

Long Island Bonsai Society

Monday, November 10, 2014

7:30 pm - Election of Officers

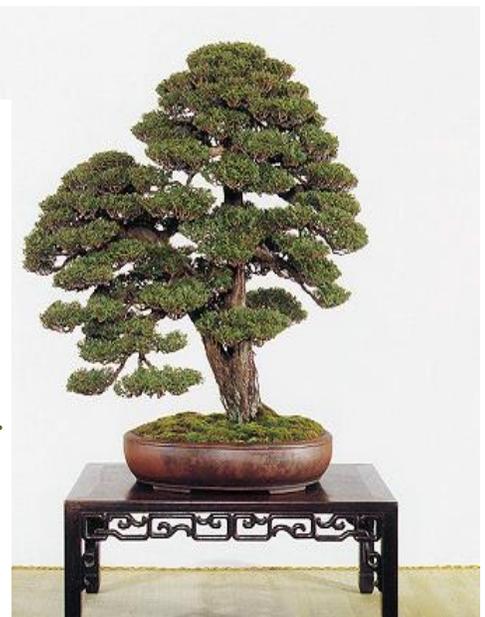
8 pm Main Program - Kathy Shaner

Hinoki Cypress Part II

Long Island Bonsai Society
PO Box 308
Malvern, NY 11565



The young bonsai on the extreme left could become a mature specimen like the one on the right if its caretaker provides proper branch selection, pruning, careful wiring, fertilizing, repotting and the passing of time...



October's events...

Our hats go off to Ceil and Joe for the terrific job they both did in making the Hicks lecture demo so successful on Saturday, October 18. So much so that Hicks has invited our club to participate in their Annual Spring Flower Show! Quite a coup.

Ceil and Joe arranged for Pauline Muth to do a lecture demonstration so well attended that it filled the classroom at Hicks.

In addition to that event, Sunday the 19th, the club held a sold-out member workshop led by Pauline. Participants were given a choice as to which material they wished to work on.

Pauline did our monthly meeting on the 20th which was also well attended. Her power point presentation gave loads of information on working with yews. We may be liberating some neighbor's unsightly, overgrown yew to turn into a great bonsai now that we know how.

If nothing else was gleaned from her lecture it was the important fact that you must take time with a yew. Once you *collect* it, it needs several years to recover and regain vigor before you start to train it into a bonsai.

Early Workshop...

We can always count on Hal to do a great demo.

Hal, the ever wise and crafty bonsai artist, told us how to maximize our nursery purchases when

planning on making it into a bonsai. We often toss out the cuttings of the nursery stock that we don't want to use for our bonsai, and Hal suggests that we air layer the stuff we "don't want". Instead of stuff for the compost pile, in a year's time we have lots of new material to turn into future bonsai.



Hal shows how to prepare a branch to be air layered by removing the bark down to the cambium layer.



After the cambium is exposed Hal affixes a plastic pot to the trunk, uses his favorite soil mix of peat and sand, but adjusted the ratio of 1/3 peat, 2/3 sand (**provides better drainage than 50/50**). Once the tree has enough roots to sustain itself, it will be cut free from the host tree below the pot, without disturbing the new tender roots, allowing the tree to further develop. The developing air layer can be wired and started on its training. Hal used the apex (top) of the air layer but the same technique can be used on branches. (Told you Hal was a crafty guy)

Hal said the best time of year to do air layers is in April – giving a longer season for root development.

Thanks to our new camera system, we all see so clearly what is being shown at the demo table.



Hal displayed his forest planting in our Tokanoma display from a larch workshop held awhile back. We hope to have a bonsai, or bonsai related item on display each month.

Please be a willing participant and volunteer to bring in a display item for our Tokanoma. If you do not wish to speak about the display item that is fine, we will tell about it for you, or just let members enjoy it.

Main Program...

Pauline still had plenty of energy left after her two day marathon to do a great job for our main program which featured "Urban Collected Yews".

Taxus (yew's formal name) are Dioecious meaning that only the female plant can produce berries (fruit) and only if there is a male plant nearby as opposed to a monoecious or hermaphroditic plant with both male and female flowers – not needing another plant to produce fruit.

Pauline is a retired science teacher and as such, rather than just getting a bonsai education she imparts a broader education such as the Druid's made their bows from yew wood which is dense, strong and long lasting.

Yew are generally styled with deadwood as they have a beautiful red wood when you remove the top layer of bark and the red contrasts effectively with the dead wood – especially when it is whitened with lime sulfur.

There are several species of yew that make exceptional bonsai – *brevifolia*, *baccata cuspidate*, *canadensis* – chose one that is suited to the location you will be growing it in.

Pauline cautioned that the yew is poisonous and you should avoid inhaling the results of carving, and sawing yews. Yews seem to thrive in pot culture making them ideal candidate for bonsai pot confinement.

A healthy yew is generally deep green although there are some hybrids that are pale or yellow in color and are generally not suited as bonsai. If your yew was meant to be deep green and is pale, it usually indicates a lack of magnesium. Older, heavier branches require being wrapped with raffia prior to bending to protect the bark and keep it from wire damage. Guy wirers are very effective in training yews – wiring is best done in the fall.

Pauline cautioned that you want to retain 40 to 60% of the foliage when pruning. Removing more will endanger the tree's health. You want to develop new younger branching and remove the older heavier branches to maintain a balanced bonsai.

Pauline talked about the "star like" growth that will produce compact branching that you want to develop.



You want to trim a branch back to that type of foliage. If you look closely at a branch you will see buds by each "needle" and you cut back to one such bud throughout the growing season to develop compact growth.

Again we were reminded that working on yews should be a slow/long process.

Pauline was asked about a tool she was using to produce jin on the tree she was styling. She got hers from Kathy Shaner. Its called a



graver and are available on the internet but are rather expensive. The ones I saw were a bit "fancier" than the one Pauline was using. They come in a right or left

handed curve.



Pauline is removing branches that are not necessary for the design and styling of the tree.



Pauline is studying the placement of branches and deciding if the tree will now be allowed to develop a bit more before additional work is carried out



You can see the heavy wire used to shape the branches and the early jin and shari work that the winner will continue to refine. (It much easier to remove the bark on a fresh cut live branch than to leave it until later.) The carving and refinement can wait until a later date.

Pauline reminded us that developing a yew into a young bonsai is a long process. At the point this tree was at the end of her demo Pauline said it would be at least 4 years before it starts to look like a bonsai. A yew should be left undisturbed after being collected for 3 to 5 years before you start to work on it.

Placing it where it receives good sun will help back-budding, but the tree likes shade when developed. The hardiness varies with the different species and so it is important to choose a variety that does well in your location.

Use a coarse bonsai mix with ¼ inch size grit, fertilize it well and provide an iron supplement as bonsai soil is inert. Pauline recommends Nutracost in the spring, regular feeding with Miracle Grow at ¼ strength, and the addition of mycorrhizae. In the fall use 0-0-5 (DinaGrow) which is beneficial for root development.

The wood is extremely hard, and the live wood should be protected with a wet cloth when using power tools to grind and shape the wood. PC Hardener and lime sulfur can be used to preserve the wood.

You want to distribute the trees energy equally - cutting back to a couple of buds will produce the "stars"

When planning to do large areas of shari do it in increments, give it time to die back a bit then do some more work on it.

Pauline is a strong proponent of using mycorrhizae and believes all plants benefit from the relationship the plant has with its particular fungi (mycorrhizae) *(Pauline sells it and it can be purchased via the 'net)*

Pauline uses Ortho Transplant liquid instead of either Super Thrive, or Upstart – both of which are more expensive and no more effective than the Ortho product.

Two resources to obtain some of the items often mentioned for the care and potting of bonsai:

[Griffin Greenhouse Supply located at 2165 Montauk Hwy, Brookhaven, NY 11719 \(631\) 286-8200](#)

Is a good source for all these supplies. Some are in larger quantities and you may want to split and share the order with a fellow bonsai artist.

[All Pro Horticulture 54 Railroad Avenue Copiague, NY 11726](#)

carries Turface which is often used for bonsai. The MPV grade is the preferred one sold in 50 pound bags.

If members know of a source/resource for supplies it is nice to share that valuable information with the club.

Often at this late time of year garden centers and "big box stores" have plant material at 75% and more off. Sometimes there is a hidden gem in the discard pile or in the clearance area.

Mark your calendars – Our December meeting on Monday, December 8th is our Winter Auction and Dinner. See what you have to donate for the auction or the silent auction – both help keep our treasury healthy so we can bring more speakers like Pauline, and Kathy and all the other wonderful presenters for the coming year.

Our new program chair Ceil has done an outstanding job of filling the calendar for 2015. Some will be first time lecturers for us, and others will be our tried and true favorites. The first timers Ceil lined up for us are Young Choe doing Kusamono, Mike Feduccia of Florida and Bjorn from Tennessee, plus a few more surprises. And we will get to welcome back Andy Smith, Vin Russo, Jim Doyle, and Kathy Shaner. I doubt whether there are too many clubs around that can boast such a line-up of speakers.

Added to the line-up of speakers we offer, we have our wonderful vendor Dan who brings lots of exciting items to sell to our member just about every month.

November's meeting will be the election of officers – just the treasurer being vacated by Jim after many years, and the corresponding secretary position held also for many year by Dee are to be voted on.

Next month will be my last newsletter – in a sick way sort of bitter sweet – news editor is not a Board position needing to be voted on.

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

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All Club Members are entitled to a **10% Discount** of All Bonsai Related Purchases.

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Photos from the member workshop held by Pauline. Participants chose from a variety of material to work on and some experienced members were on hand to offer assistance to those who wished for some additional guidance. Thanks to all who attended and thanks too to our helpers.

