

IBA News & Muse
Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter
2016 JANUARY

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IBA JANUARY Activities

January 17, Tuesday, 7:00PM, Meeting
Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive

Program: Cat Nelson will present a program on bonsai pots. This will be very interesting; do not miss this one. In addition, we will be finalizing our program schedule and content for the rest of the year.

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EIBA JANUARY Activitie

February 11, 6 pm. Board Mtg at Panera Restaurant on Edgewood Rd. Topics: February meeting preparation.

February 18, 7 pm. Club Meeting at Pierson Flower Shop on Ellis Blvd. Topics: Dues collection, club soil handout, review of 2016 Calendar.



A fantastic Azalea by Cheng-Kung. Enough color to wake us from our winter doldrums.

Only two things are infinite, the universe
and human stupidity, and I'm not sure
about the former.

Albert Einstein

Timely Tips

Brrrr. It's cold outside, and windy, too. I just came in from watering my many trees in the garage. It takes me an hour to properly get to every tree. My fingers remain cold and stiff. Typing is a challenge. Well, okay, it is always a challenge, but more so than usual.

We don't have to water nearly so often now, but it is still darned important to get it right. So, don't be any less attentive. Trees do not like to remain soggy wet all winter. Root rot is a real concern, especially if you have an organic soil. Testing soil dampness with your finger is not so easy. Your finger and the soil are both cold. This makes it harder to tell if the soil is wet or not.

It has been a warm winter up until now. During the warm December I have noticed weeds still weakly pushing. Crazy. Also, warm winter weather can bring pest issues. Watch for pest problems, fungus, etc. Spray if needed. Trees are packed tightly together in garages or storage areas. These areas are wet or at least damp. And the trees are often touching which means diseases and pests can spread. Get some good light on those trees and inspect them closely.

Now is a good time to figure out your repotting plans. Will you need soil or soil components? Which trees will need new pots? I have several trees in nursery pots that will require ceramic pots this spring. I still have to find a couple of correctly sized pots. Do you need wire or tools? Keep an eye out for deals over winter.

Another thought for you during winter. There are no leaves on your deciduous trees right now. This gives you an opportunity to really look at them! Are there flaws that can be pruned away? Do any branches need wiring and moving? And if you like what you see, take a photograph. Most of the major Japanese shows take place in winter where the deciduous trees can be displayed "naked and afraid". You can see the beauty of the structure of the tree - the trunk line, the ramification, the movement. And you can appreciate the fantastic work that has gone on for years to make that tree great.

Seasonal Care for Cold Weather

Micheal Hagedorn

Every year I try to wrap a blog post around the snarly issue of protecting our trees from cold. This year we'll try a new approach, and take it in a few bite sized chunks, in a couple of blog posts.

Firstly, we need to bear in mind that the top of a tree or shrub is much more cold hardy than the roots. When we read about the 'cold hardiness' of a plant in a garden book, that designation is assuming the darn thing is in the ground, where it's supposed to be. The designation takes no heed of silly bonsaiists who will put it up on a bench. Roots are much more tender than their tops! A lot of people don't know this,

Nextly... on the ground is a good first place to put a bonsai in cold weather, generally when it is dropping to about 27 F / -2.8 C overnight. On the ground a pot might be as much as 7 F warmer than on a bench, three feet higher (according to our experiments here at Crataegus Bonsai). Which is a significantly warmer temperature, if you're a root, and you're used to being in the ground.

Once the thermometer drops lower, below 27 F / -2.8 C, many temperate trees and shrubs need more protection. You might need a greenhouse, poly tunnel, or coldframe, either for the whole winter or for the short severe cold snap that might last a few days. Many trees are OK outside on the ground down lower than this, such as some mountain pines and junipers, but beware the wind/cold combo...

Wind can be as damaging as cold, and both together are a real whiz-bang yikes thingy that can deposit a dead tree at the door step of spring. A frozen rootball with wind is seriously not good. The bonsai can desiccate, causing if not death often some branch dieback in the growing season. Keep your trees hydrated, and keep them frequently thawed out (even if they freeze occasionally, they shouldn't remain that way).

(cont. p 6)

All are invited to the January IBA meeting to give their input to the monthly calendar.

Below is a ballot for your input. You can cast your votes before the meeting.
Send to: (ronheinen47@gmail.com) or print and bring your ballot to the January meeting.

Simply check 5 to 10 topics that are of special interest to you.

1. ___ Soil and repotting—elaborate on bottom up, specific soil for trees— create nebari during repotting.	26. ___ Types of trees easy/hard to care for, those with similar care requirements /emergency care (all share experiences).
2. ___ Proper pruning techniques for style and (proper healing) aesthetic healing.	27. ___ Collection organization—record keeping.
3. ___ Watering.	28. ___ Preparing trees for show---presentation of trees.
4. ___ Sites and stands.	29. ___ What is bonsai?
5. ___ Carving..creating jin and shari.	30. ___ Mini workshops----rock work, etc.
6. ___ Buying trees, what to look for.	31. ___ Defoliation, specific horticultural techniques of interest.
7. ___ Patience, think in terms of seasons, not weeks...make a plan.	32. ___ Drawing (visualization and realization of tree design/planning).
8. ___ Black pine work, carrying out a plan.	33. ___ Shimpaku wip into (yamadori) (radical wiring of a shimpaku).
9. ___ Have a plan...create a vision.	34. ___ Pruning for style and health.
10. ___ Styling.	35. ___ Major branch bending.
11. ___ Wintering.	36. ___ Mini workshops like the twisted shimpaku, presented by a member
12. ___ Wiring-ribbing-splitting—advanced wiring ideas.	37. ___ Monthly time for show and tell
13. ___ Collecting.	38. ___ Tree physiology
14. ___ Plant identification-ISU professor.	39. ___ Tree of the month (a talk, followed by work on chosen tree)
15. ___ Tools and tool care.	40. ___ Mentor time
16. ___ Pests, insecticides, fungicides, fertilizers, chemicals.	41. ___ Bring back and work on twisted shimpaku
17. ___ Pots and pot selection.	42. ___ Tree critique
18. ___ Siting and benches.	43. ___ Preparation of trees for show
19. ___ Club mentors for beginning members.	44. ___ Accent plants
20. ___ Discuss Botanical Center trees – current care and future plans	45. ___ Fertilizing
20. ___ Plan for collecting trip Discussion.	46. ___ Bring a tree/choose a front
21. ___ Post care, good types of trees for collecting etc.	47. ___ Soil and repotting
22. ___ State Fair tree preparation.	48. ___ Sharpening tools
23. ___ Tropical tree repotting ...discussion.	49. ___ Choosing and cleaning a pot
24. ___ Work on Club trees.	50. ___ Make a sifting screen (workshop with materials)
25. ___ Viewing stone discussion/how to show/Suiseki.	51. ___ Winterize trees (indoor and outdoor)
	52. ___ Styling workshop devoted to one style of tree
WE WANT YOUR IDEAS:	
53. _____	54. _____
55. _____	56. _____
57. _____	58. _____

NEWS FROM THE MID-AMERICA BONSAI ALLIANCE (MABA)

The Mid-America Bonsai Alliance (MABA) is comprised of participating bonsai organizations in the states of Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin and the Province of Ontario. Membership is voluntary and there are no annual dues. To be a member we only request each bonsai organization designate a representative whom can both provide MABA with club related news and in turn receive MABA related notices for distribution to their clubs.

Election of Officers

The MABA By-Laws require the election of officers every two years. Each MABA member club is allowed 1 vote for the following Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. All other positions are either appointed or filled by volunteers.

The nominating committee has received nominations for the four Elected Officer positions and has slated the following candidates:

President: Paul Weishaar, Indiana

Vice President: Evan Luse, Ohio

Treasurer: Kris Ziemann, Wisconsin

Secretary: Mark Fields, Indiana

The deadline for voting is March 1, 2016 and the elected officers will be announced.

Next MABA Convention

We are presently looking for a club to host the MABA Convention in 2017. It has been the practice in the past to hold the convention every other year and we see no reason to change this. If your club is interested in pursuing this adventure please let me know by March 1, 2016. I will let you know the Indianapolis Bonsai Club, as a result of their successful hosting of the 2015 convention, has already made overtures to host the next event.

ABS Show and Learning Seminars – Michigan in May



MAY 12-15, 2016

Bonsai in the Garden Learning Seminars

presented by

**The American Bonsai Society & The Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park
Including the Michigan All State Bonsai Show**

Featured Artists Include:

Julian Adams Jim Doyle Doug Hawley David Hodgetts Ted Matson Jerry Meislik Frank
Mihalic Martin Schmalenberg Andy Smith

Workshops, demonstrations, lectures and other festivities

The 2016 Learning Seminars will bring nine talented bonsai teachers from ABS for the traditional two days of classes plus a special Sunday event lead by regional bonsai teachers. This event will take place in the charming venue of the Frederik Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Seasonal Care for Cold Weather

(cont. from p 2)

You can work on many bonsai in the winter, including wiring and bending. If you've recently wired a tree, or done severe bending, however, they cannot be put out in wind and cold. Protect them.

Beware also of keeping temperate bonsai at too high a temperature overwinter, which may cause weakening the following year. Keeping bonsai over 50 F / 10 C creates some problems with chilling requirements and the ability to grow out in the spring nice and strong.

Chillin' isn't just for teenagers...plants need it too. Spelled a bit differently, though.

For plants, this is serious, un-boring business. Without chilling, the plant won't be able to grow in the spring. Without hardiness, the plant may be damaged by cold weather. Let's break this down a bit.

There are two things at work here. Hardiness. And Chilling.

Hardiness: The ability of the plant to survive cold. Light frosts improve the ability of a plant to withstand deeper cold. Once plants begin growing in spring they gradually lose their cold hardiness.

Chilling: Time, in hours, needed in the 33–50 F range before the plant will grow in spring. Freezing has no effect on chilling, and time spent below freezing is not 'logged' in the plant's countdown. Temperatures above 60 are detrimental to chilling. Unmet chilling requirements are what prevent a plant from growing too soon in the spring, and if chilling requirements are met and the plant is still not growing it's because the weather is too cold. Once temperatures are in the 40's trees generally begin growing.

So. What does this mean to those who grow temperate species as bonsai?

Some plants have a lot of chilling requirement or need a higher temperature in spring before growth is initiated, and burst out so late in spring you might wonder if they'd died, such as beech. Others have very little chilling requirement, like some southern blueberries. You may notice differences between coastal trees and high elevation or northern trees. Knowing these differences help us to anticipate and protect those that will begin growing earlier in spring.

You might notice some kinds of growth, like flowering, that may happen while the snow is still flying on camellia or ume (flowering apricot). These plants will still take a while to begin shoot growth, however, which is more tender to cold.

Understanding chilling also helps us to program trees that are in need of chilling for health, such as temperate trees we're trying to keep in warmer climates. In those warm areas, we may need to place temperate bonsai in the shade, keep them cooler, and keep that up for as long as we can in the winter to help them meet their chilling requirements.

Although understanding whether our trees can or cannot survive freezing is very important, hardiness maps for plants are nearly useless to bonsai growers, who have root hardiness to consider. Roots are considerably more tender to cold. Be very careful in the spring, when bonsai are growing and are beginning to lose their hardiness. Even very hardy kinds of plants like spruce, once growing, can be damaged by cold. And cold damage is irreversible, one of those things where one night of prevention is worth years of bonsai training. Isn't there a saying like that?

ANGEL'S LANDING

Ivan Hanthorn

Moses went to the mountain. Many of us do for a myriad of reasons: perspective, wind in the hair while on a high place where one knows quite well that death awaits the foolish, a good place to remember that there is more here than oneself, maybe even to feel closer to what is there, where the here begins to run out.



For me the Chinese core concept of “The Middle Kingdom” occasionally comes to mind as a succinct descriptor for that kind of artistic form where the form itself has a talismanic message that it stands before you as a connector to unutterable profundities just beyond view. The connection. The Ark.

Toshi Yoshida (1911-1995), son of renowned Japanese woodblock print artist Hiroshi Yoshida, produced several bonsai themed woodblock prints during his career. The most revered print is Waterfall, as illustrated above. This masterpiece is quintessentially Japanese, the design of the mounted bonsai material recalling the best in Japanese decorative arts, Japanese gardens, and flower arranging (Ikebana). An inspiration and model for many in attempting refined bonsai-on-a-rock style, it has never been actually equaled in a true material bonsai. It remains a supreme vision of the elegant abstraction of perfection a rock planted bonsai should portray.

The 12” x 20” image was hand printed in 1970. Copies of the print still occasionally come to market. Pristine condition is harder and harder to find. A recent offering of a copy in excellent condition, with no toning, no tears, never mounted, and full margins, was priced at \$500. The print as an art form democratized art in that more than one too rich person could acquire a copy of an excellent piece of graphic art. Democratic or not, it usually means that for a good print of any age, it still takes some significant cash.

The Yosida family of print artists gave us more inspiring interpretations of bonsai than the two we have now presented. Readers of the newsletter will see more in the future.

A Bonsai Hedge



A clever creation by Joe Selworthy. The hedge is cotoneaster and the tree is a deshojo Japanese maple.

Reasons for Repotting

Dave Bogan – from ABS eNewsletter

Reasons for Repotting

1. Showing signs of slowed growth or vigor
2. Does not take water well.
3. Don't know the soil type or the soil is not our typical type.

So many get caught up in the idea or have read that trees should be repotted based on a time schedule versus repotted when needed. Notice, I did not mention repotting based on the tree appearing to be root bound. If you could see through the pot, many deciduous trees will have roots circling the bottom of the pot within a year if they have been growing well. This in itself is not always a reason to repot. As long as a tree meets the above requirements—growing healthy, takes water and is in proper soil, it does not need to be repotted. In truth, if the tree is in the proper soil, we need to allow it to go longer and allow roots to start growing into the interior areas of the pot / soil mass. Generally if a tree is grown too quickly or in improper soil, is when you will see more and more roots circling. If you do notice a problem with the above areas during the year, than you should schedule it to be repotted the following year at its proper time. Remember, growing bonsai means to grow them at a regulated rate. Do not get caught up in the idea of pushing their growth. If you want to push a tree, grow it in a larger pot or in a training pot or even better yet, buy a larger tree. Once the tree is in the proper size pot, we want regulated growth that will mature and grow slowly. We feed only enough to keep a tree healthy. Who in their right mind wants to continually trim their trees simply because they have been over fed or grown to quickly?

Of course, once the need has been determined to repot, one of the biggest issues will be soil replacement. We all know some soil will need replaced but the question becomes as to how much if not all that needs replaced. We must know our ultimate goal will always be to have only one type of soil or soil mix within the root system. Two or more types of soil or just as importantly compacted or soil that has broken down (organic matter) within a root system will eventually cause drastic root and health problems and must be replaced. In many cases as with pines, junipers or even older trees some have very tight root systems and we don't want to shock the tree by changing all the soil at one time.

Ultimately, we must have a plan for every tree. When repotting a tree that's in good soil (akadama based) you will rarely need to change all the soil. In the case of having the proper soil all you will clean or open are the edges and bottom areas, cut the long searching roots and repot it in fresh soil of the same type. In the case of a tree that is not in a good soil mix or a mix that's different than yours (akadama based) than you will need to decide how you will handle the complete soil change. In the case of most deciduous species, this can be done all in one setting where you replace all the soil. In the case of older trees, pines and most junipers, this soil change needs to take place over a few years. If you plan to remove some of the soil, you need a plan. Simply removing some soil off the sides and bottom will not suffice in this case. Many a tree has been lost due to a compacted inner area of soil. It is imperative that you clean some soil or area all the way to the center of the root ball. Generally I do this in two stages. I typically clean the front area first, removing all the soil in the front half of the root ball. Next, I will clean the remaining area only around the edges and some off the bottom. In a few years, I will clean the back areas and have all the soil changed over to my type (akadama based) throughout the entire root ball hopefully within 3—4 years.

Meifu Show Photos

John Denny



On left is a famous old Black pine named Zuio. Claimed Kokufu Prize in years past. Shimpaku on right. Note the impact of sunlight illuminating the live vein and the pot. Both photos from Danny Coffey's blog, Tree the People. Coffey is an apprentice in Japan working in his third year under Mr. Tanaka.