

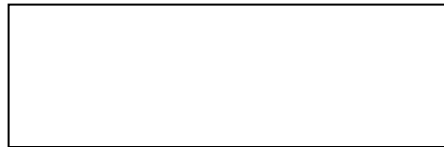
# *Long Island Bonsai Society*

*Monday, May 8, 2011*

*Early Workshop - 7:30 p.m. - Repotting - Tom O'Connor  
Doug Phillips - Lecture Demonstration - 8 p.m.*

*The Classroom - Main Greenhouse  
Planting Fields Arboretum*

*Long Island Bonsai Society  
c/o 38 Elm Street  
Lynbrook, NY 11563*





Doug is going to show us how to improve our bonsai through their roots, how to cut down a training pot to make it better suited to an advancing bonsai, and other things that we not have been privileged to see before.

I am not familiar with Doug Phillips and am looking forward to see what new ideas he is willing to share with us. Sounds like an interesting and exciting program is in store for us.

### *April's Meeting...*

*May's Meeting...* Doug Phillips was introduced to bonsai in 1986 and found the information in the Sunset book he read on bonsai was not enough. Searching for more information on bonsai led him to Midori Bonsai club in 1989. That search led Doug to Kathy Shanner, Les Steele and John Thompson, and he credits them with his early knowledge of bonsai.

All the years since that time, Doug has sought out as much bonsai knowledge and exposure as possible – with lots of experimenting along the way.

In 1991 Doug received an educational grant from the Golden State Bonsai Federation.

In 1996 Doug started specializing in several species that he personally collected - Sierra and California junipers, local Olive trees, and Bald Cypress from Louisiana, also San Jose Junipers, small leaf Olives and Prostrata Junipers started from cuttings. He also started experimenting with fused trunk Trident Maples (remember our workshop with Pauline Muth on fused trunk tridents?) Tridents and Olives are his favorites. While Doug may lack formal bonsai training in Japan with bonsai masters, the quality of his trees, lovingly referred to as '*future bonsai*' speak for themselves, and showcase the extent of the knowledge he has acquired since his introduction to bonsai in 1986.

Chase Rosade always delivers a pleasant easy going program. His experience with bonsai goes back many years – since the mid 1950's, yes more than 50 years - over the years has worked to improve and perfect the art of bonsai. It never ceases to amaze me how he can turn some doubtful looking material into something that has all the earmarks of becoming a specimen bonsai.

The saying a picture is worth a thousand words is never more evident than in the photos that follow.



This large hornbeam has been happily growing to its heart's content for many years, with little real attention to its branching and ramification. It was allowed to grow and develop a trunk and root system that would eventually lead to a decent bonsai, but no real thought was given to-

making it look like a bonsai. (This is where the patience that I mention every so often about the hobby of bonsai comes in to play)



While Chase spoke about hornbeams and elms he idly stripped off little branches that were growing everywhere along the trunk.

After a good bit of the extra stuff was removed,



then came the wiring – Chase wires everything – even knowing that eventually some of that wiring along with the branch it is on is destined to come off as the tree’s style begins to emerge. On deciduous material with generally soft bark

Chase prefers using aluminum wire as it is less likely to damage the bark, and it can be straightened and reused.

Chase was questioning whether the small branch that is emerging from the left would be kept and the final design become a twin trunk style. As a living art, the design for

your tree now, may not be the vision you have for it a few or several years down the road. As living art, a bonsai is never finished forever, but always subject to change whether by your design or that of nature, as parts die, or accidents befall your perfect bonsai. Chase felt that leaving the small branch would help balance the tree, as there was little growth on that side.

It is starting to take shape, and Chase decided that carving the old pronounced cut would enhance the design and add age to the tree. So with the help our Steve B. to steady the tree, he went to work on it with his die grinder.



The grinder tore into the tree and Chase continued cutting till the blunt surface cut that removed the original top blended in to a more believable transition, then he elongated the cut part way

down the main trunk giving it a hollowed out look of an old decaying trunk.

This following picture unfortunately does not show the hollowing clearly, but the transformation provided much in the way of impact. Chase felt that the new owner of the tree should do additional carving out, but the hour was growing late and he needed to finish up the demonstration.

Linda Fleigner looks rather pleased with her prize – and I can’t say I blame her.





**Special thanks** to **Tom Nerrie** and **Steve Borakowski** for carrying out the tree Linda' won to the waiting car – and to think people say chivalry is dead!)

Another club hero is **Hal Johnson** who missed a major part of the March meeting while he waited at the gate to let members know where our meeting was moved to. If that wasn't enough, the next month **Hal** drove to Syosset to buy coffee at Dunkin Donuts because the club's coffee pot malfunctioned.

**Tom Marinace** went to Past President, Tom Ilijic's home to dig up and pot up the trees that Helen wanted to donate to the club after Tom's death. Some are being cared for until our picnic.

**Tom Nerrie** drove to Pennsylvania to pick up the soil members ordered from Bobby Mahler when Bobby was our lecturer. Special Thanks to our **Arbor Day** helpers: **Tom O'Connor, Hal & Marian Mahoney, John & Gabriella Castiglia, Tom Nerrie, Jim & Francine Stopfer, Hal Johnson, Joe coester, Waldo Hutchins, Joe & Dorrie Greco, Marty Haber** and **Linda Fleigner**

When you take the time to do something for someone else, it is often overlooked, taken for granted or even causes you to feel embarrassed when you are singled out for praise, but it is those kinds of gestures that make a club work. Thank you for giving more than just dues to benefit our club, your actions are appreciated, and more heroes are welcomed and needed.

As for benefiting our club, we are in need of people who are willing to set up for coffee and bring desert in for our meetings. Most of us enjoy having these refreshments, but it seems that very few are willing to step forward and volunteer to do it. If each club member, or couple, would take a month, it would be several years before you need to do it again. The only alternative to no volunteers would be no '**coffee and**'. The choice is yours.

The room that we meet in does not come with cleaning service, and generally one or two people stay behind to clean up the debris that is left after a demo, or the coffee cups, and napkins that are left where the user was seated.

Help by staying a couple of extra minutes, offer to help put things away, offer to help Dan bring some of what he has not sold out to his waiting trunk. Ask the demonstrator if they need any help packing up their things. This is OUR club, if you are a member, that means your club, and your club willingly accepts all offers of help –



Rave reviews were given to the The Long Island Bonsai Society Display at the Arbor Day Celebration at Planting Fields Arboretum on the weekend of April 30 and May 1, 2011. The gorgeous set erected by Tom Nerrie, Steve Borakowski and Tom Marinace and graced with the trees owned by Hal Johnson, Waldo Hutchins, Joe Coester, Tom Nerrie, Jim and Francine Stopfer, Martin Haber, Tom Marinace, Steve Borakowski, Tom O'Connor, Hal Mahoney and John Castiglia, a true celebration of the art of bonsai, was warmly received by long lines of visitors.

*Workshop opportunity not to be*

*missed ...* Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 10 am in the Main Greenhouse at Planting Fields under the direction of world class bonsai artist Min Hsuan Lo of Taiwan. **\$60.00** payment in full is required to secure your spot at the workshop – Register with Tom O'Connor 516 352-8453 – oakie 585 @ aol.com. We will be using Shore Juniper We will be using Shore Juniper and the workshop fee includes wire, soil and pot. Limited



Registration. As a reminder, payment in full is required upon registration.

*Nebari* ... or a good root system is one of the primary features necessary to achieve a good bonsai. Sometimes a tree can have a good trunk line, and well placed branches, but if the nebari is weak or unsightly, it will detract from an otherwise good tree.

### Root Problems

1. Uneven root height at the soil line.
2. Lack of taper, chopped off, varying size.
3. Absence of significant roots.
4. Area without roots.
5. Elevated off the soil surface, curving back to trunk, or crossing each other.
7. Multiple layers.

If your tree lacks a good root system, there are a few potential solutions you may wish to try to overcome the 'defect'. Ideally when you buy or collect material for bonsai, you want to choose those without root problems as correcting root fault is difficult, but not impossible to fix.

Ideally a good bonsai should have enough roots to complement the tree's design and to give it a stable appearance, not looking as though it will tip over. Generally roots should taper from the trunk to the point where it vanishes from view.

Roots should appear firmly anchored in the soil, without air spaces between the root and the soil surface – unless it is a root over rock or exposed root style bonsai, with aerial roots such as a fig or banyan tree.

You want the roots to mimic the tree's style – formal upright – formal straight roots; curvy trunk – curvy roots. A tree with thick trunk, should have fairly thick roots.



Looks unstable – like it could tip over.



Appears stable – well anchored.



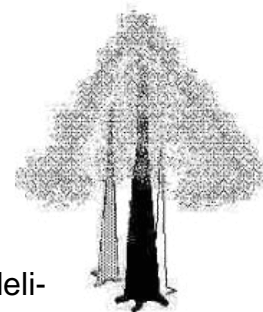
A slanting style's *main* roots should be opposite the lean anchoring the tree, but with roots on the leaning side creating balance and stability.



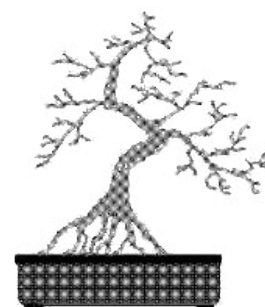
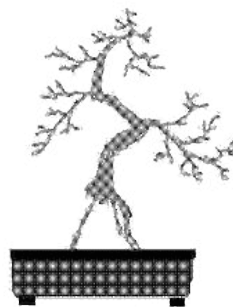
Curvy trunk style should be reflected in the curves of the root system.



Forest style should have roots that radiate out from the trunk, but not overlapping its neighbor.



Literati emphasize the delicate curving trunk line – the movement and the roots should be delicate as well – heavy roots would overpower the trunk.



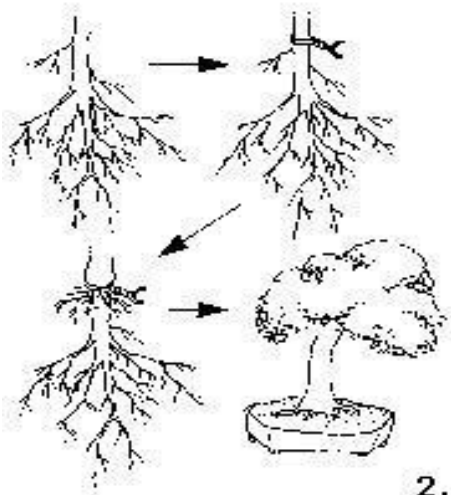
Exposed root style – left example is unstable, not enough roots – the roots should also have developed *bark* that mimics the trunk's bark, or it will look like a "new" bonsai.

*Possible solutions...* if the root is growing higher up the trunk than the others, remove that root, or plant the tree on an angle so the top root is now on the soil's surface, however adjusting the tree's apex will be necessary to give a balanced, stable appearance.

Another solution if your tree has a root that is too heavy, out of proportion with the other roots it may be improved by splitting and wiring each piece to a new location. Eventually the cuts will callous over and appear like the original roots. If you feel that splitting the root might endanger the tree's health, camouflaging the thickness with some moss to minimize its bulk – that will work well for a damaged, or cut off root as well.

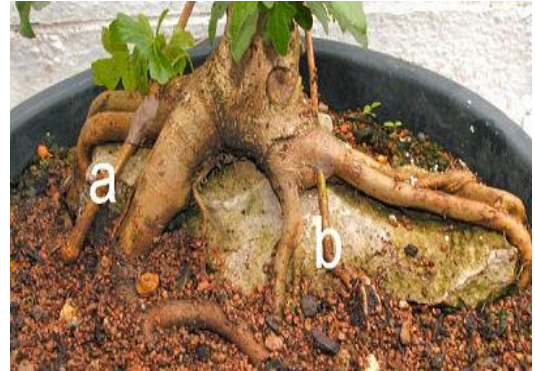
Most deciduous tree can develop a new root system by applying a wire tourniquet, twisted firmly around the trunk. As the trunk thickens, the wire will interrupt the flow of nutrients to the upper portion of the tree encouraging new roots to form just above the tourniquet.

1. Wrap a piece of copper wire all the way around the trunk right at the point where you need new roots to grow. The wire should cut about halfway into the bark; the thicker the trunk the thicker the wire should be.
2. Cover with soil. Do not cut off the portion with the original root stem, the portion below the wire) until enough roots have developed above the wire to support the tree; generally it takes one or two growing seasons.



Another possible solution is to graft on new roots either by a thread graft (Jim Byrne's demo)

or an approach graft using the roots from a seedling of the same genus – maple to maple, elm to elm - ideally, the same species - Japanese maple to Japanese maple, or Seiju elm to Seiju elm. With different species the root texture will be different, and the root will not look natural because it will not closely match the other roots in coloration or surface texture.



“a” is an **approach graft** (joined on the surface)  
 “b” is a **thread graft** (hole drilled through)

Each method has its pluses and minuses. Approach grafts are not as ‘clean’ as thread grafts. Rather than the simple entry and exit hole of the thread graft, an approach graft requires that a strip of bark be removed in order that the scion be attached. Even after the graft has taken and the area has calloused and healed over, the scar can on occasions look unnatural and therefore be too visible. When a thread graft's upper growing portion is severed, there is only a small hole to callus over. If an approach graft fails to take, a large visible scar will remain, with a thread graft, if it fails, the wound will heal quickly and be less obvious.

Another solution to lack of good roots is to join two trees of the same species together, each with less than perfect roots. Wound or scarify the two trunks low down where they make contact, tightly bind the trunks together, in time they will fuse forming a twin trunk style with well distributed roots.

All of these solutions are possible ways to improve on the material you have, but the best solution is to take the time to assess the root system before you buy a tree or collect one from the wild. It's just so much easier to work with good roots, but if your heart is set on a particular tree, try one of the mentioned solutions and judge the results for yourself.