repotted my first Blueberry in spring, right after I bought it from Oakland Nursery in New Albany. It had new leaves on it. Soil needs to be 4.5 -5.5pH. You can achieve this by using a fertilizer made for Azaleas such as Miracid or "Soil Acidifier" made to turn Hydrangeas blue. (Do not fertilize for 2 weeks after repotting.) You may also add Sphagnum peat moss to your soil mix to lower the pH. You can remove ¼-1/3 of the root mass when you repot. If your pH becomes to high, the leaves with discolor and drop off. One site recommended Akadama, pumice and Sphagnum peat or an organic compost, as the right soil mix. But yet another said he planted his in only Kanuma.

**Fertilize:** once per month as noted above. Fertilizers containing Ferris sulfide also lower the pH and can be used on your Azaleas too. Organics, such as fish emulsion and kelp are also good.

**Pests/diseases:** Aphids, mites and caterpillars. Root rot.

Perhaps they aren't as popular as bonsai because they only live 25-30 years, but as a bonsai it may live 50 years.

And something to tuck away until spring:

### Demystifying Moss By Ken Schultz

After searching high and low for moss to place around your bonsai trees for the show. The ideal moss for bonsai are those that grows in the sun. Moss that grows in the sun has tighter looking "foliage" than those varieties that grow in the shade. I've seen shade varieties of moss that look like miniature ferns and palm trees. In researching, I found out that there are actually 405 species of moss native to Ohio according to the Ohio Moss and Lichen Organization. ([WWW.ohiomosslichen.org](http://WWW.ohiomosslichen.org)) I decided that I needed to know more, which frequently is the basis for articles I've written about different "Trees of the Month."

Moss are non-vascular plants, unlike trees, shrubs and flowers, they don't use xylum and phloem to transport the sugars they produce from their chlorophyll up and down from their leaves to their roots. Mosses and Lichens are simpler plants.

Mosses belong to the genus **Bryophytes** is composed of three groups of plants, which include Hornworts and Liverworts. Mosses belong to the Bryophytae family. Bryophytae are non-vascular plants with dominant gametophytes (those little antenna you see sticking up from a path of moss that contain their spores – more on that later). The antenna or fruiting

bodies on moss are parasitic sporophytes that rise above the moss, or “maternal gametophyte. Moss spores are offered for sale in envelopes; I’ve seen them at Oakland. On the internet “Kyoto moss spores are available for \$4.75. Save your money – read on. When moss spores germinate they develop into thin threads called **Protonema** that resemble filamentous algae. These eventually develop into a mat of moss.

If you have kept bonsai for some time, or taken a walk in the woods, you’ve seen Liverworts and Hornworts too. These tend to grow on wood or stone while mosses seem to prefer shady damp soils. **Polytrichum ohioense** and **Pottoa truncate** are among the ten most common mosses found in Ohio. So the kind growing around your bonsai may be one of them. People who study mosses use magnifying glasses and microscopes to determine leaf shape and whether the edge of the leaf is smooth or serrate (toothed) to determine which moss is which. Even individual cell shape can make a difference in the variety of moss.

**Anomodum rostratus**, which can be found along the Scioto River growing on limestone is another of Ohio’s top 10. It has a distinctive bright yellowish green color. **Climacium americanum** can take over a lawn area if it is shady and wet enough. It has a zipper like structure.

While most homeowners don’t want moss in their lawns, we bonsai growers like its lawn like appearance around our specimen bonsai trees. The easiest way to get moss for your trees is to collect it. Collect moss that you like the looks of and transplant it. Look for moss that grows in the sun like your trees.” I’ve collected moss from sidewalk cracks and around parking lot bumpers, it seems to like the dirt that collects in the cracks. If you simply lay the moss on the soil and it starts to look dead, mist it, its only dormant. You’ll find that squirrels and chipmunks will dislodge moss laid on the soil to line their nests, as to strong a stream of water might until it has a chance to adhere to your bonsai media.

The answer is, soak the moss when you get it home to get rid of soil that might contain rocks and put it in a blender or food processor. There were a number of formuleas on the internet to create a “moss cocktail” to improve your success. I do admit chopping up the moss or at least soaking it first, results in a smoother looking surface. Since most mosses like an acidic environment, you can fertilize it with a touch of sulfur dissolved in water (pH 5.0-5.5).

Growing moss indoors can be more challenging as moss likes it cool and our trees like more light than moss does. The trick here is to look for moss around tropical plants offered in greenhouses. If you buy spores, cover the pot with plastic to keep the humidity high until it germinates. Set the pot in water to keep the soil moist. I use a nursery tray to transition collected clumps of moss until I need them. With spores, mist the top to keep from washing them away.

To keep peace in your house, buy a blender or food processor at a yard sale or Thrift store. After you wash your moss, put it in the blender with manure tea, buttermilk, fish emulsion, yogurt and or beer. “My bonsai buddy” offered three recipes that are blender friendly. Here’s one that sounded the most promising to me:

2 Cups of Collected washed moss  
1 quart buttermilk  
1 Tablespoon of corn syrup  
1 cup of beer

Blend until smooth, adding more moss or beer to get it to the right consistence to “paint it on.”

## Pot Cleaning by Zack Clayton

For those of you who were at the club picnic and auction, you may remember there was a really crusted up shallow Japanese pot that I bid on and no one bid against me. The minimum bid was 5 dollars. I had a brain fart and did not take a picture of its calcium encrustation, but I do have a picture of it after cleaning. The calcium build up is gone completely where I scrubbed and the tan pot is new looking. Here is how that works.

Get a dish that will not corrode in white vinegar. It should be wide enough to submerge the pot you are cleaning to cover the calcium deposits. Or long and deep enough to get an edge into the vinegar to soak. For the unglazed pot I got at auction I let it sit in the vinegar on edge for 30 minutes and then scrubbed the soaked area with an extra toothbrush. For glazed pots you probably can soak for less time. Work you way around the edge of the pot, alternately soaking and scrubbing. Rinse the scrubbed area before putting it back in the vinegar to soak the next section. This took a total time of about 2 ½ hours but I only spent about 15 minutes total scrubbing. I took longer to find a soaking dish than it did for active cleaning.

This will probably remove the patina from an aged pot so be careful. I judged the calcification to be worse than the potential loss of patina – there really wasn't any visible. The white streak is where I missed scrubbing. A lot of it still dissolved in the vinegar.



## Seasonal Care for Central Ohio

Weed your pots. Many weeds will overwinter in our pots so let your trees get all the spring attention and care by getting rid of those weeds now if you haven't done it already. Check for insect cocoons and pupae, or attached egg cases on twigs and branches. Check the bottom of the pots for web cases of spiders. Some people don't like them and some view them as the true predators they can be for flying and crawling pests.

Now is a good time to harvest the first crop of weeds that came in with your tropicals. They will continue to grow and seed thru the winter and take up fertilizer that you put on for your trees growth. This is a once or twice a month job until they stop sprouting. Spiders on the bottom of indoor pots will be active all winter so if you don't want them in your house, get them off now.

This is probably the last opportunity to apply slow release pellet fertilizer with low nitrogen to temperate trees for their spring awakening. When that starts you will be too busy with re-potting, last minute pruning, and other inspection activity. The fertilizer in the fall will give your trees that extra boost in spring for a good start for the growing season. Contrary to old beliefs, nitrogen now will not cause a flush of growth. The temperature and light cycle is not correct for the tree to push new growth.

Clean any pots that need it from summer. Inventory what you have and want for spring. Clean and sharpen your tools. It is a good time to work them during the college bowl games and NFL Playoffs. Just don't throw them at the TV like my sister-in-laws husband did. It's an expensive temper tantrum.

And finally, WATER. It is cold and trees aren't using as much, but they can still dry out if they are ignored.

Repeating what Mark said in the Rabbit Hole, if you are going to mulch in your trees, get the mulch now and keep it from freezing until you put your trees down for the winter.

## Found on the Web

If you visit a link that provides an insight, solves a problem, shares a technique, or is of general interest then please share. You may want to see these mentioned and should send an email with a link I can share.

<https://bonsaitonight.com/2023/11/03/making-a-plan-for-a-new-bonsai/> Bonsai Tonight. Jonas buys a Yaupon holly at the US National Bonsai Exhibition and makes plans for development for exhibition at a future Judged show.

<https://bonsaitonight.com/2016/07/26/developing-yaupon-holly-bonsai-a-tale-of-when-not-to-cut/> Bonsai Tonight. Jonas tries a different approach to development that works for Yaupon Holly.

<https://bonsaitonight.com/2023/10/27/preparing-for-exhibits-12-months-out/> Bonsai Tonight. Ever wondered what the successful exhibitors are doing now for next year? Here is your answer.

## Coming Attractions

There is NO meeting or planned get together in December this year. January 2024 is a work in progress.

## 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! Meetings will be at alternate locations until our January meeting when we return to Franklin Park.

November 18 COCSS 12-3 pm

November 19 Election and Winterization discussion.

December 16 COCSS 12-3 pm

December the Holiday Gathering will not take place this year. We have been priced out of the venues.

## 2024

January 20 COCSS 12-3 pm program TBD

January 21 CBS Returns to Franklin Park— agenda TBD

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

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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.