



THE KAI WIRE



SANSUI-KAI OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As I See It

*From Russell Benson
President*

They say it takes a village to raise a child, but what does it take to put on a major Bonsai event? From what I have experienced in the past few months, I can tell you it takes a lot more than a village.

When we put together our ambitious plan to bring Walter Pall to Sansui-Kai, it was great to see everyone pulling together. The December 2 Tree Critique event is an amazing opportunity for bonsai lovers to get insights into what makes a great bonsai. The event will be held at The Women's Club of The Encino Community Center. Check out the web site for details.

Increasing the club's visibility has been my mission this past year. We have maintained our membership and strengthened our ties with other local bonsai clubs. And we are spreading our net to further public interest with our new Community Outreach Program.

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THE TREE CLINIC WALTZ

Jack Reynolds and Michael Jonas share their impressions from the club's first regularly scheduled Tree Clinic last month.

Jack Reynolds:

I must say that the number of people who brought trees to work on, and the quality of the trees themselves impressed me. Some members were experienced enough to work on their own with a minimum of help and got right on with whatever they wanted to do. Others sought help, and several of us were on hand to share our experience.

A Japanese black pine with a very dense healthy mass of needles needed to be shaped. We removed some heavy branches that were too long with long internodes to be very useful, and kept smaller ones to make the branch structure. It was too early to needle pluck or decandle, so I advised the owner to take it to a bonsai class for additional work in later this year.

Michael Jonas:

Summer brought in an older juniper bonsai, which had become somewhat overgrown. The three main branches had long bare areas where they had been sheltered from the sun due to abundant growth. We first wired the three main branches and moved them into better position.

Then Summer trimmed the foliage back to allow sunlight to enter the interior of the tree and promote shorter ramification and back budding.

I talked with Summer's sister about an elm multi-tree bonsai and ways that wiring and rearranging the trunks into a more cohesive planting might improve it.

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JACK continued:

Alex Momcilovic's Natal plum has a nice curving trunk, which the main branch continues to the apex. It required a little pruning. The side branches needed to be shortened and one awkward straight one removed to give the tree some balance. The pruning should encourage more desirable twigging.

Kareyn Cavanagh and her son Jake, brought a Liquidambar Orientalis. The tree had a double apex, which was easily slant cut. Some of the lower branches needed to be shortened and wired. The tree is ready for a bonsai pot in the spring.

Al Loman wanted me to confirm his ideas about lowering some branches and top thinning.

All in all I was very happy with the enthusiasm and skill of our members in this, our first tree clinic. I look forward to many more.

-- Jack Reynolds

MICHAEL continued:

We talked about how the tree might be improved by wiring. We also talked about branch trimming to keep from extending outside the shape of the canopy and to encourage growth toward the outside of the tree, not inward.

I talked with a visitor, who found us via our website about what might improve his bonsai. I suggested that he look into taking classes, because of his great interest in learning bonsai.

I talked with Joe Pando who was trimming his very nice, well-developed, juniper bonsai that he has been working on for 20 years. I suggested that he might clean it out more aggressively, to save some maintenance time.

It looked like everyone had a wonderful time and many trees benefited from the hands-on efforts of all involved.

--Michael Jonas



October 2009 Tree Clinic

Photos by Mary Tatro



Naka Notes

by Jack G Reynolds

Many trees will go dormant this month but with the unseasonable warmth we have been having some may need help. Put deciduous trees in shade and defoliate any that still have leaves.

Conifers will not be dormant and will need attention. This is the first month that pines can have their candles thinned. (David Nguy recommends December. See May 2009 Kai Wire for Hank Fawcett's write up.)

Remove all but two lateral candles on each twig. Keep the weakest candles. All old growth needles should be removed as well as any long unsightly needles. Remove all but three to five bundles of needles on each branch, with fewer on the top and more on the bottom. Junipers can be pinched as always.

Frost is a good possibility in some locations so be sure that tropical trees (Ficus, Bougainvillia, Pomegranate) are protected.

Place tropicals under a bench or shade tree. Be prepared to bring them indoors on cold nights when temperatures dip below 40 degrees.

Water less. Dormant trees do not need as much water because they have no leaves or the leaves they do have transpire less.

It is all right to fertilize conifers this month but a waste of time on the deciduous trees. Use a low nitrogen fertilizer such as cottonseed meal with a little bone meal added or something about 5-5-5, keeping in mind the old nurseryman's truth that any fertilizer is better than no fertilizer.

Do not transplant anything this month. October is the last safe month for that. Wiring can be done on conifers but deciduous trees will be too brittle.

Native trees can be collected this month.

As I See It

From Russell Benson (continued from page 1)

Our next event will be Sunday November 15th from 11am to 2 pm at the Japanese Bonsai Garden. Bring a tree and tools, and plan to share your bonsai experiences; and maybe learn a little yourself.

One of my numerous benefits in the role of Sansui-Kai President this past year is that I have a better understanding of bonsai. Attending other club's events, talking bonsai with people, and regular care of my plants, has expanded my experience enormously.

In this, my last few months as president, I plan to continue to personally grow my knowledge and help Sansui-Kai grow its size and strength.

We can use everyone's help this month with planning a very sound raffle for the December Walter Pall Tree Critique. Let us know what you plan to bring, and/or bring your December raffle contribution to the November meeting Wednesday to give us a preview of what we can plan to have on hand for the December raffle.

Events of Interest

Walter Pall Tree Critique Event

Russell Benson is lining up items for the December Walter Pall Tree Critique event raffle. He asks that members bring their contributions to this Wednesday's meeting, so the event committee knows what we have on hand for the December Walter Pall event raffle.

And Dan Kashinsky is keeping a list of foods and beverages members plan to bring for the December refreshment table. Please let Dan know your plans.

The Women's Club of the Encino Community Center just behind the Encino Community Center building will be the location of the Walter Pall Tree Critique event. The church parking lot adjacent to the Community Center also is available to the club for the evening of the event.

Program Chair Jack Reynolds encourages everyone to bring a tree for the event. "Walter Pall is taking on all comers, regardless of the level of your tree's development. This is a unique opportunity to get up close and personal and learn first hand from a top bonsai master the possibilities for your tree or trees."

Hank Fawcett Olive Demonstration

Hank is collecting raw stock for his demonstration Wednesday.

He will create a "flat cut olive" from volunteer collected raw stock. He is collecting a specimen with small leaves and a strong trunk base. Hank studied the flat cut olive technique with its originator, Doug Philips.

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WEBSITE

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What's Ahead

Wednesday
November 4

7:30 PM MEETING
Demonstration: Hank Fawcett Does Olives
Refreshments: Karen Decker, Don Berkus, Alex Momcilovic, Michael Jonas
Niche: Frank Cuva

Wednesday
December 2

7:30 PM MEETING
Walter Pall Tree Critique
Women's Club at Encino Community Center

Wednesday
January 6

Members' Tree Clinic

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.