

pfm bonsai studio ramblings



June 2013 Volume I

June....the month of growth and work in the bonsai world....with chances of simply enjoying and sharing our bonsai with others. **NOTE: June 1 is the last day to get the early bird registration fee for ABS 2013 this September. If you have not registered yet, send me an email to hold a slot and mail it in now.**

Little Bonsai

Shohin, Mame, minis..no matter what you call them, they are fun and so much easier to move around as I get older.

Last week, my good friends Anne and Berni Gastrich visited for a couple of days. Berni brought along his wonderful camera equipment and his great photographic eye and took portraits of my little bonsai.

I have been working on a technical bonsai manual for the small in size loves of the bonsai world for way too many years for the American Bonsai Society. The biggest hurdle (besides my constant changing of the text material) has been the photographs needed. Apparently my wonderful old camera just is not up to modern printing standards.

Thus I needed to do two things to be able to have all the photographs I plan to use: Have the trees photographed by an expert with the right equipment and buy a new camera to take the technical photographs. I have given myself the



deadline of June 30. I hope by publishing that date here, I will keep to it.

I really hope to have the book in hand for the shohin course I am co-teaching at ABS this fall.

Only time will tell. Wish me luck!!

Species of the Month: *Gardenia jasminoides* 'Radicans'



The dwarf gardenia is an evergreen shrub in zones 7b to 9. It has a moderate to rapid growth rate growing to up to two feet in height and spread up to 3 feet. It grows in sun but will take partial light shade and needs acidic soil. Although it is heat and somewhat drought tolerant, it is best kept evenly moist in bonsai culture. It can be damaged by cold winds. The leaves are glossy and dark green that turn bright yellow as they are shed. The plant has creamy white flowers in May and June and into summer depending on your zone.

Climate

For bonsai purposes it is considered to be subtropical and will survive down to a 40 degree F temperature. The ideal climate will have hot summers with

cool nights. In cooler climates, it is brought outside for frost-free weather and returned to the greenhouse or light garden culture in the fall after leaf loss. In temperatures near 70 degrees F, growth will be tight with short internodal spaces. Give this species as much light as possible. If brought into the greenhouse, keep damp and the bonsai will bud out in late winter.



Soil

Gardenia needs acid soils. The soil must have excellent drainage. The plant must receive plenty of water during the growing period, but it just kept damp in the cool of winter. Constant wet soil is harmful to the species. Using a mixture of a good potting soil and a bonsai medium works well for this species. IF you are in an area with heavy rainfall or if you are a heavy waterer, use only bonsai medium. It needs high phosphorus fertilizer for bloom and applications of iron twice during the growing season to prevent chlorosis. Begin fertilizing when buds swell and stop during the flowering period. Continue fertilization after flowering is complete.

Repotting

Repotting is best done in late winter or early spring before the buds leaf out. In fast growing young plants, yearly repotting with root pruning is needed. In established plants, repotting should be done every two years.

Sun Exposure

Although full sun is preferred, take care not to burn the leaves during hot dry periods. It will tolerate some shade. IF the plant has leaved out indoors or in a greenhouse, expect sun burn on the developed leaves when you put it outdoors. The leaves that sprouted indoors will have too thin a cuticle layer for exposure to the sun. The leaves that sun burn will eventually fall off as new leaves sprout and develop the proper cuticle layer of protection. INDOORS: grow lights that are very close to the bonsai unless they are halide or halogen are necessary for continued growth. In a cool greenhouse they lose much of their leaves in winter and sprout out in January or February.



Flowers

The flowers are beautiful and tender with a wonderful fragrance. Enjoy quickly as they soon fade and brown.

Training and Pruning

The tree is best worked in late winter or early spring for hard pruning. Wire only the trunk and woody branches and raffia protection before wiring in young plants is suggested. It can be wired at any time. Larger branches can be very brittle. The use of raffia on woody branches is suggested to help prevent cracking after wiring and bending. Trimming of new shoots (those with 4-6 pairs of leaves) to one or two pairs of leaves throughout spring and summer is needed.



Propagation

It can be propagated by mid summer soft wood cuttings, leaf-less hardwood cuttings in winter, air layering or seeds. Bottom heat and rooting hormone is required for cuttings.

Problems

Treating the plant to a soap spray and wash periodically will reduce insect problems and good air circulation will prevent mildew attacks. To prevent disease and insect problems it needs excellent air circulation.

TECHNIQUE OF THE MONTH: HOLD THE PRESSES!!
WE ARE NOT DEVELOPING OUR SCALE JUNIPERS CORRECTLY!!

notes on Shimpaku and other scale type juniper development

Notes by Pauline Muth based on demonstrations by Ted Matson, Ryan Neil and Patrick DeSilva

On May 13 our club (Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society) was treated not only to a good demonstration by Ted Matson but a fountain of new knowledge on the development of Shimpaku Juniper bonsai. Ted attributes this knowledge to both experience and what he has learned from the young masters like Ryan Neil who have studied in Japan for years. These young men are bringing back knowledge and are sharing it with the bonsai community.

I personally have been amazed at the progress on scale type junipers shown in the bonsai magazines by Japanese masters. It seemed that the speed of branch development could not be contributed to just a difference in growing seasons. Foliage masses are beautifully developed.

Ted remarked that we have been taught to pinch our scale junipers from the earliest time of development. It turns out that this is totally the wrong approach. It does not direct the plant to create dense growth on the bare interiors of the junipers. If you have ever grown Shimpaku junipers from cuttings, you know that freely grown material indeed develops well with dense foliage masses.

So what should we be doing?

There are two aspects of development to consider: working from a rooted cutting and working from a developed stock with wood.

If starting with developed stock that is being used to create a bonsai, prune for branches but do NOT cut the ends off the foliage masses on each branch. Remove weak interior growth taking care to leave any new buds that have appeared. Leave "lion tails" on each branch. ----->>



<<-----Wire ONLY the wood of the branches and the trunk as needed to establish your form and open the branches to sunlight. The foliage ends of the branches are left to draw the energy through the branches (which will be largely bare to begin with). This method will encourage growth on the bare interior branch areas. In time the ends of the branches will be removed. This will not occur until you have dense interior growth to use for the bonsai.

This method creates only two working periods for foliage mass development:

- In the spring and summer, branches are allowed to grow freely with no pruning or pinching.
- In September, examination of mass development will signal removal of branch ends as needed. If interior masses are not developed, leave the branch ends on.
- Of course once your bonsai is developed to show level, you will prune spring growth when preparing to show your bonsai.

Patrick “Jake” DeSilva worked with our Monday Night Bonsai Study Group for a long period and passed on growing techniques from his master



If you are developing a rooted cutting into bonsai material, you must wire the motion into the very young tree and then allow it to grow freely for years only redoing based wiring if needed. The long growth will feed the base trunk providing it with girth over time. All branches are left on the base. Some will be completely removed in time, some made into jin and some shortened in the above method to develop the bonsai.



Both of these methods require good fertilization and light for the developing tree. For the young tree, planting in a colander will increase the air available to the roots and thereby shorten development time.

NOTE: The last three photos are from Pat “Jake” Desilva of his master’s shohin nursery in Japan.

WORKING YOUR BONSAI IN JUNE IN THE GREAT NORTH EAST

The good news is that we have received plenty of rain.

The bad news is the we have received plenty of rain.

It is wonderful that we will have a good supply of water and should not face watering bands but a lot of moisture all at once gives us some interesting challenges for our trees. Be aware of the following:

- Flat shallow pots retain water better than tall pots. So be careful that forest containers drain well to avoid root rot. I put a brick under one end of forest containers to facilitate drainage in rainy weather
- Developing needles tend to be longer when they receive a lot of moisture....especially larch.
- Fungus control becomes more difficult.
- Time released fertilizer release rates increases. Usually this is not a big problem but it could require you to put more fertilizer on later in summer. Check the beads during the summer. If the beads are hollow, replace them or use another type of fertilizer for the rest of the growing season.
- In general, growth will be increased and your trees will need more trimming.

Hopefully we will have plenty of sun also. Remember that we should ONLY do work on healthy trees.

What we need to attend to:

- Keep nitrogen fertilizer away from needled trees to prevent long needles.
- Complete your decandling and/or breaking of candles of pines.
- Watching the wires on trees....rapid growth can result in wire damage. If you have an automatic watering system, you may miss seeing the possibility of damage until it is too late...so be careful.
- It is time for trident maple full or partial defoliation. On strong, healthy trees, you can cut the leaves off at the midpoint of the petiole (the little stem attached to the leaf). Since the new buds will develop with only half the stored nutrients, they will be smaller. The leaves that develop next spring will also be smaller as they will also develop with reduced stored nutrients.
- Be careful with defoliating, even partially, Japanese Maples and Amur Maples. Remove larger leaves by cutting the petiole.
- When the weather changes and we get bright sunny hot days be careful to not let the trees dry out. During heat waves, shade the pot and soil. Maples benefit from mid day partial shade.

OK? Did I really mean that?

Most of you know that I like to use a dose of full strength Miracle Grow at the start of the season even when using time release or organic poo balls. Recently I gave that advice to a dear friend. The result: many dead trees.

Why?

I had forgotten that people now also buy Miracle Grow as a liquid. The liquid normally works with a spray dispenser that attaches to a hose. I always say make up the fertilizer according to the directions. Of course, I was thinking about the blue powder. My friend sprayed the **concentrated** liquid on her trees. The leaves turned brown over night. Sad to say but one of the bonsai was a wonderful trident shohin forest she had just bought from me. I now have it in the greenhouse in ICU but am not holding out much hope for it. Thus I am growing some cuttings to start a new one for her.

The moral of the story:

I need to be VERY specific when I give directions.....Pauline



Considering a bonsai trip?

**August 22 -25, BCI and AABC ,
Brisbane, Gold Coast - Australia**

What is Happening in the Bonsai World?

These events were covered in past issues. See their websites for more details.

I hope to see you at the * events.

June International Bonsai Colloquium *

<http://www.internationalbonsai.com/index.html>.

September 12-15 ABS Love of Bonsai Learning Seminars * www.loveofbonsai.com

October 31- November 3 **Golden State Bonsai Federation Annual Convention ***



LOVE OF BONSAI

ABS LEARNING SEMINARS

SARATOGA SPRINGS NY

SEPT. 12-15, 2013

June 1 is the last day to get the early bird discount. Courses are closing so register now.

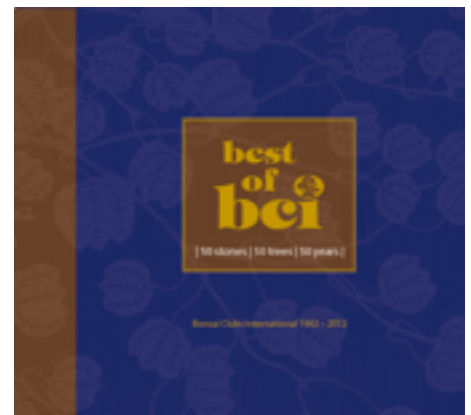
Go to www.loveofbonsai.com for registration forms if you need one.

Please come visit my nursery Sunday Afternoon after the close of the seminars.



Are you ready for something different in a bonsai learning experience? GSBF Convention XXXVI – “Bonsai Artist Studio: **OUTSIDE THE BOX**” will deliver on **October 31 through November 3, 2013**, at the Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel & Convention Center. See you there!!

<http://www.gsbfbonsai.org>



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<http://www.bonsai-bci.com>

JUNE EVENTS

AT PFM BONSAI STUDIO. Lots of bonsai traveling for me this month but Available MOST weekdays...call to check before coming out

CALL OR EMAIL TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THESE



Monday Bonsai Study Group 6 PM or so

Come and play and learn with our Monday study group. There is no charge for this group. We come together and work on a project. Or we simply bring some of our trees to work on. Some join in a pizza before beginning .we chip in for the food. Bring materials to work on and join in the fun.

June 1 Studio Closed

June 2 Studio Closed: Join me at the Town of Charlton's artisan fair in the center of town near the Historical Society. 11 AM to 4 PM

June 6-9 Studio Closed: Vending at International Bonsai Colloquium

<http://www.internationalbonsai.com/index.html>. Come celebrate Bill Valavanis's 50years of bonsai.

June 15 Intermediate Bonsai Course Session 5 at 2pm. Studio open 10 to 2 for work or shopping

June 16 Open workshop...opening at 1 pm FATHER'S DAY Come in and work on your trees. Want to do a special project, contact Pauline to set up a work time and instruction.

June 21-23 Studio Closed Join Pauline at Wildwood Garden's Summer Barbecue in Charton Ohio Saturday and Sunday.

June 29 Intermediate Bonsai Course Session 6 at 2pm. Studio open 10 to 2 for work or shopping

June 30 MHBS at pfm bonsai featuring workshop and demo by John Romano . Demo at 11 AM followed by BYO lunch and workshop.

August 2 FIELD TRIP TO MARTIN SCHMALENBERG'S Stillwater Studio.

Join us for an all day trip by car pool. We will meet at pfm bonsai at 7 AM to group together and travel. Other meeting points may arise depending on location of participants. Martin will offer a program on rock planting and give us a personal tour of his bonsai garden and studio. Fee plus share of fuel and tolls. **NOTE: the date has changed from the original plans.**

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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