

SHO FU BONSAI

April 2004 - Volume 6, Issue 4



More than 70 people enjoy Pedro Morales's demo at the Sarasota Garden Club, Inc.

Photo by Peter Trigg

From the President

Wow, that was quite a crowd we had at Pedro Morales's demonstration March 16. Many thanks to the Sarasota Garden Club, Inc., for hosting us on such a short notice.

Hopefully by the time you read this, Dr. Doug will be out of the hospital. As Bob announced to everyone at Pedro's demo, Doug is in Manatee Memorial Hospital. He has Pneumonia but seemed to be in good spirits when I visited him on the 17th. I took him some "bells of Ireland" flowers from all of us and he asked me to tell everyone how much he appreciated the thought. I know several of you have been out to see him (including but not all Timmie, Larry, Bob and Louise) Don't know how long he will be there but he hopes to be out in time for Mike Cartrett's demo and workshop on the 3rd & 4th of April. Get well soon Doug. We all miss you.

Now back to Pedro and his demo: Pedro started out with a rather large Pixie Bougainvillea, he then went on to a Eugenia and finished with a flare by cutting all the leaves and most branches off a Green Island Ficus. The three

Continued on page 2

Next Meeting April 1st

Program: Timmie Stewart

Timmie will present a program on how to
"Get your trees ready for show."

Meeting starts at 7:30 PM at Waterside

4540 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota

April 3 & 4th

Guest Artist — Mike Cartrett

Sat. April 3 1-4 PM

"Bring your own" workshop

\$20 at Julie's house

Sun. April 4 1PM

Mike's bougainvillea Demo (Free)

**Julie's house: 4014 Bay Shore Road
Corner of 40th & Bay Shore Rd. (355-9186)**

Ten Greatest Bonsai Fallacies, Part II

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second half of Jerry's "Ten Greatest Bonsai Fallacies," continued from last month. Jerry Meislik has given us exclusive permission to print this article in the Sho Fu Newsletter.

By Jerry Meislik

■ 6. Here's the formula for the perfect soil mix.

As we say in Montana, I don't have the perfect soil mix but ask me again in five minutes and I will. We have been fiddling around with soils for more than 20 years and still the perfect mix eludes us. Because there is no perfect soil mix nor will there ever be! A soil must do many things. It holds your tree mechanically in the pot. It must feed the tree while providing moisture, buffer the temperature, chemicals and environmental stresses. This must vary by the type of tree being grown, by the temperature, light exposure, humidity, wind, size of the container. etc.

To figure out the best soil start by visiting the best bonsai growers in your area. The best growers are defined by the healthiest trees in your locale, not the most impressive recently imported specimens. Ask the growers their soil mix and how they water, and also their sun exposure. Use what works, and then modify it for your specific types of tree and your own backyard micro-climate.

■ 7. There is a perfect or ideal tree.

There is no perfect or ideal tree. Sometimes one hears about an ideal ratio of six times the tree's diameter for the ideal height of your bonsai. This is not any more ideal than 6 feet height for a human being. The proportions of a human or tree depend upon many factors. A pine tree's shape is not more desirable than a broom style. Cascade is not better than informal upright. A tree that is designed to represent a 50 year old maple is not better or worse than a tree designed to represent a 600 year old ancient forest tree. Stop listening when someone tells you about the ideal tree. It is no more valid than the ideal wife or husband.

Currently we in the Americas are doing more "natural" appearing trees. This too is a fad, and is not necessarily better than more highly stylized exposed root or other bonsai styles appreciated in the past. Each type of style is just different but not better or worse than another style.

■ 8. Your visiting bonsai expert knows best.

Visiting bonsai artists bring much knowledge to your club. But unless they are from your local area they are probably unfamiliar with your native bonsai materials. They also will be less than knowledgeable regarding cultural aspects suitable to your locale. For this advice stick with your local bonsai talent.

Another gripe with some demonstrators is that their demonstrations produce beautiful looking trees. But they fail to mention that the tree would be better if certain other things were done. For instance a pine is quickly trimmed into bonsai shape. The lowest 1/3 of the trunk is stripped of branches. These branches must be allowed to grow for years to give the bonsai pine any taper. The demonstrator's tree will forever have the same taper that it had on the day of the demo; the trunk may get thicker but the taper will never increase unless low branches are left to thicken the lower trunk.

Another pet gripe is that demonstrators fail to mention that they would never do to a tree what they did in your demonstration. It would be helpful for the expert to be honest and tell you up front when they are doing things for demonstration purposes but that they would do it differently if they had more time.

■ 9. Forests or groves must have odd number of trees.

A forest planting can be created with any number of trees. Whether or not this is an even number is irrelevant. If your design is good then the number of trees is not meaningful. If your design does not work then add or subtract trees but do not automatically adjust trees to give you some magical even number. For most beginners the odd numbers are simpler to design into an asymmetrical look that we love. Groves with even numbers of trees may be more balanced, and symmetrical, and therefore less interesting to some observers.

■ 10. Lime sulfur will keep your dead wood from disappearing.

All dead wood will disappear eventually. Anything that we do is only a reprieve before the wood is digested by fungal and bacterial attack. Lime sulfur slows down the decay process but does not halt it. At best, lime sulfur keeps only the outside 1/4 inch of wood firm; underneath the wood continues to deteriorate.

If you have dead wood at the base of your tree keep soil away from the trunk. This will help slow decay. Also, use some penetrating marine epoxy on your important dead wood areas as this seems to plasticize the remaining wood and keep it around for a few more years. Also, we bonsai lovers are currently fascinated with dead wood designs. This current fad is likely to fade as is the wood of our creations. Think long and hard before creating dead wood designs as they are temporary and may even shorten your trees long term survival.

Conclusions

ALWAYS USE COMMON SENSE, ESPECIALLY IF THE ADVICE DOES NOT AGREE WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE.

From the President

Continued from page 1

trees were won by Lisa, Larry and a new member that we will all meet on the evening of our next meeting.

We had a lot of interested people attend that night and we look forward welcoming the new members into the club. Many stayed to observe the workshop following the demo.

Well, our large Selby event is just around the corner and Timmie will give us a presentation on how to "get your trees ready for the show." We will also need to know how many trees each of you intend to put in the show for sale etc. I will try to remember to bring moss for those who may need some to dress up their bonsai.

Mike Cartrett will be giving a demonstration of another bougainvillea on the 4th of April, starting at 1 PM, and we will have a "bring your own" workshop (also starting at 1 PM) on the 3rd. The price for this workshop will be \$20. Sign up at our meeting on the 1st. See you all there.

Julie Trigg

Bonsai Calendar for April - Zone 9

Weather Protection & Location

If tropicals have not been moved out of protected area last month, they should be moved now if the temperature has remained above 50 degrees.

■ Watering

Warmer weather and new growth will require more watering. Be cautious, over-watering will cause oversized leaves and too much growth. Toward the end of the month, watering may be needed more than once a day because of warmer temperatures..

■ Feeding

Continue feeding about every other week as started in February. Some feed every week.

■ Styling

Continue pruning new growth. Be sure to watch the trees for wire damage.

■ Repotting

It is probably too late to transplant deciduous trees and conifers. Do not transplant if there is any tender growth, even on conifers.

■ Pest control

The same as February, but watch for caterpillars. Spray two weeks after seeing white fly swarm. Use appropriate insecticide and follow instructions. Repeat in 10 days except for spider mites, then spray every three days for at least nine days.

Special Notes: At the end of the month, drench bald cypress (as in Feb) with systemic fungicide to prevent summer leaf browning.

Compiled by Marian Borchers & Marian Rousseau of the Hukyu Bonsai Society of Tampa.

Sho Fu Bonsai Society

4014 Bay Shore Road Sarasota, Fl. 34234

Phone: (941) 355-9186

E-Mail: info@shofubonsai.com

Visit us on the Web: shofubonsai.com

Officers

President: Julie Trigg **Vice President:** Walter Hamm

Secretary: Thelma Thompson **Treasurer:** Treva Kurtz

Directors: David Ebinger, Larry Rogers, Lois Bennett, & Timmie Stewart

Webmaster: Steven J. Ackerman

Newsletter: Julie Trigg

Historian: David Ebinger

Raffle: Carrie Ebinger

Publicity: TBA

Librarian: Phil Hummel

If you'd like to contribute to our newsletter, please contact Julie Trigg at: julie.trigg@verizon.net

Minutes of Monthly Meeting

Date: March 4, 2004

Treasurer's Report: Accepted as read.

Secretary's Report: Accepted as read.

Vice President's Report: Mike Cartrett will be doing a demo on Saturday, April 3, and a workshop on Sunday, April 4. If you bring your own trees the fee will be \$20 per participant.

President's Report: Several announcements were made.

- 1.) "Thank you" to Lisa Weber for printing the newsletter.
- 2.) Barb Bauman and Doug Chapin will mentor the Saturday workshop at Tokonoma.
- 3.) Louise Chapman was thanked for donating the turntable the speaker would use this evening.
- 4.) The newsletter will continue to be mailed in black and white, but will be in color on line.
- 5.) Pedro Morales' workshop has one space left. For the demo Pedro will be using a large Pixie Bougainvillea. The club will celebrate Pedro's birthday that day with birthday cake after the demo.
- 6.) A \$100 check has been given to Waterside by the club in appreciation of their hospitality.
- 7.) Timmie Stewart announced the Ben Oki trip to Japan. She has the itinerary and cost information in case anyone in the club would like to join the trip.
- 8.) The club will donate \$100 to the Morikami Museum in memory of Jim Moody who died about two weeks ago.
- 9.) Flyers for the Selby Show will be available at the Garden Show at the Sarasota Convention Center this weekend. If every member would do a few copies, that would spread the work around. Steve has the poster on the web site as a PDF file.

10.) The club will not buy any more trees for the Selby Show.

11.) Timmie and Julie will be doing a demo at the convention. They will do a slab forest of Australian pines. This will be in competition with other clubs in the state.

Program:

At the conclusion of the announcements, Eric Wigert, of Wigert's Mango Grove and Nursery in Bokeelia, Fl., gave a demonstration using a Jaboticaba. At the conclusion of the demonstration, the club purchased the tree for \$110. The tree may be raffled at a future meeting.

Respectfully submitted.

Thelma Thompson, secretary.

Board meeting March 31 6:30 PM
Waterside - 4540 Bee Ridge Road



Photos by Julie Trigg

Top left: Lisa says “Darn, what happened to my blueberries?”

Top right: Phil is trying to decide “do I leave enough blueberries for pancakes or do I cut the rest of them off.”

Bottom right: Gerry says “It’s perfect just the way it is.” Whether they did bald cypress, bougainvillea or blueberries, looks like all 15 workshopers had a good time.

SHO FU BONSAI

4014 Bay Shore Rd
Sarasota, Fl. 34234