

Billboard

Newsletter of The Bonsai Society of
Upstate New York



Bonsai Critique

Visit Our Website

<http://www.bsuny.org/>

Our November meeting will start off with a short business meeting followed by Harvey Carapella, Mark Arpag and Jim Dolce who will present a bonsai critique on trees brought in by the members of the club. If you have a bonsai and would like some advice on what to do with it, how to trim it, design it or make it well again, this will be the place to bring the tree. The only rule is that they have to be in bonsai pots. Trees not in Bonsai pots will be discussed if time permits.

So if you've got a problem bonsai, or just purchased one then bring them along. Last year, this proved to be an informative, informal discussion about bonsai design

This will be a lot of fun, filled with a lot of useful information. Hope to see you there.

November Display

As fall is nearing it's end and winter looms in the near future. let's try to bring in some nice deciduous bonsai with good autumn color or colorful fruit. Evergreens are always welcome too. If you have something that is looking good bring it along and share it with the rest of us.



Shishigashira Japanese maple
In fall color

Meeting Date

Tuesday
November 25, 2008

7:00PM

Brighton Town Lodge
at
Buckland Park
1341 Westfall Road
Rochester, New York
near corner of
Westfall and Clinton

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October Highlights

Arthur Skolnik, internationally renowned bonsai artist, joined us at our October meeting from Toronto, Canada. He started out with a Bonsai Basics demo and then a workshop. During the demo, viewed by 61 members, Arthur worked on a Tiger Bark Fig, answered quite a few questions and gave us his "12 Rules For Bonsai" (See Page 3), and basic things to look for in a bonsai tree.

Twelve workshop participants got to go home with a nice imported Tiger Bark Fig tree, a tropical indoor bonsai with curved trunk that they can work on over the winter while the rest of their trees take their deep winter sleep. They also received more knowledge and information on the Ficus (Fig) species in general. With Arthur's assistance each participant was able to gain insight on how to prune and wire his or her tree. Many members not taking the workshop stayed and watched to offer ideas and comments, and see the end results.

The bonsai tree that Arthur created during his demonstration was raffled and won by Irma Abu-Jumak. The Society appreciates everyone who purchased tickets.

Thank you Mr. Skolnik for your interesting, informative, and at times, funny program on Tiger Bark Fig bonsai.



Arthur working on his Tiger Bark Fig

2008 - 2009 Programs

November 25	Design Options / BYO Tree Harvey, Jim and Mark
December 16	"Holiday Party"
January 27	Harvey Carapella, Rock Planting Demo II
February 24	Stanzel Memorial Bonsai Program Brussel Martin: Mixed Group Planting Bonsai
March 24	Wm. N. Valavanis, TBA Lecture/Demo/Workshop
April 28	David Easterbrooke, Presentation Montreal Bonsai and Penjing Collection, Demo/Workshop
May 16-17	Upstate New York Bonsai Exhibition Sean Smith Demo, both days
June 23	Club Picnic, Members Sale and Auction
July 28	Road Trip to Montreal Bonsai Collection
August 25	Tour of Hosta Collection
September 14	Urushibata from Japan: Shohin Bonsai

Dues Are WAY Past Due!

To everyone who has paid their dues, thank you. For all others, this is your last chance. Please pay your dues at or before the November meeting. Anyone who has not paid their dues by then will not be receiving any more newsletters. Don't miss out on the information, workshops, fun and camaraderie. Get those dues in as soon as possible.

Arthur Skolnik's 12 Rules for Bonsai

Here are my Dozen Design Denotations, but first, a definition of Bonsai I really like. "The art is practiced by training young (age doesn't matter) trees to acquire and display the features of age while remaining small." Here's another "... to reproduce the dignified beauty of a tree that has survived exposure to the elements."

1 All trees have a front or best view. The Japanese say the trunk of a tree is like the soul of a tree and when you can see the trunk, you have a good idea of what type of life the tree has had or what type of conditions the tree has endured.

2 All trees should lean (slightly) toward the viewer, branches too. Even a slanting style tree... it leans to one side or the other making it a slanting style but here too, the top and branches leans toward the viewer.

3 We're not trying to make exact copies of trees in nature, we're trying to symbolically represent the feeling and beauty of trees in nature. Arguably the most important feature of a great Bonsai is the buttress or flare of the trunk at ground level. This is a strong feature of age.

4 A tapered trunk and branches are extremely important in creating the feeling of a large and majestic tree. The bottom is thick, the top is thin and ideally, there is no sudden change in thickness. This applies equally to branches.

5 The silhouette of the foliage mass should be contained within a scalene triangle. Looking down on each branch, the foliage here too should be contained within a scalene triangle. Taking it one step further, looking through each branch, the foliage nearest the trunk should be thickest and thinnest near the tip... a triangle too.

6 Branches should never be stacked, one on top of the next. They aren't in nature because upper branches would shade lower ones. Ideally, the branch placement should follow one of these patterns: first branch on the left or right, next branch on the opposite side a little higher up, next branch a little higher up, in the back. Another pattern would be where the back branch is positioned between the two side branches. Using letters only, here it is again: l.r.b. or r.l.b. and l.b.r. or r.b.l. Follow this pattern roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the tree. At that point, up to the domed top, front branches, to create a bit of mystery, are acceptable.

7 The spaces between branches should get smaller and smaller the higher up the tree you look.

8 The first branch should be positioned $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total length of the trunk, up from the bottom.

9 The longest branch should be the first and the lengths of the rest of the branches should diminish as you look up the tree. That's how the triangular silhouette is created.

10 The spread of the branches should be $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the tree.

11 In designing old trees with thick trunks, a pleasing proportion of trunk height to width should be 1 to 6.

12 Formal upright trees and the very common - informal uprights, should have their tops directly above the middle of the trunk.

These are the basic rules to follow. But if you study the scales in music or colour charts in painting, you will slowly learn that bending the rules combined with an experienced eye for balance, harmony, rhythm, proportion etc. often means breaking rules in order to create something artistic, creative and which reflects **your personality**. Remember, what is essential is invisible to the eye. Here's one more for you Harvey, because I know how much you like them... art conceals art. OK this is really the last one... the young man knows the rules but the old man knows the exceptions.

Plant a tree and perhaps the singing bird will come.

Arthur

It's That Time Of Year Again...

This is the time to begin protecting your winter hardy bonsai for the winter. However, the longer you can leave them outdoors before it gets really cold, the better off your bonsai will be. Really cold to the plants is about 20-25°F, (to me below 70°F). I like to wait until the bonsai, especially conifers, get a nice dusting of light snow before putting them away. In our area, the best time to put hardy bonsai away for the winter is the end of November- right after a good Thanksgiving dinner- or the first part of December. The cool weather we have had this autumn is helping the bonsai prepare their cold hardiness for the long winter season. Remember to remove all fruit, old leaves and thick moss before protecting the bonsai. Spray with a contact fungicide such as Captan when putting your trees away. It is important to eliminate sun and wind for the winter and to provide an even temperature. If you did not protect your indoor species by now, there is probably no need to. This is a good time to review your fertilizing and pesticide schedule for the past year while it is still fresh in your mind. Did you spray and feed enough? What will you do differently during the next growing season? Make some notes and review them next spring. It's amazing how much you forget over the winter. Have a happy Turkey Day and don't forget to water your bonsai even if it's cold outside. They still need a drink because, **It's that time of the year again.....**

W.N.V.

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