

# SHO FU BONSAI

January 2004 - Volume 6, Issue 1

## January Newsletter

**T**his newsletter represents the first edition from your new officers. Hope everyone weathers the demands of the holidays and is excited about our new year.

We hope to have a tip page each month on problems that are specific to our zone 9 area. When I moved back to Sarasota in 2001, after being away 14 years, I couldn't remember (if I ever knew) what should be done at what time of the year or what to look out for, etc.

So each month, I hope to include a calendar that we can consult because if you're anything like me, you need to be reminded to fertilize, repot, trim, etc. It is so easy down here in this climate just to let things slide. Or am I the only one?

This month will be a busy month if you have lots of trees and the calendar (right) was provided by Lisa, who got it from Dr. Doug, who obtained it from the Tampa club. Since their growing season is about the same as ours, it will suffice until we customize our own (I'll be calling you senior members).

David did such a fantastic job for the past two years that it makes for awfully big shoes to fill as your new president for 2004.

The program for our next meeting (Jan. 8th) will be on collecting trees in our area. What to look for, how to dig, trim or not trim, how to grow, etc. Several senior members will join me in this presentation. And we will raffle Suthin's Chinese Elm (seen on page 3)! Raffle tickets will be \$5.

Happy New Year! Julie Trigg

### Dig Planned for Jan. 17, 2004

Lois suggests bringing the following items: Shoes or boots for walking in woods, shovel, saw, loppers, plastic garbage bags, tie strings, gloves, bag lunch and drinks.

**10:00 AM (Saturday) Jan. 17**

**Area behind Victory Christian Church** at the end of

Bee Ridge Road on right. Park in back of church.

Material to be collected: Maples and Oak and ??.

Sign up for the dig at the Jan. 8th or call one of the board members

### Next Meeting January 8 7:30PM

at Waterside Retirement Estates  
4540 Bee Ridge Rd

**Board meeting** Jan. 7 6:30

**Workshop** Tokonoma Nursery Jan. 10 (10AM- 2PM)  
6611 14th Street W. Bradenton, Fl.



Christmas Bougie

## Bonsai Calendar for January - Zone 9

### Weather Protection & Location

All tropicals should be protected

### Watering

Trees should be well watered if frost or freezing weather is expected. Check everyday to see if trees need watering, especially if it is windy. Never let the soil get dry or allow to stay soggy.

### Feeding

At this time, feed with a low nitrogen fertilizer (4-12-12). May add only one drop of Superthrive per gallon of fertilizer water when watering.

### Styling

Evergreens can be pruned, wired and styled, especially pines. Established bald cypress can be wired & pruned but after it has lost all its leaves.

### Repotting

Deciduous trees, conifers and non-tropicals **NOW IS THE BEST TIME** to repot if they have lost all leaves.

### Pest control

Dormant spray, if used, should be applied. Lime-sulfur/fungicide spray for pines.

### Collecting

Ideal time for everything except tropicals.

### Special Notes

The best time for hardwood cuttings and grafting. Major pruning & styling on pines now.

Compiled by Marian Borchers & Marian Rousseau of the Hukyu Bonsai Society of Tampa (given to me by Lisa who got it from Doug).



## Sho Fu Bonsai Society

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If you'd like to contribute to our newsletter, please contact Julie Trigg at:  
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Visit Sho Fu on the Web  
[www.shofubonsai.com](http://www.shofubonsai.com)

# Common Bonsai Pests...

Symptom	Potential Cause	Potential Solution
Tree often sticky, covered with crawling insects, fuzzy or scab-like incrustations. Tree covered with little green or black insects, especially on younger leaves; leaves may be curled or yellow.	Aphids	Wash off in a hard stream of water or use insecticidal soap. Since ants often tend "herds" of aphids, you may need to control ants as well.
Plants covered with scab-like incrustation (scales), or cottony white wads (mealy bugs).	Scales, Mealy Bugs	Rub off using a Q-tip soaked in alcohol, or scrape off with a toothpick.
Leaves are dull-covered, flecked, bronzed, or falling off, the undersides covered with tiny webs; buds or shoots may shrivel up; minute arthropods visible with magnifying glass.	Spider Mites	Wash the tree with a hard stream of water every few days or use a miticide or pyrethrin spray every week for 3-4 weeks.
Leaves with small dull silvery patches; young leaves sometimes deformed; small (1mm) insects associated with patches. Leaves without webs	Thrips	Thrips are difficult to control especially if indoors. They are frequently resistant to pesticides. Wash plant off with a hard stream of water after removing infested leaves.
Tree surrounded by clouds of white insects or black insects	Whiteflies, or black Fungus gnats	Set up sticky traps, use insecticide or vacuum pests away. Usually just annoying, but can eat young plant tissue. They lay eggs on rotting plant debris, so surface should be kept clean. Repeat control measure when eggs hatch.

## Watering Checklist

**Overwatering:** Older leaves turn yellow. Waterlogged roots may die (pull plant out of pot and examine the roots). If root rot has developed, you may see a very rapid wilting, the dying leaves turning dark and clinging to the stem.

**Underwatering:** Leaves wilt, shoot tips die, leaves may develop brown tips or the plant may suddenly drop all its leaves (especially figs and serissas). Underwatering may lead to salt buildup in soil (white crust will be visible on sides of pot or on soil surface).

# Bonsai Master Shares Expertise

Suthin Sukosolvisit wowed Sarasota Sho Fu Bonsai Club members Monday night, Dec. 15, by taking a 6- to 7-year old nursery grown juniper and turning it into a Shohein tree that looked at least 100 years old. "Everyone should have a beautiful tree," he said. Shohein trees, he explained, are trees that are under 10 inches tall. But "you shouldn't worry about the size if it looks good" he said.

Competing with Christmas carols being played on a piano in the next room for the retirees of Waterside Retirement Center, Suthin mesmerized the attending club members with his expertise.

Born in Thailand, Suthin learned the art of bonsai by teaching himself. Luckily he had an uncle who would go with him on digs. They "collected and killed hundreds of trees. The more we killed the more we learned," said Southin.

He said there are three things you should look for when collecting a tree or buying one from the local nursery:

- **Roots.** Roots should give the tree a balanced look.
- **Trunk.** Taper and movement in the trunk (avoid reverse taper where the top is larger than the bottom).
- **Branches.** Healthy branches low on tree. Cut branches on inside of curves since they will die anyway because they won't get sun or as much nourishment. Branches should be on the outside of curves.

After carefully considering all sides of the tree to determine the front, Southin advised that if you are having trouble deciding between two areas to determine your front (after making the above considerations), then go away for a couple of hours or even days and come back and look at the tree with fresh eyes.

Winter is the best time to work on conifers (cone bearing trees) when there is less sap in the tree. Also it should be done when the tree is dry because they are more flexible and less likely to break. He advised not to do all your bending of a branch at once. Do it in increments, flex and bend.

When your junipers or conifers are not getting enough sun you will see a lot of brown inside the foliage he explained. Clean all of this out first.

Prompting questions from the audience, Southin explained that any question was a good one. He advised the audience to take a workshop for hands-on work. You will learn more than you can from books.

Showing two branches coming out of the tree at the same spot on the juniper, Southin advised cutting one off because it will take a lot of energy from the tree for both of those branches and will develop a big knot and not look attractive.



*Suthin first worked on the Juniper and then moved on to the Chinese Elm shown below*

He then proceeded to explain how to jin several of the branches. Jins should not look like they have been cut off. They should look as if lightning struck the tree or perhaps a hurricane broke the branch to produce the dead wood.

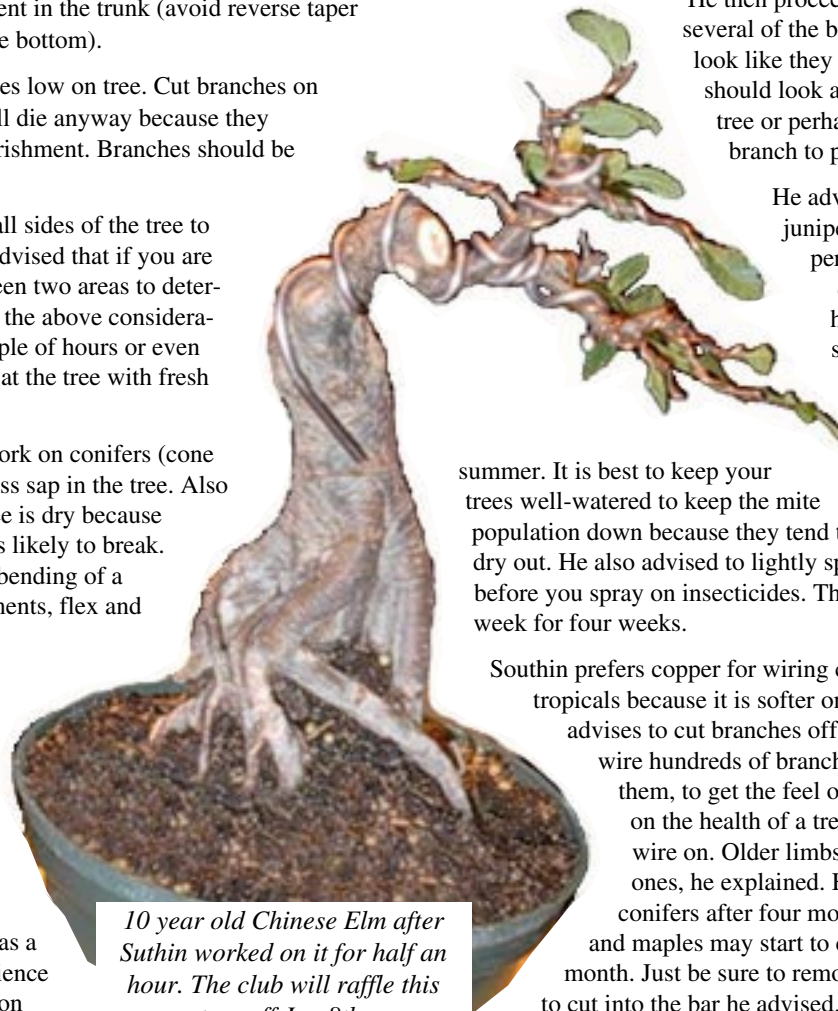
He advised the audience to keep junipers outside and that the temperature can drop to about 25 degrees before they will be harmed. They need lots of sun and water. He said that when you live in Florida you will have a Spider Mite problem in the

summer. It is best to keep your trees well-watered to keep the mite population down because they tend to attack when your trees dry out. He also advised to lightly spray your tree with water before you spray on insecticides. Then be sure to spray once a week for four weeks.

Southin prefers copper for wiring conifers and aluminum for tropicals because it is softer on the tropical wood. He advises to cut branches off trees in your back yard and wire hundreds of branches and bend, trying to break them, to get the feel of wiring. He said it depends on the health of a tree how long you leave the wire on. Older limbs grow slower than new ones, he explained. He advised to check on conifers after four months, ficus after one month and maples may start to cut into the wire after one month. Just be sure to remove the wire before it starts to cut into the bark he advised.

After finishing up the Juniper, Southin moved on to the Chinese Elm (shown here). Both trees had been chosen by Lois for the demonstration. Suthin commented on the great choice of material.

The before and after photos can be seen on the Sho Fu website.



*10 year old Chinese Elm after Suthin worked on it for half an hour. The club will raffle this tree off Jan 8th.*

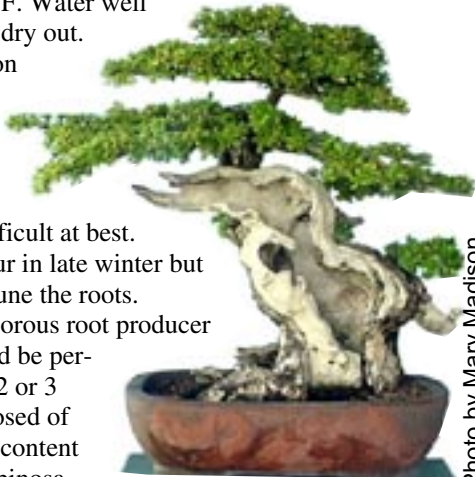
## Tree of the Month

**D**warf Black Olive (*Bucida Spinosa*) is one of the best tropical varieties available for the classic styles of bonsai. Blooming occurs most heavily in spring but may vary. The natural growth is a predictable zig-zag pattern of branch and twig growth. Twigs branch out at 30 degrees with cluster of leaves emerging at the node with occupies the point of every angle.

The natural growth is generally a wind swept style but also grows with a straight trunk and branches in the shape of a cart-wheel pattern often with 3 or 4 spokes. It takes several years growth before trunk and branches become too stiff to bend. Lateral growth is very rapid, but thickening of trunk and branches takes time. The spinosa loves full sun but doesn't like temperatures below 40 F. Water well as it doesn't like to dry out. Frequent fertilization promotes rapid lateral elongation with new vibrantly red twigs.

Propagation is difficult at best. Repotting may occur in late winter but only moderately prune the roots. Spinosa is not a vigorous root producer and repotting should be performed only every 2 or 3 years. A soil composed of high sand and lime content is recommended. Spinosa is pest resistant but susceptible to sooty mold and bark borer.

Shaping may be done with directional pruning using the natural growth for shaping. But wiring achieves better results. The branches send up elongated shoots (uppers) which need to be immediately removed. Also the branch tips send out long segments of new growth, trimming these promote shorter segments.



Mary Madison's Black Olive

Photo by Mary Madison



Barb Bauman presenting Dremel tool set to David

## Surprise Party for David

More than 20 members gathered at Julie and Peter's house to surprise David and thank him for a truly well-done job leading the club for the past two years. The surprise didn't come off the way it was planned because the Ebingers drove around to the back of the house and realized something was up before getting out of the car. Most members were hiding in the living room but some had strayed to the back because the guest of honor was late in arriving. In addition to the gift for David, the club also presented gifts to secretary, Carrie and Webmaster, Steve to thank them for a truly fabulous job!

Fatten the trunk by allowing the lower branches to grow. Old wood makes good jins but later removal of the jin may not heal well if the cut is taken from dead wood. When trimming concentrate on removing the "uppers" and when styling concentrate on the wiring. Both activities should occur in the warmer months.

Allen Carver, Jupiter Bonsai: USPA Fact Sheet ST-102

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