



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

*From Milton Huckaby
Past President*

All of the preparations for our semi-annual Mexico trip are finished and I have been relaxing prior to leaving.

I have been spending some time reading the various magazines I had put aside for free time.

I was particularly impressed with the November/December Golden Statements.

It has always been informative, but the new larger version has put it into a class never approached by the previous issues.

The officers of GSBF, who originally conceived and agreed to go to the larger format, should be commended for their foresight.

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TELLING NATURE'S STORY

by Mary Tatro

A 50-year old Prostrata juniper acquired last year by Sansui-Kai as a three-year demonstration project, met its third level of development November 5, 2008 under the masterful hand of Ted Matson, esteemed bonsai artist, teacher, author and President of the Golden State Bonsai Federation.

Ted started his design of the tree to bonsai in August 2007.

The club had acquired the tree with mature branching in a nursery can.

Ted's initial approach was to create a tighter framework with serious cutback to encourage inner foliage growth. He left enough green to allow back budding.

In his second treatment six months later in February 2008, Ted repotted the tree in a training container, removed bar and wheel branches and shortened most branches to encourage better taper through new growth.

With the November meeting, the tree had been growing in the training pot for nine months. In this stage, Ted said he would clarify interior structure and plan new green interior back growth to turn wooden.

He cleaned the tree of old foliage, and identified new growth points along the branches. He removed bottom and inward growing branches and cleaned anything in the crotches. He wired secondary branches.

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TELLING NATURE'S STORY

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Ted said the Prostrata has been doing “just fine” during its most recent period of growth. He said he has been using Grow Power 5-5-5 since Spring and noted that about two cups of soil have been displaced by root growth and extension -- a very good sign.

He emphasized his ongoing process of positioning, placement and pinching. “This process is essential for good bonsai – allow to grow and regrow and regrow. It impacts the quality of the branches and restructuring. With this consistent process over the next 10 to 20 years, the tree can be realigned without having to do grafts or other interventions.

When Ted takes the tree home this time, he will continue to pinch and create foliage masses on different planes and in different contours. He will shape branch weight and activity, stretch out and broaden the shallow crown.

Ted envisions additional layers at the crown and will identify branches that will fill out the layers. With pinching, the tree will “dense up” as it gets more mature foliage. He will continue feeding to prompt health.

By the time of the next demonstration stage, Ted envisions good “finish proportions” for the tree as a result of his plan to “pinch, pinch, pinch.”

Ted says the tree will have a “story” to tell. In high altitudes Mother Nature shapes a broad, low, compact tree as winds direct and snows lay down the branches. Designing a tree that tells nature’s story is the most effective bonsai art, he said.

--Mary Tatro



Michael Jonas and Mort Lowy help wire the club's Prostrata Juniper during it's Stage Three development under the direction of Ted Matson.



Cleaning, wiring, choosing and pruning the interior growth bring the Juniper to stage three of its development.



Photos by Michael Jonas



Naka Notes by Jack G Reynolds

All deciduous trees should be dormant by now. If you haven't removed their leaves and fruit, do it this month.

Be sure not to over water at this season. Dormant trees use very little water but don't let them dry out completely either.

Conifers are not dormant in southern California because it doesn't get cold enough in the Los Angeles area to put them into dormancy.

Be sure to protect any semi-tropicals such as *Ficus* and *Bougainvillea* trees by placing them under a bench or a shade tree or under shade cloth.

It is possible to fertilize conifers but don't waste good fertilizer on dormant trees.

Trimming and wiring can be done at this season but remember that branches are more brittle so be careful.

If a tree freezes, do not water it until it thaws out. It may be brought indoors for this purpose but keeping trees in the house creates a new set of problems -- heat and dry air. It is better to thaw the tree in an environment that is only a few degrees above freezing.

Trimming and pinching of conifers can be done this month but deciduous trees are better left alone lest they break dormancy in response. Any new growth would likely freeze in the coming months.

This is a good month to graft conifers. If you have some shimpaku juniper stock that you want to graft to a California juniper, now is the time to do it.

This is also a good month to dig native trees.

As I See It

From Milton Huckaby (continued from page 1)

The Golden Statements magazine is the one common thread that holds the California bonsai community together. The magazine with its larger type gives more detail to the pictures and gives the appearance of a truly professional publication.

I understand that there were concerns about finances, and Michael Jonas has been brought on board as Advertising Manager. Hopefully this will correct any problems that existed.

As we go forward, I can only hope that the magazine continues to expand and become even more of a rallying point for the bonsai community.

I congratulate the editor and entire staff for such an outstanding publication and I would recommend that everyone subscribe.

Events of Interest

Italian Master Returns

Events Director Hank Fawcett has brought Marco Invernizzi, Europe's youngest bonsai master, to do a workshop and demonstration on the club's regular meeting date Wednesday, December 3.

The day-long workshop starts at 9 am December 3. The price is \$55. Contact Hank Fawcett at hankf@playboy.com to register.

Michael Jonas says bring your best material and Marco will improve it and teach you something about bonsai while doing so. All conifers and most deciduous trees are okay to work on now.

Calling All Olives

Hank Fawcett also is planning to bring Doug Philips to Sansui Kai for a January 14th workshop and demonstration.

Hank needs to locate some olives in the ground for the "flat cut" olive workshop and demo. He asks that if club members know of an area to dig volunteer olives, 2" to 4" diameter, call or drop him an e-mail.

Kaz Murai Grafting

And in February Hank is calling on Kaz Murai to do a grafting demonstration on a cascade juniper.

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What's Ahead

**Wednesday
December 3**

**9:00 AM Marco Invernizzi
Workshop**

7:30 PM MEETING

Demonstration: Marco Invernizzi
Refreshments: Tony C., Eric Rogger, Mary Tatro, Don Berkus
Niche: Eric Rogger

**Wednesday
January 7**

7:30 PM MEETING

Demonstration TBA

**Wednesday
January 14**

Doug Philips Olive Tree

Workshop and Demonstration

**Wednesday
February 4**

7:30 PM Meeting

Kaz Murai
Grafting Demonstration

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.