



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

From Russell Benson
President

MY GOD! I am starting to sound like a broken record, or CD, or BluRay Disc. I just looked over my As I See 'Ems (as I like to call these), and in almost every one I talk about the same things: bonsai and what it takes. We are a bonsai club, so that is the main topic.

We've had some spectacular raffle donations for the Walter Pall event, including a Marco Invernezzi styled tree from Jack Reynolds.

The Women's Club at the Encino Community Center becomes available at 5 pm. The event starts at 7 pm on December 2.

I want to encourage everyone to come early to help with set up and socialize – especially if you are bringing food and/or raffle items. Be one of those who are making this important event and Sansui-Kai a success.

I am very grateful for the good help and support coming from our faithful volunteers for this event and for the club at large.

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Live, Oh Live, My Olive!

by Jack G Reynolds

Southern California's Mediterranean climate and their great resilience make olives one of the top choices for collected bonsai. Hank Fawcett gave us a demonstration on how to start a bonsai from collected material.

When digging, you don't have to preserve a large root ball, but be sure to protect the bark because olive bark is thin and scars easily. Keep the ball in wet rags and plastic wrap. If the tree starts out without any leaves, don't worry, more will sprout.

Choose the best front. Take into account the angle of the trunk and the flaring at the base. Tilt the root ball to get the best angle, and then cut the root ball flat at the flair. Lay the tree across a sandbag and get someone to hold it still while you saw the root ball. Protect the trunk by wrapping it with rags during this process.

After the root ball has been flat cut, trim the cut edge at a 45 degree angle to promote outward rather than downward root growth. To further insure that roots grow outward, Hank screws a ¼ inch plywood block into the flat cut root base that is 1-2 inches wider.

Apply rooting hormone to the trimmed edges of the base and seal. Plant the tree in a pot slightly larger than the block in a gritty soil mix such as pumice and scoria.

Anchor the tree with guy wires. To do this, put a screw into the top of the tree and run three or four wires from the screw to holes in the rim of a plastic pot, to keep the tree from wiggling and damaging new tender roots.

For the next few months the tree will need a humid environment. In the proper environment, the tree should begin leafing out in a month or two.

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Live, My Olive!

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A small greenhouse may be constructed around the tree by making a framework of wire or PVC pipe and covering the tree with a clear plastic bag or wrap.

In the proper environment the tree should begin leafing out in a month or two. This does not mean that roots have formed however. That may take several more months.

To check for root production, you can remove the tree from the greenhouse and let the leaves wilt just a little (they will begin to curl at the edges). When that happens, water the tree and see if they recover from the wilt.

If they do, you have roots. If they don't, put the tree back into the greenhouse and wait another month or two before rechecking.

The base grows and is enhanced with substantive root development -- ideal to achieve fortunate nebari, a key element of successful bonsai.

Remove roots that are in indentations on the base and leave roots that are on projecting parts of the base.

To get an apex, you need to let a leader grow until it is about three quarters the diameter of the trunk. Then, cut it off about two inches up and let a new leader grow, thus creating the taper needed for a natural apex.

--Jack Reynolds



Rooting, apex, branching, and nebari show good progress after four years' development



Hank Fawcett "flat cuts" raw stock olive root ball



He blocks the root base to force outward growing roots



First stage of root development after flat cutting

Photos by Mary Tatso



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.

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.

Be sure not to over water at this season. Dormant trees use very little water but don't let them dry out completely either. If a tree freezes do not water it until it thaws out. It is better to thaw the tree in an environment that is only a few degrees above freezing.

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.

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 a good month to graft conifers so 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 **Russell Benson** (continued from page 1)

I just started my first set of bonsai classes with Ted Matson. I haven't taken classes since working with Kaz Yoneda back at Yamaguchi Nursery many years ago. It feels good to have an instructor who I can work with to improve my techniques. I encourage everyone to find a teacher you value and appreciate.

David and I just returned from Spain and Portugal. No matter where we travel I find bonsai -- Tasmania, Holland, Auckland now Lisbon. They were selling a tree dated 1887, from Korea and priced at 33,850.00 Euros!!

Well now I have seen a tree costing \$48,000.00, but I still haven't seen one worth that much!

Our community outreach, held in November at the Japanese Gardens was a great success. Michael Jonas, Alan Loman, Al Espinosa, Frank Cuva, Eric Percifield and myself were working on some great trees. David and June Nguy were also present doing demos on four trees recently purchased by the Japanese Gardens for the permanent collection. We will not be having a December Outreach, but will restart again in January.

Events of Interest

Walter Pall Tree Critique

Mark your calendar and select your trees for this rare opportunity. European Bonsai Master Walter Pall will give his perspective on your trees and offer his visionary ideas for their development.

Members who are bringing food for the refreshment table and donations for the raffle may arrive early to set up their contributions and socialize prior to the event. Doors open at 5 pm. Volunteers are needed. Contact Russell Benson to determine how you can volunteer to help coordinate the event.

The Tree Critique begins at 7 pm with Walter Pall considering trees in the order of owner registration and arrival. This event is open to the whole California bonsai community.

In addition to the Encino Community Center's parking lot, the church lot adjacent to the north is available to Sansui-Kai for additional parking the evening of the event.

Winter Silhouettes

Now is the time to select your Winter Silhouettes tree and begin preparing it for the exhibition January 16 and 17. The event is Saturday and Sunday and includes a reception 6:30 to 9 pm Saturday at the Los Angeles Arboretum.

Sansui-Kai has been selected as one of three clubs to enter in a styling competition in conjunction with the event. Three members from each club will participate. Contact Michael Jonas for more information.

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What's Ahead

**Wednesday
December 2**

7:00 – 9:30 PM

Walter Pall Tree Critique
**Women's Club at Encino
Community Center**
4935 Balboa Blvd.
1 block North of Ventura Blvd.

**Wednesday
January 6**

7:30 PM MEETING
Members' Tree Clinic

**Wednesday
February 3**

7:30 PM MEETING
Ted Matson

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.