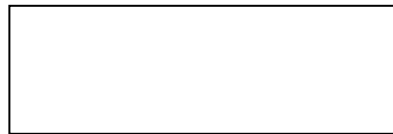


Long Island Bonsai Society
Annual Holiday Gathering
Monday – December 12th – 7:00 pm
The Classroom in the Main Greenhouse

Long Island Bonsai Society
38 Elm Street
Lynbrook, NY 11563



Reminders:

Let Steve know if you will be attending if you haven't done so as yet.

There is no early workshop, and the festivities begin at 7 p.m.

Please feel free to bring along a guest or two – they are always welcome.

Scout up some items for Marion's auction and the main event.

Please pay your dues in a timely manner.

Our November meeting

was another winner – Kathy Shaner always does a bang-up job no matter what material we throw at her. However thanks to Jim Byrne's generous donation the material was anything but a dog. The tree was beautiful by any standards, but in true bonsai artist fashion, it could be more than it already was. So Kathy set about cutting branches left and right; plucking needles, shortening what little was left. With each cut my inner soul let out a little cry for all that gorgeous healthy green foliage that was littering the work table and floor. But as usual, the night's work allowed you to see the tree that was lurking under all that green; allowed you to appreciate the fact that it was planted as root over rock; and that the adage of less is more is true.

Kathy opened up the tree, allowing you to really see what was hidden under all that lush foliage.

Kathy said it is important to study your tree, see what it is telling you, see where it is weak, and see what its strengths are – THEN DO IT. Unfortunately most people do not do it. (I am one of those guilty people who procrastinate, and then that year's window passes, and then the next so I am

happily caring for little trees that are in some nursery containers, or in some insignificant bonsai pot. Developing bonsai takes time, and the truth be told, I do not have loads of time any more, so it is time to bite the bullet – either cut the dickens out of those *wanabes* or take up a new time consuming hobby.

Kathy felt the current composition was somewhat disjointed – you want to emphasize the power of the roots grasping the stone – you need to pull the soil back a little bit at a time to expose the roots.

The tree has a large nebari, but the tree is getting ready for winter, and this is not the time to start exposing the root, but wait until spring, continuing this over the next few years.

Kathy suggests removing the moss in the winter as it usually harbors insects and diseases. The moss will readily grow back in the spring. Your trees will be much healthier if you put them away for the winter in good shape. Look at the underside of the pot for slugs, and pill bugs which love being in the drainage holes. Kathy said the screening material should be flush with the bottom of the pot.

Kathy uses the term rock or stone – when it is plain and non-descript, it is a rock, if it has character and enhances the overall composition it is a stone.

The curve of the main trunk gives the appearance of it having a bar branch, which it did not have.

She is reducing the legginess by shortening branches which will give the tree an older appearance. Pines generally are good about back-budding when you allow light to reach into the tree's interior. Remove overly strong branches. You should look at your tree from a distance, not up close – you will see more; look for balance, refinement – see what is too heavy or out of place. (Again we hear "Let the tree talk to you") You may learn that the front is not the front at all – don't be afraid of choosing a new front. Change is good, sometime it is even great.

Using copper pipe cleaners in ½ and 2/3 inch size are good when working on jin. If you rub with the grain, the soft tissue is removed, leaving the harder grain, and it gives a much better illusion of age. Using power tools remove that grain and produces a more artificial feel to the jin.

A question was raised as to whether cutting big branches at this time of year was a problem. Sap loss is more of an issue in the spring, so this is a good time to prune. Yatsubusa black pine produce short internodes with buds very close to each other.

You want to be building layers on your tree. Layers formed by the major branches, but also layers within the individual portion of the branches themselves. Carefully separate the two needles – you don't want to actually pull them out – often encourages back budding.

We were reminded that you cannot keep everything the tree produces – by only keeping what is needed, you will improve the health of the tree – everything you do should be with the goal of achieving good inside growth.

- Mason bees are great pollinators. They are 'reared' in straws and kept refrigerated and can be mail ordered. They are especially useful on fruiting trees.



This pine shows great health and vigor, but the design is lost beneath all the foliage – but not when Kathy gets through with it.



The tree has been lightened up and a large branch removed allowing the tree to be seen.



Lucky Liz Travers was the raffle winner of our demo tree. After the meeting Kathy gave Liz lots of information and pointers on the care of her newly won treasure.

Prior to our main program Hal Mahoney shared with us his vast storage of knowledge gained of many years of experimentation.

Going on a long vacation? Hal offered his solution of his and Marion's three month escape from our cold winters. He uses burlap as a wick to take up the water into plant's soil.

Hal places one watertight container filled with water, than places a second container holding the plants over the first. Cut burlap strips that extend about twice the depth of the container, place the burlap wicks in the bottom of the plant's pot (through the drainage holes) capillary action draws the water up as the plant needs it. If you don't have a second container, you can suspend your plants on a wire or plastic mesh shelf. (This set-up works for Hal for the entire period that he is away – he has someone come in a check on the plants, but he also states that the heat is turned way down, and the water does last without replenishing for the entire time he is away.)

Hal told us that strawberry plants make nice accent plants and he found one that produces red flowers instead of the usual white. One plant will keep sending out runners, so in no time you will

have more accent plants than you need.

Another one of Hal's tricks of the trade is to use lids from all sorts of plastic containers as water catching trays under your plants.

Hal uses Titebond (or other exterior adhesive) and peroxide to treat cuts on branches as a good way to allow the tree to heal over the cut.

Gutter nails, or chop stick are great to work the soil in and around your newly transplanted bonsai.

And last but not least Hal reminded us of his favorite way to air layer a bonsai. He cuts down the side of a plastic pot, cuts a hole in the bottom large enough to just accommodate the branch you are layering. Fill it with your bonsai soil of choice (his is 50/50% sand and peat) – secure the pot to the tree using six nails as a shelf. Cut a ring of bark off the tree and treat the upper portion only, with rooting hormone. March is the best month to undertake air layering. New roots will form at the top end of the ring of bark, and when the roots are sufficiently developed – usually by the end of summer, the cutting can be cut off the parent tree at the bottom of the plastic pot without disturbing the newly developed delicate roots. Let the new tree develop in the

pot for another year or so, and then treat as any other healthy bonsai in training.



John Castiglia brought in a beautiful cork bark pine (the photo does not capture the bark's beauty – unfortunately)



Marty Haber brought in a tree that he has cared for and develop for over 20 years. It was originally half dead with a great deal of rot and decayed wood. The live vein is still thriving and keeping the upper growth health. It is obvious that Marty gave this tree love and care over all these years.

Annual Holiday Party – Monday, December 14th

7:00 pm

In the Main Greenhouse (our normal meeting place)

If you have not done so already – please let Steve know

(631-499-0363)

you are coming so he can plan on the food that is needed.

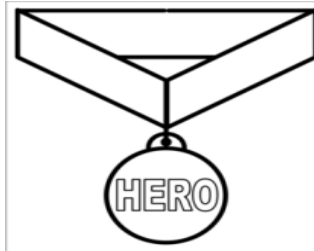
The cost is \$15.00 per head – payable at the door.

We will have our winter auction, and Marion will have her silent auction as well – so please look around and bring in some items for either or both auctions.

Remember it is through this and the summer picnic that we raise most of the funds needed to provide the quality speakers that you have grown accustomed to having each month.

As this year draws to a close, it is time to renew your club membership. Jim Stopfer is always ready and willing to accept your dues check or cash.

We will be holding a board meeting on Saturday January 7th at 11 am at Steve's home. Please be kind enough to RSVP at (631-499-0363)



We can't exist as a club without the help and dedication of our members.

Special thanks go to Jim Byrne for donating a beautiful tree for Kathy's demonstration.

Thanks Tom Nerrie for constructing planter boxes for our special March program.

Thanks to Hal and Marion Mahoney for the coffee and set up and the festive turkey display.