

This has been one great summer so far – very little extremely high temperatures, fairly good rainfall, and nights with a cool gentle breeze – our bonsai should be enjoying a relatively stress free existence – let's just hope it continues for the month of August. But Mother Nature is probably gearing up for some scorching heat and we will have a hard time keeping our trees watered.

## *Last Month's Early Workshop*

Marty Haber did an excellent job of telling us how to prepare a tree for display.

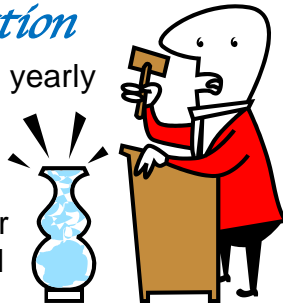
- Selection made at least 6 months before the display date
- Wire if necessary, but remove it a couple of months before exhibition
- If the tree is a fruiting or flowering variety, time the display to take advantage of its display (*and pray that you timed it right – editorial comment*)
- Prior to display remove any dead, yellowing or damaged leaves, flowers or fruit.
- Select the display stand - which should always be used when showing a tree.
- Make sure stand and pot are clean. Oil or polish them.
- You may want to freshen up the moss, or use a fresh layer of bonsai soil.

## *Our Summer Picnic*

Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> is the date for our Annual Picnic and Auction. If you prepay, the fee is \$15.00 and receive one free raffle ticket – or \$15.00 at the door.

## *Our Auction*

We hold two yearly auctions at which we raise the bulk of our income and that enables us to offer the outstanding lineup of presenters at our monthly meetings.



Please be generous and donate some of your bonsai material, supplies, tools, pots or books to our auction – and be equally as generous when the bidding starts.

AND not to be forgotten is Marion Mahoney's silent auction. Please bring any item – bonsai related or not – for the silent auction.

## *Last Month's Meeting*

Susan Amoy worked on a ficus which was originally growing more or less in an upright fashion, and she redirected it into a cascade form by reducing most of the roots on the one side so it could be placed on its side. It was an interesting approach, and one that looked nice when she was done.

Susan has a very upbeat personality and her demos are filled with laughter.

Vinny Kreyling's daughter won the raffle for that tree.

Susan then worked on a group planting of ficus and used hardware cloth to encircle the planting that was being placed on a rock slab by bending the cut edges together. The hardware cloth was folded in half with landscape cloth enclosed between the layers to keep the soil on the slab – this allowed the soil to be mounded up giving the trees good support and allows the roots to develop over time. Susan said in "five years" you will have a nice forest planting. (*hearing that statement is a good reminder that Bonsai is not for those who want/need instant gratification – it takes time and patience to achieve the goal that your mind's eye sees as the finished result.*)

*It was so good to see new faces at our meeting...*

**Sam Lee, Steve & Georgie Gaherty, and Hong Chow** – hope you enjoyed the meeting and please know that you are welcome to attend at any time.

We were all new to bonsai at some time, and in the beginning it may seem overwhelming, but we have all lost more than a fair share of trees learning and doing bonsai, but that is the only way to learn – attend demonstrations, try some of the things you see, read some books on the subject, ask questions, talk to people with some experience – learn from their mistakes and don't be disheartened when you lose some trees – there is not a member anywhere who has not lost trees. I hope you will come back again.



## Tokanoma

Thanks to **Tom Ilijic** for bringing in his olive trees for our Tokanoma display. It's always nice to see what other members have accomplished.

Thanks too to Hal Mahoney for getting members to display in the Tokanoma.

In August The Villandres will have have the spotlight.

## August's Early Work-

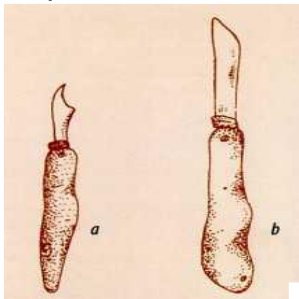
*shop* Jim Byrne will demonstrate thread grafting.

## Grafting...

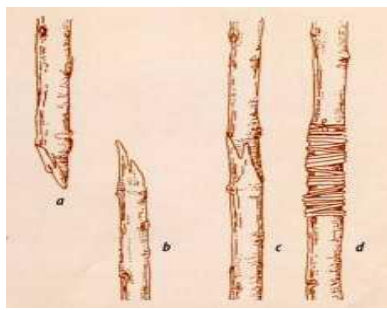
There are many methods of grafting – it can be done as a means of propagation, to improve the strength of a desirable material that has weak roots, or to disguise or eliminate a flaw on a tree or in a group planting.

Grafts need to be carried out with material from the same family – trying to graft an elm on to a maple won't work – but a cut leaf maple onto a field maple will – IF you do it correctly.

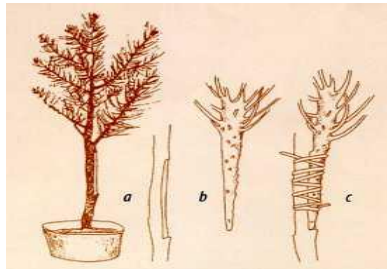
The following illustrations are of the more difficult grafts to achieve, and require a very sharp fine bladed knife.



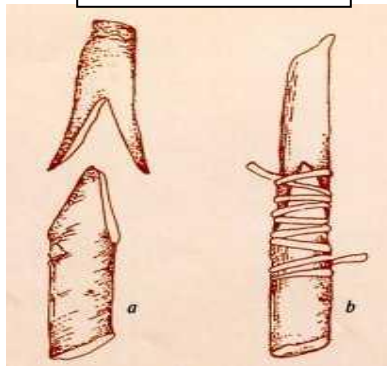
e.  
grafting  
knife



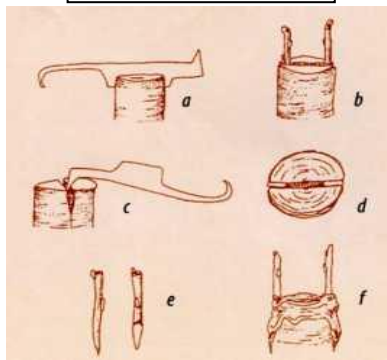
Whip and tongue



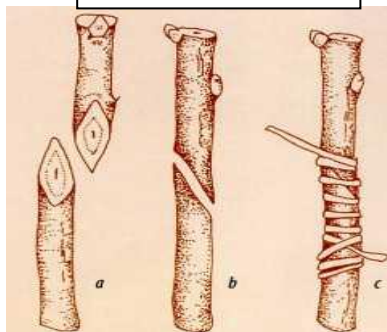
Veneer graft



Saddle graft



Cleft graft



Splice graft

There are two methods of grafting that are reasonably easy to achieve successfully; one is **thread grafting** and the other is **approach grafting**.

Thread grafting is considered the easier of the two, but approach grafting can also be achieved with a good success rate.

The methods shown in the previous illustrations are considered "Free" grafting, using a branch that is completely separate from the tree that will receive the graft – and separated from the source it came from.

In both **thread** and **approach** grafting, the "new" material to be grafted is kept attached to the plant it is growing on. It only becomes "free" after the graft has successfully taken place, which, depending on the species, can be from a few months, to a year or more.

Thread grafting utilizes a branch from the tree on to which the graft will take place.

Approach grafting can be from a donor tree, or from the host tree with the graft being attached at the desired location on the "host" tree.

In approach grafting, if a donor tree is used, (keeping in mind that it must be from the same family as the host tree) it continues to grow in its own pot alongside the host tree. You continue caring for the donor tree as you do for the host tree.

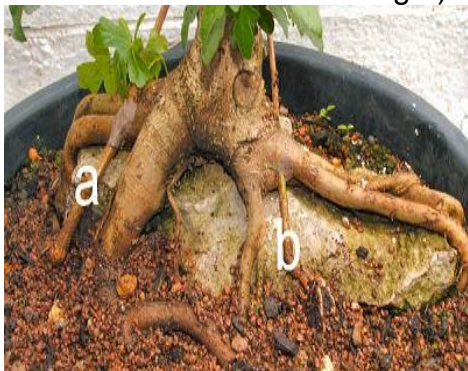
Both grafting methods have advantages, and disadvantages.

In approach grafting, the foliage is not removed and can be used on conifers. Approach grafting is easier to do on trees with larger diameter trunks which can make drilling a hole difficult. You can also make

several approach grafts close together, which you do not do with thread grafting.

Thread grafting with an elongated branch from the tree itself has the big advantage of the characteristics of the “new” branch will have identical bark, leaves, autumn coloration as the existing ones on the host tree, where with a graft from a donor tree, these characteristics will differ to some degree. Generally with thread grafting, the method is almost always successful unless you sever the original connection to the tree before the graft is completely healed. Do not detach all of the redundant side of the graft at once; the scion will still receive a little energy and be supported from the entry side of the branch. Detach the scion from the parent plant but leave a length of the donor branch in position so that the scion can slowly become accustomed to being entirely supported by its new parent trunk. Over the course of 3 or 4 weeks, slowly shorten the donor side until it is finally removed.

Depending on the species, the wait time can be a year or more. (always keep in mind that patience and bonsai go hand-in-hand – you cannot achieve success overnight)



The graft on the left (a) is an approach graft; the graft on the right (b) is a thread graft. Both techniques have been used to

add new ‘roots’ to the tree.



Using a very sharp knife, the cambium layer and bark is cut away along the intended path of the graft, taking care to make a channel just large enough to accept the scion without damaging the bark of the scion itself.



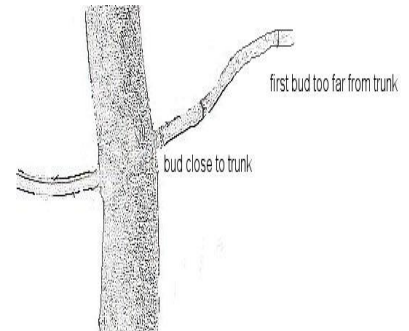
Using a long branch growing from the lower trunk



Using a branch that was allowed to lengthen from the tree’s crown



Using a donor tree as the graft



Place the grafted branch so that the bud/node is close enough to the trunk to achieve eventual good ramification



Successful grafts before being severed from the donor – note the bud node’s relationship to the trunk

## Bonsai Tool Maintenance

Bonsai tools are precision instruments and can be an expensive investment. Caring for the tools properly can help them last and operate properly for many years.

Keep your bonsai tools together. Purchase or make a bonsai tool case or carrier that will be large enough and light enough to hold most if not all of your bonsai equipment. That way you can move your tools easily as you work on your collection. Soft roll-up tool carriers are very handy, and you can keep those silica pouches that come packed in many items, in the various compartments as a help toward preventing rust.

It's a good practice to sanitize your tools prior to working on a tree – and between trees – helps control the spread of disease between trees.

I keep my tools in the garage, and this is the first year that rust on some of them has become a factor – perhaps it was due to the non-stop rain we have experienced in June.

- Inspect your tools after each use, removing dirt and debris. Note any dull blades or nicks. It is easy for the grit from potting soil to dull and damage blades. Never use force when working with bonsai tools. Forcing blades that are too narrow or small will damage the branch as well as the tool. This is particularly true of long reach shears. Before using bonsai wire cutters, verify that the tool is rated for the diameter of the wire you will be using.

- Remove any liquid, sap, or stains promptly with a clean cloth and a soft bristle brush. WD40 can help remove sap.
- Keep detergent, lubricating oil, rust retardant and other useful solvents nearby. When they are handy, we are more likely to do the necessary work to keep our tools in good shape.
- Rust will make a good tool useless in no time. Use rust removers regularly to keep rust under control. If allowed to get out of hand, you will have a difficult time restoring your tools to a useful life.
- Treat newly cleaned tools to a light oiling with a good rust prevention product.
- Keep your gloves clean. This will help you keep dirt, sap, sealant and glue off your tools.
- Wash brushes periodically in warm soapy water.
- Soak root hooks, sieves and screens in warm soapy after each use. Dry well.
  - Lubricating oil
  - Soft cotton cloth
  - Tool box
  - Rust retardant – WD - 40
  - Soft bristle brush
  - Alcohol
  - Bleach

Baking Soda is very helpful in removing sap and pine tar from tools and your hands – it is abrasive enough to do the job, and gentle on hands.

Sharpening tools is a job that is probably best left to a professional sharpener.

Prevention will go a long way to keep every tool in the best possible working order.

## Seeing is Believing

Remember the Azalea that Tom Ilijic won that Bobby Maher styled? – the one with hardly any leaves left! Well here it is one month later. It certainly has leafed out – as we were assured it would.



After the Azalea was styled



After a little over a month

After seeing the e-mailed picture Tom sent, I gave my azalea a real clipping – down to the main branches – I hope mine will respond as favorably.

After all this time doing bonsai, I still have a hard time cutting back ruthlessly – even though I know it is the only way to get the kind of tree I am striving for. We see it demonstration after demonstration, but I still hold back and it just takes longer to get to the style and ramification needed to create a bonsai.