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March meeting! Rencontre de mars!

At the last meeting a long-time member, Ian McRae gave a fascinating talk on the use of deciduous material for bonsai. Ian was a fountain of knowledge on the history of deciduous trees dating back to the prehistoric era.

He also gave more practical information on the use of some of the most common species for bonsai. Ian drew from his lengthy experience using deciduous material for bonsai. In particular, he showed an Amur Maple which he had field grown to accelerate the thickening of the trunk, obviously with great success.

Matt Yakabuski then followed with two collected specimens of wild apple. These had grown in a cow pasture and had been "pruned" by these four-legged products of nature. They did an awfully good job on one creating a potentially dynamic semi-cascade!

Vianney Leduc followed with a discussion using two examples of Japanese maple, one grown in an over-sized container. It exhibited good girth from the extra room for roots but, more importantly, he could easily control the spread of the surface roots as well. The "nebari" was excellent!

The evening was over before you knew it and everyone left with a greater appreciation for deciduous material used for bonsai as well as benefiting from the design discussions on the wide variety of deciduous materials at hand.

Ottawa Bonsai Society Events Calendar



Bonsai Clinic and Members' Bonsai Sale !!!

**Monday April 19th, 2004
7:30 p.m.**

Would you like help on the design of a "problem" tree? Would you like to re-design an existing bonsai? Is your tree sick and you want some advice on what to do? Well, this meeting is specially designed for you! Bring in your bonsai or pre-bonsai stock and get the advice and assistance of senior members of the society. **There will also be a Bonsai "Flea Market" / Swap Sale.** Bring in any bonsai, bonsai starter material, cuttings, plant stock, pots, etc. and sell them for a worthy cause. 10% of all proceeds will go to the Ottawa Bonsai Society and you keep the rest. Don't miss all the bargains to be had! **Please note that this is the meeting during which we will proceed to the raffle of the large Japanese Garden Juniper that was totally redesigned by Barney Shum at the January meeting.**

N'oubliez pas que durant la rencontre, nous procéderons au tirage du genévrier du Japon de bonne taille dont Barney Shum avait modifié la structure et repoté lors de la rencontre de janvier dernier.

Shopping Trip!

Arrangements have been made to visit a bonsai vendor in the Joliette Area on Saturday May 1st. The vendors are Suzanne Piché and Robert Smith who run La Pépinière du Gros-Bec Errant. They are located about 3.5 hours away by car. The plan is to leave Ottawa at 8:00 a.m. and stopping for lunch along the way, arrive there around 1:00 p.m. We would stay until 3:30 p.m. and then return to Ottawa. Please call or email **Vianney Leduc (827-3384 or vianney.leduc@nlc-bnc.ca)** for additional details, to register for the trip and to make arrangements for car-pooling.

WORKSHOPS

With the arrival of spring, members are eager for hands-on practice on actual bonsai material. There is no better way of improving one's skills and knowledge of bonsais than to actually go through the process of designing and potting one's own trees under the guidance of experienced bonsaists. There will be three such opportunities for OBS members in the coming months.

- 1- **Bonsai Development Workshop, Saturday, April 17 in Building #72, Central Experimental Farm, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

This is a workshop aimed specifically at those who have

ATELIERS

L'arrivée du printemps rend les membres fébriles à l'idée de pouvoir à nouveau effectuer du travail concret sur de vrais bonsaïs. Rien ne permet d'améliorer sa dextérité et ses connaissances des bonsaïs autant que l'effort déployé à créer et à mettre en pot ses propres bonsaïs avec l'aide d'experts de cet art. Dans les prochains mois, les membres auront trois occasions distinctes de profiter de telles circonstances :

- 1- **Atelier pour débutants sur la formation d'un bonsaï, le samedi 17 avril 2004, édifice #72, Ferme expérimentale centrale, de 9h30 à 15h30.**

Cet atelier s'adresse directement à ceux et celles qui

taken the Beginners' Bonsai Courses given last November 29 or March 27. Participants will receive assistance from experienced OBS members to begin developing their own bonsai using nursery grown Japanese garden junipers. The plant material, a suitable pot and the necessary supplies will be provided. The team of instructors will make their own bonsai tools available for sharing among those participants who may not have their own. Participants and instructors should bring their lunch; the room is equipped with a fridge and microwave oven. The cost of this workshop is \$55 per person. The 15 places available are already reserved but a waiting list is kept in case of cancellations.

2- Intermediate Workshop led by David Easterbrook, Saturday, May 29 in Building #72, Central Experimental Farm, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

This also is shaping up to be a very popular event. Nine of the twelve spots available are already taken. The cost is \$125 per person, which includes the tree (hardy conifer worth \$60 and selected by Mr. Easterbrook), the bonsai soil, wire (but not the pots) plus the professional assistance of David Easterbrook. Naturally, members just wishing to look on are welcome to attend at no cost. This will be a great learning experience for participants and onlookers alike.

3- Bring Your Own Tree(s) Workshop, to be held in June, either at the regular meeting on June 21 or on a Saturday (to be confirmed).

In the case of the above workshops, participants will all be working on the same plant species under the guidance of experts. A need has been expressed by several members for a workshop during which participants work on their own plant material (nursery stock, plants collected in the wild or even bonsais in development) and receive advice and assistance from other, more experienced members. Such a session in June of last year was a great success. The club will provide the wire and bonsai soil, and several members will bring their tools and share them with others, as needed. This will be an opportunity to practice such techniques as pruning, wiring, potting, grafting, shaping of branches and trunks, leaf trimming, air layering, etc. Vendors will be on hand with a variety of pots and other supplies that might be required. The cost of this workshop, payable at the start of the session, is set at \$10 per person. There is no need to pre-register for this workshop.

**For additional information, please contact :
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ont suivi le cours pour débutants du 29 novembre ou du 27 mars. Durant cette session, les participants recevront les conseils de membres chevronnés de la SBO et procéderont à la formation de leur propre bonsai à partir d'un pant de genévrier nain du Japon. Ce plant, un pot approprié de même que le terreau et le fil pour ligaturage seront fournis. Les instructeurs mettront leurs propres outils de bonsai à la disposition des participants qui n'auraient pas les leurs. Autant les participants que les instructeurs devraient apporter leur lunch – l'endroit dispose d'un frigo et d'un four à micro-ondes. Le coût de cet atelier est de 55 \$ par personne. Les 15 places disponibles sont déjà toutes réservées mais il est possible de faire mettre son nom sur une liste d'attente au cas où il y aurait des annulations.

2- Atelier pour intermédiaires dirigé par David Easterbrook, le samedi 29 mai 2004, édifice #72, Ferme expérimentale centrale, de 9h30 à 15h30.

Tout semble indiquer que cet atelier sera également très couru. Neuf des douze places disponibles sont déjà réservées. Le coût est de 125 \$ par personne, ce qui comprend un arbre de bonne taille (conifère rustique d'une valeur de 60 \$ choisi par M. Easterbrook), le terreau, le fil pour ligaturage (mais non le pot), ainsi que les conseils professionnels de David Easterbrook. Si des membres souhaitent assister en spectateurs à cet atelier, ils pourront le faire sans frais. Autant pour les participants que pour les spectateurs, cet atelier sera une occasion en or d'approfondir ses connaissances des bonsais.

3- Atelier collectif pour travail sur arbres de son choix, lequel se tiendra en juin, soit lors de la rencontre régulière du 21 juin, soit un samedi (sujet à confirmation).

Pour ce qui est des deux ateliers ci-haut, les participants auront à trimer, avec l'aide d'experts, sur la même espèce de bonsais. Plusieurs membres souhaiteraient participer à un atelier au cours duquel ils auraient l'occasion de travailler sur un ou plusieurs arbres de leur choix (plants de pépinière, arbres cueillis en pleine nature ou même des bonsais en développement) sous l'œil attentif et avec l'appui d'autre membres plus expérimentés. Un atelier de ce genre tenu en juin de l'an dernier remporta un vif succès. La Société fournira le terreau ainsi que le fil pour ligaturage, et les membres qui en possèdent apporteront leurs outils, que tous pourront utiliser au besoin. Ce sera l'occasion de pratiquer différentes techniques telles la taille d'entretien, le pinçage, le ligaturage, le repotage le greffage, le placement des branches et du tronc, le marcottage, etc. Des vendeurs seront sur place pour offrir un choix de pots à bonsai et autres articles qui pourraient être requis. Le coût de cet atelier est fixé à 10 \$, payables au début de la session. Il ne sera pas nécessaire de s'inscrire à l'avance pour cet atelier.

Bonsai Concepts Canada

Bonsai Concepts Canada will be experiencing a growth spurt this spring with the opening of its greenhouse to the public.

Bonsai Concepts Canada owner Loretta MacDonald, a new member of the Ottawa Bonsai Society, is excited to be opening the doors to the greenhouse starting May. 1. Packed with a varied selection of juniper and tropical trees, the greenhouse is located in Cardinal, Ont., just a 75 km drive south of Ottawa.

Bonsai enthusiasts will find everything they need at the greenhouse: from pots – both glazed and unglazed and in all shapes in sizes – to bonsai soil, books, tools, mud-men and granite lanterns.

This season's first shipment of pre-Bonsai stock is due to arrive in late-May. While special requests are always welcome, orders should be made a month in advance.

Bonsai Concepts Canada, which will continue to operate its full-service kiosk at the Rideau Centre, is also planning a Japanese garden landscape on the Cardinal property. The landscaping should take most of May and June to complete, but like any true Bonsai the design will never stop evolving.

The greenhouse is located 10 km east of where highways 416 and 401 meet. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. , Thursday to Sunday. However, visits can be arranged during the rest of the week by appointment.

In an exclusive offer to the Ottawa Bonsai Society, members can make their purchases tax-free just by showing their membership cards.

Bonsai Concepts Canada was founded in 2002 by Loretta, a forestry grad who previously worked as the general manager of a large Bonsai nursery in the U.S. Northeast. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact her or Rideau Centre kiosk manager Wendy Lalonde. We both look forward to seeing you at the next Ottawa Bonsai Society meeting.

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Developing Large Trunks for Bonsai ***by Brent Walston (Evergreen Gardenworks)***

<http://www.EvergreenGardenworks.com>

Introduction

Perhaps one of the least understood concepts in bonsai is that plants are grown and trained for years to develop large and interesting trunks. Small bonsai do not become large bonsai. Plants are grown out in large training pots or in the ground to attain the trunk size and character desired before they ever come near a bonsai pot. I have a large *Pyracantha* bonsai that was trained for twenty years before it finally got its bonsai pot. Once plants are potted in small containers they nearly cease to grow. This is the time to develop other aspects of bonsai such as leaf reduction and ramification (development of fine branches). Beginners often rush to have that first tree in pot, and thus deprive themselves of the opportunity of having a really fine bonsai.

The following discussion pertains mainly to deciduous trees.

GROWING FOR THE LONG TERM

I usually spend between 5 and 10 years training my trees before they ever reach a bonsai pot. The best ones take 15 to 20 years. I often tell my students, I don't grow trees, I grow trunks. Next to the nebari development, trunk development takes the most time to achieve.

There are no strict guidelines for how long it takes. It depends on how you want your tree to look. When presented with a plant for bonsai treatment, the first question I ask is: How big do you want it to be? Almost everything else follows (assuming a style has been selected). Development plans must fit the eventual size and shape of the tree. This is very hard for beginners to grasp because they have not seen many trees and have a great deal of trouble visualizing the end product. Nonetheless it is essential.

For really large trunks, 3+ inches, planting in the ground is probably the fastest way to go, assuming good soil, water, and you don't live in the arctic tundra. This works best for deciduous trees that back break buds easily, as do elms and maples. Often I don't even think about growing branches until I have my 3 inch trunk. If you have been growing branches all along, they probably will have gotten too fat for your finished bonsai.

DECIDING ON BRANCH PLACEMENT

I do think about branch placement however, because I really like gentle bends in my trunks, even the large ones. So I might grow a tree in the ground or in a pot for 3 to 5 years, get a 2 inch trunk, then cut it down to the level of the planned first branch. Where is this? One third the decided height of your finished tree. This is why it is so important to have first visualized the tree.

After the trunk cut, the tree will explode with new growth, and hopefully a new leader will develop at the top of the cut (the first branch position). Let this leader and all the wild branches under it grow for several years. All these lower branches are really sacrifices that will be cut off later, so don't worry about them getting too fat. The new leader will form the trunk section between the first and second branch. Continue the same process until you get the trunk that you want.

Somewhere near the end of the process you can start growing the branches that you want to keep at the bends in the trunk that you created. The timing depends on the species of tree and its growth characteristics. I have grown 5 inch trunk crabapples from cuttings in 6 years with this method, they have tremendous taper and crooked trunks, but I am just now beginning branch development.

GROWTH RATES AND TAPER

Cutting back the trunk, as described above, will actually slow the increase in diameter, but it will increase the amount of taper. This is the price that is paid for taper. The larger the trunk you desire, the longer you allow the new leader to grow. In approximate terms, let it grow until it reaches half to two thirds the caliper of the desired trunk or trunk section. For example, if you desire a three inch trunk, it makes little sense to make the first trunk cut until the stem has reached an inch and a half. After it reaches this size, cut it down with a perpendicular cut just above where you want it to break buds for the new leader (see How to Make the Cut below). Make the cut at one third the desired height of the finished tree. This will be the position of the first branch. Allow a new whip to develop from nearest the desired position. This will form a nice soft curve in the trunk of the finished tree. Restrain all the other shoots by pruning them back slightly, but let them grow. In other words, let the new leader be dominant.

The soft curve in the trunk results from the new leader growing at an angle to the first trunk section. This is the place to grow the first branch. Repeated cuts of additional leaders will continue to increase taper because each new leader will have to start from a bud while all the lower sections continue to grow. Each cut at the top of a new section of trunk provides the position for the next branch.

Many deciduous trees will form a jungle of low branches in addition to the desired whip which will form the next trunk section. Leave these low branches on the tree. Branches increase the diameter of the trunk up to their point of attachment. These will greatly increase the taper. They should be removed when you begin to work your final branches, or when you have achieved enough taper, or when they result in a 'knob' that gives you reverse taper (Chinese elms, *Ulmus parvifolia* will often do this).

CONTROLLING THE DIRECTION OF GROWTH

Repeat the whole process of locating the cuts at the position of the other desired branches as many times as you like, but usually three is sufficient. Each new trunk section should be shorter than the previous one to get diminishing intervals between the ascending branches. You direct the growth by selecting a leader, side branch, or bud where you want the new growth to go. I like my trees to ascend in nice soft spirals.

WHEN TO MAKE THE TRUNK CUTS

You should probably never perform this operation as the leaves are coming out, wait until the new leaves have hardened off, usually in a month or two. Before the leaves emerge, the roots are at maximum storage capacity. If you prune then, all that food is going to look for buds to expand, and the growth will be explosive, coarse, and with long internodes. This is exactly what you want if you are only looking to develop the next section of trunk, the portion between branch 1 and branch 2. This will give you the most rapid development. Identify the new leader quickly and protect it. If you are lucky it will be right at the top of the cut that you made.

If you perform this operation after the leaves have hardened (or sooner), you do it when the roots are depleted. They spent a great deal of food (energy) to produce all those new leaves and shoots. This is not conducive to developing a new leader unless you want a weak one with close internodes, such as if you want to develop a new apex at the top of tree. It is also preferable for trying to get buds to break for new branches on fast growing trees, because the new growth will be more refined with closer internodes.

HOW TO MAKE THE CUTS

I've been doing trunk cuts for some years now and can report what I have learned. At first I did 45 degree cuts as recommended by most books. In fact I spent a lot of time carving the crater shapes at the same time. I have come to the conclusion that this is mostly a waste of time. I now just give them a perpendicular whack, and save the angle cuts and carving for later, after the dieback is complete.

will wall off and heal by itself. If you cut back to (or near) a side branch, the plant will usually wall off an area that reaches around the collar of the top of the side branch and then extends downward at an angle behind and below the side branch. The area that lives is the area that has connective pathways to the branch. The area above this dies (unless it can break some buds in this area). This may be a 45 degree angle, it may be more, it may be less. It makes little sense to try to guess what this angle will be. It makes much more sense to wait a year and see how far it dies back, then cut off the dead wood and carve out the wound if necessary for clean closure. It is going to die back to this point anyhow, so why carve it out, or create such a large wound so close to the tissue that is going to survive?

If there is no side branch and you are cutting back to just a stump, the same argument still holds. Cut a little bit higher than the position you want bud break and hope you get it where you want it, or inspect the trunk closely for the small bumps that may be dormant buds. By making an angled cut just above where you want bud break, you are creating a larger wound and increasing the chances that it will dieback more than you want. Once you do get bud break and you choose a new leader, you can proceed as above. One interesting and powerful trick is that dieback will usually proceed until it hits a preformed bud, or the collar of an existing branch, or the connective tissue of an existing branch. If you cut back to a side branch and there is another branch lower and on the opposite side, dieback will almost never go lower than the collar of this lower branch. This can help you limit the dieback by choosing the position and branches properly, OR you can pre-train your tree by pruning it back the year before to create more lower branches before doing the final chop. This also strengthens the lower 'tree' because there will be many more preformed buds on the 'stump' after the final chop.

GROWING SACRIFICE LEADERS AND BRANCHES

A related process is to grow sacrifice leaders and branches to increase trunk or branch caliper, or correct a reverse taper in a developed tree. This process involves growing a wild whip somewhere out of the trunk, or less frequently, out of a branch to increase the caliper up to its point of attachment. The difference in this case, is that the sacrifice is simply a tool, an artifice, that will be removed completely when it has done its job of increasing the caliper. Sacrifice branches can be used for deciduous or evergreen trees, but they are especially important for developing conifers.

It is important when growing out sacrifices not to shade out the areas below it, or overly weaken the areas beyond it. I usually let the sacrifice grow as a long unpruned whip with all the leaves and small branches cut off of it for several feet to keep from shading the 'tree' below. Sacrifices can be as long as ten feet or more, depending on the degree of enlargement desired.

Use sacrifice branches and leaders to correct a problem when your tree already has good form and finished branches. Remember that branches increase trunk caliper up to their point of attachment. To increase the diameter along the entire trunk allow a sacrifice branch to grow near the apex of the tree, but not at the very tip of the apex or it will destroy its delicate structure. If this occurs you will have to grow a new apex to achieve the final diminishing taper. I often cut out the sacrifice before it has finished its job and start a new one a little lower to preserve taper.

You will have to remove your tree from its pot and put it in the ground or in a larger training pot to achieve the vigor necessary for the sacrifice branch to do its job. To achieve caliper *and* taper, select positions lower on the trunk for the sacrifice branches. Do not let sacrifice branches grow from existing branches (water sprouts) or you will overly fatten the branch and put it out of proportion to the trunk. They can, however, be used to correct the diameter and increase vigor of weak branches.

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Société de bonsaï d'Ottawa

2003/2004 Executive

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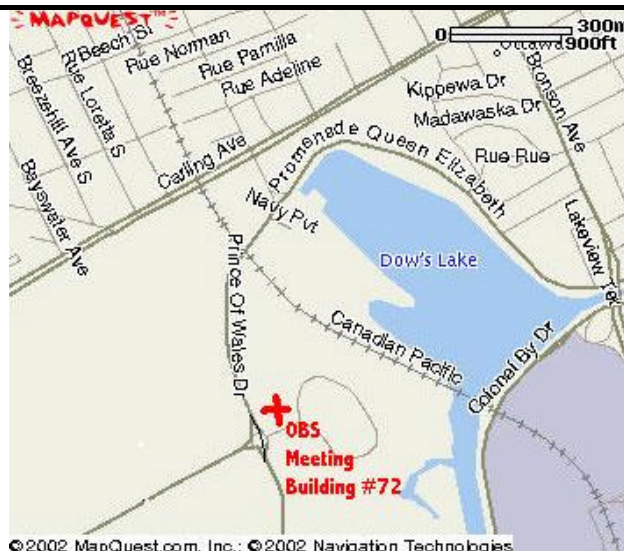
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Barney Shum
Gordon Williams
Murray Wilson
Matt Yakabuski

Meeting Location / Lieu des rencontres

Nos rencontres se tiennent à l'édifice #72 de la Ferme expérimentale centrale. Pour vous y rendre, prenez la direction sud sur la promenade Prince of Wales jusqu'au rond-point à l'intersection National Capital Driveway et Prince of Wales (qui est aussi l'entrée principale de la Ferme expérimentale et de l'Arboretum), où vous prendrez la direction Est menant à l'Arboretum. Une courte distance plus loin, à la première fourche, Prenez la route de gauche qui mène directement à l'édifice #72 (vous verrez une affiche juste en face de l'édifice, de l'autre côté du chemin, qui dit «Friends of the Farm» .Le stationnement est situé de part et d'autre de l'édifice.



Our meetings are held at Building #72 at the Central Experimental Farm. Heading south on Prince of Wales, at the traffic circle at the intersection of the N.C.C. Scenic Drive and Prince of Wales, the major entrance to the Experimental Farm and the Arboretum, exit east into the Arboretum. After a very short distance, where the road divides, turn left to Building #72 which will be down a short distance on your left. There is parking just before or just after the building. The entrance is on the street side (east side) and there is a sign reading "Friends of the Farm".