

Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter

www.iabonsai.org

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



July 2019

Volume 71, Issue 7

IBA July Activities

**July 20 - IBA Meetings at The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.
909 Robert D. Ray Drive**

Topics: Open Study Group - Bring a tree to work on whatever you want.

10:30 Presentations: Mugo pine techniques and trimming discussion. Progression of mugo techniques, Nenad Tatalovic. Formal bonsai display discussion, Larry Totton.

Everybody is welcome.

**IBA Board Meeting, 8:00 am
All members welcome.**

EIBA March Activities

July 11, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting at Panera Restaurant on Edgewood Road.

Topics: Plan for July mtg, discuss picnic and future picnics, NewBo show Aug 3.

July 18, 7:00 PM, EIBA Club Meeting of 2018, Pierson Flower Shop on Ellis Blvd.

Topics: Tropical Trees, presentation by guest speaker Cat Nelson.

August 3, 10:00 am, EIBA Club Show at NewBo in Cedar Rapids

Corporate Sponsor DaSu Bonsai Studios



www.bonsaitrees.com/

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Bonsai Soil Components for Sale

**Pumice \$15 for five gallons
Akadama \$29.50 per bag**

Contact Scott Allen or Tim Peterson

Up Comming Events

**BONSAI 101 CLASS,
SATURDAY - JULY 20, 2019, 1:00 - 4:00 PM
SATURDAY - JULY 27, 2019, 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

Taught by: Ron Heinen and Scott Allen. Contact Education Department at the Greater Des Moines Botanical garden.

**BJORN BJORHOLM DEMONSTRATIONS
SATURDAY - AUG 10, 2019 @ 9:00AM
The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden
Bjorn Bjorholm demonstrations at Botanical Gardens. Details to follow. Demos free to the public. Members to bring trees for consideration to be styled by Bjorn. Selected trees for styling cost \$100. to be styled by Bjorn. Selected trees for styling cost \$100.**

SUNDAY - AUG 11, 2019
IOWA STATE FAIR BONSAI SHOW
Iowa State Fair Grounds
Dave Richmond will be organizing contact for the State Fair Show.

Bjorn Bjorholm will be Judging the State Fair Judging this year.

SUNDAY - OCT 19 and 20, 2019
TODD SCHLAFER WORKSHOP
Workshop (9:00-5:00) with Todd Schlafer.
Location to be decided. (contact Scott Allen 515-480-4437 if interested)

Common Bonsai Pests

Bonsai Empire

Like any other living plant, Bonsai trees can be infected by any kind of pest or disease. However, when your plants are healthy and cared for properly, the risk of infection is reduced to a minimum.

Make sure your trees are potted using the right soil mixture, you understand how and how often to water, you don't over or under fertilize and your Bonsai is placed right. Although chances of infection of healthy trees are low, of course they can still get infected. As it is often hard to identify the problem correctly you might want to take pictures and ask for help at our Bonsai forum.

<https://www.bonsaiempire.com/forum>

Identifying Bonsai pests and diseases

These are some of the most common problems people experience with their Bonsai trees:

Dying leaves on Bonsai

Leaves suddenly turn yellow and fall of the tree. This is often the result of a sudden lack of water. When the leaves slowly turn yellow and die it is most often the result of sustained overwatering, overfeeding or underfeeding.

Insects often found on Bonsai

Try to identify the insects either by photographing them and asking for advice at on online Bonsai forum, or by comparing the insects you see with the pictures below.

Aphids



Spider mites



Mealy bugs



Scale insects



Caterpillars



Ants



After you have identified the insect buy an insecticide (chemically or organically) to treat the trees with; be careful to follow the instructions and you might want to start using a half doses first, if necessary you can increase the doses later on.

Three Days in Nature

John Deny

Recently, I listened to a short Audible book on the topic of Three Days in Nature, and how it affects you. Actually, the book was more like a 3 hour interview with various people, both subjects and scientists.

This is a topic I first ran across when I heard of Shinrin Yoku. Shinrin-yoku is a Japanese term that means “taking in the forest atmosphere” or “forest bathing.”

Go to a Forest. Walk slowly. Breathe. Open all your senses. This is the healing way of Shinrin-yoku Forest Therapy, the medicine of simply being in the forest.

I wrote about this phenomenon a year or two ago. It coincided with my own experience of spending time in nature. It took me about three days to “feel it”. I also wondered, does this happen if I spend three days working on bonsai trees? Do I benefit in the same way as being in the woods?

I ran across a Swedish term this week, *smultronmulle*. It refers to “a lovely spot where you can forget your troubles”. It is not lost on me that different languages have words that refer to this impact that nature has on humans. It tells me this is a universal effect.

Back to the Audible book. The greatest migration of humans in our history is the migration from the woods to rural to urban. Half of Americans live in only a small handful of cities. How does that impact us? We are more and more stressed. Traffic, constant noise, long work hours under pressure, never off the grid because of our phones and computers, never any down time, less and lower quality sleep, people everywhere, etc. Scientists have learned how to measure our brainwaves and hormones as we live in cities. And as we escape into the woods or rivers and lakes for days at a time.

Scientists have studied Veterans with PTSD who spend three or more days in the woods or waterways away from city life. They relax, but it takes three days. They have done the same studies

Three Days in Nature - continued

with recovering sex workers, with people who have suffered all kinds of trauma, with people who have only lived in large cities. Always the same. It takes three days for people to relax, for people to begin to change and to feel it. For their brain waves to change. Their sleep is deeper and longer. Anxiety levels drop off. We feel a connection to nature, to the Universe. That same connection is hard to feel in the city.

Not everyone thinks they will like the woods. I recall Woody Allen, saying, “It’s not that I dislike the nature. I just don’t want to get any on me!” We have all been in nature with bugs, snakes, heat, rain, snow, freezing cold, long hard hikes, etc. But, invariably we overcame the less lovable aspects of nature and left our time there in better spirits and even in awe of nature. We adapted just fine.

So, I wondered, does this effect happen in a mini way when we throw ourselves into intensive bonsai work for three days? Surrounded by trees, connected to nature in a “small” way. I have a lot of trees and I spend several days three times a year working on them nonstop. Usually, four or five days straight, all day. Immersed. I don’t pay bills. I don’t watch tv or use my phone as much. I do shower and eat, but that is about it. I work with friends or a teacher and all we talk about is bonsai. How to keep trees healthy. How was this tree collected? What did I do to this tree last year? What shall I do this next year? You get the idea.

Do my brain waves change? I don’t know, but I bet they do! I feel more relaxed after getting into the initial swing of bonsai work. It takes three days. I think of each tree’s relation to nature. What kind of tree is it? What are its needs from nature. Is it getting enough or too much sun? Enough or too much water? Is it stressed? Pests? Disease? I am constantly thinking about the weather and its impact on my trees. Will it be windy, hot, cold, humid? Are those clouds coming in? From what direction? I am more connected to nature when I am with my bonsai trees. And I am more connected with friends, too, whether I am working together with them or setting up a bonsai show or visiting one with club members. Bonsai is

often seen as a solitary, quiet hobby. But, for me, it makes connections – connections to other people, connections to nature. I like it that way.

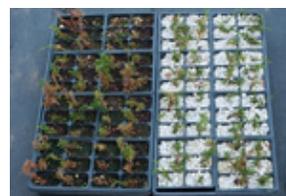
I bet my brain waves do, too!

Shimpaku Cuttings

Jonas Dupoichof Bonsai Tonight

A few months back I grabbed an armful of juniper branches from the green recycling bin at a Bay Island Bonsai workshop. <https://bayislandbonsai.com> I’d found both kishu and itoigawa shimapku branches and figured I could use them to make cuttings for grafting roots or branches. Although I’d made cuttings many times before, I wasn’t sure about what soil worked best to facilitate rooting or how long to leave new cuttings in the greenhouse before bringing them outside. An experiment was in order.

I tested three different soil mixes outside and in a greenhouse. Despite poor experimental design and uneven care after the cuttings were made, I was surprised to find fairly consistent results. I planted the cuttings in “houseplant soil” (an all-purpose soil mix rich in organic ingredients), perlite, and a mix of perlite and sand. The perlite yielded better results than the houseplant mix, and the sand and perlite mixture yielded better results than perlite alone. Overall, the cuttings I left outside fared better than those left in the greenhouse, but I suspect that’s mostly because the cuttings I left in the greenhouse were watered erratically. Here are some photos of the cuttings after a few months.



“Houseplant soil” (greenhouse) :: perlite (greenhouse)!



“Houseplant soil” (greenhouse) :: “Houseplant soil” (outside)



Perlite and sand (greenhouse) :: “Houseplant soil” (outside)



Last year’s cuttings

Shimpaku Cuttings - continued

The cuttings planted in perlite and sand fared equally well indoors and out. I wasn't too surprised by this as Boon Manakitivipart <http://bonsaiboon.com> and others recommended this mix and it offers a good balance of drainage and moisture retention. It's also a sterile mix, unlike the "houseplant" mix I used. Why did I try the houseplant mix? Mostly out of curiosity. And why did I use cell packs instead of larger containers? Simply to save the time of wiring screens into more pots. I'll replot all of the viable cuttings into bonsai soil this coming winter.

I shared this story less to encourage the use of perlite and sand than to encourage any amount of research on the topic. Many people are experts at this – are you one of them? If anyone knows of good resources about making cuttings, feel free to share. I used rooting hormone for all of the cuttings and made clean, slanted cuts with a grafting knife. I also planted all of the cuttings at an angle. Are there better approaches to preparing and planting the cuttings? I experimented with small, medium, and large sized cuttings and found that all lived, but there may be good reasons to start larger or smaller cuttings. Any suggestions?

EIBA Bonsai Show at NewBo

John Deny

The Eastern Iowa Bonsai Association held the first of its two outdoor shows at NewBo in the Czech Village area of Cedar Rapids on June 15. The venue has many advantages. You can park within feet of the set up, take down. There are many simultaneous events going on in the area, including the Cedar Rapids Farmer's Market, which bring plenty of people to the show. There is music, food, good coffee, restrooms, parking, etc. all within a few feet of the show. There is a large overhang to protect in case of rain.

Bill Englert and Craig Bean have set up and take down highly organized, so the effort is minimal. This year, we had a People's Choice Award. Voting results follow the photos.



The top 3 in the NewBo People's Choice voting:

- No. 1 Sharps Pygmy Maple
Acer palmatum
27 years old
14 years as a bonsai
Bill Englert

No. 2 Colorado Blue Spruce
Picea pungens
150 year old
2 years as a bonsai
John Denny

No. 3 Hibiscus Rosa
Sinensis cooperi
32 years old
19 years as a bonsai
Craig Bean

Timely Tips

John Denny

July came to us with a lot of heat and humidity. It finally cooled down a bit and the humidity has gone from near unbearable to simply typical July humidity. But, July will crank up the heat and humidity again, to be sure. What does this mean for our bonsai?

Changes this month include a slowing down of the growth period of spring and early summer. Trees will need plenty of water especially when temps rise to 90F plus. Windy days will require more water, too. Think about rotating your trees to get growth in a 360 degree circle. Trees with a wall or solid fence behind them can suffer if not rotated. You will have two dimensional trees, when you want three dimensions. When I look at really well styled trees, they are very three dimensional.

Also, your trees may need some extra shade this time of year. Overhead shade cloth is really helpful in reducing both heat and sunburn. Some of my Tridents suffered sun scald this year as I was late getting my shade cloth up. Todd Schlafer also commented to me that if your deciduous trees have to stay in winter storage too late into the spring due to hard frosts, the

leaves do not form proper cuticles and the leaves are extra susceptible to sun scald. I believe him.

During the wet spring fungus can become a problem for many species. I was lax in my spraying. Things are better now with dryer weather. I have kept up spraying for pests which can really be a problem in a hurry. Aphids, spider mites, worms, caterpillars, scale, etc. And I saw the first dang Japanese beetle yesterday. Be on the look-out as they can strip a tree in a hurry. They seem to love my shohin zelkovas, Japanese hornbeams, Korean hornbeams. Spray can help, but the beetles can eat several leaves before they expire from the chemical. Those blessed with good eye sight can look at their trees carefully and pull the critters off manually. (What you do with them is between you and your conscience.)

I repotted all my Tropicals a couple weeks back. This is a good time to do that. They recover quickly. I used to chopstick and spray the roots with strong water spray to get bare roots. Now, my trees have well established root systems, so I remove soil from the bottom, top, edges and I leave the center of the root ball. Since my roots are now solid, I can drive a short piece of pointed chopstick into the ends of the roots horizontally. I then tie my wires to the chopsticks. Everything is solid. This way the tree still has a good bit of untouched root base with fresh soil surrounding it and recovery is much quicker. In fact, I put my trees back out in full sun the next day. If you do not have a solid root ball, this chopstick tie in method will not work for you. Clip off a third of the roots. Leave what soil you can, unless you really want to get rid of old or poor soil. Use standard root tie in techniques. I would give your Tropical tree a couple of extra days in the shade to adjust if you bare root them at repotting. I do not repot any other trees in summer.

Trees should be looking pretty good this time of year. Leaves have not been chewed or dried out yet. Take some photos. Think about showing one of your trees in a local show. EIBA has two informal, fun summer shows at NewBo. IBA has the State Fair and their Fall IBA Show at Reimen. Both are excellent shows. Join in the fun!