

PFM RAMBLINGS

If you do not wish to receive my monthly newsletter, please send me an email.



Spring has come to
the greenhouse

NEW YEAR'S BONSAI RESOLUTIONS

Normally I like to present my resolutions that will hopefully improve my bonsai at this time of year but instead I will take the space to announce some of the coming year's events at the studio. I will list my bonsai resolutions in the January issue of the MHBS twig which most of you receive. The best resolution is to take the time to work on your trees!

For those of you who grow some indoor bonsai in your windows, under lights or in a greenhouse in Zones 4 or 5, spring has arrived. When the day length begins to lengthen, our trees respond. We are in Zone 4 and the current temperature outside is 5 degrees F. The greenhouse has 50 degree nights and increasing day lengths, thus a wonderful early arrival of spring.

As a result you should be repotting these bonsai now. I start

on December 21 and keep going until they are all repotted.

The hardy bonsai are safe in winter storage, solidly frozen. I fear that this the very cold winter that we have missed in recent times.

I have found that that super cold (- 40 Degree F) winter occur about every 10 years here but we missed the one that should have occurred 4 years ago and have enjoyed warm winters instead. As a result some of us have gotten lazy about cold winter care.



Snow bonsai

A recent snow fall covered the stands piling up to form winter snow bonsai. The trees are actually safe in storage.

GREWIA CAFFRA ?

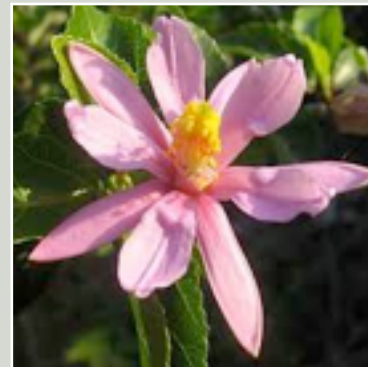
or

GREWIA

OCCIDENTALIS ?

Lavender Star Flower

First, on the classification: I am certainly confused on which of the names is correct. I am sure I will hear from one of you soon. No matter which, the information below is correct.



In our area, this is grown as a tropical as it needs a minimum temperature of 50 degrees F. Growth occurs best at around 70 degrees F. It requires full sun for good growth. It can survive winters in a southern window, under lights or in a greenhouse. Once placed outdoors when it is frost free time, it will grow strongly in full sun. It will tolerate shade but flowering will be limited and internodal spaces will increase.

Fertilize well with your favorite type. I use Nutricote with micronutrients and supplement with Actino-iron once a month for dense green color and super-phosphate for flowering.

The species will take severe pruning early in the growing season. It breaks back with new buds easily. Cut after flowering. Wire with aluminum wire at any time. It works best right after pruning when the amount of leaves is decreased.

This is a very vigorous grower so it develops easily. Allow to grow several sets of leaves and then trim back to one set to develop good ramification.

It develops well in a variety of styles. It naturally forms layers of foliage.

It prefers a rich organic, well draining soil but does not tolerate dryness. Roots are shallow and grow rapidly so yearly repotting is necessary.

Note: We have a ws with these on January 18.



GROWING SHOHIN FROM CHOPS

As mentioned before and again and again....trunk is the name of the game. One of the faster ways to develop a great trunk for shohin bonsai is to cut down a larger tree to make a smaller one. Bonsai artists know that growing stock in the ground is the quickest way to develop a strong trunk. This is of course true for shohin bonsai. The major key to success will be to have low enough branches to allow us to develop the smaller tree from the large parent tree.

Developing low branches on most deciduous trees is easier than with evergreens. Most deciduous trees will bud out from the trunk once the top of the tree is cut off providing this is done before the tree buds out in spring. By first growing the tree in the ground or a large pot (or purchasing one with a developed trunk) and then cutting the trunk down, new buds will develop on the remaining trunk and grow. The type of cut you make when removing the top of the tree has two schools of technique. Some artists prefer a flat cut, while others use the angled cut. I prefer the angled method as there is a great chance of developing a new apex that is smoothly in line with the old trunk and the angled cut helps with the illusion of taper. The angled cut also allows lower branches to form below the apex branch. This is important for the styling of mame bonsai. There are variations on this cut also. If a deciduous tree has one or more low branches that are worthy of keeping, the cut back can be made above the the branches to be kept. The bonsai will be developed from the remaining material.

Once the cut back deciduous trunk sprouts out, then it is time to select the branches you wish to keep. Hopefully a branch has sprouted at the high point and will develop into a good apex. At this point wire the selected branches into place for further development. See the paragraph below which describes treatments for the open wound.

With evergreen species the cut back can be done above one or more of the lowest branches on the stock tree. Of course the problem with evergreens is that we can not cut off all the leaves. To cut back an evergreen, you need to first locate the perfect tree with the perfect low branch or branches. In this case you will need to wire a new leader up as you will not sprout a new one as seen on Frank Mihalic's pine to the right.



Once your cut is made you need to protect the severed cambium so that the wound will heal over properly. Start by making sure that the cut is very neat and clean. Use a very sharp knife like an Exacto to recut a clean sharp edge. If the cut is pointed up and down in the same direction as the cambium vessels, it will heal better. Be sure that the hard wood surface level is below the bottom level of the cambium layer. The new cambium and bark will grow over the old wood with time.

Then cover the wound with a substance to keep the layer moist. There are a number of options. Substances as simple as Vaseline work on deciduous stock. Nick Lenz has found that Preparation H with Hormones works extremely well. There are a number of excellent gels and soft clays produced by Japanese countries that work well on both deciduous and evergreen species. The key is to keep the cambium from drying out. Sometimes it helps to keep a piece of foil wrapped around the cut as it heals.

New growth on cutbacks is often very vigorous due to the stored food in the roots that would have supported a much larger tree. With good fertilization and plenty of warmth and light, you will have good growth to work with. In a few years with proper wiring and trimming to develop ramification you will have an excellent shohin bonsai.

WINTER AT THE STUDIO. register now..ws trees may be stored in the greenhouse until spring. All workshops are limited to 8 people.

DATE	Morning	Afternoon
January 4	Open Workshop	Open Workshop
January 5	Open Workshop	Open Workshop
January 11	Closed	Closed
January 12	Closed	Closed
January 18	Grewia Workshop * \$45 includes tree	these will make excellent shohin especially being cut and wired this early
January 19	Kingsville Boxwood Group Planting Workshop* cost of trees and pots you select only	create with wonderful stock in several size to make a good saikei or land and water penjing
January 24	Open Workshop	Intermediate 11
January 25	MHBS at Voorheesville	Closed
January 31-February 5	Closed at Shohin in CA	Closed at Shohin in CA
February 8	Open Workshop	Intermediate 12
February 9	Work on Wiring Workshop	Wiring practice afternoon
February 15-16 Exhibit your love of bonsai on Valentine Weekend by participating in our annual winter fun. Come and spend the weekend with us.	Winter Madness Weekend Free Demonstration & lunch each day Saturday morning at 10AM: Land and water penjing lesson and demonstration with wonderful aged olive trees. Sunday morning at 11AM: Shohin lesson and demo with newly obtained shohin material from our California buying trip.	Workshops: limited to 8 participants each...register now (\$50 deposit to reserve your place): Saturday 2PM: Land and water penjing or saikei with beautifully aged olive. Price of materials only...your choice. Sunday 2PM: Shohin workshop with a variety of shohin material just brought it. Cost of material only.
February 22	Open Workshop	Intermediate 13
February 23	MHBS at Voorheesville	Closed

BONSAI EVENTS TO ATTEND



**MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies 2014
Spring Festival April 25-27**
[http://midatlanticbonsai.freervers.com/
fescurr.htm](http://midatlanticbonsai.freervers.com/fescurr.htm)

**BCI in Australia
August**
<http://goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com>

4th National Bonsai Exhibition
[http://www.internationalbonsai.com/store/
1708315/uploaded/2012_national_exhibition/
index.html](http://www.internationalbonsai.com/store/1708315/uploaded/2012_national_exhibition/index.html)



**ABS/GSBF
Bonsai Visions of the West
October 31,2014
Sacramento,CA
Save the Date
Details coming soon.**

pfm bonsai studio supports

Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society <http://mohawkhudsonbonsai.org>

MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies - www.midatlanticbonsai.freesevers.com

American Bonsai Society - www.absbonsai.org

Bonsai Clubs International - www.bonsai-bci.com

National Bonsai Foundation - www.bonsai-nbf.org

please visit www.pfmbonsai.com for current happenings at the studio

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7 Western Avenue

West Charlton NY 12010