



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

*From Michael Jonas
Treasurer*

Well the year has gotten off to a great start. Jack gave us a glimpse of his tour of China and we got to see some less formal, but interesting bonsai from there.

The Baikoen Winter Silhouettes show was very well attended and, as usual, the trees were excellent, showing the many years of work their owners put into them.

Then Kathy Shaner came to the Huntington and gave us two days of bonsai instruction that made me want to move up north, just to join a club where she is the sensei. Her teaching was advanced, but everyone could have picked up some valuable information from her talk.

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The China Syndrome

by Jack Reynolds

While in Beijing for the 2008 Olympic Games I took a few extra days to tour some of the cultural sites in that ancient city. One of my main goals was to visit a Chinese bonsai (penjing) garden. My tour guidebook indicated that the Beijing Botanic Garden had such a collection.

The lady in the booth at the penjing garden spoke no English and only smiled at my questions. It was clear that I would be on my own with no docent or penjing guru to provide information.

Penjing is described in the bonsai books as the art of creating scenes using stones, trees and small figures of humans and animals. Surprisingly, the collection is in pots like the Japanese use. Only one or two had rocks, and those seemed to have been an afterthought.

The collection numbers about 200 large trees. There are none less than 18 inches, and most are between 24 and 48 inches tall.

The most common species is the Chinese elm, followed by *Ficus macrocarpa* or *retusa*. Also in the collection were ginkgo, crepe myrtle, murryea, maples and others. There were no pines on display in the collection, and only four junipers, all of them cascades.

The trees have exposed roots, massive trunks showing scars, hollows and unusual shapes. The trees in this Chinese collection ignore some rules of the Japanese school. Ugly roots pointing directly at the viewer or branches crossing the trunk are a few such variations. Nevertheless, most of the trees are impressive and do not appear to me to be flawed.

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The China Syndrome

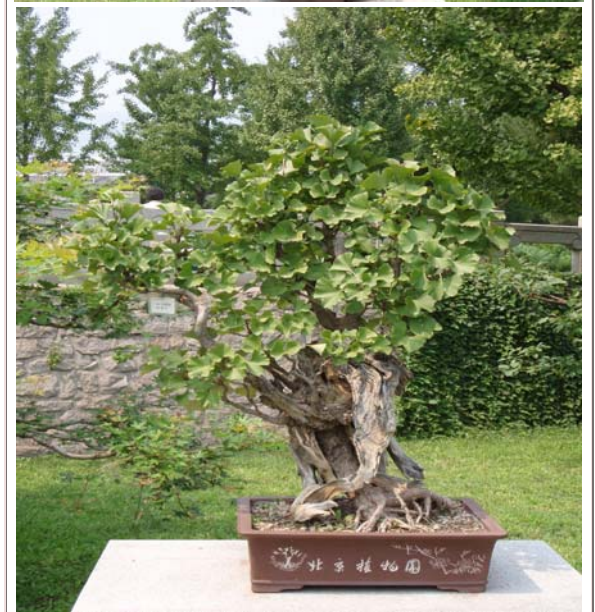
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The Chinese way of styling seems less formal than the Japanese. My general impression is that the trees are not as finely groomed. They have a somewhat shaggy or loose appearance. Many trees were styled in a flat top without a clear apex. Branch cuts were often left flat and uncarved. There was no attempt to use special soil mixes. Trees appeared to be planted in regular garden soil that had been shoveled up on the spot. Yet, all the display trees were healthy and growing vigorously in this soil, which looked like a sandy loam.

In retrospect I have formed the opinion that the uniformities of style that I observed may be the preference of a collection director. Those who have seen collections other than the Beijing Botanic Garden indicate that they are more like the Japanese style.

-Jack Reynolds

Three trees typical of the Beijing Botanical Garden collection are a Ficus retusa, Crepe Myrtle and Ginkgo. They are 36-40 inches in height, and demonstrate the preferred style of thick exposed roots; and mature growth trunks allowed to develop with dramatic complexity.



Photos by Jack Reynolds





Naka Notes

by Jack G Reynolds

In general, February is much like January in terms of bonsai care. We have had some rain so you will have to be aware of the dampness of your trees. Sometimes we say, "let the rain do it". Then the trees may get too dry. On the other hand, we may continue to water when we don't need to and over water as a result.

This is the month to spray deciduous trees with lime sulfur to ward off leaf curl and other insect pests. Read the directions before you spray. Not everything likes lime sulfur. Don't spray new tender growth or flowers that have opened with lime sulfur, as it will damage them.

Any trees that were set in the shade to promote dormancy need to be watched. When they start new growth move them into the sun. If you leave them in the shade the growth will be spindly and weak.

Pruning of deciduous trees should be done this month. This is a good month to start cuttings. So when you are pruning things keep the best twigs for use in that enterprise. Grafting of deciduous trees and also conifers can be done this month. Ted Matson says that this is a good month to repot California junipers so their roots have adequate time to regrow before the summer dormancy sets in.

Fertilizing will not be done this month except for conifers, which are not dormant. It is a good time to apply soil amendments such as Ironite, gypsum and sulfur.

Get your soil mixtures made up and sharpen tools for the coming repotting season.

As I See It

From Michael Jonas (continued from page 1)

As I write this today, the weather is warm - mid 70's - and it feels like spring is here already. Some of my trees are already popping and I've got to get serious about repotting now. We'll probably get cold again, but the trees are saying they don't want to wait.

We are accepting nominations for officers at our February meeting, so if you or someone you know will help to run the club please let me know at the meeting. We will also be voting on Jack's motion to amend the Bylaws. A copy of the Bylaws and Jack's proposed amendment should have been mailed to you already.

As most of you know, we voted to change our Annual Dinner to a buffet luncheon at the Odyssey Restaurant. Please let me know who and how many will attend, because we need to tell the restaurant so they can plan for the food and set up a room for us. Mark your calendars for Sunday March 8th from 11:00 to 4:00. Remember we will not be having a regular meeting in March.

Also mark your calendars Feb. 28th to March 1st for the Bonsai-A-Thon weekend. It's free and there will be demonstrations, raffles, auctions, exhibits, food and lots of things to buy. You don't want to miss it.

Events of Interest

Kaz Murai Grafting

On February 4 Kaz Murai will do a grafting demonstration on a cascade juniper. And, Alan Loman will host a study group at 4 pm prior to the February 4 meeting for all interested members.

Bonsai-A-Thon

The Golden State Bonsai Federation will present its annual Bonsai-A-Thon February 28 through March 1 (Saturday and Sunday) 10:30 am to 4:30 pm at the Huntington Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd, San Marino.

The event includes demonstrations by internationally recognized bonsai masters, exhibition, sales, workshops, and a live auction. For information, call 626-405-2128.

Election of Officers

The February Meeting will be the final call for nominations for five club officer positions: President, 1st Vice President, 2d Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The president's role is to oversee the board, financial management, programming, communications, development and planning. The 1st vice president is responsible for programming. The 2d vice president is responsible for membership. The treasurer is responsible for managing the club's finances, and the secretary keeps a record of board meeting minutes. Currently on the roster, according to nominating committee chair Michael Jonas, are Russell Benson for president, Michael Jonas for treasurer, Karyen Cavanagh for secretary. Candidates still are needed for the roles of 1st and 2d vice president.

SANSUI-KAI Administration

PRESIDENT

Position Open

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Position Open

TREASURER:

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PAST PRESIDENT: Milton Huckaby

REFRESHMENTS: Sonja Kobler

LIBRARIAN: Alan Loman

BENEFIT DRAWING: Gloria Downie

WEBSITE

www.sansui-kai.com

What's Ahead

**Wednesday
February 4**

7:30 PM MEETING

Presentation: Kaz Murai
Grafting Demonstration
Refreshments: Elliot Farkas,
Dan Kashinsky, Dick Beltran
Niche:

**Sunday
March 8**

BRUNCH & ANNUAL MEETING 11 AM to 4 PM

Odyssey Restaurant
15600 Odyssey Dr., Granada Hills

**Wednesday
April 1**

7:30 PM MEETING

Presentation: David Nguy
Black Pine 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.