



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

*From Milton Huckaby
Past President*

Just a couple of comments on the 2007 GSBF Convention in Anaheim.

The San Diego group is an enthusiastic bunch and it showed at the convention.

I was especially pleased to have a workshop with Warren Hill, as I have heard so much about him since I started bonsai ten years ago. Even Marty Mann took his class, which was unusual, since he normally roams the workshops taking notes.

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IN FROM THE WILD

by Jack Reynolds

Local Bonsai Artist Bob Pressler brought a California juniper he dug from the wild for his Dec. 5 demonstration. He shared his process for collecting and maintaining wild trees while he styled the 10-year old evergreen.

Bob only digs trees in rainy years and in the cold weather months. Trees are usually bare-rooted because of the way their roots tend to spread out in nature and they usually grow in very sandy soil, which does not cling to the roots. This drastic root pruning requires that large amounts of foliage be removed to balance transpiration water loss against root absorption.

After digging, he wraps the roots in moist peat moss or wet newspaper.

He pots in pure pumice and maintains specimen in a greenhouse for a couple of years so that humidity can be controlled. Bob says that he is able to save about 70 to 80 percent of the trees he digs in this manner. This is a very good record.

Bob stressed that junipers have a lot of jin and shari. California junipers typically have a lot of branch dieback in the wild and as a result of being uprooted.

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In From The Wild (Continued from Page 1)

Bob created jins of branches that could not be used as live branches because of their location.

In creating shari, he said, it is important to strip bark selectively so as to protect living branches. One does not want to kill a strip of bark that is supporting a living branch so close attention must be paid to this process. You can tell the living lifeline by its being swollen in comparison to the dead bark. Already dead branches will have an area of dead bark below them, which should be stripped.

Bob wired most of the major branches after removing underneath growth. He left the top long to promote thickening of the apex. During the wiring, one of the larger branches cracked. Bob noted that the first crack was okay. The wire will support a cracked branch and allow it to heal. The second crack, however, meant new material for a jin.

Bob says that allowing a tree to dry to the point of wilt before wiring is unnecessary. He prefers to keep the trees well watered for wiring.

He called on Jake Cavanagh, the youngest member of Sansui Kai, to assist him with the wiring. Bob showed a way to select the proper size of wire to use on a branch. If you can cause a branch to flex by pushing on it with a piece of wire, then that wire is big enough. If the wire bends instead of the branch, the wire is too small.

He said wrapping wire around branches has only been in use for about the last hundred years. Before that, guy wires or cords were used, or weights were hung on branches. There was also a great use of directional pruning.

After the demonstration Bob awarded the tree to a very lucky Jake Cavanagh. Bob estimated that the tree will be ready to put into a bonsai pot in a couple of years, no rush there. And soon thereafter it should be show quality.

-Jack Reynolds



Photo by Michael Jonas

Youth Has its Rewards

Bonsai artist Robert Pressler styled a California Juniper he dug from the wild ten years ago. His demonstration assistant, Jake Cavanagh, Sansui-Kai's youngest member, won his teacher's favor and the tree, which, Pressler said, should be ready for showing in two years.

From Milton Huckaby (continued from page 1)

The one aspect that I hope the convention keeps is the demonstration in which there are four or five people working on trees at the same time. Only one demonstration tends to drag, but this way, a running commentary and the various techniques on the different trees keeps audience attention.

New GSBF President Ted Matson has started a few new concepts that should further strengthen the next convention.

Don't forget to bring your best specimen of a dormant tree to the Wednesday, January 2 meeting and competition for the Winter Silhouettes entry.

Congratulations to Jack Reynolds on winning the auction for the Prostrata juniper Bonsai Master Marco Invernizzi styled and donated to the club at the November meeting.

NAKA NOTES

by Jack Reynolds

January is a good month to study the structure and style of your deciduous trees. I have learned a lot from studying the local deciduous oaks in nature because they are often very old and have wonderful drooping branches with interesting curves. When you are out among trees, take note of the best ones to see what it is that makes them attractive.

We've had a little rain so most of your trees will be damp. Do not rely completely on the rains however, watch carefully and keep your trees damp, but not wet. Too much overhead watering of pines can promote the dreaded needle cast fungus so I would not do it at this season.

Be sure to keep your tropical trees under some protection from frost. You can put them in your garage for a few days during particularly cold periods. Bringing them into the house is risky because the warmth may stimulate them to put on new buds that will freeze off when the trees are put out.

The only trees that need fertilizer at this season are conifers, which do not go completely dormant in southern California. However soil amendments such as gypsum can be applied now to loosen compact soils.

Now is the time to do your first application of lime sulfur dormant spray. A second one can be done in February.

Wiring, particularly of deciduous trees, may be done this month but be careful of the brittle branches. Drastic shaping should be left for the spring.

Do not transplant anything now. Wait another month or two. One can get soil mixes made up and sharpen tools etc.

This is a good month to collect native trees.

Events of Interest

January 2, 2008

Horticulturist and bonsai specialist for more than 50 years, Roy Nagatoshi will demonstrate approach grafting at the Wednesday, January 2 Sansui-Kai meeting. A native of Japan, Nagatoshi learned bonsai from childhood and studied with John Naka before earning his degree in horticulture and Landscape. He is owner of Fuji Bonsai Nursery in Sylmar and tours the United States extensively teaching workshops in the bonsai art.

January 19-20, 2008

Winter Silhouettes show hosted by Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai at the Los Angeles Arboretum, 9:00 to 5:00 daily. This show features deciduous trees without their leaves, showing the underlying branch structure that has been painstakingly created to support their leafy canopies. The 6:30 p.m. Saturday night reception is well attended by Sansui-Kai members and the raffle is one of the best of the year. Each year our club is invited to show a tree. The selection of that tree takes place at our January 2nd meeting. Everyone is invited to submit a tree for review.

SANSUI-KAI Administration

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Hank Fawcett (818) 705-1272
hankf@playboy.com

TREASURER:

Michael Jonas (818) 776-0813
mjonas4lita@social.rr.com

SECRETARY:

Vienna Castellaw (818) 368-7418
vienna@cashinusa.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:

Russell Benson (323) 633-3461
rb2step@aol.com

KAI WIRE EDITOR:

Mary Tatro (818) 885-0180
emtechicago@yahoo.com

PAST PRESIDENT: Milton Huckaby
 (661)942-2351

REFRESHMENTS: Sonja Kobler
 (818)784-8765

LIBRARIAN: Alan Loman

BENEFIT DRAWING: Gloria Downie

What's Ahead

January 2

7:30 PM MEETING

Roy Nagatoshi Demonstration

REFRESHMENTS:

Gloria Downie, Ed Henjyogi, Alan Loman

NICHE: Michael Jonas

February 6

7:30 PM MEETING

Demonstration by Ted Matson who will repot the tree he created at our Sept. meeting.

Sunday

March 9

Annual Dinner

Odyssey Restaurant
 6 PM Cocktails
 7 PM Dinner

MEMBERSHIP

Sansui-Kai is dedicated to the learning, use and teaching of the horticulture techniques and artistic principles needed to grow, design and care for bonsai. Regular membership is \$22. Family membership is \$27. Corresponding membership is \$7 limited to any previous club member now living outside a 50-mile radius of the meeting place.