



Bonsai in America

Written & Published by Dave Bogan

September Volume 2, Issue 9

Pots

We're all guilty. Sometimes we get caught up in the moment and give in to an addiction and we buy pots. Hopefully as we grow and learn, most times we buy them out of a specific need but other times we buy because they look beautiful. Usually it's due to the color but sometimes it's due to texture or shape but when we get them home many of them simply set on our shelf. I have no idea how many blue pots I have from my early years of bonsai that have never been used. Try to be more selective and if you are buying pots especially if they are just for your back stock, buy generic colors and shapes that can have a variety of uses. When you do buy a nice pot, choose them when you have a specific tree in mind. We can never have too many pots but at least let's have pots that have more than one use.

The Berries of Summer

By Andrew Smith



Outrage!
Summer is almost over!

I can't really express the deep sense of disappointment I feel when I see the first "Back to School" sales advertised in the paper, even though I don't have to go back to school anymore and autumn is maybe even the best season of all. But my boys have got to go back, and it pains me to think about it. Sure, they'll learn to become more civilized animals with each passing year, but I hope they don't forget something wild about summer. No matter how old they get, I hope they don't forget that.

Autumn is the dry wine pressed from the rich grapes of summer. I like the fall, the golden leaves, the sharpening breeze, the vivid, earthy smells, flannel shirts, splitting firewood for winter. But I don't really long for autumn after a too short summer the same way I long for summer after a too long winter.

Summer is rich, the amazing wealth of Nature. There is no green anywhere as bright and alive as the new growth of early summer. Lightning bugs shine like prayers in the night, and crickets sing praises in the hot, humid, dark. Girls wear bikinis. Thunderstorms open Heaven's rivers, and waterfalls drench the earth. Flowers pull rainbows from the sky to burst against the ground.

My bonsai take as much of it as they can get. They open themselves to the sky and drink in the sun and heat and rain. Born in the mountains, they know without knowing that it will not last long. Winter is always just over the horizon, a shivering white ghost eager to reclaim its domain. It sometimes snows here in July,

just an inch that lasts a few hours, just as a friendly reminder.

So my pine trees sometimes seem to wait and wait and wait and then suddenly do a whole seasons worth of growing in just two weeks. It's almost like the 4th of July of Bonsai. Everything pushes to finish its growth while the sun is still hot. I think you could measure the needle growth with a ruler, day by day.

Then it slows down. Buds and berries begin to swell. In mid-summer the tree already plans past winter and fall for the coming spring. Meanwhile my insurance agent urges me to forget about spring and plan for fall and winter, but I'm not listening.

I don't have too many flowering bonsai here and the ones I do have are all natives. I have a very old wild plum that's in the ground, so not technically a bonsai yet, but hopefully will become a bonsai soon. And I have some western red currants and a couple Saskatoon serviceberry. And a bearberry, or kinnikinnick. That's it.

All of these have white or pinkish/white flowers and red berries. The plum actually has small reddish plums, rather than berries. No matter.

In bonsai books the autumn fruit of a flowering tree is displayed as something as lovely, at least, as the tree in flower, or the new leaves in spring. Not only is it visually captivating, but it's an enduring symbol of the rich fertility of life and rebirth past winter again and again. So, the fruit on a flowering bonsai would be something you'd want to keep and display, or at least so I once thought.

But as we careen towards autumn I see that once again my flowering bonsai have no fruit. No plums, no currants, no bearberries, no serviceberries. The cupboard of the tree is bare and there's no fruit to be had. This crop won't yield a thimbleful of jam.

Note,

Remember all articles, suggestions, tips and procedures may differ in your area or not be true for all species. Always think through any technique and ensure it is appropriate for your individual trees or area.

ABS News

Bonsai in America is an official publication of the American Bonsai Society. This Newsletter is published monthly and may not be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without the written permission of the American Bonsai Society. The views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the American Bonsai Society

Continued By Andrew Smith

There was fruit, a few weeks ago. Green berries weighted drooping branches as they swelled and deepened into to red. OK, that's maybe a gross exaggeration, but there were berries and plenty of them.

Then the birds came. They come every year and they eat all the berries. This year I thought maybe I'd do something about that –put the trees inside for a while, or something, so I could have berries to look at. But I didn't.

This year the birds were a pair of juncos. They built two nests under some grass in an earthen bank by the greenhouse and raised several chicks during the summer. I was worried the worthless cat would get them, but she never did. She's supposed to chase squirrels but she doesn't do that either. Maybe she's vegetarian.

Anyway, the juncos and their fledglings perched on my bonsai all summer long. They got pretty used to me and would hop from tree to tree in front of me while I watered. I got attached to them. They were raising a crop too.

Then the berries started to ripen and one by one they began to disappear. The birds managed to pluck them without tearing a single leaf, so far as I could tell. I thought it was fine. I often saw them giving food to their chicks, even after the chicks could fly.

So, when winter comes and the branches are bare, my fruit-bearing bonsai will have no fruit again. The branches will be stark and empty for months to come. But maybe that's how it's really supposed to be. After all, fruit isn't made to stay on the branch. Truly, it's made to fly away.



September 12-15, 2013

FOR THE LOVE OF BONSAI Learning Seminars Given by **The American Bonsai Society & Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society**. Detailed information at www.loveofbonsai.com or call 518 882 1039



Visit us on the Web
absbonsai.org

Tips, Ideas & Techniques.

Forest & Grove Plantings

The majority of forests and multiple tree settings are typically created in shallow pots or trays that have very shallow soil areas. No matter what type of soil was used, eventually there will come a need to change some of the soil. Changing soil on this style, generally is limited, since we do not want to disconnect or disturb the tree locations. In order to change the soil, most simply remove the entire setting from its pot or slab and trim off the bottom area and then trim around the edges. This generally removes the mat of roots and in most cases is sufficient. Once done, we simply add fresh soil to the bottom and side areas and the job is complete. This is fine with some settings, but in the case of some older or fast growing settings, there may reach a point where some of the soil throughout the middle areas will need replaced. This is especially needed if a soil was used that breaks down quickly, no longer allowing good water penetration or with a setting that stays too wet due to clogged and non draining soil. Correcting this problem can still be easily accomplished. To change the other soil areas, I start by using a chopstick to slowly and gently loosen soil in areas that I think needs changed. This procedure is usually done with the soil being dry. As you work the chopstick in and around in the soil, it becomes loose around the roots but the roots basically stay in the same place. Now, I use my secret tool—a shop vacuum. Use one that has good suction but not one that will rip the roots out. Again using the chopstick, work the soil loose and simply vacuum it out. Do an area at a time and once you are satisfied in that area, add new soil, work it in as you normally would on a newly repotted tree and then move to another area. Once you're satisfied, add ground cover or surface soil and water in as usual. Forest planting



BONSAI Club Update



We need to insure we have the correct contact for your club.

Please e-mail your club & contact info to:

abssecretary@frontier.com

Need Help?

Don't forget to renew your

ABS Membership

Check your renewal notice on the front of your latest Journal magazine envelop.

If it says **EX 1** it means

Issue #1 will be your last edition.

Go to the web site for easy renewal on-line

Membership is still only

\$40. per year

E-mail

abssecretary@frontier.com

Or renew at

Absbonsai.org

Problems—Questions?

Call Barbara at

812—922—5451

Tips, Ideas & Techniques.

soil should always be open and well drained since we rarely change the soil. Do not become complacent with your soil requirements and simply utilize soil to reduce your work or watering. Remember, bonsai should out last us so insure they stay healthy for the next person.

Late summer and fall growth. We know we need to feed our trees to prepare them for winter. This fall feeding can also stimulate some additional growth that we are always tempted to remove. Removing this new additional growth can also cause back budding and add additional new growth. As fall approaches, we need to consider the results of feeding and trimming. Again, anything we do at this stage will cause a new growth reaction. Due to the lateness of the year, we need to understand that this new growth needs sufficient time to harden off before it is subjected to cold weather. New growth and its die back from cold could result in additional work later or have a direct impact on the amount of stored energy a plant will have going into winter. Fall becomes a balancing act. Do we trim, allow new growth that may not harden off before frost time? Much of this depends on your area. Generally I stop my trimming and leaf pruning 2 months prior to the first frost date in my area. I allow my trees to get a little out of shape thus building up a little additional strength and then after a frost or two and the leaves have turned or dropped, I then perform my fall pruning. Remember, sometimes we need to allow the trees to rest or get strong prior to our working on them.



If for any reason you prefer not to receive this newsletter simply reply and put remove in the subject line.

Keep your email address up to date with us.

Send any updates to

abssecretary@frontier.com

American Bonsai Society,

a non-profit organization promoting Bonsai in the Americas. Dedicated to the individual practitioner as well as Clubs and Organizations

Soil, a Continuing saga—When we listen and learn from the new masters returning from Japan and other areas, we are quickly becoming better educated when it comes to our soil mixes. The most important factor is that we are finally understanding what each ingredients purpose is. From what I'm seeing, most no longer use bark in their soil mixes. It has been proven over time, this type of additive will not only hold too much moisture but also break down and clog the air spaces. Soil and what it's made from is very important not only to nurture the tree and its root system, but this time of year it is also very important in it roll during hot weather as a soil cooling agent.. When organic or other additives like bark are used to retain water, as mentioned it will either break down or hold too much water. Now, as we have entered into summer and hot weather, some of us monitor our soil temperatures and we realize quickly that we must do all we can to minimize heat build up in the soil. What retains and transfers more heat in our soil? Of course, it's water. If a tree is sitting in full sun and the soil stays wet the moisture in the soil will retain this

ABS Contacts:

Journal Magazine Editor: editorABS@shaw.ca

Newsletter Editor: absnewsletter@frontier.com

ABS Executive Secretary—Membership abssecretary@frontier.co

Miscellaneous

A lot of people are moving towards the use of organic fertilizers especially with their more finished or specimen trees. Generally this is because we no longer want or need lush or fast growth and instead simply want to keep our trees healthy. With organic's there are basically two types. Liquid and or solid types. Generally solids are used only on the soil surface or incorporated into the soil. Liquid can be used either on the soil or as a foliar feed. In many cases, I use both. Especially with the liquids. I foliar feed my junipers all the time. I have been using some types of seaweed and kelp derivatives. Generally any type of product that comes from the sea—plant or even fish products are very good sources of nutrients and many of these nutrients are only found in this type of product. Most plants will take up nutrients through the foliage and actually utilize it better than through their roots. Foliar feeding a juniper will result in a much richer green color. A color that typically can not be achieved without foliar feeding.

Keep in mind, as fall approaches we should only use fertilizers that are low in or lacking nitrogen to hold off on foliage growth before fall cold weather sets in to hurt it.



Joshua Roth New Talent Contest

Would you please alert your club members with fewer than 10 years experience to this contest and encourage their participation.

Information about the contest is available online at

<http://absbonsai.org/>

or contact me

John Wiessinger

directly

at natureetours@gmail.com

Information about the **Saratoga Springs** learning seminars is available at:

www.loveofbonsai.com

Is your name
on the list?



**National
Bonsai & Penjing
Museum**
click here

**Lets all support the NBF and
its desire to improve and
maintain the fabulous bonsai
collection in Washington D.C.
Make it a point to join and
support the NBF.**

[http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/
campaigngifts.html](http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/campaigngifts.html)

Go to <http://absbonsai.org/book-service> for a lot of great deals and selection of bonsai books.

Members always receive a discount

As an ABS member you have full access to the ABS web site. Make it a point to **always log in** as a lot of the site is only viewable by members = a great benefit.

If you are a new member or an older member, it is so important you keep your e-mail address up to date . An incorrect email address can prevent you from using the web-site, receiving this newsletter or any other notices the ABS may put out.

excess heat and ultimately hurt our trees ability to grow and thrive. Not only does the excess moisture hold heat, it also fills all the small air pockets which help disperse heat. Remember, when we water, one of the more important tasks we are trying to accomplish is an air exchange within the soil. With air pockets, the entering water will flush out old air and bring in fresh cooler air. Think of your soil and its air pockets as the trees air conditioner during the summer heat. Remember, the trees needs will always trump our needs to simplify our work. Its always better to water more often than to allow your trees to stay wet. If you must add something to retain moisture, use pumas which is a natural reservoir of moisture, (holds approximately 300 times its volume in moisture) doesn't breakdown and it will always maintain air pockets in the soil.

Coming soon !!!! A new ABS web site.

See Page 5 for details

Send Me Your: Club announcements, Tips, Questions, Short articles. Please try to hold any articles or tips to approximately 1/2 page in length. Send all to absnewsletter@frontier.com

What's New and Exciting with the ABS

NEW ABS WEB SITE THE END IS IN SIGHT – I hope!

We have been wrestling with both the old web site and the new ABS Web site for a long time. The old site has been limping along, and we haven't tried to add anything to it or to fix any of the errors that came about when we moved from the old server to a new one.

We had planned to have the new site up and running by this time. However, as with many things in the computer world, we have run into a few snags. I won't go into the problems we have had, since that would take more space than we want to use in this newsletter. However, we hope to have the new site operational, more or less, by the end of September. Keep your fingers crossed!

When the site does 'go live', you will have to reactivate your account. To log into the site for the first time, you will need to enter the email address that you have previously supplied to us. Then you will be taken to a screen where you enter your user name and password. Please make sure that you record both the user name and password. Also please check your personal information that we have for you. If there is an error, you can make the changes; you don't have to inform the webmaster.

As you page through the new site, many things will look the same as the old site. To save time and money, we simply moved a lot of the old site over to the new one. As we proceed, there will be more information added and lots of changes made.

There is an area on several pages where you can put comments, suggestions and complaints – it's called "Tell Us" and is on the lower right side of several pages. If you have a lot to tell us, the box does expand, so don't worry about space. Let us know what you think. If you have questions, send them also. We will either answer you directly or have a Q&A here in this newsletter. If you see an error in the new site, please let us know.

Bear with us – the new site will be here soon!

New Addition for the Newsletter

Bonsai is all about trees and what do we enjoy most about our trees? We love to see pictures of them and hear about them. If I can get the support from members, I would love to add a new tree gallery and comments about the trees from you. Send me your photo of your favorite tree. At minimum give me its species and possibly how long it has been a bonsai. If you have details of its growth, species or your challenges in creating it I would love to receive them.

E-mail these to absnewsletter@frontier.com

It's Coming Back

Coming soon in the
Journal Magazine—

Regional Care Series.

A very popular series in the past,
with new support and contributors,
it's coming back.

Watch for it soon.

A couple of
my Trees



Dave



Seju Elm Grove



White Pine



Buttonwood