

# Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter

[www.iabonsai.org](http://www.iabonsai.org)

<https://sites.google.com/site/cedarrapidsbonsai/>



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## IBA July Activities

**July 21, 9:00 AM, 8:00 am Board Meeting, all members welcome. all members welcome.**

**Open Study Group 9:00 am and Presentation at 10:00 AM Topics:** *Mugo pine techniques and trimming discussion, Nenad Tatalovic, Formal bonsai display discussion, Ron Heinen.*

**Everybody is welcome.**

## EIBA July Activities

**July 12, 6:30 pm. Board Meeting at Panera Restaurant on Edgewood Road**  
**Topics:** *Andy Smith Workshop, July meeting plans.*

**July 19, 7:00 pm EIBA Club Meeting at Pierson Flower Shop on Ellis Blvd, Cedar Rapids. Topics:** *“Tropical Trees” guest speaker Cat Nelson*

**August 9, 6:00 pm. Board Meeting at Panera Restaurant on Edgewood Road**

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## Fertilizer Teabags

*John Denny*

Have you tried fertilizer tea? For your trees, that is! I had heard of this method of fertilizing trees with organic fertilizer for a few years, but





under the bottom. Lay the bag on the soil and use a sturdy toothpick to stab through the teabag into the soil to hold it in place.

For medium sized trees place three or four bags around the trunk, halfway between the trunk and the pot edge. For larger trees, go with six or eight. Small trees only need one or two. These teabags should last about 6 weeks. Replace the teabags with a new teabag and when you do, move the new teabag to a new location in between where the old teabags were located. That's it. Check out the photos as they might clarify my wordy explanation. Now go have a nice cup of real tea and admire your work!

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## Bonsai Empire – Anatomy of a Website

never tried it. Urged on by Bill Englert and Todd Schlafer, I gave it a try. It is easy and it works.

If you use soil that does not contain organics, you need to fertilize. Many people use only inorganic fertilizers like Peters or Miracle Grow. Others wish to use organic cake fertilizers which can be expensive. A cheaper option is to add your own fertilizer into tea bags and place them on the soil surface of your bonsai trees. It becomes “time release” fertilizer. Every time you water, your trees will get a small dose of organic fertilizer.

You can purchase empty teabags with an open end and a draw string (see photo). Obtain these on the internet (Amazon has them). For fertilizer Dr. Earth 5-5-5 from Menards works great.

Open the teabag, shovel in a full tablespoon. Draw the teabag closed. Fold the top half over onto the bottom half. Turn teabag so the folded over portion is on TOP and pull the loose string



In today's world there are an amazing number of websites focused on bonsai. One reason for this is that bonsai, as a hobby, is now a world-wide endeavor. Thus, there are websites in many languages and websites sourced in many countries. Some are good, many are not. One of the best is Bonsai Empire out of Europe. Let's take a dive into what all this website has to offer.

First, the website was initiated by Oscar Jonker. Oscar has asked many people to assist his efforts in creating a diverse and very deep website. His website can be read in a dozen languages and it contains all manner of good content and clean graphics.

What will you find at [bonsaiempire.com](http://bonsaiempire.com)? Literally everything! This site will take you days to really check out fully. So much to learn. Videos imbedded everywhere. Tons of great photos.

There also is Shopping on the site. The highlight of which I think are the many Bonsai Courses for sale. I recommend any by Bjorn BJORHOLM. Beginner, Intermediate, or his new Advanced.

Do yourself a favor if you have not seen this site and visit it. Scroll around. Here is how it is basically laid out. On the Homepage you can reach several basic areas within the site. Across the top:

**What is Bonsai:** click on Definition and Meaning, History of Bonsai, Bonsai Styles, or Related Arts.

**How To:** click on

**Bonsai Tree Care:** sections on Watering, Fertilizing, Repotting, Location, Calendar, Advanced Soils, Pots, Pests and Diseases, Over Wintering)

**Tree Cultivation:** sections on Buying Bonsai, Nursery Stock, Collecting Trees, From Cuttings, From Seed, Advanced Techniques (ie. Air layering)

**Bonsai Styling:** sections on Pruning, Wiring, Advanced Techniques (many advanced techniques explained)  
General: sections on Tools (lots of tools) and Books

**Tree Species:** click on

- List of individual tree species with Care Guides
- Identify My Bonsai Tool – nice little tool
- Indoor Bonsai
- Outdoor Bonsai

**Inspiration:** click on

- Bonsai Gallery - beautiful trees
- Movies – top videos from their YouTube
- Top 10s – 10 Greatest Trees, 10 Oldest, etc.
- Bonsai in Japan – Where to go, what to see, maps, links, video, photos, descriptions
- Progressions – Before and After photos, discussions

**Blog** – News and Events, coverage articles and photos of all major bonsai events around the world, ie. Kokufuten, Noelanders Trophy, etc.

**Forum** – Search all manner of topics for questions and answers given by bonsai hobbyists from around the world.

This site is simply wonderful with so much good content, whether you are looking for technical content or simply to enjoy the beauty of bonsai. I suggest checking it out now, just to peruse it and see what all is there. Since you can get lost for hours looking at video after video or reading interesting articles, I think you can make this a winter bonsai project.

In summary, Bonsai Empire's website shows you why bonsai is such a great hobby and will help you both learn more and enjoy bonsai more. Bookmark it and come back again and again!

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## **Top Five Bonsai Trees Worldwide** *Bonsai Empire*

Most any list of “Best” is subjective. This is even more true in the world of art. There are so many criteria by which to judge. So many opinions. This list selected trees from around the world, but has a decidedly European lean. No problem. For me, the choices are subjective, but all beautiful trees. And the selections give much food for thought and discussions amongst bonsai lovers. Which trees would I pick? Which trees would you pick? Which are your top 3? Which is number 1

**(#1) An 800 year-old Bonsai tree at Shunkaen  
by Kunio Kobayashi.**



**(#3) Small Bonsai; a Shohin tree  
by Morten Albek.**

A remarkable tree which is well known for its extremely high age; the tree is reported to be over 800 years old, one of the most expensive Bonsai trees! Its owner, master Kobayashi, is one of the most well known Bonsai artists in the world and has won the prestigious Prime Minister award in Japan 4 times. His nursery, ShunkaEn, is located in Tokyo and is open to visitors. For more information, read the Shunka-en Bonsai page, or check the Bonsai artist profile of Kunio KobayashiGoshin



**(#2) Goshin “protector of the spirits”  
by John Naka.**



A gorgeous Rockspray Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*). This is a picture taken in spring; the tree flowers in summer and has small red berries in wintertime. The tree is only 9,5 cm (4 inches) high and is planted on a miniature rock. The pot is made by John Pitt, a famous potter. The tree is about 20 years old on the picture and has been in training for about a decade.

**(#4) Pinus Silvestris  
by Stefano Frisoni**



(“protector of the spirit”) is a Bonsai created by John Y. Naka. It is a forest planting of eleven Foemina Junipers, the earliest of which Naka began training into Bonsai in 1948. Naka donated it to the National Bonsai Foundation in 1984, to be displayed at the United States National Arboretum; it has been there ever since. The tree is posted on our Bonsai homepage, but you can also read more about John Naka in his Bonsai artist profile.

This tree is remarkably realistic, a character highly valued for Bonsai trees. As you can see, the foliage pads are very dense, as if it were clouds in the sky. Read the article on how this tree was cultivated and trained here!

**(#5) Chinese styled trees; a Penjing landscape  
by Yee-sun Wu**



This wonderful Chinese landscape belongs to the Man Lung collection in Hong Kong. The trees are Chinese Bird Plums (*Sageretia Theezans*) and together make up a very realistic scenery. In the collection Ficus Bonsai are also popular. In this landscape, the trees, rock and miniature figurines are placed on a shallow rectangular pot (made of marble), which in turn is displayed on an antique table.

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**Timely Tips**  
*John Denny*

By now our trees have slowed their heavy spring growth. Most of our growth management functions such as pruning of deciduous trees, thinning of junipers and de-candling of pines should have been completed by now. Our tasks switch in July.

Pests and diseases raise their head just a little higher, so look hard for them. I have seen spider mites in junipers recently and the annual appearance of Japanese beetles came early this year. You can use a spray for mites. Hit them a second or third time about a week apart in order to pick off mites that hatched from the eggs after your first spray. Japanese beetles are a challenge. You can look hard for them and pick them off by hand. Use

a heavy water spray to knock them off temporarily. Or use a pesticide to kill them, though they will chew up your leaves prior to dying. Also, be on the look on the lookout for fungus. I have seen just a bit of fungus in my trees, though not much. Daconil works well, but do not use it on spruce as it can damage the cuticle.

The first half of July is a good time to defoliate some of your very strong deciduous trees. Maples can be defoliated. Leaves will come back smaller and you will get some ramification, too. It takes about three weeks for the leaves to return. Only do this on the strongest, healthiest trees. I have done it also on my Tropicals, defoliating Narrow Leaf Ficus, Schefflera, and Golden Gate Ficus. I am seeing new leaves already popping back out.

Speaking of Tropical trees, July is a good time to repot Tropicals. Repot them while they are growing hard. I am letting some of mine go a second year rather than repot them annually as I have in the past. Those trees are getting older, more mature and slowing down a bit in their youthful exuberance. By repotting now, your trees will still have plenty of days left to recover prior to early fall night time temps dropping and forcing you to bring them inside.

We have already seen some temps in the mid 90s and will see more of the same. It is important to keep our trees happy as can be during such hot stressful weather. I added a second shade cloth which keeps more of my trees shaded in the mid afternoon heat. Also, consider placing a layer of shredded sphagnum moss to the surface of your trees. It holds water and keeps the surface cooler. It helps increase the root zone just a bit higher in the soil of your pot. Every little bit of added root zone helps your tree, especially on stressful days. Take regular sphagnum moss and rub it over the top of a half inch square soil sieve. Gently spread a thin layer over the surface, especially around the trunk and in a circle. Wet the fine moss with a fine sprayer until thoroughly wet. The moss will settle into a mat that will stay on your soil very nicely.

Beginning about now the nice foliage you have will begin to suffer from insects chewing the leaves, fungus blighting leaves, wind burn, sun burn, etc. Your trees have worked hard to turn green, grow hard, and look nice for you. Do your best to keep their foliage in great shape as long as you can. If you have a nice tree and can keep the foliage nice, think about showing it. You don't have to have the best tree in the show. Just share something nice and have a good time doing it! Your club and those attending the show will thank you for it.