

Columbus Bonsai Society

December, 2023 Newsletter

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Columbus Bonsai Society

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COLUMBUS
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SOCIETY

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What's Up This December

As we approach the year's end, here's a brief update for December:

1. Membership Renewal Reminder:

- It's that time of the year to renew your membership!
- January marks the last newsletter for those who haven't renewed

2. No Club Meeting this Month:

- Please note that we won't have a formal club meeting this month
- Instead, we're excited to host our annual year-ending celebration

3. Holiday Gathering at Sushi.com, Japanese Restaurant:

- A big thank you to those who have already signed up for The Holiday Gathering!
- Location: Sushi.com, Japanese Restaurant, Dublin, Oh
- Details: We will be ordering off the regular menu, and guests are kindly requested to handle their own checks
- We'll be having a festive white elephant sale
Feel free to bring an item or two for sharing – all proceeds will benefit the club

Your participation in this celebration will undoubtedly add to the joy of the season. Looking forward to a delightful evening of camaraderie and celebration!

Best regards, Columbus Bonsai Society

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Down the Rabbit Hole

by Mark Passerello, President

It is December. As Christmas approaches, New Years is not far at all, and 2023 will soon be over. It has been a good year for CBS and we anticipate an even better year in 2024.

New year means changes, one very big change is our meeting location. In 2024 the club will be home based at 15Forty meeting space inside Contrast Church in Grandview. Those who attended the November got a look first hand at this space. The Club's relationship with Franklin Park Conservatory is not ending, simply changing a bit for the immediate future. The board thought the change in meeting location was worth making because we will have access to a consistent meeting venue all year round.

Speaking of changes of venue, our show in 2024 will be coming "back home" to the Columbus area. Our experiment with Dawes was interesting in many ways but the distance is just too far to make it a viable show venue going forward. Details for our new venue are still being worked out, so I am not going to mention it by name. But know that it is easy to access from anywhere in town, easy to find, has plenty of space for all our needs, and best of all-NO Tents!

As the year winds down, we witness a change on personnel on the club's board. For those departing members, let me express my appreciation for your time and effort to keep the club moving forward. For those new members coming on, thanks as well and best of luck!

Club meeting dates and topics are being posted as events on our Facebook page and group. These can be accessed by anyone-you do not need a Facebook account. The same info will also be posted on the calendar on the club website. These are reliable ways to always know what we are talking about and where we'll do it. There are great meeting topics in the works for 2024. Save the dates and plan on participating.

Editor's Notes & Introduction

by Dwight E. Maxwell, Co-Editor

As we step into 2024, changes are underway in the editorial landscape. This newsletter signifies a collaborative effort between Jess Mulalley and myself. I've had the pleasure of meeting some of you at our meetings and was honored to serve as the Volunteer Coordinator for the 2023 club show.

My bonsai journey commenced about five years ago, yet it wasn't until 2023 that I truly became a part of the bonsai community and delved deeper into this art form. I attended various shows, ranging from local club shows like ours and in Cleveland to larger gatherings such as the Mid-America Bonsai Exhibition in Michigan, ABS Learning seminars in Denver, CO, and the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY. It's been an incredible year, uncovering a world I wish I'd found much

sooner and I greatly value the connections I have made with fantastic individuals from across the United States.

Beyond bonsai, my interests extend to drawing, sculpture, and photography. Growing up in a family deeply rooted in creativity and craftsmanship—my mom and stepfather were sign painters, and my dad was a car builder—I've been immersed in the creative industry my entire life. Bonsai, for me, embodies the essence of sculpture. Whether it's a hobby, a lifestyle, or something in between for you, I'm grateful to be sharing this passion with you.

I anticipate exciting developments this year. While I may have subtly tweaked things this month, more noticeable changes are on the horizon. I encourage each of you to contribute your experiences and love for bonsai to the newsletter. Let's make this a collaborative space where our shared enthusiasm for bonsai flourishes!

Member Spotlight by Jesse Mulalley, Co-Editor

Hello everyone, my name is Jesse (Jess) Mulalley, my wife, two children, and I moved to Ohio in 2022. We really love it here, great food, wonderful weather, and really nice people that know how to drive. I grew up in a small town in western Montana among the Ponderosa forest, when it got hot there was a specimen Cedar forest that felt like a refrigerator among the barren ground shadowed by 100' trees. The forest is where I spent my free time, I just wish I knew about yamadori when I was 17 years old but it's never too late for planting trees.

I have been doing Bonsai for about 5 years now and I realize there's libraries of information about the hobby that I still need to learn. The CBS members have been a real treasure chest of knowledge that is an invaluable resource. This newsletter is a great opportunity for me to grow and share with you all.

Bonsai is a unique hobby because they are alive like pets and children. The trees require selfless atten-

tion and care, in return the trees give peace and an appreciation of patience. It is also exciting to see a growing hobby and community forming in the USA. I would like to thank everyone I have met for being so welcoming and I look forward to meeting all the other members of CBS.

Have a great day!

Bonsai Show Tree Evaluation and Display Guidance

By Ken Schultz

Much has been said and published on how to evaluate bonsai. I have seen checklists for judging trees in a show that set up point values from Nebari, trunk taper, branch positioning, overall aesthetics of the tree, the pot selection, and the stand. For a complete display, there are more things that come into play, including the placement of the accent plant, any scrolls, or Suiseki. I know I've tackled portions of this subject before and provided information on selecting nursery material that has greater bonsai potential. This compilation is from Bonsai4me, Growing Bonsai, Bonsai-en, and BCI; along with my usual editorial permutation. In 2014, BCI ran a series of articles in their 4 issues about how they judge bonsai, complete with photographs.

Don't let me scare you away from showing your best trees. The experience of showing will increase your knowledge of bonsai and the appreciation of the creativity and skills of your fellow bonsai enthusiasts. And most importantly, you might inspire a bonsai admirer into joining your club. In Tennessee, the clubs I show with have the guest artist provide a critique of the show. Some artists provide comments not only on the tree but also the pot, the accent plant, or other accessories and the relationship of the display as a whole. It is always interesting and a good learning experience.

Best Conifer

Taxus



As you read through the criteria for judging bonsai show trees, you will notice that the judging criteria are almost exactly the same as the guidance for creating your bonsai from scratch. Judging criteria reinforce the basics. Whenever you touch your trees to style, prune, or repot them, you are using the guidance that follows.

Best Mame' - #2

There are 4 trees comprising this display - 1st of 4



1) Aesthetics– General Artistic and Technical Impression:

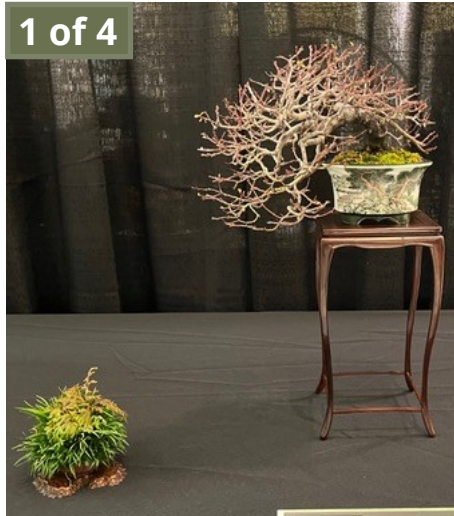
The greater foliage mass of the tree should be behind the trunk than in front of it, to create a greater feeling of depth. The tree should not appear "flat" when viewed from the side.

Cuts should not be visible from the front unless they have been developed as a feature of the bonsai. E.g. hollows, Shari, Jin.

The tree should not appear to lean backward in its pot. Informal styles' apex should lean forward to embrace the viewer. This also gives a greater sense of height.

Does the tree look good from multiple angles and viewing points? Have multiple branches been used to create the crown, or is it one branch, as may be the case in a recently created pine bonsai? (1-10 pts.)

1 of 4



2 of 4



4 of 4



3 of 4



2) Roots & Nebari

The roots should hug the soil's surface and not show gaps unless it is an exposed root style tree. The root spread should appear to anchor the tree firmly. Upright trees' roots should radiate evenly around the base of the trunk. For Slanting and Cascade style trees, roots opposite the lean or cascade should appear more robust. 1 or 2 thicker roots emanating from around the trunk or facing forward is consid-

ered to be of lesser quality. Roots should exhibit some taper and branching on a mature tree. (1-10 pts)

3) Trunk:

The trunk should taper as gradually as possible from the widest point at the base to its thinnest at the apex. Is the taper appropriate for the style of the tree's style? Literati may not have much taper at all, unlike formal upright.

The trunk should not have "inverse taper." This is when the trunk is thinner at the Nebari than at a point above it.

Half or 2/3 of the trunk should be visible to the viewer from the front of the tree, revealing the structure of the trunk. (There are exceptions)

Trunks with any slope should also slope at ground level. In other words, unless it's formal upright, it should not come straight up like a telephone pole from the soil.

Grafts shouldn't be readily identifiable.

Each bend in a trunk should lessen in length as your eye travels from the base to the apex.

Trunks should be clean and free of algae and moss. (1-10 pts)

4) Branches:

Branches normally begin about 1/3 to 1/2 of the way up the trunk, based on the overall height of the tree. (some styles may have exceptions, e.g. cascade)

The first branch should be the thickest, with branches thinning in diameter and length towards the apex. The branches should thin towards their tips. Mature branches should show several levels of ramification.

No branch should emanate directly above another as you proceed up the trunk.

Best of Show Its my understanding that this tree was a Nick Lenz tree, He has passed away in April of 2022. So there was some sentimentality in the award for this tree. Photos on the. Table show its progression over the years. Painting the hollow black was a typically controversial thing that Nick Lenz was known for.



No branch should visibly cross another. (single tree plantings)

ALL branches should have similar movement and overall shape as reflected in the movement of the trunk and other branches. (Harmony)

Only branches in the top 1/3 of the tree's trunk may point directly towards the viewer. (no eye-pokers)

No two branches should appear to emanate from the same point on the trunk. (Bar Branching)

No branches should cross the trunk (as seen from the front) on the lower 2/3rds of the tree. (Branches 1-10 pts.)

5) Tree Silhouette:

The Silhouette should roughly form an irregular triangle (Scalene). Older and deciduous trees tend to have a round rather than pointed apex. Some species are rounder than others. Avoid pine-shaped tropical too.

Group plantings and Multi-trunked trees should also have a triangular silhouette, which is not perfectly symmetrical. In some multi-tree plantings, a dominant tree can break the overall triangular shape.

Is the tree as a whole balanced? Does the crown size fit the trunk? Does the tree appear to be in balance or does it appear to be ready to fall out of its pot? Does the tree portray an old mature tree? IS the tree in harmony? (1-10 pts)

Best Deciduous

Raft Style



People's Choice

Japanese Maple Forest



6) Foliage, flowers, and fruit:

Dead or diseased leaves should be removed, Leaves should be free of lime/water staining

No insects or cobwebs should appear on the tree.

Overly large leaves should be removed.

Flowers and fruit should be blemish-free. Dying flowers should be removed. (you can only lose points in this category)

7) Pots

Pots should be clean and undamaged. (No chips or cracks) Surfaces should be clean of any dirt or lime deposits.

The color of the pot should complement/not clash with the color of the tree's trunk, leaves, fruit, or flowers.

In general, unglazed pots are used for Conifers and glazed pots are used for deciduous specimens.

New pots are OK for young trees, antique pots are preferred for older trees.

The pot should enhance the tree and its style, not distract attention from it. Decorated/painted pots or ornate pots are considered more suitable for fruiting or flowering trees or Mame'.

The tree should be planted towards the back of the pot, behind the midline.

Trees should not be planted in the center of its pot, except for round or square pots.

The greater portion of the tree's mass should be above the pot's center. A tree leaning right should be planted towards the left of center so that the center of gravity appears over the center of the pot. Similarly, a tree leaning left should be planted to the right. Cascade or Semi-Cascade styles are the exception.

Trees should only be over-potted for horticultural reasons. Over-potted trees appear to have smaller trunks and appear to be younger. A good pot provides a sense of stability to the tree. (1-10 pts)

8) Soil/Media Surface:

The tree's root crown should

Best Display

Unfortunately - I only took individual tree photos - The Zelkova Boom was on the left and the Exposed Root Japanese Black Pine was on the right.



be planted just above the surface of the soil, which should fall gradually away towards the edges of the pot. (exception for Exposed Root style)

The soil's surface should be free of weeds, leaves, and fallen flowers.

The soil surface should be mossed. In some cases, a combination of gravel and mosses can be used for effect.

The use of animals, huts, or figures should be limited and size-appropriate. They should not distract from the tree. (see #2 for point value, again you can only lose points here)

9) Multi-Trunked Bonsai:

The number of trunks should be an uneven number, with the exception of two.

Multi-trunked trees' trunks should rise from ground level, not partway up the trunk of another tree.

Trunks should emerge close to one another and then spread as they ascend.

All trunks should have a similar form/shape to provide harmony to the composition.

The thickness of each trunk should be proportional to its height. So Taller tree would be thicker and shorter thinner. (see #2 for points)

10) Wiring:

In a show, the wiring should not be visible to the casual observer. Wire should not be biting into the branches nor should there be gaps between the wire and the tree. Guy wires should be protected from cutting in also. Wire should not cross and should be tight along the length of the branch. Wire angle should be 45 to 55 degrees. (1-10 points)

Summary:

There are numerous iterations of point values. I've seen somewhere Aesthetics/ Overall impression is weighted more, as well as some of the other components that go into making up the tree.

Judging may also be done by a group, or team of judges to prevent any one judge's likes or dislikes from having too great an impact. BCI usually uses a team. (I have seen where a single judge's personal likes or dislikes impacted the awards in certain categories.) At the Artisan Cup on the west coast, there was a panel of judges. There were rules to be followed for each display's evaluation: composition, tree, pot, stand, accent and quality of the overall composition. Since Ryan Neil was trained in Japan, I am guessing that this follows a Japanese show model. There were a possible total of 60 points based on Technical and Artistic values.

Some shows use the size of the trees for awards, others may give awards for Conifers,

Best Flowing 2023' Winter Silhouette Bonsai Show, Kannapolis, NC-

Since this was a Winter Show held 12/2 & 12/3, I found the inclusion of a Flowering Tree Award ODD

AZALEA



Flowering, Deciduous and Forests. Recently the Knoxville Club decided to group trees into years of bonsai experience by the tree's owner; 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more.

Typically shows have audience participation where the tree that most of the visitors like, gets "People's Choice". At the Asheville Bonsai Expo where 16 different clubs were allowed 2 – 8' tables, there was a Best Display by a club award. As with the overall placement of trees in a show, the Best Display by a Club Award was given based on the placement of each tree and accent that provided a cohesive display. The end trees have movement toward an upright or large center tree. Ideally, there was a separation of Conifers by Deciduous trees. And in Kannapolis at the Winter Silhouette show, a best display by an individual was awarded. This show provides one 8' table per person. The display is usually a large tree and a smaller tree, and an accent or Kusamono. This year there were at least six scrolls used. I also saw Suiseki and figures. Trees in a show are also selected based on size and movement but also to give a cue to the attendees on which way to move to the next tree. The Winter Silhouette Show has a theme. As such, deciduous trees are shown without foliage. In Knoxville and Kingsport displays are separated with bamboo pieces into 4' display

areas. This separation lets each person provide the needed negative space to create balance and harmony within their display.

Mame or Shohin displays where several trees comprise the display have their own sets of rules, as do the use of scrolls. I once saw a presentation about show stands and Mame' displays at the N.C. Expo by Harold Johnson of the Research Triangle Bonsai Club of Virginia. Position on the stand provided guidance on which species of tree goes on top, middle and bottom. There are guidelines to follow on accent plant placement, size, Jitta, and seasonality. Kathy Shaner once had me change the Jitta I used for one of a different wood color. As she critiqued our show, she moved people's accent to where it should have been placed. Seasonality is also a consideration when using a scroll. For example, scrolls with winter scenes and used in winter and spring flowers are used in Spring. The same is true of accent plants. Accent selection should also reflect the place where your tree is growing, e.g. near a lake, or in the mountains.

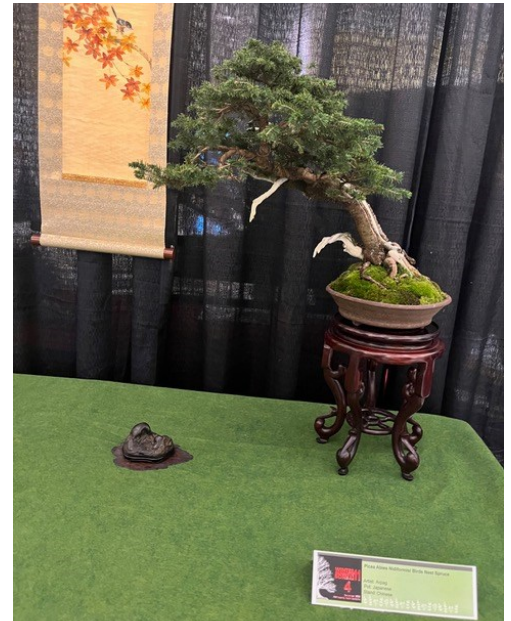
Additional Photos From The 2023 Winter Silhouette Bonsai Show, Kannapolis, NC-



Great Kusamono, but wrong stand



Tank 30 years in Training



Birds Nest Spruce with a Fall Theme



Scroll with a Winter Theme



Easy to over look the Mudman in this Shimpaku Grove.



I Liked the tire swing in this Kingsville Boxwood.



My Friend and I don't know how this Ginkgo didn't get an Award too.

Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt

Heading into 2024, our regular schedule for meetings will now take place at "the15Forty by Contrast Church" meeting space within Contrast Church, located in Grandview, on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM for general meetings. Please note that workshop timings and/or venues may change, so kindly stay alert for updates.

December 16 COCSS 12-3 pm

December 17th CBS Holiday Gathering at sushi.com, Dublin, OH. 7pm

2024

January 20 COCSS 12-3 pm program TBD

January 21 Two topics: 1. Evaluating new bonsai and potential bonsai material. 2. Wiring-Experienced presenters will introduce the subject and lead hands-on exercises.

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

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Membership Information: Our new dues/membership policy is now exclusively available on the website. Payments can be made using a credit card or PayPal, and we no longer accept paper forms. Visit <https://columbusbonsai.org/product/memberships/> to renew your membership.

The revamped system aims to address historical issues. Under this new procedure, all memberships will expire with the January issue of the following year. While renewal is still possible afterward, the newsletter won't serve as a reminder. To renew, visit the website or the Facebook group for the link.

Newsletter delivery will now run from January to January, with the exception of class participation memberships and early-joining members at the show or after. These exceptions will cover the current year and the next.