

Long Island Bonsai Society

Monday - January 13, 2014

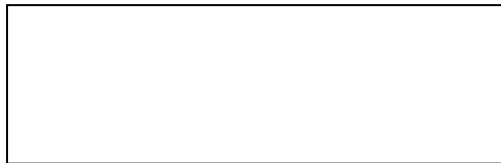
No Early Workshop/Beginner's Corner

Vin Russo - Ancient Horai Black Pine 7:30 - pm

Main Classroom

Planting Fields Arboretum, Oyster Bay, NY

Long Island Bonsai Society  
PO Box 308  
Malvern, NY



*First snow  
the neglected yard  
now perfect*

## *December...*

In lieu of our monthly demo meetings, we had our holiday party and winter auction. A good time was had by all – and a better time was had by those who were the successful bidders on some really nice items.

Rose Bringer, a former member who along with her husband Peter were long time members of our Society. Rose left Long Island quite a number of years back after Peter passed away. Rose was kind enough to contact the club and donated much of what remained of their bonsai business. We truly appreciated her generosity to our club. Many thanks has to go to Hal and Marion who picked up those items from Rose's daughter's home and brought them to the auction.

Special thanks too needs to go to our auctioneers, Tom and Dan as well as to Gabrielle who kept track of the bidding and tallied the accounts. Our president, Chris arranged for the food which we all enjoyed. Thanks too to Ceil who took care of Marion's silent auction.

I would be remiss if I did not thank you our members for supporting the auction. The proceeds were \$120 from the silent auction and \$1,709 from the regular auction.

## *Upcoming in February...*

Once again we will be asking members to bring in their stones (suiseki) for display and for those willing to tell where or how these treasures were obtained. Suiseki is a hobby that is closely aligned with Bonsai.

Many of us have included Suiseki in our addiction to bonsai. The good thing is stones do not require much care and attention.

So please bring in a few stones to share with our members.

## *January...*

We will not have an early meeting as such in order to allow Vin Russo the time needed to do his program. Vin has been with us before and the work he does is always first rate. His program will feature ancient Horai style with black pine.

At the conclusion of Vin's program we will raffle off the evening's tree.



Horai trees are designed to be representative of a dragon, with a twisted body covered with scales (bark) and spines (Jins) mysteriously obscured in places by the wild clouds (foliage).

200 years ago, commercial growers in Japan in Honai specialized in creating this style and named it Horai after the legendary mountain island of perpetual youth.

As most of you are aware postage is once again increasing at the end of this month.

I am still providing hard copy of our Newsletter to 28 addresses and am asking that if at all possible could you please provide me with an e-mail address instead of receiving a printed copy – [dfleck@manhassetlibrary.org](mailto:dfleck@manhassetlibrary.org)

In addition to the postage increase I am seriously entertaining the thought of retiring by midyear and will no longer have the ability to print the newsletter without cost to the club as I have done since taking the **TEMPORARY** position of news editor several years ago.

I think most of us would agree spending the club's funds on programming is better than paying for printing and postage.

But if you still wish to receive a hard copy, I will do so.

So far our winter is off to a furious and somewhat erratic start – great fluctuations in temperature, lots of rain, strong winds, snow, and now bitter cold.

In spite of all that Mother Nature throws at our bonsai they usually remain snug until spring wakes them from their winter's sleep.

In one way it is kind of nice to have the winter "off" and let nature take care of them, but our display benches look so lonely and bare without their presence.

## *How I spent my winter vacation...*

While it is true that unless you have tropical/indoor bonsai, you have a bit of time on your hands during the winter. Now some of our more organized members spend this time mixing various soil combinations in preparation for late winter/early spring repotting chores. Others are busy cleaning tools, sharpening those that have become dull with use, replacing others that are no longer serviceable; making sure they have plenty of wire and screening on hand; maybe even planning what else to buy to add to their collection; read those books and magazine articles that will help increase their bonsai knowledge. Then there are other members who while away the winter and scramble at the last minute to get try to repot those trees that we didn't get to last spring, or the spring before that.

Repotting is a necessary evil if you want to develop young trees, and keep those mature bonsai alive and well.

Why do we repot? Bonsai are growing in a very small environment and at some point that environment is no longer able to maintain the optimum requirements a tree needs.

Some signs indicating repotting is probably necessary:

- Slow rate of growth from previous year
- Difficulty in wetting the soil – lack of absorption
- Early leaf drop in the fall – poor color
- Yellowing of foliage

- Root ball rising up in the pot
- Algae/mold developing on soil surface
- Drooping foliage

The medium (soil mix) a tree grows in basically supports the tree in its growing container – it doesn't really sustain the tree. Water, carbon dioxide and sunlight allow photosynthesis to occur which in turn allows a bonsai to create carbohydrates which is needed for growth. Oxygen is also needed – while it is readily available above ground it needs to be able to reach a plant's root system. Soil that is compacted does not allow adequate oxygen to reach roots. Without adequate oxygen, the plant cannot produce abundant foliage, without foliage the plant can't conduct adequate photosynthesis – it becomes a cycle of decline.

Healthy potting mixtures allow for small air pockets to exist throughout the entire pot. As roots grow these air pockets are eliminated – soil becomes compacted, water does not penetrate and the production of "food" becomes difficult and the bonsai begins to suffer and decline. If the conditions are not improved eventually the tree will die.

Akadama, coarse sand, gravel, turkey grit, turface are some of the mediums that allow air spaces to exist.

There are two ways to increase air spaces

- Use a larger pot
- Prune the root mass

Since most of us wish to have good sized "bonsai" in a rela-

tively small pot we should go for option #2.

Root pruning may sound a bit scary since roots are what a tree needs and now you are going to be cutting a good bit of them away

Roots are needed to anchor a tree into whatever it is growing in – but it also is what allows moisture to be utilized by the tree in order to do its photosynthesis thing. Young, or new roots do a much better job than old lignified roots. New young growth is generally white or pale in color, while old (lignified) roots are brown. The more "new" roots, the more moisture to the tree, the more moisture the more photosynthesis = a healthy, thriving bonsai.

When we repot a healthy tree, we remove a good portion of the "old" root system knowing that it will be replaced by young productive roots which will contribute to the health of the tree.

That being said, a bonsai may not need to be repotted each year. Repotting is not something you do by the calendar, but rather by what a particular tree needs that particular year. Each tree has individual requirements. You need to recognize what your tree needs on an individual basis. Some species are extremely fast growing. Others are happy growing for several years in the same soil mix. Mature or "finished" bonsai can be in the same mixture for 8 to 10 years or longer.

Generally speaking the timing of repotting is fairly consistent. Generally for most

species late winter or early spring is the time to repot. Some repotting can be done in late fall or early winter. However if a tree is in obvious distress, it can be done at any time, but hopefully you will recognize the signs a tree needs help before it comes to that.

How much roots to remove? At our various demos you have seen a tree taken from a several gallon nursery container and the roots cut down so that the tree can fit into a bonsai pot or training pot, or the original nursery pot is cut down to 1/3 or 1/4 its original size. Generally that is not what you do to your "bonsai".



A healthy root mass – lots of fine roots which are the active roots that contributing to plant's health.



Thick old roots are eliminated from base.

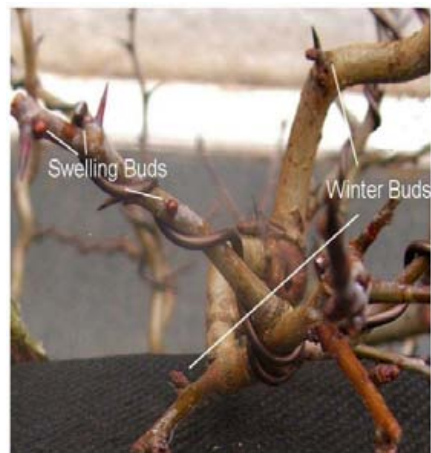


Coarse planting mix = lots of air spaces – good growing conditions.



Roots encircling the pot – tree definitely is in need of repotting. The new healthy roots should be closer in to the tree's base. Soon those white healthy roots will become lignified and there is no room left for new ones to grow.

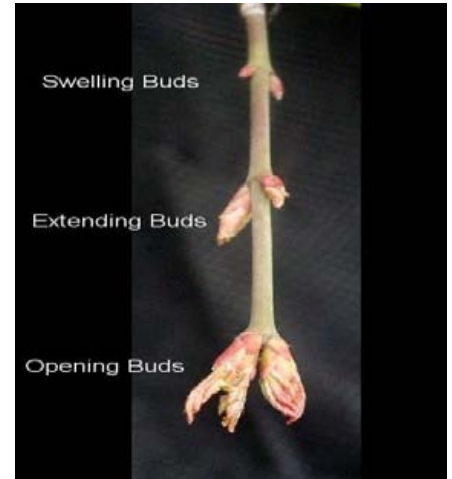
When you replace your tree into its pot you should have room for fresh soil beneath and around the remaining root mass. Generally it is wise to wire your tree into the pot to eliminate as much as possible any movement until the tree becomes re-established.



Buds are generally the best indicator of when and how to root prune and or repot

the roots are also dormant. During this time the tree can be lifted from the ground or its current pot, bare rooted if necessary and repotted. But stored energy is in the roots and when pruned off, the energy that would have gone to

the upper portion of the tree is discarded. But it is still a safe time to root prune.



At the swelling bud stage repotting and root pruning can be done safely.

The optimum sate is when the extending buds are visible on the upper branches. That indicates active root growth and the tree will recover quickly from root and branch pruning. The window for this stage is rather short so often depending on your collection, on some trees, it is done at the earlier stages. Generally evergreens can be done later and tropical's usually get done in the dead of summer.

The closer the tree gets to the extending bud stage the better it is as repotting early will deprive the tree of some energy. However, those with large collections and with many trees to repot in a short period of time, will typically start early and repot trees at the Swelling Buds.

There are many articles on line, in bonsai books and magazines that cover repotting and as in all things bonsai there are many variations, methods and philosophies, but the bottom

line is at some point you do need to repot if you hope to keep your tree alive for any period of time.

Take the time to study about the various aspects of bonsai. It is an ongoing process and the more learning you include in your pursuit the better your chances will be to create some really pleasing, healthy, long lived bonsai.

Don't become discouraged if you are not always successful. We all have and continue to have set-backs and outright loss of our bonsai. This is true of the pros, the advanced hobbyist and the rank beginners. Hopefully with each effort you gain some knowledge and figure out what might have worked better.

*Gentle Reminder...*

*January is the start of a new club year – if you have not as yet renewed your membership please do so.*

*Jim will not be in attendance this month so you may send your check to Jim at LIBS  
POB 308 Malvern, NY  
10565*

*We value all our members.*



Our auctioneers, Dan and Tom were encouraging the bidder to bid yet higher.



This beautiful tree was the high priced item of the evening and there were several active bidders but Henry persevered and came away the winner on that one.

Don't forget...

Bring in some of your stones for our February meeting.

For those members who do not collect stones, you will become a fan and start your own collection – some of ours came right out of the back yard, and others from half way around the world. Some were gathered during travels, some were gifts and some were purchased; some required lots of work to dig them out and haul them back, others were just picked up and put in a pocket; some have stands, some were polished or worked, others developing a patina that only comes from years of exposure or handling. Many have a story to tell But no matter their origin Suiseki is another addictive pursuit and our meeting should be most enjoyable.

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 **20% Discount** of All Bonsai Related Purchases.



## **Suburban Bonsai**

**211 Burrs Lane • Dix Hills • NY 11746**  
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