

# SHO FU BONSAI

October 2004 - Volume 6, Issue 10

## ... of Hurricanes & Bonsai

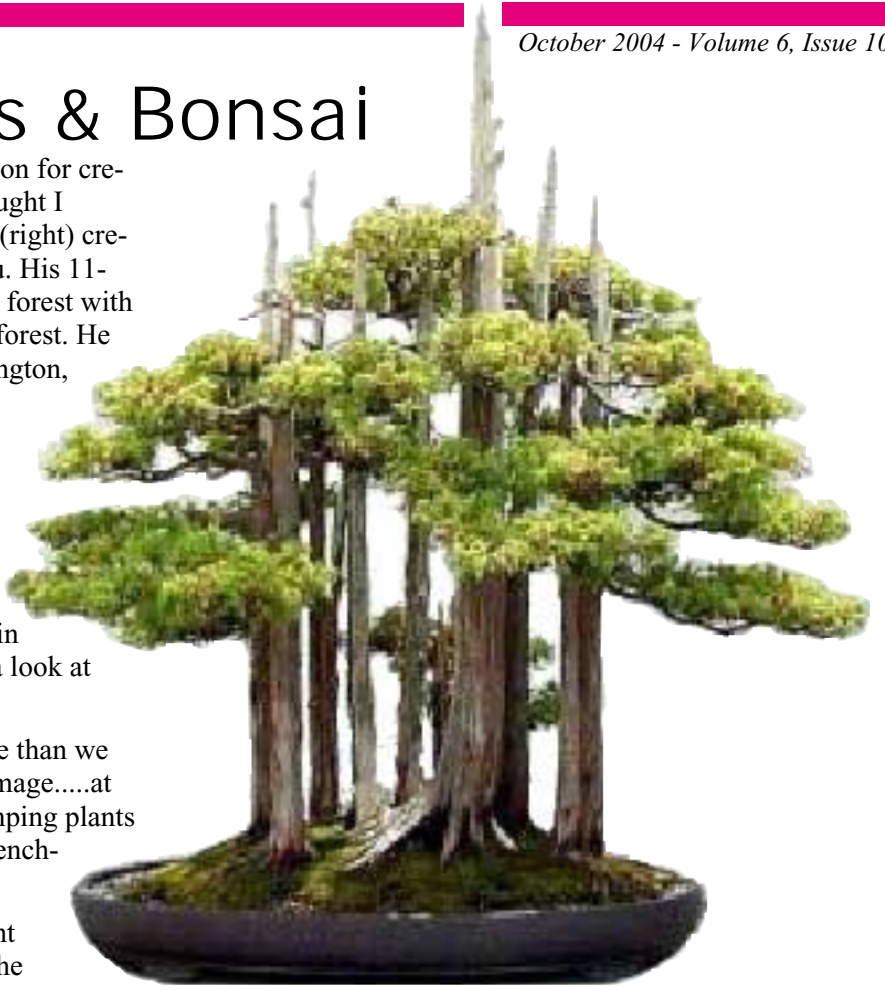
**W**ell group, if we ever needed inspiration for creating bonsai we need it now. So, thought I would put up this picture of Goshen (right) created by the late, great John Naka to inspire you. His 11-juniper masterpiece, representing an American forest with bleached jins, interprets California's redwood forest. He donated it to the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., in 1984 and it remains in their collection today.

For more inspiration see Mary Madison's Black Olive on page 3.

So if the hurricane blues have you down and you're thinking of throwing in the towel after hauling your collection in and out, in and out, in and out and now maybe in again . . . just take a look at Goshen and hopefully, you will be inspired.

Some of our bonsai friends had it much worse than we did. I heard that Jim Smith got some major damage.....at least 60 percent of the benches collapsed...dumping plants everywhere. Some the plants were under the benches.

"We were out of power at the nursery for eight days....had to use a generator to get water for the plants.....had no rain during that time," Jim VanLandingham said. "None of the good plants were damaged beyond recovery, so we made out okay. We have things under control, but we have another one, Jeanne, off the coast coming toward us," he said in a pre-Hurricane



*Goshen, the 11-tree juniper forest created by the late, great, John Naka.*

Jeanne email a few days ago.

I haven't heard the latest but feel sure that they suffered a lot more with this latest one. Still having trouble believing that we had four hurricanes in six weeks!

At my house, we lost power for Jeanne but got it back after about eight hours. You really don't realize how much you depend on electricity until you don't have it. For this 4th hurricane, I said to #\$\$\$ with it and left all the bonsai outside. I just took everything down to ground level and I saw this morning that most everything survived. A few broken limbs due to falling debris but I think they fared better than being inside for several days at a time.

### Sho Fu Elections

If you haven't already done so, call Lisa Webber and

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## **Next Meeting Oct. 7th Program: Slab Building Demo**

by: Julie Trigg

**Meeting starts at 7:30 PM Waterside**

4540 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota

**Board meeting Oct., 7th. 6:30**

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**Slab building Workshop:**

**Saturday Oct. 9th 9:AM**

**4014 Bay Shore Rd. Sarasota 355-9186**

# Bonsai Questions & Answers

(Editor's note: Questions and answers culled from "Bonsai Forum" on the Internet).

## Sticky substance & Scale

**Q** I have a 10-year-old Fujian Tea, that I purchased last summer. It has been happy and healthy, and still looks healthy, but during the winter it began to emit a sticky substance from it's leaves. The leaves are now constantly sticky and the table around the pot continuously has the same sticky goo. Does this sound normal? Gary

**A** This is probably the "dew" expelled from pests that may be invisible to the eye. Use a strong magnifying glass and check the leaves. Here's a home made brew that will work on most insects: SOAP solution!

I pour a solution of 1 to 2 tablespoon dish washing detergent, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil into a plastic gallon and slowly add water to fill the gallon jug. I fill this solution from the gallon bottle into a spray bottle and just before using I add 1 to 2 two caps full (from the rubbing alcohol bottle) of rubbing alcohol and spray immediately. If you do not use the full bottle of spray, I suggest the next time you are going to use the soap/alcohol solution add the same amount of rubbing alcohol again, since the alcohol will evaporate. I store this soap/oil solution in the gallon jug for months on end. It does not seem to go bad.

Spray on plants covering all leaf and stem surfaces. You may have to spray three or four times with intervals of three days. I have eliminated almost any kind of pest that have attacked my trees, including scale.

I do not wash off the spray and have seen no adverse reaction to the trees from this mixture. .... Carl L Rosner

**A** "On scale I use ultra fine oil spray. It kills the scale. I spray it on the entire tree especially the underside of the leaves. Once in a while, I have to do a second application, but usually it is not needed. Ultra fine oil is lighter than dormant oil. I know a person that had success with Sun Oil, one ounce to a pint of water. It dried up the scale without damaging any leaves on the trees." ..... Steve Wachs

## Aerial roots on Ficus

**Q** I have been desperate to put aerial roots on my Ficus? All the usual tricks failed, or I have gotten crummy aerial roots that are in the wrong places and at the wrong angles.

**A** Recently I found a technique that seems superior to other techniques that I have tried. First, remove or obtain some fresh long roots from the Ficus species that you wish to graft. In my case I was repotting a Ficus salicifolia. I removed four long unnecessary roots, and these were used immediately and were not allowed to dry out. The roots were

from the same tree but probably roots of the same species would be fine as well.

If using roots from another species the bark character may not be similar and therefore the roots will look out of place. I simply planted several inches of the root end into the pot in the exact spot were they were wanted. I then notched the underside of the branch on the mother tree and inserted the other, cut end of the root. Make the notch or hole in the branch slightly smaller than the root's diameter. Then cut paste around the joint graft, but be careful not to wiggle it apart. For stability wire the new aerial root joint. This protects the joined areas from moving in the wind or from being bumped when watering.

Within sixty days you will find the root has taken by its increasing girth. If the graft fails the root will shrivel up. Once the root has taken, the protection wire may be removed. The successful root will be in the right spot and at the right angle.

If the grafts do not succeed then get some more roots and try it again, you have not lost anything but a few worthless extra roots. On my Ficus salicifolia , I grafted four roots, and two succeeded despite the fact that this was done in the fall when growth is not optimum. I would recommend this be done when growth is most rapid, and suggest avoiding thin roots as they will dry out before they can take.

Another technique is to use a small seedling fig to graft into the host tree exactly where a new aerial root is required. Use a modification of the above process and cut off the foliage once growth is apparent. This usually takes about 90 days. ....

## Jack Pine question

**Q** I have a Jack Pine seedling which is about 2 1/2 years old. It's 5-inches tall and has a trunk which is about 5 mm thick. It sports needles which are 4 inches long. The bonsai book I own advises that two-needle pines should have all their needles removed in the Autumn (with the exception of 6 pairs at the end of each limb.) This seems to make sense in my case since the needles are so long and their sheer weight is making my seedling lean to one side. Should I go ahead with this procedure on such a young specimen? What about the remaining needles on the ends? Should I trim their length down? Thank you in advance for any advice.

**A** If you treat your seedling as a bonsai, you will retard its growth. Sounds like a jack pine should be a larger tree to carry the needle size. If you can, my advice would be to put your seedling in the ground and let it go for a couple of years. You do want some curves in the trunk, which will be easier to do sooner than later. If you do put it into the ground you should check the rootage now and then to make sure you have some feeder roots up high enough so when you dig out the tree, you can put it into a pot. .... Kitsune Miko

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## Sho Fu Bonsai Society

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### Officers

President: Julie Trigg  
Vice President: Walter Hamm  
Secretary: Thelma Thompson  
Treasurer: Treva Kurtz  
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Director: Lois Bennett  
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## ... of Hurricanes & Bonsai

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volunteer to help the club out by filling the slots for next year. Whether it's for president or serving on the board, your club needs you. Our elections will be in November, on the same night we have our annual auction.

### Auction

David Ebinger will spearhead the auction and advises that you think about what you are bringing to the auction. He says that "finished bonsai" are the best sellers. And that you should have everything tagged with your name, and the price you are hoping to get. If you have a minimum, or set price, please indicate that on the tag. If you have items to donate to the club just put your name and the word "donation" on the tag. "If things come in that are not marked, then we will consider it a donation." The club gets 15% of the sale price and don't forget to pick up the items that have not been sold at the end of the meeting.

The November meeting, our last one of the year, will start at 7:PM (half an hour early). This way, it will give us a chance to get the business meeting out of the way and still get you out at a decent hour.

### Next week's meeting

Our October 7th. meeting will start at the usual time (7:30 PM), and I will be doing a demonstration on building a slab for doing a forest planting etc. It is quite messy work, since you have to use cement, so I probably won't be able to do a very large one. Then for those of you who would like to build your own slab, there will be a workshop here at my house on the following Saturday, October the 9th., starting at 9AM. I will provide a list of things that you will need for this workshop on Thursday and also directions for getting to my house for those of you that haven't been here before. Julie Trigg



*Mary Madison's magnificent black olive*

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## Fungus Gnats Could Indicate Poor Watering Practice

An article in the latest edition of Greenhouse Grower reports research in using fresh cut potato slices (about one inch across by 1/4 inch thick) to detect and remove fungus gnat larva from four inch pots of plants. The fresh cut slices were placed on the soil of pots infected with a known number of lab raised fungus gnat larva. In 48 hours, 54% of the gnats in an average pot were found on (or near enough to be easily removed) the potato slice.

While I would not advocate using potato slices as a fungus gnat control on our Bonsai. (Good watering practices are the best control and an insecticide drench the next best) I would suggest the potato slice as a diagnostic tool. Do I have fungus gnats? Try the potato slice. Actually about 12% of the larva were found on the slice after 24 hours, which would be enough evidence to change watering practices and maybe treat with a drench. Also carrot slices worked almost as well as a detector in 24 hours but the potato slices did better after 48 hours in the percentage of gnats removed. Billy on the Florida Space Coast

## Bonsai Calendar for October - Zone 9

### ■ Weather Protection and Location

Be prepared to protect tropicals during the cool spells. Especially protect from cold wind. Remember 50 degrees is the danger point.

### ■ Watering

If cool, watering may be cut down but watch if there are cold winds as this can cause plants to dry out more quickly.

### ■ Feeding

Start using low nitrogen on all plants. Bloommaster, bloombuilder, Magamp or other low nitrogen fertilizer may be used to "harden-off" plants.

### ■ Styling

Major pruning may be done on pines. Can still style and wire trees.

### ■ Repotting

Junipers, if not severely root pruned.

### ■ Pest control

Watch for caterpillars, also aphids and other insects — spray as needed..

### ■ Special Notes

Good time to dry screen and prepare soil for bonsai — keep dry.

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

## MEMBERS CORNER

■ We reported in last month's newsletter, that Carrie Ebinger had a shoulder operation. We are now happy to report that Carrie is out of her sling and in therapy three times a week. Good going Carrie!

■ Just had to share the following email from Lois Bennett with you: "Hey Julie, I'm so excited that I have to tell someone. I have little fuzzy things on my oak tree and I think that they will be acorns. I've had this tree a long time and it was almost dead last year but it looks fine now. I wonder if the fuzzy things will mature? Guess we'll wait and see. Neat, rad, awesome, yahoo." I called her today and she says Tom thinks they are definitely acorns and she promised to bring it in to our next meeting!

## Bonsai Questions & Answers

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**Q** I have been told that ficus will thicken up by simply potting it in a very shallow pot.  
Anil Kaushik (India)

**A** It is true that putting a ficus in a shallow container induces flare, but the growth retards. The best course will be to grow it in a big container or in the ground after cutting the downward growing roots especially the tap root, and placing a disc under it. This forces the roots to grow sideward and roots emanate from all sides causing swelling at the point of origin which becomes buttress or flare over a period of time.  
Vicky

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