

Volume 155

March 2015



The Bonsai Creation

TREE OF THE MONTH: FOEMINA JUPITER



From the President

It's almost March and springtime is around the corner. Although many of my messages are focused on future events, today I am going to focus on the recent past. I'd like to talk about dealing with tropical bonsai in the winter. In mid-winter, it's pretty common for me to get calls from novice bonsai growers. The call goes something like this: "I got a tree at Penrod and it has been doing great all of this time. Then, all of a sudden, a bunch of leaves started turning yellow and are falling off!" Now sometimes, yellow leaves and rapid defoliation is a cause for concern. Other times it is not. None of us usually worry when the leaves on our maple trees turn red and then fall off in autumn. People are used to seeing that cycle. Most of us who've grown up in the Midwest have seen this cycle for as long as we remember. Not everyone realizes that tropical trees have cycles, too.

Normally, most tropical and subtropical trees *do* shed old leaves over the winter. "Old" leaves are usually 2 or 3 years old. Normally, the old leaves are deeper inside the canopy, and it's pretty normal for your tree to drop about 1/3 of it's leaves. Some species, Like Bougainvillea, Buttonwood, and Parrot's Beak tend to drop more. These trees may drop 2/3 of their leaves. I usually try to warn people ahead of time to expect this. Although most tropical and subtropical trees drop some leaves over the winter, they'll do it at different times, depending on the species. For example, my Bougainvillea trees dropped their leaves early, and they are all growing back new leaves right now. My Parrot's Beak just started dropping all of it's leaves about 2 days ago.

One's leaf pruning techniques also are a deciding factor on how many leaves drop during the winter. For example, I have a couple of large ficus trees that were actually one tree that I split about 8 years ago. Genetically, they would be the same. One dropped hardly any leaves this year while the second dropped almost every leaf. Why, you ask? They are on opposite ends of my

defoliating schedule. The tree which lost almost no leaves was the one that I had in the U.S. National Exhibition this past September. In order to get it show ready, I defoliated it a couple of months before the show. That way, it would have a huge flush of young small leaves come show time. The second tree had the year off. I did not show it at all this year. I defoliated that particular tree before the show season in 2013, but I did not defoliate the tree at all in 2014. Therefore, *all* of the leaves on this particular tree were old. All of the old leaves dropped this winter, leaving the tree almost bare. It is currently flushing out with new leaves.

My final words are this: Trust but verify. Although it is normal for many tropical trees to lose leaves in the winter, keep in mind that many tropical trees will also go through a dormant or slow-down period. During this time, trees are more vulnerable to insect or fungal attack. They just can't naturally fight off infestations like they can during the summer growing period. Things like spider mite and mealy bug can cause your tree to drop leaves, too. Although your tree may be going through a natural winter defoliation, it never hurts to inspect it and make sure that it's not being eaten by something. I recommend spraying your trees for insects regularly during the winter. If you are going to have insect problems, it is far more likely to have problems while your tree is inside during the winter rather than outside during the summer.

Scott Yelich



This Parrot's Beak loses almost all it's leaves every year in mid to late winter.



This bougainvillea lost almost all of it's leaves in early winter. It is now filled with young, fresh foliage.



This Burt Davy ficus lost almost no leaves this winter. It was defoliated this past summer.



Eight years ago, this tree was the conjoined twin of the first Burt Davy Ficus. They are genetically identical. This tree was defoliated in 2013, but not in 2014. It lost almost all of it's leaves this winter.

What to do...

Mark Fields
Bonsai by Fields

What to do... March/April

Well, there's no doubt that it's still winter here in central Indiana. It is snowing outside as I type this article. It seems like the temperatures are on like a roller coaster ride. The good thing is that the 50's seem to be falling on the weekends. The winter does seem to be a normal one this year, quite different that last year when we had temperatures in the 80's in March. Last year I had maples and hornbeams fully leaved and candles stretching on my pines in my winter poly huts. I do have a few trees waking up such as quince ready to bloom which is normal. Let's hope that the spring and summer are normal this year.

Towards the end of March, when night time temperatures are in the mid-20's and days are in the 40's and 50's, I usually start moving my conifers back out of my huts onto the outdoor benches. Their foliage will appreciate the sunshine and spring mois-

ture. I know many people start fertilizing when the weather starts getting better thinking that when our plant wake up, they need fed. Truth is, if they were fed correctly in late summer and fall, they have stored all the nutrients they need to flush out and harden off and be healthy for the spring. If you are one of those who must fertilize, try to use a low nitrogen fertilizer so that you don't promote unhealthy leggy, grotesquely long and leggy new growth.

Here is an exception, I recently learned from Ryan Neil that double flush pines such as Japanese black and red pines should be fed every 4 to 6 weeks starting at the beginning of March. I will be teaching the techniques I learned from him later this year.

Another exception would be that you should have been fertilizing your tropical trees that continue growing indoors or in a greenhouse throughout the winter. I usually do that every 6 weeks instead of every 2 – 4

weeks like I do in the summer.

If you haven't done so already, you should also be plucking your pines, removing the needle clusters on the bottom of last years growth and taking the foliage back to 8 – 12 needle sets taking care to leave some old, 2 year old, as well as some of last years needle clusters. For pines such as Scots and Ponderosa, it is better for the tree that you cut the needles from the bottom of the branches rather than pulling them. Pulling needles from these two varieties can damage the fragile bark and cambium resulting in the death of the growth.

By mid-April you can expect to see trident maples and hornbeams that have been over-wintered outdoors to start flushing. When that happens it's a perfect time to repot them. If you are digging tridents that were growing in the ground, you can cut the roots back hard. The roots will sprout from along the cut edge of the roots.

Continue repotting other trees as well into late April. Just remember not to let them freeze afterward.

Also remember that when the new growth begins to flush, the trees will require more water.

Mark Fields

***Mark has just recently returned from Japan. This is a reprint from his monthly tips from 2014. Thanks!**

Tree of the Month — Foemina Juniper Kyle Weidener

The Foemina Juniper is a juniper with a strong upright growth habit. It is believed to be closely related to the Hollywood juniper. The juvenile needles are the desirable foliage. They are blue-green in color. The gray-green adult scale like leaves are what you want to remove from the tree. John Naka claimed the juvenile foliage is nicer than the needle juniper because it has a finer structure and is hardier even though it is juvenile foliage. In America, the Foemina Juniper is often called a Needle Juniper but they are not the same species. To keep the foliage compact you should cut each branch back to two whorls every three or four years. It is recommended that you not repot Foemina Junipers as often as you would other junipers. Repotting every eight to ten years is all that is required. Foeminas are best propagated by root cutting or air layering. Because of their strong upright growth habit they are most often used as formal upright trees or planted as grove or group plantings. John Naka's famous Goshin is an eleven tree grove made of Foemina Junipers.



Checkout the updated IBC websites:
www.indybonsai.org / www.maba2015.com

Indianapolis Bonsai Club
February 4th, 2015
Meeting Minutes
Amanda Cox

Date & Time: February 4th, 2015 from 7:00-9:00

Location: Garfield Park Conservatory Meeting Room

Presiding: Club President Scott Yelich

Attendance: 25 **Visitors:** 4

Membership: 36 paid households

Checking/Savings Balance: \$4700.99

Upcoming Events

-March 7th & 8th Brussels Spring Preview Sale in Olive Branch Mississippi

MABA July 10th-12th

Registration Opens February 15th

Kyle will be available at the March meeting to register club members

Volunteers Needed

Anyone who volunteers ½ day will receive:

- \$25.00 discount - T-shirt

Please see Steven Dick to sign up for your volunteer slot ASAP



Upcoming Club Meeting Topics

-March: Wiring trees presented by Mark. Please feel free to bring in trees and wire to work on while at the meeting

-April: Lace Rock Planting (Samples of trees and rocks will be available to view at the March meeting. Pricing will depend on size of rock and number of trees)

Tree of the month

Campeche – Paul Weishaar (February)

Winged Elm – Neil Dellinger (January)

February Meeting

Japanese Black Pine Needle Plucking: Neil Dellinger

Team Tree Demos



2015 Meeting Calendar

3/4/2015

Short Program:

Team Tree

Regular Program:

Wiring Your Bonsai Tree - This will include a wiring demo. Members are encouraged to bring their own trees to wire as well.

Tree of the Month: Femina Juniper - Ron Fraley

4/1/2015

Lace Rock Planting - Club members will have the opportunity to create their own lace rock planting for a small fee.

Tree of the Month: Blue Atlas Cedar - Steve Knapp

5/6/2015

Grafting & Air Layering - Members are invited to bring trees that are in need of grafting and/or air layering. We will work on these trees during the meeting.

Tree of the Month: American Hornbeam - Jason Parrish

6/3/2015

How to Display Trees at a Show - Members will get into groups and we'll work together to set up bonsai trees for display in a show. We will learn the proper way to display trees using stands, accent plants and accent stones.

Tree of the Month: Pine (Red/Black) - Mark Fields

7/1/2015

MABA Prep - Finalizing MABA enrollment and finishing any last minute tasks for the convention.

Tree of the Month: Tamarind - Amanda Cox

8/5/2015

This month, we'll be having a demo/lecture presented by the judge of the Indiana State Fair Bonsai Show.

Tree of the Month: Musk Maple - Greg Madson

9/2/2015

Annual Club Auction - IBC members can bring "any bonsai related" item to be auctioned. 20% of the proceeds go to the club. There will be no business conducted or presentations held during this meeting. You must be a paid member of the Indianapolis Bonsai Club to participate in this event.

No Tree of the Month Presentation

10/7/2015

Bring Your Own Tree Workshop - Members may bring any tree(s) they are needing help with or have questions on. Bring your wire and tools, too!

Tree of the Month: Yew - Carl Wooldridge

11/4/2015

Benches, Winter Prep, 2016 Prep Discussion - Presentation on different home bonsai displays, winter tree preparation, spring 2016 preparation.

Tree of the Month: Water Jasmine - Kyle Weidner

12/2/2015

Annual Holiday Party - No regular meeting. We'll have our annual dinner, which includes the holiday raffle, volunteer raffle, and dead tree award.

No Tree of the Month Presentation

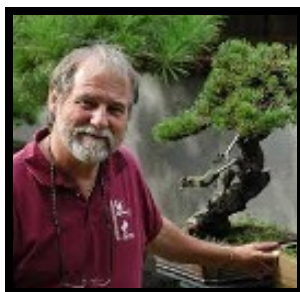


Suthin Sukosolvisit — Headlining Artist

Featured Artists



Pauline Muth



Jim Doyle



Mark Fields



Mike Thiedeman



Brian Ciskowski



Scott Yelich



Bill Valvanis

List subject to change



Photo's by Amanda Cox

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IBC LOGO ITEMS

Scribbles Embroidery of Arkansas has the Indianapolis Bonsai Club logo on file and they can produce dress shirts, polos, t-shirts, caps, bags, sweatshirts, fleece pullovers, etc in a wide selection of colors, both product and logo. This allows IBC members to purchase any item any time they wish. You can visit their website at www.scribblesemb.com to see their selection and place your order.

Club Information

Visitors are always WELCOME!!!

Where: Garfield Park Conservatory
2450 Shelby Street
Indianapolis, Indiana

When: First Wednesday of each
month

Time: 7:00 pm

Club Dues: Dues are \$25 per calendar
year. Cost includes up to
two members of the same
household.

Club Officers 2015-2017

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| President | Scott Yelich |
| Vice President | Carl Wooldridge |
| Asst. Vice Presidents | Robert Hoy Kyle Weidner |
| Secretary | Amanda Cox |
| Treasurer/Newsletter | Robert Hoy |
| Past President | Mark Fields |
| Membership | Jason Parrish |
| Web Master | Scott Yelich |
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| MABA/ABS/BCI | Paul Weishaar |
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