

SUMMER IN MAY?

BONSAI CLIPPER

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NEXT MEETING IS SATURDAY, MAY 20TH

May 20

Root-Over-Rock Ficus workshop for \$20 each. Members will bring their own rock. The club will provide the Ficus, nurse pot and potting soil.

Display by Justin Michael.

FIG FACTS BY SUE JOHNSON

In our May meeting, the Ficus Root-Over-Rock workshop, we will be using *Ficus benjamina* var. *nuda* -- *Ficus philippinensis*. Ficus are generally easy to grow, especially here in Florida, and many varieties have been incorporated into bonsai with great success. Ficus are often recommended for beginners to bonsai because figs are fast growers and their leaves can be greatly reduced.

In her Tropical Green Sheets I, Martha Goff notes that Ficus are members of the Moraceae family of plants, of which there are over 1500 species. Ficus are native to southern Asia and India, but grow happily in any tropical climate, which makes them the ideal bonsai tree for Florida.

F. philippinensis has large, leathery leaves with long, weepy tips. New leaves sprout as "bronz-rose," according to Goff, but turn dark green as they develop.

According to Jerry Meislik in Ficus, The Exotic Bonsai, "figs have a rare and rather unusual characteristic that helps

them to overwhelm and out-compete neighboring trees, and to survive hostile environments. This feature is their ability to spread laterally over significant distances by forming aerial roots and in this manner to expand across more of their surroundings."

And although not all figs can form aerial roots, Meislik notes that the third largest fig [with aerial roots] listed in the Guinness Book of Records is right here at the Edison Estate in downtown Fort Myers. This is not surprising when one considers that the fig produces a white sap when cut and Thomas Edison was working in his laboratory in Fort Myers to develop a rubber alternative using this sap. Unfortunately, fig sap does not make rubber, but nonetheless, The Edison & Ford Winter Estates property is studded with varieties of fig trees that Edison planted.

For the record, Meislik writes that the largest fig (*F. bengalensis*) is in Calcutta, India and covers approximately three acres. In the May workshop, we will capitalize on the fig's ability to develop aerial roots over a rock that you choose.



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 which is one block south of Virginia off of McGregor.

*Our website is:
www.bonsaiswfl.org*

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

See you soon...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FIG FACTS CONT'D	2
TREE OF THE MONTH	2
FUTURE EVENTS	2

ROOT-OVER-ROCK (CONT'D)

Since Ficus are fast growers, they will probably have to be repotted every year. And since they like the heat, be sure that repotting is done when the minimum night temperature is at least in the low to mid-sixty degrees. That also means that repotting can happen all summer long. Although Ficus are not fussy, and do well with a balanced fertilizer and a well draining bonsai soil, once our temperatures turn steamy, watch for aphids, thrips, and fungus.

May 20th Root-Over-Rock Workshop

Ficus philippinesis, in one gallon pots

Cost: \$10

What to bring with your tools: a rock to wrap

FUTURE PROGRAMS

- **May 25-29** is the 2017 Bonsai Societies of Florida convention. It is a joint convention this year with the American Bonsai Society so it will have a national flavor... **don't miss it.**
- **June 17th** is a caravan field trip to Lake Placid to Mary Madison's nursery. Mary, "The Buttonwood Queen", will give a talk on Buttonwoods, as well as provide a delicious lunch! This will be a great trip and you will enjoy it. We will develop more information as needed as who is driving what cars, what to bring for food and a gift, etc...
- **July 15th** is a Pinch pot workshop with Lyn Baker, cost \$15, sufficient to make three pots.
- **Misc: Need Soil?** Contact Martha Goff before next Saturday's club meeting at 239-332-3850 or email her

marthagoff50@comcast.net

1 gallon bag for \$10, 3 gallon bags for \$25 or a 5 gallon bucket for \$32. She takes credit cards too...

the roots around, and a plastic pot that the rock fits in. (Note: since the trees are already in one gallon pots, this may work unless you have a really big rock. We will provide the potting soil and tape.)



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TREE OF THE MONTH

This is a new feature we hope you will enjoy. It is a photo of one of our member's tree(s). I will begin with one of mine, a Bald Cypress. Please send me a photo of your tree please for next month.

