

Long Island Bonsai Society

Monday - July 14, 2014

Early Workshop 7:30 pm - Dan Skabelkis - Unusual Plants
for Bonsai

Main program - 8 pm - Mike Lane - Green Island Ficus

Island Bonsai Society
PO Box 308
Malvern, NY 11565



*One could envision taking a nap
or reading a juicy novel under
the shade of this magnificent
tree... of course you would
have to be only a couple of
inches tall.*

Summer is underway, with lots of sunshine and a good bit of rain – but it would be nice if the rain could be spaced out a little more evenly – at least we are not having flooding or droughts as is the case with other parts of our country. I wish I could say I was all unpacked and settled-in in my new home, but that is not the case – too much socializing and not enough keeping to task. My computer and printer have been giving me some difficulty of late – must know I am secretly lusting after an upgraded system.

July's meeting...

Our main meeting at 8 pm follows the 7:30 Beginners Workshop and will feature Mike Lane, a presenter new to us will be doing a program using a green island ficus tree. Mike is a young instructor and bonsai artist working at Wigert's Bonsai Nursery in Fort Myers, Florida. We hear lots of positive feedback about Mike and look forward to seeing the world of bonsai through the eyes of a new and upcoming artist. Thanks to Francine for arranging this for our club.

Our Beginners Workshop/Early Workshop begins

at 7:30 and will feature Dan our own member/vendor. His topic will be ***Some Unusual Plants for Bonsai***. With any luck he will be bringing some of his subject matter to his sale table. Dan always has something nice to offer for sale. Having a vendor at our meetings is such an asset to our members – both old and new. We never have enough bonsai material, and when you are new to the hobby it is often difficult to find suitable material to work with. So thanks Dan for the workshop and for all the wonderful things you bring to our meetings.

Hope that vacation travel plans won't keep you from this meeting

Reminder

Saturday, August 9th at 12 noon will be our Picnic and Summer Auction at Planting Fields – Save the date and start gathering items that you would like to donate to the auction.

Our auctions are always a good opportunity to increase your collection of started bonsai, new material to work with, or find some great pots and other bonsai related materials at prices that can generally be considered “a steal”.

We have several newer members and I hope they will come and take advantage of this opportunity and also to give us long time members some stiff bidding competition.

Mark your calendars for August 9th

Since retiring I no longer have the option of printing our Newsletter at no cost to the club.

Currently we have 10 members without e-mail addresses and I will gladly send hard copies to those members – hopefully continuing to offer it in color.

I had to re-create the club's contact list and I hope everyone's Newsletter reaches them on time.

Bob BonGiorno's ad for his Suburban Bonsai Nursery in Dix Hills, NY has been changed to reflect a 10% discount given to club members. Bob has been making some changes to his bonsai offerings and visiting his nursery is always a nice adventure – not to mention not hard to find something to add to an ever increasing bonsai collection.

John and Gabriella Castiglia along with several of Martin Haber's family members made donations to our club in memory of Martin – one of our club's founding members.

Donations can always be made to our club – whether in remembrance, in honor, or just as a "special thanks" and go to continuance of our mission to spread the knowledge of bonsai.

Our Newsletter...

Don't forget it needs a new editor starting January 2015. Over the years the Newsletter has taken many forms – each unique to its editor – so there is no reason to hesitate taking over, or to feel

this is the format you must follow. Please consider being the Newsletter Editor as your way of contributing to our club, helping it stay strong and grow.

Our May meeting featured Frank Mahalic, a second generation bonsai artist. His dad, Tony, specialized in forest and rock style plantings while Frank prefers single tree styles. In addition to his bonsai skills he is a skilled artist with metal casting as shown below and he has translated a child's book about bonsai.



Hal did an early workshop using a rather tall cryptomeria (Hal always likes a challenge.) Hal is showing where he would air layer this tree resulting in a "free" bonsai to work on in the future.

Hal gave out an excellent handout explaining the where and how to do layering. By exposing the cambium layer, the upper portion of the tree is capable of forming new roots which, when large enough, will sustain the air layer independently.

Hal used Shultz root hormone on the upper portion of the cut that encircled the trunk. Hal cut down one side of a plastic pot so it fit around the trunk –stapling it back together, drove three nails into the host tree just under the pot to support the air layer keeping it from moving which can damage new young roots. Hal filled the pot not with his usual 50/50 peat and filter sand – but adds 1/3 MORE sand for this purpose.

Even though Frank prefers working on single larger trees he did a group or forest planting as his demo.

Starting a group planting requires a bit of thinking and planning – is it going to be a near view, or distant view –

Trees are affected by their growing condition – do they have room to spread out, do they have lots of sun and water, or are they competing with their neighbors? Your composition should reflect the effects that nature has on it. (Forest or group planting are often a good way to use trees that lack the characteristics that a good bonsai needs to become a focal point or specimen tree.)

Frank uses spacers to help keep his group in the format he has in mind (spacers can be pieces of wood, or cut offs from the tree itself if strong enough) Trees are also wired into groupings which will help keep the design until the individual tree roots intertwine and become a cohesive unit rather than several individual trees trying to claim a piece of the real estate for themselves by pushing the weaker tree out of the way.



A shallow tray is generally used for group or forest plantings. Each of the holes in the tray is covered so the planting medium stays put and wires are inserted up through the holes. These wires will be used to anchor the arranged trees in place.

When transplanting, waiting at least 2 years after original planting – keep the grouping together – treat as if one tree.

A muck wall is formed around the shallow tray which will allow enough additional planting mix to be added to give the roots a place to grow in to and thrive. (muck is generally a mix of clay and peat moss – each artist has their own preferred “formula”)



Sand was added to replicate a stream, accent plants and mosses were placed to complete the scene.

Paul won the evening’s demonstration material.



June's Meeting...

Our president, Chris gave us a great early workshop using a variety of sedum in a couple of broken clay pots.



Attractive arrangement – Thanks Chris.

Succulents have become a very popular choice for home and garden so there are loads of choices if you want to try your hand and a similar creation.

Our main speaker for the evening was one of our regular visitors – Kathy Shaner. Kathy presented part one of a two part program. *(it is not practical or wise to do everything that is needed to style a tree at one sitting)* Generally speaking it is wiser, and better for the tree to do the styling over a period of time.

The Hinoki Cypress was personally selected by Kathy from Brussels Nursery for the evenings demo tree. Kathy also selected a mugo pine which was raffled off at the end of the evening as the Hinoki will be worked on again during an autumn meeting.

Hinoki Cypress do not bud back readily so you need to increase the light that reaches the interior of the tree to maintain the branching and buds that are there. In February or March each frond should be cut way back and pluck off the new growth. You need to make “air spaces” between the branches.

Kathy reminded us that while the rules we know, heard about, or follow should only be guidelines – listen to the tree and do what it is trying to show you. You will have a much better tree when you develop the personality of the tree rather than adhering to rules.

Low growing branches can be treated as “trunks”. When you do cut off a branch leave a little bit of a stump initially – about 1 ½ inch long – trim some of the bark off *(which is easier when bark is fresh)* but leave some around the collar – that will result in better healing with a smaller wound.

The nebari *(roots)* should be the deciding factor as to the tree’s “front”. Use caution when checking out the roots as they are soft and can easily be damaged.

Hinoki grows with opposite branching with flat hand like foliage. When you cut off some of the existing growth, new more denser growth will develop.

Kathy recommends leaving some “extra” branches when initially styling as you might need or want them in the future. In addition to that possibility, the extra foliage feeds the tree which is a definite benefit to the tree’s health and survival.

Hinoki branches take a long time to set, so you will need to reapply wire in the future. But you also want to wire the tree somewhat loosely, as it grows fairly quickly and the wire can cut into the bark in a very short time.

Kathy raved about the virtues of having a **Masakuni plier** as one of the most important and useful tools you can own – any will last a life time with proper care.

Use the plier to grasp the wire that you wrapped around the branch when bending a branch is necessary. Don't bend the branch itself. . Kathy made that method look effortless when she achieved several graceful bends on a long branch creating of a more compact graceful arching branch.



Bar branch – if exactly equal in size and thickness and come from the same point on the trunk make one shorter and twist its orientation making the bar branch less obvious.

September is a good time to do heavy growth pruning. In the Spring do plucking of the new spring growth. Hinoki like lots of water, but must be in a free draining mix – they are also heavy feeders.

Kathy reminded us to “Learn to respect the material you are working on – not how much you can do at one time.”

The tree was returned to its original pot and seated by dropping the pot multiple times on the floor. You want to eliminate air pockets (or wake up any of us who may have dozed off).

We have indoor greenhouse facilities for winter storage for both tropical and hardy plants.

We also carry hard to find specimen plants for your garden.

All Club Members are entitled to a **10% Discount** on all bonsai related purchases.

Suburban Bonsai

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Sun & Holidays 10:30-2:30



Kathy points out the virtues of this tree, and also the styling option it presents when you utilize a good size lower branch as a trunk rather than removing it.



The raffle tree was given minimal styling and will develop into a nice shohin tree in a relatively short time.