

SHO FU BONSAI

August 2004 - Volume 6, Issue 8

Carver Designs Forest of Raintrees for Sho Fu

By Julie Trigg

Allen Carver has a wonderful self-effacing manner that puts his audience at ease and makes them comfortable enough to ask questions. Performing to a packed room, Allen did a five-tree forest of raintrees for our July meeting at Sho fu. Allen is the grandson of bonsai master Jim Moody who died earlier this year.

Allen said he had never done a raintree forest and had been wanting to do one. He brought along five, beautiful, Brazilian raintrees that were about four years old. These had been grown from the original raintrees that his grandfather had started from five seeds that his sister-in-law sent him from Brazil about 30 years ago.

For those of you who have observed the beautiful, flat, twisted trunks of raintrees, Allen explained that the trunks start to flatten wherever a branch comes out of the main trunk. He said there are several kinds of rain trees. Some flower more than others, and some may start to bloom in as little as four years when grown from seeds.

He explained that raintrees are very resilient so you can be harsh with your trimming of the roots as well as the top and that this is the best time of the year to do both. He cautions that you should first inspect the rootball to make sure you have feeder roots. "If you have feeder roots, you



Photo by Peter Trigg

Allen makes a muck dam to hold in the bonsai soil before placing the trees on the slab.

Next Meeting August 5th **Program: Ernie Fernandez**

Root over rock demo

Meeting starts at 7:30PM at Waterside

4540 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota

Board meeting Aug 5th, 6:PM

Workshop: Sunday, Aug. 8th. 10AM—2PM

Tokonoma Nursery

6611 14th Street W

Bradenton (941) 753-6611

can then cut the larger roots." While trimming and inspecting the roots, he looks for nematodes. Allen explained that he applies Nematrol (a non poisonous powder made from plants that can be obtained from Home Depot) to each raintree as he pots it up. And he is always careful to use clean pots when he is potting raintrees, fukien tea or malpigia. The only time he doesn't care if he has a clean pot, is if he is potting a ficus.

Before getting to the design of the forest on the hand-

Continued on page 2

Bonsai Calendar for August - Zone 9

■ **Weather Protection & Location**

For tender leafed plants, the morning sun is best.

■ **Watering**

All plants should be watched carefully. They may have to be watered more than once a day. Heavy rains may cause erosion of the bonsai soil and it will need to be replaced immediately so the sun will not dry out exposed roots.

■ **Feeding**

Continue feeding program — either diluted once a week or every other week feeding.

■ **Styling**

Continue pruning for shape.

■ **Repotting**

Tropicals only for June, July and the middle of August.

■ **Collecting**

All tropicals. GOOD time for buttonwoods.

Special Notes: Air-layering can be done. Defoliating can be done in June (except Japanese maple). **NOTE:** The plant must be well established and healthy. Leaf prune two weeks after fertilizing. If air roots show on ficus, place where moisture can be contained around area of the roots. If buttonwood has leaf spot, use Benomyl as a soil drench and foliage spray — follow label.

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 **Printing:** Lisa Webber/Classic Printing

Historian: David Ebinger

Publicity: Peter Trigg

Librarian: Phil Hummel

Raffle: Lisa Webber

Membership: Louise Cashman

Hospitality: Jean Schneeburger

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

Carver Demonstration

Continued from Page One

made slab he quickly trimmed the rootballs and made some preliminary cuts on the long, leggy growth just to bring the foliage in closer so that he could see where to go with the design of each tree. He explained that he “styles each tree individually, cutting branches that go straight up or straight down and usually cuts off the



Allen makes the final decisions on the design

branches from inside curves. “If you have two branches that come off the trunk in the same place, always take the top one off because this will give you a more natural look. If you let too many branches grow in one spot, you can end up with a large knot on the trunk. The more you trim, the more growth you get because they will break-back great on old growth.”

Allen says he uses “dynamite” fertilizer and lets rain-trees slightly dry out between waterings, and keeps them in full sun.

After doing the preliminary trimming on all five trees, he set about mixing up the muck to be used as a wall to hold in the soil around the outside of the planting. He used what he refers to as “marl” that he collects from the bottom of stagnant ponds that have decaying organic matter that has collected there for some time. He then mixed about 50 percent of long-fiber sphagnum moss with the marl. He explained that when using wet sphagnum moss, it is important to wear gloves. He then proceeded to build about a 2-inch dam around the perimeter of the stone, observing the characteristic of the slab, and then started arranging the trees.

He explained that he observes the basic rules when creating a forest to give the illusion of depth by placing your largest tree off center, closer to the viewer, with the smallest tree in the back. He cautioned not to overcrowd your

Continued on page 3



Allen Carver demonstrated to a packed house of Sho Fu members at the July meeting. A video was made of his demonstration and will be available to anyone who missed the meeting.

Raintree Demo

Continued from Page 2
slab, though, with too many trees.

Working and taking questions from the packed room, he responded to a question about die-back on raintrees: When you cut a branch directly where the thorn is, it will die back somewhat and that you may want to cut about one inch beyond the thorn if you are concerned about that.

He stressed patience when making styling decisions, not making all your cuts at one sitting.

He stressed that when designing a forest, think in terms of movement and getting your triangle design, but to think of the entire forest as one tree when making your decisions.

From the President

Well, again, you won't want to miss the upcoming meeting. I have never actually seen Ernie Fernandez in action, except the way he kicked our butt at the state convention on club night. It was Ernie who led Fort Myers to victory with their entry. I was too busy to look over (they were on our right) during the mad rush Timmie and I made to get our demo finished. But..... I have been told, by some of the best, that his "root over rock" demonstration is "not to be missed." So . . . I am really looking forward to this one also.

But how about our last demo by Allen Carver. The Raintree forest was great. Wish Peter had put more than \$20 into those raffle tickets. For those of you who weren't there, guess who won the Raintree forest on a very large handmade slab? Guess I don't have to say it, I know what's running through your head as you read this! But he's such a nice guy that none of us can

hate him for long. What?

Timmie (we miss you Timmie) had suggested we have a sale table at our meetings, where members could bring a tree (pot or whatever) that they wanted to sell. I thought it was a great idea, but never got around to bringing it up to the meetings. Each member could bring one thing each month, with a price on it, and if it didn't sell, they would take it home. If it sold, they could give the club 10 percent but they would be responsible for the transaction so as not to burden our treasurer with any additional work. What do you think? I'll try to remember to bring it up at our next meeting. Maybe we'll have this in place before Timmie returns in January.

We don't have a member's corner this week but I talked to Boudy yesterday and Dr. Doug may be coming home soon. He still can't have visitors but wants to thank everyone for the cards,

letters and flowers.

Don't forget about Mary Miller's visit to our club on September 2nd. The workshops will consist of 10 Nerifolia (Willowleaf Ficus) trees on Friday and a "bring your own tree" workshop on Saturday. You can also have Mary in a private session for \$50 per hour with a minimum of two hours.

And then in October, I will be doing a slab building demo and workshop and of course November will be our big club auction.

More on these later. Julie Trigg

Somebody said it:
"You shouldn't compare yourself to others - they are more screwed up than you think."

Tree of the Month

Sea Grape *Coccoloba ubifera*

By Walter Hamm

The sea grape, frequently found near the seashore, may grow to a height of 25-35 feet with wide spreading branches and graceful rounded crown. It grows naturally in arid and alkaline beach areas and has even become a popular privacy hedge.

New leaves emerge in April, unfurling a delicate silky texture and pinkish bronze color. The leaves become a rich green with prominent red veining. During May and June auxiliary and terminal stalks several inches long emerge with tiny ivory flowers. After blooming, grapes develop that are visible as tiny yellowish-green globes covering the stalks. Late summer grapes turn to purple and are then edible and make an excellent jelly. During the cooler months, the leaves turn red, amber and yellow and eventually brown and brittle dropping when new growth emerges in spring.

Collected species offer better trunk size and shape. They thrive in moist acidic soil. Frequent pruning of branches results in desirable twigging after a few years. Total defoliation three times between May and September each year reduces the leaf size to silver or even half dollar size. Sea grape root growth is slow, a tree may stay in the same pot for five years. A slightly root bound tree aids in leaf reduction. Foliage will branch out on old wood. Full sun is recommended and frequent weekly or bi weekly fertilization with alternate chemical and organic fertilizer. The sea grape is not prone to pest infestation or disease except aphids on new growth.

This species dictates a gentle curved trunk style with branches only near the top to show off its gnarled trunk. A graceful rounded canopy condenses the foliage and shows the flower stalks and fruit to best advantage. Sea grape frequently shows up as shohin bonsai.

Sho Fu Bonsai Society Minutes

July 1, 2004 Call to Order: 7:30 P.M.

Secretary's report: Accepted as published.

Treasurer's report: Accepted as read.

Vice President's report: Ernie Fernandez will be doing a demonstration on root-over-rock planting at the August meeting. The August workshop will be able to be held at Tokonoma Nursery.

Old Business:

1: Jim Moody Memorial: Julie read the letter she sent to the Morikami Museum with the club's donation to the Jim Moody memorial and introduced Carolyn Moody Carver, Jim's daughter, and mother of Alan Carver.

New Business: 1: There will be no workshop this month due to the holiday weekend.

Program: Alan Carver from Jupiter Bonsai presented a program on forest planting on a hand made slab. He created the illusion of a mature forest by planting five beautiful rain trees on a large slab made by Julie Trigg. Using muck from the bottom of a pond, sphagnum moss, and bonsai soil, he created an environment for the trees which will allow them to thrive on a flat surface. Beautifully done!

Raffle: At the conclusion of the program Lisa started the raffle amidst much chatter about who would win the forest planting, which was the raffle prize for the evening. Much joking about everyone's chances being lowered if Vito bought a ticket, because he has such incredible luck. He won the tree!! Again!! Congratulations, Vito.

Phil Hummel won a pair of gardening gloves, and Wes Miller a schefflera plant.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Thelma Thompson, secretary

SHO FU BONSAI

4014 Bay Shore Rd

Sarasota, Fl. 34234