



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

*From Russell Benson
President*

Sansui-Kai is sponsoring an evening of tree critiques with European Bonsai Master Walter Pall, Wednesday, December 2, 2009. This is a rare opportunity to hear a world-class bonsai master. Please pass along word of this extraordinary event to your networks.

As The Japanese Garden celebrates its 25th anniversary year, it is acquiring some 15 new bonsai trees for its permanent collection and redesigning the Bonsai Garden to address shade and watering issues. We are privileged to have the support of The Garden's Director, Gene Greene in making the Japanese Garden our Club's home and to play an active role in the celebration of this treasured Valley landmark.

We will gather at the Japanese Garden on Sunday October 11 from 11 am to 2 pm to participate in The Garden's Origami Festival. We are welcomed and encouraged to take part and further our bonsai mission. It is a great opportunity to build membership – one of my primary goals as president.

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Walter Pall to Visit Sansui-Kai

By Mary Tatro

Sansui-Kai is hosting a presentation here by internationally renowned Bonsai Master Walter Pall Wednesday, December 2, 2009 from 7 to 9:30 pm.

The club is promoting this special event throughout the region and has booked the Encino Community Center to accommodate the expected number of guests. The Community Center is located at 4935 Balboa Boulevard, Encino.

For his presentation, Pall will give critiques of material brought to him by participants. "People should bring all sorts of trees, from a cutting in a yogurt cup to world class bonsai and all in between. I will critique everything," Pall said.

Admission for the event is free to members, and \$5 per tree for critique. Non-members' admission is \$7 for entry, and \$10 per tree critique.

Walter Pall said he expects to be examining a significant number of trees based on followers of his blog from this region. The board is offering advance registration on a first come, first served basis. Early registrants will receive preferred seating and first consideration of their trees.

"Walter Pall is often listed among the top five bonsai masters in Europe," said Program Chairman Jack Reynolds, who contacted Pall in his native Germany when he learned that Pall would be traveling to California in December. "It is a rare opportunity to have a world class master visiting here, who is willing to share his time and insights with us through an event like this. We are very fortunate."

For more information on Walter Pall and his work visit his website at www.walter-pall.de.

The Juniper Project: Stage Four

By Jack Reynolds

This was Ted's fourth visit to Sansui-Kai to advance the styling of our project tree and show the club how it has improved over the last visit.

The last session saw the removal of much old growth and wiring of some of the branches to bring them into positions that indicated age (lowering) or in some cases to fill in gaps in the shape that is forming. It then was given a rest so that new growth could develop to be used in the next step of refinement.

At this meeting, Ted noted there were too many branches in the lower part of the tree, which obscured the beautiful trunk structure. His solution was to jin several branches at the back and a large side branch. This avoided an overly symmetrical look and reduced an undesirable bar branch flaw.

Ted noted that even though there was a lot of new growth in the tree, the fact that a great deal of the soil is old, inhibits nice even growth. Some new growth is needed to replace weak lanky branches that are not in proportion to the rest of the tree.

The solution is to repot the tree. That can be done in late winter or early spring. It is necessary to work within the natural rhythm of the tree in its cycle of growth and rest dictated by the seasons in Southern California.

At the end of the session the tree was sent home with Michael Jonas who will be responsible for pinching it to produce the refinement that it needs. A return demonstration visit for the tree is scheduled in February.

--Jack Reynolds

Ted Matson masterminds the fourth progressive styling of the club's Prostrata juniper at the September meeting. The club chose the tree in August 2007 as a five-year demonstration project.



Nine months of growth offer new insights into the next right steps.



Ted removes lower branches to expose the trunk structure. A natural asymmetrical balance follows the tree's lines.

Photos by Michael Jonas



Naka Notes

by Jack G Reynolds

This month is spring in reverse. The weather is variable. If the weather turns hot, be ready to water more but not as much as in the spring because new leaves are not sprouting and the ones that are already grown are beginning to shut down for dormancy. Many deciduous trees will have brown or dying leaves on them and will be dropping leaves. Conifers will be slowing down also, so less water is needed.

Remove any wires that are cutting into the bark. Tight wire can kill a branch in the winter cold. New wires may be put on but remember that twigs become more brittle in the cool weather.

Some pruning should be done at this season. This is the time to give junipers a strong cut back and thinning. Pines need to be thinned and last years needles plucked. Branches and twigs on deciduous trees may be cut back as leaves are lost. Pruning too soon may stimulate new sprouts, so wait until leaves drop or remove them at the end of the month.

Remove all fruit or seed pods, as they are an energy drain on the tree. A few may be left for viewing if the tree is healthy, but only in alternate years. Tropical species like Ficus, Bougainvillea and Pomegranate should be placed in protected areas to avoid cold snaps. Elms and maples should be placed in the shadiest locations to encourage dormancy. They can be defoliated at the end of the month if they still have leaves.

Fertilize for dormancy, which means low nitrogen fertilizer. Use something like a 0-5-5 or just plain bone meal. Too much nitrogen will stimulate new sprouts that will freeze off in the winter. Conifers can take a little more nitrogen because they don't really go dormant in Southern California, and will continue to sprout new growth that will not freeze.

This is the last month to transplant. No drastic root pruning should be done at this season but going from pot to pot with a soil change is ok.

As I See It

From Russell Benson (continued from page 1)

Last month, we held our inaugural Sunday Community Outreach, chaired by Frank Cuva, at Lake Balboa Park. Frank, Dan, Michael and I spent several hours working on our trees and informing park visitors about the art of bonsai and Sansui-Kai. We meet on the south side of the park nearest the public restrooms.

Members brought four trees for sale in our first silent auction sale at the September meeting. Participation was lively! There were more than 25 bids competing for the sale trees.

Members greatly appreciated the opportunity to sell trees and make some extra money, help the club, and encourage fellow members to acquire new material. Bring your bonsai plants, pots and other items for sale. We are making it a regular feature of the monthly meetings.

Lastly, we need volunteers for two important opportunities: the upcoming Walter Pall event December 2, and participation in the care of The Japanese Garden Bonsai Collection. Come be a part of these exciting new developments and ask how you can participate.

Events of Interest

Tree Clinic

In October, in lieu of a demonstration, will be the first regularly scheduled "Members' Tree Clinic." Don't forget to bring at least one tree to work on at this month's tree clinic. You will need tools, wire and soil if you plan to repot anything. Help from experienced members will be available. If you can't bring anything to work on, come anyway and watch and learn.

Origami Festival

Members are invited to volunteer at the Bonsai Garden during the Japanese Garden Origami Festival Sunday, October 11, 11 am to 2 pm. Gather in the Bonsai Garden, 6100 Woodley Avenue, Van Nuys

Silent Auction



Photo by Michael Jonas

Four trees sold by way of silent auction at the September meeting. Members brought items for sale, and the club benefited from a percentage of the winning bids.

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What's Ahead

**Wednesday
October 7**

7:30 PM MEETING
Members' Tree Clinic
Refreshments: Tony Castagna, Michael Jonas, Dan Kashinsky, Grace Sy
Niche: Michael Jonas

**Wednesday
November 4**

TBA

**Wednesday
December 2**

7:30 PM MEETING
Walter Pall Tree Critique
Encino Community Center

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.