

BONSAI SOCIETY OF SW FLORIDA, INC.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

BONSAI CLIPPER

VOLUME 33 ISSUE 1

JANUARY PROGRAM VIA ZOOM

JANUARY 16, 2021, we covered both the aesthetics and horticulture of bonsai.

Phil Krieg discussed “Rules of Thumb” - guides for styling a tree.

Bill Smith explained the anatomy of a tree.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

FEBRUARY: Propagation. Seeds, cuttings, and air layering

MARCH: Bonsai tools. What are they and what are they used for? Care and maintenance

APRIL: Soil basics and mixes

People’s Choice Award from Virtual Show



#21 Buttonwood
23H X 27W



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...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
RULES OF THUMB	2
RULES OF THUMB	3

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Finally, 2020 has ended, which means, if you haven't paid your dues, you are late!

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://bonsaiswfl.org/sites/default/files/BONSAI-MembershipForm.pdf>

Runner up People's Choice



#15 Coontie Palm 21H X 36W

Bonsai “Rules of Thumb”

THESE ARE SUGGESTIONS, NOT REALLY RULES. They are generally focused on upright trees, and are based on observations from nature, and conventional artistic norms.

- 1. The base of the trunk (“nebari”) should be the widest part of the trunk, which should taper as it rises from the soil. No foliage should block the view of the trunk from the soil level to about the top third of the tree.**
- 2. The first branch (closest to the soil) should be about a third of the way up the trunk and should be on either the left or right side of the trunk.**
- 3. The second branch up (from the soil) may be either from the side opposite of the first branch, or may come from behind the trunk.**
- 4. The third branch up from the soil should be from the behind the trunk (if the second branch comes from the side opposite the first branch) or from the opposite side (if the second branch comes from behind the trunk).**
- 5. The above branch pattern should be repeated in the upper branches, until reaching the top third of the tree or so, where the branches should radiate from all directions, the foliage of which may/should cover the trunk.**
- 6. Branches preferably originate at the outer edges of any curves in the trunk.**
- 7. Branches should not cross, nor should any branch be directly below another.**
- 8. Two branches should not originate from the same horizontal plane of the trunk (“bar branches”).**
- 9. Branches should diminish in size as they spring from higher planes on the trunk, and should be increasingly closer together as they approach the top.**
- 10. The height of the tree should be 6 to 12 times the width of its trunk at its base.**
- 11. The width of the pot should be about two-thirds of the height of the tree (or if the tree is wider than it is tall, about two-thirds of the width).**
- 12. The depth of the pot should be about equal to the width of the trunk at its base.**

Jim Bremer

RULES OF A DIFFERENT THUMB

Please remember that these are very general “rules”. Each of them is subject to your own vision of your tree. These are tried and true techniques based on many years of experience and produce excellent results. For those who are beginning their Bonsai journey, there are many books on Bonsai but it might be more useful to begin with the Masters’ books: *Techniques I* and *Techniques II* by John Naka, the “bible” of American Bonsai.

Container (Pot/Slab)

Container: depth 1-1/2 times the thickness of the trunk above the nebari. Width of container should fall just inside trees canopy. Trees with curves should have round, oval, or rounded rectangle pots. Strong uprights and heavy trunks should have square or rectangles. Feminine trees use glazed, masculine use unglazed.

A very general rule of thumb: bigger the pot, the longer your tree can go between watering. In certain situations such as extreme heat and low humidity, it makes sense to consider a pot that is slightly larger than usual.

In most cases the ideal length of the pot should be about 2/3 the height of the tree.

If the height of the tree is shorter than its width, the length of the pot should be about 2/3 the width of the spread of the tree.

The width of the pot should be a little narrower than the spread of the longest branches on both sides.

The shape of the pot should relate to the style of the tree. Straight trunk style trees will balance better in a rectangular pot while curved or soft-lined trunk trees will look better in an oval, round, round cornered, or rectangular pot.

A powerful and rugged looking tree should be planted in a similar looking pot. i.e. a pot with hard angles.

Always offset tree position in pot (do not center tree)

Shallow pots DO NOT drain well, therefore soil should be designed for best drainage. Avoid soil particles less than 1/8 inch, sift out anything smaller. The more coarse a soil, the more the tree will grow. When nearing fine refinement levels, use smaller particle sizes. Mix all particle sizes evenly and uniformly. The soil will drain only as well as the smallest particle allows, so stratifying soil size (large on bottom, medium in the middle, and small on top) will keep the water level high. If your intent is to keep the tree wetter (which slows growth) put a small sized particle on the top dressing. If you're in a heavy growth phase, use larger particles and water more frequently.

Styling/Design

A “Banyan” style tree is twice as wide as it is tall.

Avoid “pigeon breast” trunks.

The base of the trunk (“nebari”) should be the widest part of the trunk, which should taper as it rises from the soil. No foliage should block the view of the trunk from the soil level to about the top third of the tree.

The first branch (closest to the soil) should be about a third of the way up the trunk and should be on either the left or right side of the trunk.

The second branch up (from the soil) may be either from the side opposite of the first branch, or may come from behind the trunk.

The third branch up from the soil should be from the behind the trunk (if the second branch comes from the side opposite the first branch) or from the opposite side (if the second branch comes from behind the trunk).

Wire: aluminum should be about 2/3rds the thickness of the branch for best holding power. Copper about 1/3-1/2.

Styling/Design Continued

The above branch pattern should be repeated in the upper branches, until reaching the top third of the tree or so, where the branches should radiate from all directions, the foliage of which may/should cover the trunk.

Branches preferably originate at the outer edges of any curves in the trunk.

Branches should not cross, nor should any branch be directly below another. All branches need direct sunlight to grow.

Two branches should not originate from the same horizontal plane of the trunk ("bar branches"). It stops your eye from continuing to move and follow the trunk line.

Branches should diminish in size as they spring from higher planes on the trunk, and should be increasingly closer together as they approach the top.

The height of the tree should be 6 to 12 times the width of its trunk at its base. "Sumo" style trees are in fashion and their ratio approaches 1:1.

The first branch should be the thickest and longest branch. The second branch should be slightly shorter, and on the opposite side of the tree. The third branch toward the rear of tree and so forth up the trunk. Branches should be more closely spaced as they approach the apex.

Generally the apex (top) of the tree should lean toward the viewer.

Height to trunk ratio of the tree: at the current taste, we exaggerate the height to 1:6. The height is 6 times the width of the trunk.

For balance, and a stable appearance, the center mass at the top of the tree should occur over the center mass of the root spread.

For deciduous style trees, the width of the canopy should be just a bit less than the height of the tree. For sumo style trees, the width and height are the same. For tropical style trees, the width is greater than the height.

When viewing and styling a tree, the viewing height should be about 1/3 up the trunk.

First branch occurs at the first 1/3 or the last 1/3 the height of the tree, should point to a corner of the pot. Avoid splitting the tree in half.

Branches should not point towards the viewer until top 1/3 of the tree.

Horticulture

Major branch cuts: After approximately two years the bark will stop rolling over. Re-cut the wound to reactivate rolling over.

Three or more branches emerging from the same point will eventually develop reverse taper. Taper of the trunk and each branch is necessary and is an overriding goal. Remove one of the three, bifurcation.

If it takes more than one minute for the water to drain from your bonsai pot, it's time to repot.

Root prune conifers when the tree is dormant, deciduous just as the tree is breaking dormancy, tropicals in active growth.

Soil needs three things for best growth. Water retention (particles that hold water within their matrices) Structure (particles that don't break down) and CEC (cation exchange capacity-particles that hold fertilizer). Some soil components have all three characteristics, like Akadama or diatomaceous earth, some, like pumice, only hold water and have structure, some break down, like charcoal or wood barks but also hold hold water and fertilizer.

Always tie your tree into the pot. Cats, squirrels and children don't care about your art.

Phil Krieg



Trident maple

Acer buergerianum

Gift from Qingquan Zhao in honor of Emily Jane McNear, 2001

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

BONSAI GLOSSARY

Tokonoma: A tokonoma is a small raised alcove where individual specimen bonsai are displayed, consisting of three elements, the bonsai tree (man), a scroll (heaven) and an accessory (earth). Tokonoma is a traditional display area in a Japanese house where bonsai are brought inside for a short period and displayed with accent plantings and calligraphy.

Transpiration: The natural process of water loss from the surfaces of leaves and plant stems.

Tufa rock : Pronounced "toofa is a type of soft limestone rock, easily carved and ideal for rock plantings. Tufa is formed when water evaporates from lime-rich waters, leaving calcite (calcium carbonate) to crystallize, often with impurities of iron oxides (rust), which give tufa its yellow and red coloration.

Tachiagari : Movement of the trunk that goes from the rootbase (nebari) up to the first branch.

Variegated leaf: A green leaf design which is blotched, edged or spotted with yellow, white or cream color.

Vermiculite: This is a mineral called mica that is heated and puffed up to form lightweight, sponge-like granules capable of holding both water and air. Useful in rooting seedlings .

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

2021 CLUB OFFICERS

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FREE TO GOOD HOME

Jim Bremer cut back a large Gumbo Limbo tree a few days ago, and stuck 6-7 of the larger cuttings in pots with soil. These are 3"-4" in diameter and are very likely to root and shoot soon. They are free to BSS-WFL members. Call Jim at 239-482-7543 or email for directions to his house (jimbremmer239@gmail.com)

