



YAMATO BONSAI KAI

“FRIENDSHIP THROUGH BONSAI”

Since 1968

Newsletter - June 2010



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

By Tony Hayworth – President

I want to update you on my May 22nd trip to Sacramento to the American Bonsai Association show and demonstration that weekend. The headliner was Ryan Neil, who recently returned from Japan and his near six year bonsai apprenticeship with Masahiko Kimura. Ryan put on a fantastic demo with a Sierra Juniper, I am including before and after pictures in this newsletter. Ryan is a capable and humble young man. It is great to see such a talent mixed with a demeanor of modesty and humility. If you get the chance to go to the next Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention (Oct 28-31 in Santa Clara - see GSBF website for details), he will be one of the featured headliners. Mark your calendars!

His demonstration and instruction brought to mind the importance of having and selecting good material for making great bonsai. I've said many times that if your material is full of flaws and poor structure it can still be a fine bonsai someday. But the path to that end state will require you to have exceptional skill and training in your technique to make it happen, alone with time! This discussion reminds me about some tips I've given in the past about selecting good material for making bonsai. Let me deliver it again.

Select a Tree

Take your time. Not all trees are destined to be bonsai. It is true you can take almost any tree and turn it into a handsome bonsai specimen... But you should try to choose a tree with the least amount of flawed characteristics. In this way you can achieve results much quicker and with less effort. It may take you some time to learn what characteristics make a tree flawed and therefore less desirable as a selection - so don't be fooled, take your time with your tree selec-

tion. With a little luck and some perseverance you will soon learn all about what makes good bonsai material.

Key areas to consider are the natural shape of the trunk, the primary and secondary branches, and the root formation. Start with trees or nursery stock that is half-gallon to 5 gallons in size. As a beginner you may want to hold off on collected trees or selecting very large trees that must undergo a major pruning operation (roots and branches) to be a bonsai.

Consider the following in your selection.

Trunk - It is most important to choose a trunk that naturally suggests the style of bonsai you want to achieve. Later on, as your knowledge and skill grows, you can do more drastic operations to achieve a style or shape. Carefully inspect the trunk and make sure there are no unacceptable scars or damage. This will be important on trees with many branches and dense foliage.

(continued...)



Sierra Juniper—Yamato Bonsai Kai Exhibition 2009

AT THE NEXT CLUB MEETING...

On Tuesday, **June 15th**, the focus will be pruning and shaping Japanese Azalea (Satsuki).

. Don't miss this club meeting event.

PLACE: Castro Valley Women's Club,
18330 Redwood Road, Castro Valley, CA

Note: All Club Meetings start at 7:00 PM.

Message from the Board (continued)

Branches - The first or primary branch chosen should be the thickest or largest branch. Choosing this branch will factor in the style, shape and front view chosen for the bonsai. You will probably eliminate many of the branches on an initial bonsai creation. Therefore take your time, as it is usually a one-time operation to decide the initial primary, back and secondary branches on the bonsai.

Carefully imagine the look and style of the tree without some of the branches. Start from the bottom and proportionately eliminate them alternating as you go up the tree. Do this several times in your mind to make sure the characteristics meet your needs of the future style. Hiding some of the branches with your hands or with newspaper often helps you decide which ones to keep or cut.

Rootage - Normally the roots should spread in all directions of a healthy and mature bonsai. If you are dealing with nursery stock in a gallon can, dig down with your finger at the base of the trunk if you don't see any roots. Be careful you do not damage anything... but if you are not finding roots somewhere, be aware.

The color of the foliage will also be a factor in knowing if the tree has healthy roots. If the color and growth volume of the upper foliage is good, so must be the roots to support it.

General Notice - if anyone has a topic for the Board Meeting please let me know or pass it along to any Board member.

Remember to take some time and keep you eye on

bonsai.

YAMATO BONSAI KAI ANGEL PROGRAM

By Brad Sheldon

For some time, Yamato Bonsai Kai has had to spend \$70.00 per month to rent the Women's Club for our monthly meetings. In order to defray that expense, the club has asked members to help out with a tax deductible donation, hence the Angel Program. If you sponsor a meeting, your name will be published in the newsletter and you can get the tax paperwork from Dave Barron.

If money is tight, please consider a joint contribution with another member. Note that you can send in a check any time to the Yamato Bonsai Kai PO Box or in-person at the meeting. Any help will be appreciated.

SAN LORENZO ADULT SCHOOL

AKA THE BEGINNING OF BONSAI FOR MANY

By Michael Baker

On Monday May 22nd San Lorenzo Adult School ended its night school sessions at its Bockman Road campus. In doing so it ended a 25 year run for a certain bonsai master, a 6 year run for a certain wannabe Sensei and a unique learning experience for many current and past bonsai artists.

My experience of SLZAS and of working with Sensei Uchida has many fond memories. It has been not only a learning field for me, it was a retreat for me to focus on honing my bonsai skills. Many Monday nights were spent up to my elbows in "muck" and loving it! Week after week I would arrive early and wait to see the procession of fellow bonsai artists drive in smiling from ear to ear as I was. We were all glad to see each other and couldn't wait to get to work on our stuff.

The first couple of years I took Sensei Uchida's class starting back in 2000 Sensei would bring a couple of flats full of new prizes for us to work with....it was a little like Christmas for a fledgling bonsai guy. The classes themselves were magic. He would take something that looked like nothing and turn it into a piece of living art....we were all amazed, EVERY WEEK!!

As time went on and so many of us joined the class we became not only fellow artists but friends. I've met some of the most important people in my life at SLZAS.....made many friends and maybe a couple of rivals....but such is life...

I remember watching Dean Sutcliffe counting the daily till, Al Hightower lugging in some new treasure from his backyard, Sam Adina sitting next to me creating his own treasures, Jack Ellis politicking as usual, Rick Boldy sitting in the back row sweating bullets building some new and unusual group plantingand everybody was smiling!!!

Lately I've watched Emiko bringing in stuff that was as big as she is, Al Hightower lugging in another new treasure (where does he keep getting this stuff?), Sandy Barron with Dave in tow, Brad Sheldon breaking chopsticks, Mike Butler wearing his cowboy hat, Jack Ellis still politicking, Dennis Hacker not wanting anyone to cut his stuff ...and a host of othersall smiling!!!

It's been a pleasure to meet all of these new people and an honor to call many of them friends.....all because of the opportunity afforded me by the bonsai class at San Lorenzo Adult School.

We are looking now for a new place to hold the Monday night class and I'm sure we'll come up with something...but we will surely miss our time at the broken down lean-to known as San Lorenzo Adult School. To all of you that I've met there I say thanks especially to Dean-san and Sensei Uchida....



SENSEI UCHIDA'S NOTES

Dear member, there is very strange weather this year. This month I will talk about satsuki azalea, sometimes the blooming can be very confusing. This year it is a little late to bloom. I will bring some of the azaleas I have that are blooming. They are beautiful, but the rest of the satsuki trees at the nursery are all green (no blooms).

We see this month take the candles off of the black pine. Then very soon after you finish cutting, give

them fertilizer (but do not overdo if you already fertilized). Then get ready to water good for the summer. From now on we get very hot days, and paying attention to watering is very important.

When it comes to your bonsai, your care is the most important, "nobody does it like you do". Take care.

AMERICAN BONSAI ASSOCIATION SHOW AND DEMONSTRATION

By Tony Hayworth



Sierra juniper - before styling



Ryan Neil - making final adjustments



Sierra juniper - after styling



Front of tree after styling



Tony Hayworth and Ryan Neil

Bonsai Basic

Summertime Bonsai Blues—Redux

Editor's Note: "Summertime Bonsai Blues" was Mike Baker's submission for seasonal tips in June 2009. Please enjoy my re-interpretation of Mike's article which sums up the seasonal needs of bonsai in our area.

Summertime Seasonal Tips

This is the time of year your bonsai need you the most. We are subject to many issues this time of year, not the least of which is the potential for triple-digit temperatures.

Watering

There is a saying that we need to water every day, what we should be saying is that we need to check our trees for their water needs every day.

Your trees need the attention of checking for water and as the days get warmer they may very well need water every day but do not be fooled into thinking that it's automatic. Check the soil with your finger or use a chopstick and look for signs of saturation, especially with trees in larger containers. They may be just fine and be able to go a few days in between watering. However, black pines, junipers (especially California junipers), cedars, and other conifers actually do much better with a dry type environment.

Be in tune with your plants particular water needs and remember to check before you drench!!!

High Temperatures

Run for cover!!! When the mercury rises not only do we have a watering issue we need to protect our babies from the direct sun. Sensei Uchida reminds me of the year he experienced 104° in Hayward and how it burnt the tops of trees throughout the nursery.

The trees that I have in Pleasanton are always exposed to high temperature in the summer...what saves them is the fact that I protect them from direct sun!!!

Again, black pines, cedars, junipers and other conifers are not as much of an issue but certainly maples, hornbeams, all saikei and anything in a "small" container get a location in my yard that is protected from full sun exposure.

Those particular trees also get a misting in the morning and evening to maintain moisture in their foliage. Another particular species you need to watch are your hinoki cypress, they do not do well in direct sun!!

Other Issues

Besides the sun, other issues in the season of the sun are weeds, pests, local wildlife and the neighborhood kids hitting foul balls into your yard and knocking over your stuff.

It's all about attention, if you know your trees are secure, which ones are thriving, which may be struggling, and how long the wire has been on each one of them, then you're probably o.k. for the season ahead. If you look through your collection and find a tree that you can't really see because the weeds are too tall, you might want to consider reducing your "headcount" or getting to work on your stuff.

Summer is a great time to re arrange your display and show off your collection to your neighbors. Enjoy the great weather and remember your trees are like children....they count on you to survive!!

Editor's note: We are excited this month to get a special contribution from a Yamato club member. Presenting, for the first time ever, "Newby News"! Thanks Dennis!

NEWBY NEWS

By Dennis Hacker

First a disclaimer: I have only been doing bonsai for about 3 years and am definitely not an expert. What I state is what I have found helpful. **Everything in bonsai depends on you and the environment in which you and the trees live.**

I am using a mixture of Akadama, pumice, hyuga, pamy pebbles (1/4 inch decorative pebbles), red lava and about 10% fir bark for planting. The reason for this is that it doesn't hold a lot of water. Good drainage and air help your plants. The main thing to remember is that a mixture such as this will require watering daily to two times daily when it is hot. I live on the bay in Richmond and the humidity is high and it is windy.

This brings me to a second point: If you have green algae on your potting soil in the pot, this is a big problem! Algae will remove air from your plants and will/can strangle your plants. I use Physan-20 (a fungicide used on orchids) and spray from a handheld spray bottle. I use 10-15 drops per quart and spray

daily. This also works on black trunk fungus. You'll be surprised as to how much better your plants do without the fungi or algae. But, the algae will only grow when the soil is too wet too long. So, don't water so much and let things dry out some between waterings.

Spray your plants vegetation daily...twice daily if you have collected a Utah juniper or a California juniper. These plants get a lot of their summer water via dew as little rain falls in the Mojave desert or in Nevada in the summer.

If you repot a tree and shortly thereafter it starts looking really poor, get it out of that soil and look at the roots and the moisture in the pot. I have lost many trees this winter due to too much water being held in the pot. This is why I use the above mixture. Although it may seem wrong to repot immediately, as I have sadly found out, without repotting, the tree will die. It may die with repotting so you really have nothing to lose.

Before asking Sensei what should be done with a certain tree, think about it yourself. Draw the trunk structure and ask yourself what design would be best for that trunk. Then, and only then, ask Sensei what he would do. Having either Sensei Uchida or Mike Baker groom your tree without thinking about it doesn't teach you how to look at your trees.

I invite all of you to just drop Noah a note and give your thoughts. We all have information. If we give some "pearl" which answers a question of only one artist, you might have saved a tree



GSBF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(For a more complete list, please refer to Golden State-ments calendar of events or visit the web site at www.gsbfbonsai.org).

Some nearby scheduled events are:

July 1-5

San Rafael, California

Marin Bonsai Club: Bonsai Exhibit at the Marin County Fair, Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 10 Avenue of the

Flags. Hours are 11AM-10PM daily. Admission to Fair is \$14 for adults; \$12 for seniors and children 5 to 12. For more information contact Craig Thompson, 415-472-6685.

Aug 28-29

Santa Rosa, California

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 27th Annual Show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1351 Maple Avenue. (Opposite the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.) Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Over 200 trees on exhibit, large vendor area, members' sales area, raffles and a silent auction. Demonstration both days at 1:30PM by Kathy Shaner. Free admission and parking. Contact Bob Shimon at 707-884-4126 or shimon@mcn.org for further information.

October 28-31

Santa Clara, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention XXXIII: "New Face of Bonsai." The "New Faces" will shape the Art of Bonsai for years to come with the guidance and vision of these new teachers, and the GSBF 2010 will be the able to receive the new visions of bonsai and participate in the future of Bonsai. The July/Aug issue of Golden State-ments will contain convention registration information. For more information visit <http://www.gsbfcconvention.com>



YAMATO CLASSIFIEDS

FREE Workshop at the GSBF collection in Oakland

Hello Bonsai Friends,

This is a reminder for the 4th Sunday June workshop at the collection in Oakland. The date is June 27th from 1pm to 3pm. This is a FREE class so I hope all can attend. The topic of discussion this month is fertilizing/watering of Bonsai. I will also discuss some black pine pruning techniques, since June is the month for this activity. See everyone in class.

Mike Pistello
Bonsai Basics Instructor
Golden State Bonsai Federation

Notice: *if you want to advertise something in this space, please compose your text and contact the Newsletter Editor.*

THIS MONTH ...

A very Happy Birthday to:

June

13th – Edgar Zarate
11th – Joseph Soares
25 – Patrick Baggett

Happy Anniversary and many more years to come:

4th –Sandy & Dave Barron
18th – Robert & Jeanne Fujimoto
27th – Kathy & Patrick Baggett

YAMATO BONSAI KAI – 2010 BOARD

President – Tony Hayworth	510-471-9238
Vice President – Karen Paulos	510-410-5782
Secretary – Emiko Rosenberg	510-537-0326
Treasurer – Dave Barron	510-657-6895
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Director 2009/10 – Sandy Barron	510-657-6895
Director 2009/10 – Allen Hightower	510-792-2677

CONTACT US

If you need to mail anything to the club in general, please send to:

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If there is anything you would like to contribute or comment on regarding the newsletter, contact the editor, Noah Hanna, at noah@invalidargument.com

If you have moved, or changed your email address, please notify Yamato Bonsai Kai, so that we may update our contact and mailing list information. Thank

YAMATO BONSAI KAI

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