



OYAMA BONSAI KAI

Club Newsletter - September 2011

President's Report

Hi All,

September !

Where has this year gone?

The last Kai presentation was on soils by Freddie and I must congratulate him on yet another quality job. The amount of detail was fantastic. We should all be busy with re-potting by now and hopefully our mixes all the better for Freddie's talk.

Arbor month exhibition opened last Saturday and was a huge success. Thanks to Freddie, Hennie and Willem Pretorius from Boland Kai for all their effort into achieving this. A big thanks to all the Kai members that helped with the organisation and attending over the weekend. It even made the national news! If you didn't make it, then try and go this weekend. It's worth it. Oyama was very well represented.

Abc3 is coming up fast. The only people attending at present are Cindy, Carl, Gerrit and I.

Andrew de Pomeroy-Legg has offered to host a workshop on Saturday 1st October from 1-30pm at his home in Bergvliet. If you are interested please contact him directly at andrew.legg@cobham.com or call him on 0836288163 for directions.

Andrew Annandale and Debbie have resigned from Exco due to work commitments. We thank them for all their efforts over the years. If there are any members willing to serve on Exco or help with things such as catering, raffle table etc then please contact me ASAP.

The next club meeting will be a Saikei workshop. There will be plenty of plantings available so we should be able to keep the groups small. Please make an effort to attend as a lot of preparation is going into organising what should be a really



Olive Saikei - Thys Klem
Photo by Carl Morrow

exciting meeting.

Technical and Development committee are starting to put together next year's programme. Please provide input of what you would like to see included or dropped from the monthly meetings:

- > Should we have tree critiques back next year?
- > Was the "Senior Moment" a success?
- > More or less demonstrations, workshops?
- > etc. etc.

Your input is important so PLEASE MAKE IT !

The last thing >> Please bring in trees to the meetings that you want help with or just to display. It makes the hall a lot more interesting with trees in it and there are always plenty of senior growers with helpful suggestions.

Regards

Phil

Len's What to do Monthly

Apparently this is one of the warmest winters we have had for a good few years but I am not convinced as I have lived in a track suit for what seems like forever. The good thing though is that finally the sun was out today and guess what, people were complaining about how hot it was. People are never happy. What the sun does mean though is you must get back into the habit of checking and watering if your pots are not damp enough. At this time of year it's quite important to check your pots before you actually water as too much can be as bad as too little. A good way is to use a lollipop stick (wooden one) and just stick the stick into the pot leave for a few moments and check if it shows a damp patch on the stick.

Done any potting yet? I have done quite a few trees, obviously Elms and Celtis a few Olives and Swamps, surprisingly some Junipers especially Procumbense which have been showing some good growth and this is a sign of the warmer weather. I am a big believer in letting the tree tell you when it's ready to pot and not what the book tells you about potting time. We are extremely fortunate in the Western Cape with our ideal growing condition which gives us a wide window of potting time. If you have not planned and prepared your Spring potting itinerary you can be in for lots of work as Spring means having your ingredients for your potting mix ready. Now start to collect your components. A few growers are having a hard time finding these ingredients this year as places close down and go out of business. My maples are moving but if you are a little late for Elms and Celtis you can still pot them just don't root prune so hard and do a light foliage defoliation. Just a word to those of you who are new to Bonsai, the thrill of seeing that small tree you have been training in a bag for a year or two and now you put it into its first pot is something even the most serious Bonsai grower does not forget, it's quite a moment. Even I after over 20 years of growing still get excited at potting time. Of course now that I have a little more experience I am not putting many trees not in pots but large washing basins, especially when they come out of the bag.

An apology to older members who have read some of these ideas over the last few years but a lot of advice is evergreen and as we have new beginners every year they are very relevant.

When removing the tree from the pot don't just drag the tree out of the pot, score around the inner lip of the pot loosening the root ball with a flat ruler like implement, and gently lift the Bonsai out of the pot, for larger trees put the pot onto its side (on a cloth or towel) and roll the tree out of the pot, inspect the roots, if there is minimal root growth and the tree has been growing healthily the previous year I

would just nip the ends of the hair roots and put the Bonsai back into the pot and leave for another year. If the tree has not been growing well, find out why, wrong growing medium, wrong siting, didn't fertilize, incorrect watering?

Make sure you have a balanced root system and this is where the term combing the roots out evolved, when you comb out the roots you can see the area where the roots come from and so trim a little more on the side with more roots and less on the side with sparse roots. This balanced root system gives you even top growth. (When combing roots do it gently.)

When working the growing medium (which should be on the dry side) into the roots make sure all the air spaces, even those under the middle of the root ball have been eliminated. Larger trees are the hardest to pot properly as it is difficult to work the growing medium under the large root base. First sit the root base on a mound of growing medium adding medium to the mound until your tree sits just above the height you need it to be. The using a little downward pressure with a slight twist push the tree into the mound so the growing medium is pushed up under the root mass. Now you can start pouring in the dry growing medium helping it into the root mass with a stick or your fingers using a rotary movement, keep doing this until the roots are covered completely. Fingers are a great help with this type of potting and you can feel a lot more with your fingers than the stick.

Once your tree is potted make sure the mix is draining properly, I submerge the newly potted tree until the whole pot is under water which has a few drops of Rescue remedy and leave it there for a few minutes, when I take the pot out of the water the pots surface must be free of water and drained within 15 to 20 seconds. If the pot does not drain either your mix is wrong or the holes are blocked and it needs to be remedied. Drainage is the most important aspect about potting.

If you are potting Elms, inspect your root cuttings as ones with interesting shapes make super root cuttings.

I have never lost a tree to Insects or bugs (I have some near misses) as I have always kept the immigrant population of bugs down to a minimum, (I was once embarrassed at a show when it was pointed out one of my trees had Mealy Bugs at my first show). Ants can be a problem if you let them get out of hand and in Pinelands they are quite a problem. They can bring Mealy bug which can deplete a tree quickly.

At the beginning of Spring I submerge my Bonsai (the ones I am not potting) in a solution of 15 litres

of water to 15ml of Jeyes Fluid and 10ml of Sunlight washing up liquid Leave in the water for 10 min and all ants will leave the nest and it will discourage other nasties from staying.

Aphids love young new leaves, they carry disease and viruses and can attack roots so be on the lookout for them. It's easier to deal with infestations if you catch them early so check your plants daily. Aphids can be discouraged with soapy water or a Nicotine spray. You could use Nicotine dust but I dislike the tobacco smell so I tend to use chemicals which also smell!!! If you see scale on your trees now you probably have had it all winter, so the tree may be weak. I spray with Oleum and Metasystox for Aphids. Check your Burt Davyii (Wild Fig) figs for scale as they are prone to it.

Here is a list of the Chemicals I use on bugs.

- Aphids: Malathion (small infestation), Merit and Comfidor
- Red Spider: Kelthane, Red Spidercide
- Scale: Oleum
- Mealybug: Squash with twig (easily seen)
- Caterpillars: Malathion Bexadust, Margaret Roberts Caterpillar Killer (Recommended)
- Ants: Dyant
- Slugs/Snails: Size 9 Nike (still the best)

Watch your wiring as tree will very shortly put on a spurt of growth and you could end up with severe wire bite. When you are sorting out your roots they may need to be wired to put them in optimum positions. Instead of wiring try and use raffia and pull them using other larger roots as the anchor. The raffia will eventually rot and it will save you the trouble of taking the tree out of the pot mid-summer to remove the wire.

It's important to keep fertilizing your evergreens such as Junipers Pines and Cedar. I use a 75% strength mix through Winter until they start growing strongly and change to a 100% mix. I have put together a List of Nutrient Deficiency Symptoms for you to identify problems you may be experiencing in your Bonsai. These usually happen after you have been growing your trees for a good while.

Nutrient Deficiency Symptoms

(Taken from a Starke Ayres publication 1985)

- Manganese: New foliage has yellow or dead spots but veins remain green.

- Boron: New tip growth dies and the plants become brittle.
- Copper: Young foliage wilts and dies but there are few other indications of deficiencies
- Zinc: The lower and older foliage turns yellow, dead spots become holes and the plant is generally stunted.
- Molybdenum: Mottling of older leaves with veins remaining green. Leaves curl and there is dieback in leaf tips and margins. Young foliage soon mottles.
- Nitrogen: Small leaves that turn light green or yellow, lower leaves are lighter in colour than those at the top of the plant, and the plant is generally weak.
- Phosphorus: Plants have dark green leaves but lower leaves are inclined to become purplish. Lower leaves may also become yellow between veins.
- Potassium: Yellow spots develop between veins on the lower leaves. Leaf margins on older foliage may turn yellow or show signs of drying out.
- Calcium: Tips of young leaves curl and die.
- Magnesium: The leaf margins on the lower leaves curl and may have yellow spots with a pronounced green veins.
- Sulphur: Plants have light green leaves, leaf veins are often light coloured and upper foliage is considerably lighter in colour than the lower leaves.
- Iron: The edges and the tips of leaves may die, and the new foliage is invariably light green or yellow.

Bonsai Ramblings

We are Ramblingless this month as I have not had time to try to pry contributions out of you lot!

Club Calendar

14th September

President's Report Phil

Main Theme
 Saikei

Beginner's Corner
 Tree within the tree!

Arbour Week

3rd to 11th September
 in the Company Gardens
