

BONSAI SOCIETY OF SW FLORIDA, INC.

IT'S (VIRTUAL) SHOW TIME

BONSAI CLIPPER

VOLUME 32 ISSUE 11

Since our annual Show and Sale is canceled this year, we are planning an exhibit with Zoom on November 21, 2020 from 9 AM until noon to view and discuss trees.

Also, photos of trees will be on our web site which can be viewed by others from around the state.

At a minimum, your display should include a tree, in a clean bonsai pot, on a stand, Jita, slab, or table. Moss, accent plants, scrolls are optional. (Hooray...don't have to search for moss!)

Members may display 2 trees.

With the photos, include the common name of tree (botanical name optional), and dimensions height (from pot rim), depth, and width. We normally do not include your name with the tree. It will have a number for the award selection.

There are two ways to obtain photos:

1. Members may photograph their tree. Submit 3 photos max, and use a dark background for consistency. (Please, no garbage cans, white stucco walls or other distracting backgrounds. We want to see your tree.)
2. Or bring the tree to the Garden Council (date TBD) and Phil will photograph. He will have a "studio" set up with lights, background and table ready to go...including a camera. We will also have a couple of spare tables for, use if you need one. Just bring your tree, table, companion and whatever else you'd like.

All photos must be submitted by November 14. Photos should be sent via email to Ham Agnew (hamagnew@gmail.com) and Phil Krieg (phlkrg@gmail.com). Due to time limitations we need to follow this schedule.

"People's Choice Award" will be announced in December, voting using Survey-Monkey. There will be no other awards due to exhibit limitations including no judge.

We will ask BSF and the Garden Council to announce the virtual exhibit to their members. Only our club members will participate in the Zoom meeting to vote on the award. There will be a few invited guests such as President of BSF, our representative from our District and a few others who have supported us through the years like Ed Trout, Adam Lavigne...Feel free to suggest a guest.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

DECEMBER An in person gathering at Lakes Park!. Masks, social distancing, please. This will be a time to re-connect and plan for next year.



ABOUT US:

We meet every third Saturday of each month at the Berne Davis Botanical Garden building located just north of the Edison Estates at 2166 Virginia Avenue. Parking is located on Larchmont street located one block south of Virginia off McGregor Boulevard.

Our website is:

www.bonsaiswfl.org

We welcome everybody interested in this ancient art form to take advantage of our many experienced artists and teachers.

See you soon...

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IMPORTANT REMINDER!

It seems impossible that the year has almost ended. At times during the pandemic it seemed to move at a snail's pace.

It is now time to renew your membership for 2021. We pay dues for the calendar year which begins in January. BSF urges us to have a current, up to date membership list by the first of January. The club will continue with innovative programming next year, either virtually or in person. You can mail your check to BSSWFL PO Box 61945, Fort Myers, Fl 33906-1945. Please enclose a membership form that you can find at <https://wwwbonsaiswfl.org/sites/default/files/BONSAI-MembershipForm.pdf>

November Seasonal Considerations by Adam Lavigne

Ah, cooler days are here, interspersed with those random, cloyingly hot and humid days of course or, worse for the trees, hot, dry and windy.

But it's in this month when people who run inside from the car to the AC can finally use the phrase "This is why I moved to Florida, I love this weather!" What's that mean for your trees?

No more tropical repotting. The same time limit's for super tropicals apply to regular tropicals, six weeks, but the temps are lower. 60°f at night for six weeks following a repot is your template to follow. Daytime temps don't matter: it could be 85 during the day but if it's clear and dry, we can and have lost up to 40° at night.

I once had a discussion with Ted Matson, curator of the Huntington collection in California, about his tropicals, and his regimen for repotting and just winter prep in general. What I learned (besides his aerial root envy on our ficus) is the inability of him to be able to repot his buttonwoods until fall because his greenhouses aren't set up until then and he can't provide that minimum 70°f nighttime temps for the required 6 weeks after repot. His climate is very desert-like and the concept he's dealing with is called "evaporative cooling", so beware here in Florida, because it happens. If it's a clear night, with low humidity, chances are the temps will drop by at least 20°, usually more.

Leave your broadleaf evergreens alone now (ilex, boxwoods, etc), they'll begin their dormancy soon and you'll weaken them for the spring flush if you go chopping them back.

You should be able to begin wiring junipers now though, the sap glow should be slowing and wire application won't harm the bark like when it's moving in a growth phase.

Your deciduous should be looking ratty and dropping leaves, don't worry and don't remove the old leaves for at least a month or more, when we get a real cold front into the 40's. The temps are still warm enough that you could clean off some growth and it'll be wasted when winter comes by, weakening the tree. I believe most winter twig dieback occurs because we just have to have a pretty silhouette to look at through winter so we prune when we shouldn't.

Repotting of junipers can begin late this month thru February, starting with procumbens varieties first, then parsons and Hollywood and other Florida landscape bushes, then shimpaku in January/February. Now is also the best month to collect oak trees.

And if you'd like to make a trip, on Saturday November 14, 10-4, there's a big multi-club auction on the east coast (Cocoa) that should be fun. Live and silent auctions, bonsai friends and camaraderie will be the order of the day.

I am also open for visits here in the nursery. As always, any questions, drop me a line.

NOMINATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



David Bovio and Bill Smith are the Nominating Committee. They are looking for a few good men and women. The Board meets quarterly to help plan programs, manage the money, and discuss other issues to arise. The Board is especially in need of a volunteer to serve as Vice President. The Vice President is responsible for proposing and planning programs for the year. This is not done alone, but with the help of other Board members and club member suggestions.

Now is the time! If you are interested, please contact Dave Bovio (bullydave@verizon.net) or Bill Smith. (smittysmit23@aol.com).



Chinese Banyan *Ficus microcarpa*

In training since 1971. Gift of Mike Uyeno, 1990

<https://www.bonsai-nbf.org/collections#America>

MINUTES
BSSWFL BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 27,2020

VIRTUAL SHOW

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Also photos of trees on our web site

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Or bring the tree to the Garden Council (date TBD) and Phil will photograph

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DUELING DEMOS

Club received \$130 as our share of proceeds from the auction. We paid \$300 at the end of last year to District 7 for trees and fees to presenters. The Board agreed we should reimburse Ham \$80 that he spent for a microphone and headset for the event.

BOARD NOMINATIONS

Bill Smith and David Bovio agreed to be the Nominating Committee

Elections held at November Zoom meeting

MEMBERSHIP

Time to be collecting dues for 2021. Continue to push in Newsletter and email blasts. Goal to have members and dues by December 15, 2020.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

Meet in person in open pavilion at Lakes Park Saturday December 19,2020 from 10 AM until noon.

No pot luck (members can bring a picnic lunch if they want)

No gift exchange

Bring a tree to show (maybe the tree they had in the show)

Juniper Bonsai- My Voyage of Discovery By Jim Bremer

Junipers are the stereotypical bonsai. Show people a picture of a juniper, and many will call it a bonsai (mispronouncing "bonsai", of course). Some outsiders think **only** a juniper can be a bonsai. Striking pictures of juniper bonsai were the inspiration for many of us to become involved in the hobby.

For this reason, it was very disappointing to me to find out how difficult it is to create juniper bonsai in South Florida. All my first junipers died as soon as I tried to develop them. I took notes from my reading and attendance at demonstrations, and tried many variations and alternative methods, but nothing worked. About ten years ago, I came to a demonstration by Ben Oki, a venerable master from California, sponsored by the Society, at which he aggressively styled an unusual California juniper, and I won the tree at the following raffle.

Lucky me !

I followed instructions, put the tree in a sunny spot and watered it regularly. Over the next few weeks, the needles turned a dismal gray, then vivid brown as it died. Knowing what I know now, the tree had probably been killed at the styling; junipers do everything slowly, especially dying. As a result, I gave up on raising juniper bonsai altogether.

BUT- I kept seeing articles and pictures of bonsai juniper-yes, here in Florida. And some local enthusiasts had them. Ernie Fernandez and Dorothy Schmitz exhibited some beauties at the Society's annual shows. There **had** to be a way to do it!

I'm retired, so I have lots of time on my hands (bonsai's a great hobby for such people). I'm also persistent (my wife calls it stubborn), so I read some more, bought lots of cheap material (\$10 landscape junipers in 1 gallon pots at Lowes were a favorite) and decided to try other ways to grow and develop them into acceptable bonsai trees. I learned a lot by following nursery practices and found that only some of the commonly accepted "bonsai rules" had real value.

One point, observed and reinforced many times, was that junipers grow very slowly, and do not accept major shocks well without a lengthy recovery period. Most of my other trees are shooting out throughout the year, and many require 3 or 4 trimmings a year to maintain their shape. An article I read about a Kimura styling of a Japanese tree showed the initial styling episode, and began its description of the second styling "Five years later...". So, I began to develop future junipers with a longer timeline in mind. When I buy a new juniper now, I either repot or wire the tree, and wait at least six months to do the other. (I normally repot first because nursery trees are usually rootbound).

[A sidebar on juniper materials- look for varieties that will do well here, grown and sold by local nurseries. Best values are found at the less fashionable, large-project nurseries, like Battista Brothers. For the same \$10 that I paid at Lowe's, I found 3 gallon Junipers of twice the trunk diameter].

I asked a nursery veteran (who guarantees the trees he installs for one year) **when** to repot (I was also putting some into my yard) and he said "why- anytime !". Conventional bonsai wisdom is that one repots a juniper only in January or February, when they are dormant, but I had already begun doubting that rule. My junipers grew inconsistently throughout the year; I think they are most "dormant" in the hottest months of the year, and after the rains stop. In any event, my new junipers, in pots and in the ground since July, are doing well.

For repotting, I am generally "slip potting" (sliding the tree out of the old pot into a larger one) and pausing only to loosen and spread the roots, cut off **very** long roots or clumping soil clods, and realign the trunk, if appropriate for the future tree I am beginning to see. I then add soil to fill the larger pot, and it is **not** "bonsai soil". My reasoning is this, I repotted all my first junipers in bonsai soil, all of those

Juniper Bonsai- My Voyage of Discovery By Jim Bremer (continued)

Over the years, I have noticed that junipers in my yard seem to grow best when they are not in direct full sun for extended periods, and in fact, many are happy in pretty heavy shade. I now try to put my potted juniper material in part sun or bright shade. I think they like UV rays especially, so recently I've started them at poolside or canal side, where they can get UV rays reflected off water, and they are flourishing.

Next, of course, is to wire and trim the junipers -but as I said, that won't be for a few months. I examine each tree when I water, and when I see that a tree has grown a lower trunk that could be the start of a credible bonsai tree, I note it as a candidate for the next wiring session. Otherwise, let it grow. Remember, once a tree has been wired, trimmed and/or put in a smaller pot it will grow much more slowly.

My next notes will deal with choosing a "style" and wiring and trimming to accomplish it. I'll also describe another new source: "yard yamadori".

Hope you find this helpful, entertaining and/or thought provoking. Send questions to jimbremmer239@gmail.com or call me at 239-482-7543. I'm looking for "bonsai conversations".

BONSAI GLOSSARY

Petiole: In a simple leaf, the petiole is the structure that attaches the leaf blade to the stem.

Perlite: Volcanic ash that has been exposed to very high heat expands to form perlite. It is very light weight and is often used in potting mixes to encourage good drainage, as well as to keep the soil from compacting. Because it is also porous, it helps to maintain soil moisture. Its size ranges, but it is about as large as gravel.

Phloem: A layer of tree tissue just inside the bark that conducts food from the leaves to the stem and roots. See Cambium.

Phosphorous: An essential element of bonsai nutrition and identified by the chemical symbol P. It encourages root development and also ripening of fruit and seeds.

Photosynthesis: The process by which plants convert water and carbon dioxide into carbohydrates, using sunlight as the source of energy and the aid of chlorophyll.

pH: Measure of soil acidity. The pH is a measure of the acidity or basicity (alkalinity) of a material when dissolved in water. It is expressed on a scale from 0 to 14. Roughly, pH can be divided into the following ranges:

pH 0 - 2 Strongly acidic
 pH 3 - 5 Weakly acidic
 pH 6 - 8 Neutral
 pH 9 - 11 Weakly basic
 pH 12 - 14 Strongly basic

Pinching: A technique used to control and shape soft new growth of foliage, by carefully pinching or pulling off small shoots with the finger and thumb in a pinching motion.

Pot: A growing container for bonsai, usually high-fired clay. The Chinese or Japanese word bon means "tray" or "shallow pot". To fully appreciate the beauty of a bonsai, the pot you chose should compliment your tree.

Potassium: The third essential element of plant nutrition and identified by the chemical symbol K. It encourages strong new growth, development of flower buds and fruit formation.

Pot-bound: Refers to the state of a container grown plant where the root growth has filled the container to the extent of eliminating all vital air spaces. When a plant gets too large for its pot, the roots circle around inside the pot and start to restrict themselves. If your plants seem to dry out more quickly than they used to, but are otherwise healthy, they are probably pot bound. There are simply too many roots in the pot and not enough soil is left to hold and distribute water.

Pruning: The process of controlling the shape and growth rate of a bonsai by cutting back the shoots, stems and branches.

Pumice: It's a light-colored volcanic rock containing abundant trapped gas bubbles formed by the explosive eruption of magma. It's often used as a bonsai soil amendment.

<https://www.bonsaioutlet.com/bonsai-glossary/>

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