

IBA News & Muse
Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter
2015 OCTOBER

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www.iabonsai.org

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IBA OCTOBER Activities

October 10–11, 9 AM–4:30 PM

2015 FALL BONSAI SHOW

Reiman Gardens, 1407 University Blvd., Ames, Iowa

October 20, 7 PM, IBA MEETING

Des Moines Botanical Garden, Botany Lab, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive

Topic: Tool sharpening and pot repair. Chat and Chop, bring a tree to work on.

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EIBA OCTOBER Activities

October 8, 6 pm. Board Mtg at Nothing But Noodles Restaurant. *Topics: Election of Officers, Holiday Party plans, 2016 Agenda ideas, Garden Fair presentations at Coe College.*

October 22, 7 pm. Club Mtg at Marion Library.
Topic: All About Pots by Cat Nelson. *Also, election of officers, plans for Holiday dinner.*

November 11, 6 pm. Board Mtg at Nothing But Noodles Restaurant on Collins. *2016 Agenda Planning.*

November 19, 6:30 pm. EIBA Holiday Party at Leonardo’s Restaurant.



A view of the dramatic lighting used at the Artisan’s Cup held in Portland Oregon in late September. The Exhibition Hall was cloaked in darkness and trees were lit with spotlights. The lighting was amazing and brought out the drama in each stunning tree. Photography, however, was a challenge.



He plants trees to benefit another generation.

Caecilius Statius

Timely Tips

It is October. Each day brings new weather, varying from daily highs in the upper 70s filled with sunshine to night time lows near freezing. Cloudy, windy days with highs in the low 50s are common. So, what is my point?

It is time to take your watering habits off of autopilot and begin thinking on your own. Each tree, each pot of soil, each day bring different watering conditions. It becomes more important than ever to stick your finger in the soil to feel the dryness or wetness yourself. Trees this time of year can slow down their photosynthesis and utilization of water. Leaves become less active. Some of my maples are beginning to lose their green color (chlorophyll), a sign of slowing down. Top growth is over for many trees. Most trees are still strengthening their roots systems. Cooler temps mean slower water evaporation from soils, which in turn means the soil needs less water. So, this time of year we have to think a lot more about watering habits.

I am still fertilizing. I used half strength fertilizer on deciduous trees, and full strength on pines as they are still active. Trees will use what nutrients they need and the rest will be washed out.

My tropicals are inside now, though I will bring them out for a day of good sunshine and warmth, especially if the night time temps allow me to leave the trees out overnight for two days of sun. I will spray them soon and then keep them inside for good.

I am cleaning my garage in preparation for the cold snap that requires me to suddenly bring a lot of trees inside quickly. My shelves are ready. Make sure your winter storage situation is prepared ahead of time. You worked hard all spring, summer and fall to take care of your trees. Don't take shortcuts now. Clean the area for your storage, keep it organized, safe, and make sure your watering set up is good. These things are not difficult to accomplish if you only have a few trees. But, if you enjoy this hobby on a larger scale (and you know who you are!), then making sure you are ready for a lot of trees is important. Be a good Scout and "Be Prepared!"

Artisan Cup Odyssey

By Helene Magruder

One sunny day in September Alan, myself and Gary Wood set off on an odyssey to the Artisan Cup in Portland, Oregon. Our first stop was to visit Backcountry Bonsai in Douglas, Wyoming. Steve and Dan have been collecting bonsai (responsibly) in the Wyoming wilderness. Steve's backyard was crammed full of wonderful yamadori, Ponderosa pines, limber pines, Rocky Mountain junipers, Engelmann spruce and a smattering of other goodies. A table was full of some outstanding trees going to Portland, some to Michael Hagedorn and some to be vended at the Artisan Cup. They have been working with Michael to improve their bonsai skills. Two super guys. I managed to hold myself down to one tree.

We took our time and meandered along the Columbia River Gorge to Randy Knight's place. Randy is a well known collector of yamadori and supplies Ryan Neil with many of his spectacular trees. He graciously let us wander through his trees as he and two assistants were getting trees ready to take to vend at the Cup. We bought two trees which he is keeping until spring to ensure their survival as they were recently collected. Another super nice guy.

We spent another day driving down the Oregon coast stopping to take photographs and eat seafood. We spent most of the next day visiting Telperion Farms, known for their field grown pre-bonsai. Wow! Some really impressive material much of which Gary had helped start. Two more trees in Anderson trays found their way into our vehicle. Chis was also busy preparing trees to vend at the Cup.

We arrived at Michael Hagedorn's in the Portland Bonsai Village. Behind a small unassuming house was a spectacular garden displaying his trees in the backyard. Gary put on one of his famous shrimp boils for a large group which included John and Gail Denny. That very large pot rode in the back of the car the whole trip.

The Artisan Cup. Without doubt it was the most beautiful display of bonsai I have ever seen. I have been to Taiken Ten, Kokofu and the Nationals which display beautiful trees but this was something else. It was an art exhibit of some of the best trees in the country. There has been a lot of controversy about the show and I think it stemmed from a misunderstanding of what Ryan was trying to achieve. He wanted to have people see bonsai as an art and he did it. It was held in the Portland Art Museum, you entered passing a row of Greek or Roman sculptures, into a darkened room. Each tree was displayed on specially made tables with black curtains and spotlighted. It was breathtaking. A large number of trees were American yamadori and they were very powerful and beautifully styled. There were some black and white pines and some deciduous trees sprinkled in too. All were exceptional trees.

I wandered through the display three times. Photography was allowed but it was difficult due to the lighting and the crowd. I am hoping Ryan plans to publish an album, I will be on the waiting list. The next Artisan Cup will be in Australia, I doubt that I will make it, but Ryan is working with MOMA, the Museum Of Modern Art, in New York hoping to have another Artisan Cup there in 2025.

The vending area was in a tent outside the museum with wonderful trees, pots, show tables and other bonsai related items for sale.

Our only disappointment was that the Japanese Garden in Portland was closed for restoration. I had been looking forward to visiting it for years.

Our next stop was to Elandan Gardens, Dan Robinson's bonsai museum. It is a beautiful garden with paths winding between bonsai displayed in a wonderful setting right on the sound across from Seattle. There were several impressive Korean black pine which I learned were grown from seed Dan had collected while serving in Korea. It is a unique experience.

Next was a visit to the Pacific Rim bonsai collection which was formerly the Weyerhaeuser Collection. There were a number of great bonsai displayed in an outdoor setting. Many of the trees had a sign with its history and it was a treat to discover trees from John Naka, Ben Oki, Melba Tucker and many others. The last tree on display was a powerful Rocky Mountain juniper recently purchased from Ryan Nei I.

As we made our way home we did a little rock hunting along a river bed in Idaho, toured the Custer Battlefield, stopped at an enormous coal mine and found ourselves at Andy Smith's Golden Arrow Bonsai. Andy lives in a Ponderosa forest in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We wandered through rows of yamadori Andy has collected and managed to cram one more tree into the back of the car.

A drive through the spectacular Badlands with stops for photography and home, happy to have stopped to smell the roses.

Wood Adventures – Ask Wood

by Gary Wood

This is a new column – an advice column if you will – where you, the reader, can ask Gary Wood a question about your bonsai. Any bonsai. Any question is fair game. Ask why, ask how, ask when. Gary is a bonsai teacher from Alabama who travels extensively. He began life in a tree nursery, learning about trees and followed that by learning bonsai, pottery, and a whole lot of other things. We welcome him to our newsletter!

Question:

Hi, Gary

I have junipers that did well all summer, but beginning in late August some began to lose their bright green color. I suspect spider mites. Tell me about spider mites. How can I avoid them? What should I do to get rid of them? And what shall I do to help my junipers recover their natural color and health after spider mite damage?

Gary Wood Answers:

Spider Mites: The bane of most gardeners wherever they are. Their small size, about the size of a needle point, make them difficult to see and the damage sneaks up on you. They feed by puncturing the cells of foliage so the damage is small until infestation proportions are reached. A female can lay about 20 eggs per day and live for 2 – 3 weeks. That doesn't sound like much but incubation is just 3 days and sexual maturity is in 5 days. If you do the math only one female during her lifespan can produce millions. They thrive at 80f so usually we start seeing damage in mid to late summer.

Bonsai is not the typical gardening scenario where a good bit of natural damage is accepted or expected. We can't afford to lose foliage or branches or a plant. Most all plants are susceptible to mites but junipers fare the worst.

I try to think of mites like any pest problem. Identifying the level of infestation first. If the weather hasn't warmed yet and there are no signs of mites then give the plant a good washing at watering time and don't be timid. Give a good blast every watering. If an infestation is just starting, follow up with a soap spray for the mildest remedy but must be daily applied for at least a week and recheck. Most bonsaists go for a dedicated miticide when they are discovered. Make your application following the directions on the label.

Usually discoloration is first noticed when there is an infestation. Foliage color (green) tends to fade and then becomes grayish (almost dead), eventually turning brown (dead). Foliage damage can't be repaired. Every cell that was damaged (dead) will always be dead. Thus the importance of prevention. Restoring vigor to parts that were damaged depends on the strength of the tree and the amount of damage. Light damage on a strong tree can be overcome quickly but any damage on a weak tree can take a year or more. Another argument for strong trees. About the only course in getting a tree looking good again after moderate to severe damage is good tree care, sun, water and fertilizer, let it grow.

To sum up:

When it warms up Mites are active

Spray wash the foliage at watering

Infestation, apply chemicals

Good husbandry

Rotate your chemicals!!!! The rate mites multiply is a recipe for building resistance!!

If you have never tested your trees for mites, hold a sheet of white paper beneath your juniper and brush the foliage so any loose foliage and potential spider mites fall onto the paper. Watch carefully as the mites are tiny. If you see small specks slowly moving on the paper, you have mites. Be patient if the weather is cool as the mites may not move immediately. Also, a hand lens is helpful.

Auction, Auction, Auction

by Ivan Hanthorn

The final IBA meeting of the year is a banquet event, November 17. Following the meal various activities are scheduled, including this year an auction of bonsai materials donated to the Iowa Bonsai Association. Fred Truck has thinned his collection of pots and given the culls to us for sale. Monty Redinius has decided to give up bonsai; he donated pots and other materials to us. Some or all can be yours for a mere fraction of their value. Alan Magruder will serve as the auctioneer. Bring a check book!



A Visit to Bonsai Mirai

By John Denny

I was able to visit Ryan Neil's Bonsai Nursery which he calls "Mirai". In Japanese this translates roughly to "future". Ryan is almost obsessed with the future of American Bonsai. He wants to raise the visibility of American bonsai and to improve the quality of American bonsai to totally new levels. Ryan Neil does not settle for small gains. He has grand ideas and he is executing them. He put on the amazing Artisans Cup held in late September. The scale of this show was large and dramatic. It raised the level and visibility of American bonsai in a major way.

Who is this guy? He is a young man, in his early 30s who became interested in bonsai at an early age living in Colorado and prepared his future with a Horticulture major and Landscape Design minor. He became an apprentice in Japan for the best known bonsai artist in the world and has been back in the US building his Mirai nursery, styling hundreds of amazing and powerful collected trees, and doing whatever he can to raise the level of bonsai. Here is his story straight from Ryan.

"I was born and raised in Colorado, on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. The fantastic array of tortured and stunted trees in the landscape of my childhood instilled a deep appreciation for and fascination with trees and the resilient nature of plants. The twisted trees of the Colorado Derby Mesa were my greatest source of material and inspiration to pursue bonsai. They were my introduction to bonsai before I had any concept of what it was, and they proved to be the fuel that fed the fire once I found the art. I studied horticulture in college and, after graduation, I spent six years apprenticing for Mr. Masahiko Kimura, the most revolutionary figure in contemporary Japanese bonsai. In 2010, after completing my apprenticeship, I settled in Oregon to begin the lifelong pursuit of building Mirai.

My visit to Mirai was awe inspiring. I snapped a hundred photos of the buildings, benches, studio, landscaping, and the 1000 trees. Oh, the trees!! Nearly all of Ryan's trees are yamadori or collected trees. Powerful, twisted and contorted trunks, massive deadwood centuries old, styled to show off their power and uniqueness. If there were any nursery grown trees here, I did not see them. All yamadori. Ryan told me his inventory was at 1000 trees, which he waters by hand. Every tree was unique. I expected to see a lot of nice trees. I did not expect to see an endless number of such unique powerful trees. His 900th best tree would be a rock star on my bench! That is how deep his collection is.



View from Ryan's house which has a great view of Mt. Hood. His 3 story studio is the building you see.



Ryan's famous Rocky Mountain Juniper, "Hook", now owned by Pacific Bonsai Museum.





NEWS FROM THE MID-AMERICA BONSAI ALLIANCE (MABA)

2015 Convention

It was the pleasure of the Indianapolis Bonsai Club to host the 2015 MABA Convention and what a pleasure it was for all who attended. Over 100 registrants plus a surprisingly large number of walk-ins strolled through the Vendors Hall and Bonsai Exhibit. Registrants participated in fantastic workshops and attended numerous free lectures, seminars and demonstrations.

The exhibit consisted of 91 displays with 152 bonsai and was the talk of the convention. The quality was beyond everyone's expectations. Careful planning is the key to success and it was obvious to all this convention was magnificently organized and reflected the dedication and hard work of all the members of the Indianapolis Bonsai Club. It was an exciting weekend.

Election of Officers

The MABA By-Laws require the election of officers every two years. Each MABA member club is allowed 1 vote for the following Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. All other positions are either appointed or filled by volunteers.

At the present the nominating committee is requesting each club to discuss and if they so wish, to submit a name, or names of anyone whom the club feels would make a good officer. You must have the candidate's permission, the club President's signature and a thumbnail bio. These names and bios will be reviewed by the committee and will be selected for each position on the slate with as much geographical spread as possible.

I might remind you we need WORKERS ---innovative, friendly workers--- No glory seekers---WORKERS. Please send your information to Paul Weishaar @ pweishaar3@comcast.net as quickly as possible. The absolute deadline for the receipt of candidate data is December 1, 2015.

The ballot with the slated candidates will be distributed by December 15, 2015 with a February 1, 2016 return date.

On a personal note, I am more than willing to continue as President of MABA for the next two years and Kris Ziemann has indicated she would like to continue as MABA Treasurer.

Next MABA Convention

We are presently looking for a club to host the MABA Convention in 2017. It has been the practice in the past to hold the convention every other year and we see no reason to change this. If your club is interested in pursuing this adventure please let me know as the more lead time you have the greater chance for success. I will let you know the Indianapolis Bonsai Club, as a result of their successful hosting of the 2015 convention, has already made overtures to host the next event.

Artisan Cup Photos

By John Denny

