

Volume 186
February 2018



INDIANAPOLIS BONSAI CLUB

The Bonsai Creation



IT'S WINTER IN INDIANA!
HAPPY VALENTINES DAY.

BONSAI MAKE GREAT VALENTINE'S GIFTS
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From the President

There is a break in the cold weather, but I know it won't last. My wife and I spent News Years in Iceland and it was warmer there than Indiana! It was wonderful to see how people can convert a barren land into a beautiful country. I, however, am not sure that I would be comfortable living on top of a land with over 100 known volcanoes!

The February program is "Finding the Bonsai in the tree." There will be 8 to 12 trees presented if I can get them out of the ground! We will look at the tree and try to find if there is any potential bonsai to be found. We will discuss the trees at the end of the program. I will try to find pictures of bonsai trees on the internet that represent these trees. We did this with the beginners class last fall and it was very useful and fun. I am asking Paul and Scott to assist you, but I hope you try to find the bonsai first. I am asking Mark to bring his sketch pad and draw sketches of the trees that he sees.

FUTURE PROGRAMS. The theme for 2018 is "enhancing our skills." If you follow the calendar, which I am changing as better programs are being realized, you will see a progression of programs to do this. In the Winter and early Spring we will be looking at trees and pots. In April there will be the opportunity to sell and purchase tree, pots, possible Bonsai tables and other Bonsai related bonsai material. This will be followed by a repotting or first time potting of a tree you just purchased or brought in. (More information on this in future letters.)

In the Spring segment we will present Grafting, possible air layering, (depending on the weather), designing and creating shohin bonsai, and July will involve a presentation and possible workshop on Kusamono. It is my hope that many members will improve their skill set and be willing to show their trees at the Garfield show and State Fair.

In the cold winter months, it has been suggested that we should catch up on our reading. I however, recently discovered that Ryan Neal, whom many consider one of the best Bonsai artists in the country, has released a fairly extensive series on YouTube. There is a four part series done for the Bonsai Society of Portland that covers most of what we should be doing with our trees when Spring breaks! I always knew that he was a outstanding artist, but he is also a great teacher. You can find these programs on YouTube with the words Mirai, Ryan Neal and BSOP/

Keep warm, and I hope to see you at Garfield on Feb. 7th.

Carl Wooldridge



Winter Work on Japanese Black and Red Pines

Mark Fields

If you have Japanese black or red pines, winter is not the time to sit back and ignore them. When you are dreaming of the time when the birds are singing and flowers are blooming, and the reality is that we are having those cold, snowy, blustery days, this is the time to work on your conifers. Winter is not a time to sit back and relax and ignore your bonsai. It is the perfect time to assess, tweak and style most trees. It is the critical time to help your Japanese black and red pines.

I know some people keep their black and red pines in their garage during the winter months where temperatures rarely, if ever, drop below freezing. Mine are put into a winter hut covered in white poly in order to keep the wind chill from damaging the trees and the temperature from heating up to much. I put all of my shohin into plastic concrete mixing tubs and their pots buried in Turface or pumice. The larger trees are placed on the floor, which is covered with black greenhouse fabric. Then premium hardwood mulch is installed around each tree up to the soil line in the pot. This system has worked extremely well for my trees for almost 50 years.

In early January, I pull the black and red pines out of their winter quarters and move them into my garage. My garage never drops below 40°F. They are put on multi-tier racks with plastic trays where they can be easily watered. I place them in front of a south facing 6ft by 6ft window.

It is important to note that in Japan, black pines grow at lower elevations close to the coast and red pines grow a little farther inland. They don't exist in the colder areas of the much colder northern Japan. They do grow in the sub-tropical climate of southern Japan. Their needles will desiccate when wind chill temperatures drop into the lower teens and single digits. Please be conscious of this when overwintering your black and red pines.

When working on these trees, carefully inspect each tree. Look for signs of diseases and insects. Look at the bark. If there is moss growing on it, carefully remove it using a soft tooth brush or tweezers. Take care not to remove any of the flakey or corky bark which is a very important characteristic of black and red pines.

The ends of the branches should be absolutely full of needle sets or clusters. They are typically 2 to 3 needles per set or clusters. Black pine needles are typically darker green, harder and more rigid, while red pine needles are lighter green, softer and more delicate.

During this time, you should pluck all needle clusters back to 6 to 8 sets or cluster per terminal, or end of the branch. This can be done with your fingers or using tweezers. Be careful not to damage any buds emerging along the branches, some of which

could be at the base of the needles you are plucking. These are back buds and are very desirable and are necessary for increasing the density of the tree. You should also look at the buds at the end of each terminal. If there are more than 2 buds emerging from the terminal, they should be removed. Also look back into the branches. Make sure that no more than 2 branches are emerging at any point. After needle plucking, bud selection and cleaning out the tree, it is time to wire and style the tree.



Japanese black pine before needle plucking



Japanese black pine after needle plucking



Japanese black pine branch before needle plucking



Japanese black pine branch after needle plucking

Upcoming Bonsai Events

(For IBC Monthly Meetings see Indybonsai.org)

February 17-18, 2018

GSBF annual bonsai auction at the Bonsai Gardens at Lake Merritt, Oakland, CA

February 24-25, 2018

Bonsai-A-Thon XXII at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, CA

March 3-4, 2018

Bonsai Returns to North Haven Gardens in Dallas, TX

March 17, 2018

Beginners Bonsai Class at the Indianapolis Museum of Art led by Paul Weishaar. 10 am-noon. Reservations required, contact the IMA

March 22, 2018

Beginners Bonsai Class at the Indianapolis Museum of Art led by Paul Weishaar. 6:30-8 pm. Reservations required, contact the IMA

March 17-18, 2018

Atlanta Bonsai Society Spring Show at Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, GA

March 24-25, 2018

Bay Area Bonsai Associates 37th annual exhibit at Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland, CA

March 24-25, 2018

Tucson Bonsai Society annual exhibit at Tucson Botanical Gardens, Tucson, AR

April 13 -15, 2018

Mid Atlantic Bonsai Society Convention at the Radisson Hotel, Cromwell, CT



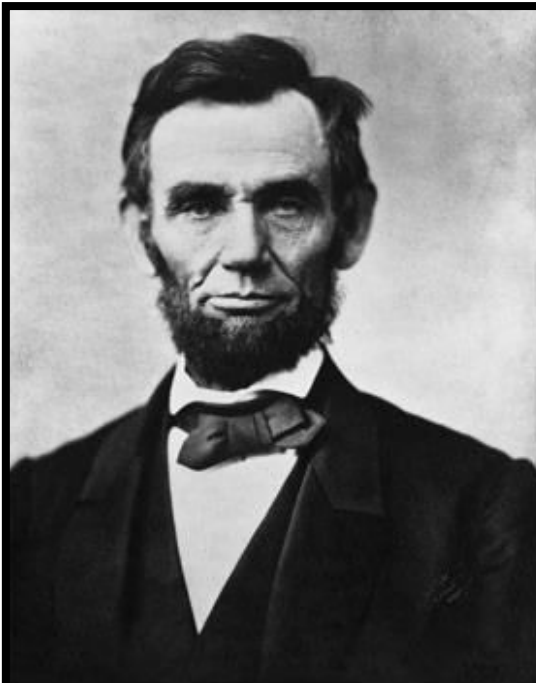
Not long ago, I saw a Facebook meme quoting Abraham Lincoln. Abe's quote was, "Don't believe everything you read on the internet." Although I know "Honest Abe" wouldn't lie to me, he does have a pretty valid point. You can't trust every piece of information you read on the internet. That holds especially true for bonsai.

Now, I don't believe the internet is evil. I actually think it is a pretty helpful tool. Our own club website has some helpful links for obtaining bonsai information. Still, you have to be careful with that information and you have to consider the source. I'm not even saying that some sources attempt to purposely mislead. What I'm saying is this: Plant care differs greatly depending on your location. There are bonsai enthusiasts in nearly every temperate zone and micro climate. Therefore, bonsai care can differ greatly depending on tree species and environment.

Here is a good example: Jerry Meislik and Ed Trout are two well respected bonsai artists. They both have stunning Narrow Leaf Ficus bonsai trees. Although the tree species are the same, each care for their bonsai very differently. Jerry lives in Whitefish, Montana. His trees stay indoors and are grown under artificial light. Ed lives near Ft. Lauderdale. His trees are out in the sun, and are only inside during extreme weather conditions. Their since their climates differ so greatly, their soil mix, watering and fertilizer application differ greatly as well. I have some pretty nice Narrow Leaf Ficus, myself. As an Indiana resident, my trees spend about 5 months outside and about 7 months either in my house or my greenhouse. They way I care for trees and the soil I use differs from what those two guys are doing. My watering schedule also differs between trees I bring into the house and what I leave in the greenhouse. Since bonsai care tends to differ so much depending on where you live, I think it is best to rely on wealth of knowledge that you can get from local artists and hobbyists. One of the greatest advantages of being a member of the IBC (or any club, for that matter) are the resources available for zone-specific bonsai care. No matter if you prefer tropical, deciduous or evergreen bonsai, there's someone in the club that know how to maintain almost any given bonsai in our specific climate.

Still, searching for information on the internet about bonsai isn't all bad. Sometimes I will look for pictures of trees for inspiration. Sometimes, you can find some good ideas or helpful advice. There are some great styling demonstrations that can be found on Youtube. There are some insightful blogs out there as well. To the new bonsai hobbyist, I would recommend this: Read and watch internet bonsai information to gain ideas and inspiration, but don't *do* anything to your tree until you speak to a local seasoned bonsai hobbyist first.

Scott Yelich



**"Don't believe
everything you
read on the
Internet just
because there's
a picture with a
quote next to it."**

—Abraham Lincoln

WeKnowMemes

| Date 2018 | Short Program | Long Program | |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1/3 | Barberry Bonsai | Severe wiring of a Juniper | |
| 2/7 | Mugo Pine | Finding the bonsai in the tree | |
| 3/7 | Flowering Apricot Bonsai | Everything about bonsai pots | |
| 4/4 | Chinese Quince | Potting a Bonsai / Club exchange-selling of trees | |
| 5/2 | Crab Apple Bonsai | Shohin Bonsai | |
| 6/6 | Japanese Maple Bonsai | Kusamono | |
| 7/11* | Juniper Bonsai | How to finish a bonsai display | |
| 8/1 | Tropical Bonsai | Presentation of show only State Fair trees | |
| 9/4 | Members Only Auction | Annual Club Members Bonsai Auction | |
| 10/3 | Evergreen Workshop | | |
| 11/2 | Preparing for Winter | How to draw a bonsai | |
| 12/5 | Christmas GALA | | |

**For the most up to date calendar, visit our website:
www.indybonsai.org**

IBC Board of Directors 2017 & 2018

Carl Wooldridge – President

Dan Cain – Vice President

Bob Hoy – Treasurer

Alyssa Batula – Secretary

Scott Yelich – Past President

Barberry

(Since Mother Nature decided we shouldn't meet in January)

Care This semi-evergreen is a hybrid of *B. darwinii* and *B. empetrifolia*. It will grow to 7 feet, and has slender, arching branches and yellow flowers. It is happy in zones 5-8.

General Care

Propagation: From seed, cuttings taken from soft-wood at the beginning of summer, or by air-layering. In addition, as the barberry suckers from the roots, it can be propagated by division. Then pinch back new growth as it occurs. Barberries bud back readily. It is easier to shape the barberry through pruning than by wiring, as many species are stiff and have nasty thorns. blossoms of golden yellow tinged with red, and has blue/purple fruit in autumn. It is not hardy in cold climates.

General Information The barberry is a thorny plant with yellow flowers. Some varieties are evergreen, some are deciduous. Native barberries are found on many continents, including both Americas, Europe and Asia. Barberry was once a popular hedge plant, but the tendency for some of its species, most notably *B. vulgaris*, to harbor fungus dangerous to corn and wheat crops has led to its virtual disuse. *B. thunbergii* and *B. verruculosa* are fairly disease-free and are making a comeback in popularity.

Wiring can be done throughout the year, but as the barberry grows quickly, check the wiring often. The major challenge with barberry is getting a thick trunk. Choose a nursery plant which is well-developed, and prune it back gradually, over the course of several years. If you desire a single trunked bonsai, watch carefully for the emergence of suckers from the roots, and remove them immediately before they sap trunk vigor.

Berberis julianae: wintergreen barberry - Native to China, it is an evergreen species growing up to 8 feet tall. It has dark green 3 inch leaves which turn purplish-bronze in winter. It has yellow flowers and blue-black berries. Will grow in zones 6-8.

Temperature: Best grown in temperate zones. Deciduous barberries are hardy for colder zones than evergreens. All barberries have fine root structures which need a bit of frost protection if grown in shallow pots.

Repotting Every 1-2 years in early spring, before bud burst. Tolerates root pruning well, and up to half of the root mass can be removed. Evergreen species are slightly less tolerant; remove up to 1/3 of the root mass. Use basic bonsai soil. trunk is reputedly difficult. It is best used with clump styles.

Lighting Barberries need light for their leaves to turn their vivid colors. Evergreen species can be placed in semi-shade.

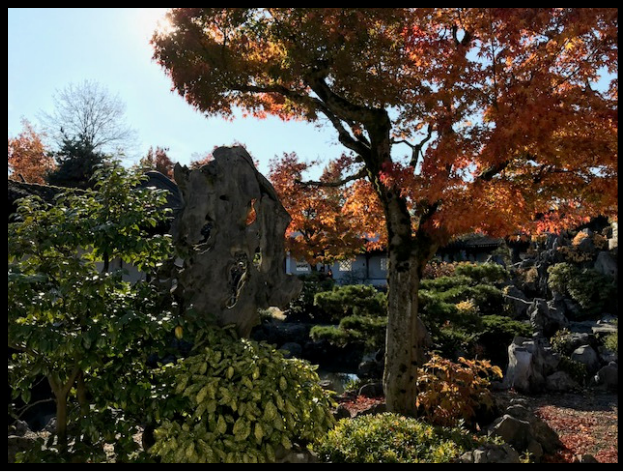
Design and Styling: Species useful for bonsai:

plant, with red or purple leaves and red winter fruit. It has yellow flowers tinged with red which turn orange in autumn. The

leaves are small, up to 1 1/2 inches, making it a bonsai natural. It is found in zones 4-8.

Watering Moderate watering, although the barberry prefers it a bit on the dry side.





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Butchart Gardens Japanese Garden
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Bucharest Gardens Victoria, BC
November 2017

Photos submitted by Jerry Sinks/Anita Bracalente

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Club Officers+ 2017-2018

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.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
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**Checkout the IBC website:
www.indybonsai.org**