

Long Island Bonsai Society

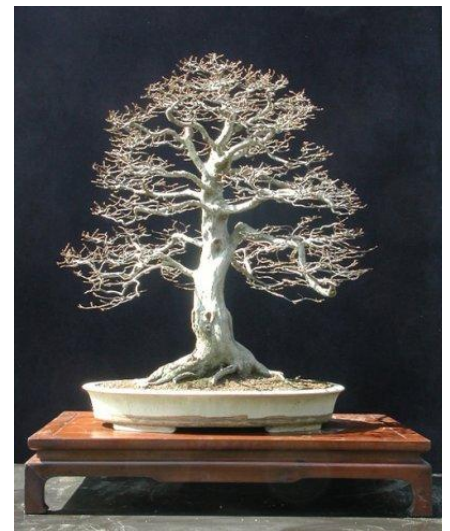
Monday - April 11, 2011

Special Auction - Tom Ilić's Trees - 7:30 pm

Lecture Demo - Hornbeam by Chase Rosade - 8 p.m.

Main Classroom - Planting Fields Arboretum

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



Hornbeams change with the seasons, but their beauty and grace is ever present

Our March meeting...

was somewhat of an adventure – we were locked out of the entrance to Planting Fields, - which was bad enough. We finally found a staff member to open the entry gate for us and we thought things were looking up. Then we found the Class Room in the main green house, our meeting place, also locked, and our helpful employee did not have a key to that location. He did shepherd us to the small meeting room at the Hay Barn. We helped Dan repack his truck with all the things he brought for his sales table, we scrambled to get our refreshments and unfortunately, because we lost so much time, Tom O'Conner was unable to do the early workshop, he prepared for.

Sorry Tom – all that prep for nothing.

The best thing about the evening was we had several new visitors – who were great sports about the evening's glitches. Hmm perhaps the drawing was rigged, and that was how one of guests won the Azalea that Bobby Mahler styled during his presentation of azalea as bonsai. We were trying to make it up to them. Life is always a mixture of black and white – Yin and Yang.



Hal and Camille were good sports, and had our refreshments ready in spite of the glitches

Bobby Mahler has been our speaker in the past, and once again, he did not disappoint us. One of Bobby's favorite material to work with is Satsuki azalea. The word Satsuki means the number five, and in Japan and in our area Satsuki flower in May = #5. Bobby went on to tell us that azalea root easily and can be cut back ruthlessly; they carry a reddish bronzy coloration throughout the winter and are hardy in Zones 7 and 8, Chinsan variety is hardy in zones 6 and 7. Azalea can be somewhat brittle, and wiring needs to be done with care while dormant; Bobby felt clip and grown is an easier way to style them, Regardless of the variety all Azalea should be pruned immediately after flowering. Bobby actually feels that you should enjoy the blossoms for one week, removing them behind the leaf break. You can repot after complete defoliation. Bobby recommended using Kanuma

soil, which is a volcanic soil from Japan that acid loving plants such as azalea thrive in. He also pointed out that azalea do not like major change in soil types, so do it gradually. Repotting should be done every two years.



Azalea have fine hair like roots, forming dense mats. When repotting, cut around the outer edge of the root mass, and scrape the bottom of the root mass, and then refill the container with new soil.

Prune the top portion of an azalea the least, as it is the weakest part of the plant, and may not bud back.



It is not uncommon to have die-back in the mid upper portion of older plants. Bobby said not to drastically cut those roots that go straight down, as they are the ones that feed the top of the tree.

The cambium layer is relatively thin and you need to make a clean cut, using sharp tools. He recommends sealing cuts with Elmer's glue mixed with a fungicide, as Azaleas don't heal over well.

Shade Azalea from the sun during the high heat of summer, but spring and fall they want to be in full sun – 8 to 10 hours will give you great results.

If you are using starter material, you can cut it back to the main trunk in May, and it will bud back well if cuts are sealed. In the second year, you can place it into a bonsai container for a mamé size bonsai.

Bobby gave us his recipe for organic fertilizer consisting of:

11 parts cotton seed meal
5 parts bone meal
1 part muriate of Potash

Add and mix in just enough water until it has the consistency of you "ear lobe"

Add two tablespoons of Seven insecticide (not available for sale in New York, but is available mail order over the internet – Shhh it's a secrete)

Secure a cover of wet burlap over this mixture, and store it away from your home, as it will smell awful and attract flies and if not covered well, maggots as well!

Let it ferment for a week or two, pour in to a tray or other

item to hold the mixture until it dries out. Then cut it into cakes. The feeding action will last about one month. You cannot "burn" your plants with too many cakes, as once they have fermented, they will only feed your bonsai.

If you are brave enough to try this concoction, more power to you, and let us know how you made out, and if your neighbors and family are still speaking to you.



Denise and Gilbert Rodriguez are the winners of Bobby's styled azalea - Congratulations!

April's meeting...

Our long time friend Chase Rosade will be our demonstrator using hornbeam.



Chase lives and works at his home in Bucks County, Pennsylvania where he purchased 10 acres in 1970, and as the saying goes, the rest is history.

Chase's studio offers classes, and all types of material for bonsai, tools, soil mixes and just about anything else related to bonsai.

Rosade Bonsai Studio is a reasonably short drive, just over the New Jersey border. Chase is fond of saying whatever tree he is currently working on is his favorite tree.

Arbor Day Celebration

Planting Fields Saturday, April 30, and Sunday, May 1. We need bonsai to display, and again we will have a special Beginners Table, where newer bonsai artist can display their trees. Be proud of your work - we all were beginners at one point.

Also needed are plant sitters for both days. We hope to be able to display some bonsai in an outdoor setting as well as those on display indoors.

This year our club will be in the South Lounge of the Hay Barn, a location that should attract more viewer traffic than we had at last year's location.

Please call Francine at 516 593-1855 to volunteer your services and your trees.



*Our sincerest
condolences Waldo
whose wife, Carol died
at home on February 1,
after a courageous bat-
tle with cancer.*

*Sadly our past presi-
dent, Tom Ilijic has
passed away on March
26th after a long illness.*

*Tom was a three
term club president and
always a very willing
worker. He did not let
the use of his motorized
wheel chair slow him
down, while his health
issues kept him from our
meetings lately, he still
determinedly worked on
his trees, and he had
some wonderful trees.*

You'll be missed.

As a result of Tom's death, Helen felt she would not be able to care for the trees in his collection and asked that we sell them at auction at our next meeting. There is between 10 and 15 trees.

While the reason for the trees to be sold is sad, it is an opportunity to obtain some lovely trees, and to honor Tom's memory.

These trees will be sold at auction – Cash and carry - to the highest bidder prior to the main lecture demo.

Unfortunately I do not have a material list at this time, but I am sure you will see something worth bidding on. Tom had some good trees.

The LIBS Bonsai Library

The LIBS library has books, DVDs, and some ancient VHS video tapes. All are available for loan. As the current librarian, I have elected to tackle reorganizing the video tape collection. At this time I am inventorying them to generate an Excel® listing. Attention: Lenders with video tapes, please e-mail me with the information from those tapes (i.e., Title, author or artist profiled, volume number). My e-mail address is: Hjijohnson1@optonline.net Alternatively, leave the information on my voicemail at (516) 624-0623.

At the next meeting please return all tapes so I can assign them with the new numbers.

Thank you. Hal Johnson



Just a few of the items Dan has on his sale table – we are glad to have some good material to add to our collection. Thanks for bringing in a selection of bonsai things each month. We appreciate it.

Save the date...

Sunday, June 12th we will be having a workshop led by Min Hsuan Lo at Planting Fields. He is touring the USA and our club was fortunate enough to be able to make arrangements with Pauline Muth to have him as a speaker.

Min Hsuan Lo is a headline speaker at conventions around the world, and the workshop is an opportunity that may not be available to us again.

To date we do not have a price or know what material he will be using.

Developing a young tree or seedling into a bonsai...

Young trees planted into a bonsai container early in their development generally will take a long time to develop a mature thick trunk (what we desire in our bonsai). Growth will be slow, and many years need to pass before you develop that maturity.

Once a tree is placed in a small pot, or bonsai container, the roots become restricted, and with the necessary pruning to balance growth to a small container, branch and trunks will develop very slowly with most species.

Many trees that you see with large “old” trunks were develop in the ground – as is the practice in Japanese bonsai nurseries.

New growth develops during the growing season, as part of the new growth, the trunk’s girth increases to feed the new shoots and leave. The more new shoots and leaves, the greater the need for new wood to feed them. It is a symbiotic relationship – each directly affects the other.

Initially you want to develop a good trunk with strong roots – the rest can come later. If the tree is allowed to grow freely, it will thicken faster than one that is in training (pruning). The best way to provide unrestricted growth is to plant it directly into the ground. A large contained is the second choice, but there is some scientific dynamics that differs when planting in anything other than directly into the ground. (I guess Mother Nature knows best what trees really need) The only time field growing would not apply here is of course with tropical material – but they could be placed in large growing boxes, and moved indoors if you have the space.

Generally, a tree will be just acclimating to its new planting location for the first year – the same as any garden plant. It is the second year that you will start to see strong growth and increase in the truck diameter. Usually by the third year, it will be growing vigorously and can reach 10 to 12 feet (not exactly bonsai size).

If you allow a tree free rein in the ground, the roots can get out of hand and you want to try to develop the radial surface structure that is so important to a good bonsai. You might want to consider planting your tree over a tile or flat stone so that the roots spread out rather than grow downward. Planting over a tile or stone will make it easier to dig out the tree, in addition to developing a better surface root pattern.

Another benefit of field growing is that you have minimal care requirements, watering is generally taken care of by the natural rain cycles. But if you root pruned your tree when first placing it into the open ground, you want to make sure that the soil stays moist as deep as the now pruned root mass – you don’t want the shallow root system to become dry. Now to confuse things a little, you do not want to keep the ground too moist because you do want the roots to grow outward and to an extent downward in search of moisture. The planting beds should have good soil, with good draining, with lots of composted material added.

You may need to stake taller trees as the root system you are developing will be shallow, and the tree will not be stable against strong winds. With the exception of conifer trees, let the tree grow unchecked – branches everywhere, but once the tree is getting to the trunk diameter that you need, those branches will be too thick to be in scale with a bonsai and you will be removing them, and then begin to develop the branch structure on the now thick trunk with radiating surface roots. If you prune

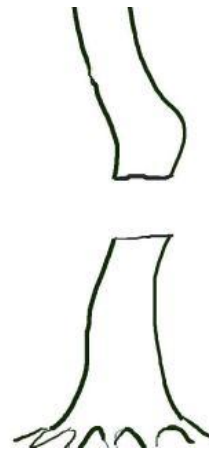
while you are trying to develop the trunk, you will be slowing down the trunk development.

Root pruning is necessary, and should be done in early Spring, but pruning only just enough to develop good nebari, but keeping in mind less roots, less growth, less trunk diameter. – just like should be carried out in early Spring as with bonsai. Every second or (preferably) third year, lift the tree and look at the roots. Remove roots that are not suitable, crossing over other roots, straight roots without branching or taper, etc – if not planted over a slab, or tiles, any overly long downward roots should be shortened. It is probably best to remove only a couple of major roots in any one year.

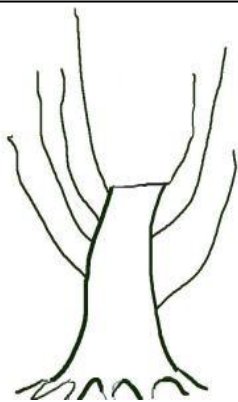
In the last year or two before you are planning to remove it from the ground and place it into a container to begin styling and developing your tree into a bonsai, cut around the base of the tree with a sharp spade in early Spring to encourage finer root near the trunk. Then you care for it as though it were a bonsai and work on branch placement and ramification as well as leaf reduction. Hopefully in a few more years, you will have transformed a young tree into a handsome bonsai, with the hopes that each additional year will only improve the vision you had for that particular seedling



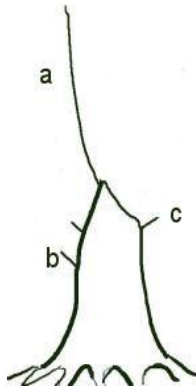
You are striving for a thick trunk with healthy root system. The fastest and best way to obtain it is with ground or field growing,



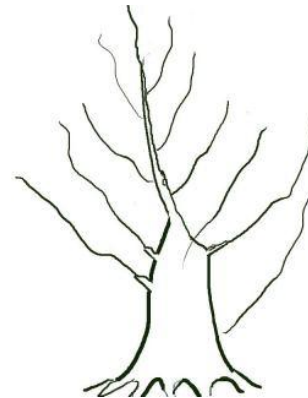
When trunk has reached the thickness you want, you'll cut it off, then work on developing taper, branches where you want them, and then finally you work on ramification



a- new apex
b and c - branches



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Eventual taper, and ramification