



Green Country Bonsai

September 2009 Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 9

August Meeting Notes

Pres. Justin Lovelace called the meeting to order. There was 1 new guest... Ben Renshaw... and 2 repeat guests, both of whom joined the club at the meeting. Welcome to new members Chris Wood and Dave & Margidine Bellavia.

Old Business:

The club is still wanting to buy some pots for sale at the shows. Neil Dellinger has some pots that the club might use to plant trees for sale at the next show.

Mike Flanagan reported that the Saturday workshop at the Linnaeus Garden was not well attended.

Our Fall Show on Oct. 3rd & 4th needs a Showmaster, and Neil Dellinger expressed interest in the job.

The previously discussed show at the Jenks Aquarium is now planned for Sept. 19th. This will be a great opportunity for the club to gain more exposure, and also to celebrate 25 years of Bonsai in Tulsa. All members, new and old, are asked to bring trees to this event. Let's make a good showing of our art form. Later in this newsletter is an article by Steve Sanders that will help members prepare their trees for the show. Show time is 10 am - 5 pm, with setup from 8 am to 10 am. Tom Howard & Mike Blake will be working on advertising for this show.

The Executive Board voted to have Jim Doyle for our Master's Workshop next March.

New Business:

Fran Danner reported that the Hosta Club is having a 10th anniversary party at 7 pm on August 25th, and that G.C.B. members are invited to attend.

Tom Howard reported that the hot weather transplant of his Mugho Pine has so far been a success. With Tom's TLC, it may make it... let's hope.

Please note the date of our next meeting. Due to Labor Day, it's on the 2nd Monday.

Show and Tell:

Mike Flanagan brought some Crepe Myrtle varieties and a Texas Ebony. Neil Dellinger brought a Bougainvillea, a couple Shimpaku Junipers and an Elm. Tom Howard brought a dwarf Caladium, and Steve Sanders brought a sedge accent plant. Roy & Fran Danner brought a Bonsai book from their Hawaiian trip.

Raffle:

Pots/trays/stone compliments of Herb Martinez, tools from Neil Dellinger,

Program:

The scheduled slide show of the Danner's Hawaiian Bonsai pictures was cancelled because of computer problems. This program is being rescheduled for a later meeting.

Officers:

Justin Lovelace, President
Mike Flanagan, Vice Pres.
Donna Hardin, Treasurer
Lisa Martin, Secretary

Board Members:

Ken Cole, 3 year
Tom Howard, 2 year
David Parham, 1 year
Marcus Bush, Ex Officio
Mike Blake, Webmaster
Frank Kohn, Newsletter Ed.

September Meeting:

Monday Sept 14, 2009,
7:00 pm,
Tulsa Garden Center,
2435 S. Peoria

September Program:

Hands-on pot making
with Donna Hardin
Prepare to have fun
& get your hands dirty.

REMINDER OF UPCOMING EVENT

October 3rd & 4th from 10 - 4 is our
Fall Bonsai Show.

BONSAI DISPLAY --- by Steve Sanders

Normally when we speak of a formal display, we mean a show.

If you were to go to an art museum and look at three pictures on the wall, all by the same artist and all similar in style, eyes would be focused on the picture. It might have an attractive frame, but the balance and harmony and the proportion of the frame would direct the eyes to the painting. If the second painting had no frame, the absence of a frame would make it difficult to focus on the painting, there would be nothing to lead our eyes to the painting. When we look at the third painting and it has an orange stripe frame, it would be all but impossible to focus on the painting because of the disruptive balance the frame provided.

The same principle is what we apply to a bonsai display. It is made up of the main object of display, the tree and its "frame" is the pot, stand and accent plant or stone. They should all be proportionate, balanced, in harmony and should direct the viewers eyes toward the object of display, the tree. The final display should be an asymmetrical triangle.

In putting together the display we start with the tree. It must be well groomed, any die back or yellow leaves removed and be in its best display condition. Next come the soil. The soil particles must be uniform size, all weeds and foreign matter removed and leveled. Moss is acceptable and a proportionate size stone is acceptable. Mudmen or other figures should be used with caution. They sometimes direct the attention of the viewer away from the tree.

Next comes the pot. It must be cleaned of all lime stains and dirt. This can be done with mineral oil and lightly buffing with a lint free cloth until you have reached a dull luster. A more difficult chore is choosing the right pot. In the end it is subjective and is what you like best. There are some guidelines for selection though. Pines and junipers go well with a brown unglazed pot. Colored ceramic pots are best left to deciduous trees, tropical and blooming trees. Subtle colors work best. The style of the pot is again a subjective matter. It is what you like best. It is best to start with what harmonized with the tree. Upright trees will work in a round pot, trees with a large canopy will need a oval or rectangle shape. As a general rule the ideal proportion of the width of the pot is 2/3 to 3/4 the height of the tree and depth should be about 1/2 the height of the tree. These are aesthetic considerations that work best in a display situation. Oklahoma summer can be brutal and you might want a deeper pot for water retention. Pots are expensive and it seems like you never have the pot to match the tree. You might have 10 trees to be potted and have 10 pots, but they just don't match. Pot selection is not a simple matter and takes practice and developing an eye to make a good match.

Stand selection is a bit easier. The ideal stand should be 1/3 larger than the pot. It should be made of wood and can be footed or flat. It should have no adornments, such as a marble top or any inlays. Most stands are of a dark wood and should harmonize with the total display. Good stands are expensive and not easy to find. They should be cared for like fine furniture, cleaned with lemon oil and never water a tree over the stand and keep the stand out of the sun to prevent fading. The stand should only be used in a formal display.

Accent plants complete the display. They can be a common weed, herb, succulent or anything low growing that harmonizes with the display. Dianthus, accorus, dwarf mondo and sedges are some species that grow well in our climate. They are potted in small proportionate size pots that can be more avant garde in style and more vibrant in color. They can be placed on small bamboo mats or small stands.

In summary, we take the main object of display, the tree. We elevate it on a stand to emphasize its importance and just like in nature where there are trees we find flowers, grasses and stones. We accent the display with accent plants and present it in an artistic manner. The key words to remember in setting up the display are harmony, balance and proportion.

There are certain rules to follow in display. We can call these the 10 commandments of display.

1. The presentation is intended to bring out the beauty of the principal tree.
2. The overall design should be of an asymmetrical triangle.
3. The companion piece, whether a plant or suiseki, must have the opposite direction of flow and be placed to frame or stop the flow of the tree's visual image.
4. Flowering companion plants should not be used with flowering trees.
5. Space is more important than crowding.
6. The display is an experience in minimalism.
7. A very large bonsai should be displayed by itself, no other plant is needed.
8. Under no circumstances should an ornament be placed on the tree.
9. Proportion, harmony and balance must be present in the display.
10. Anything unnecessary can disrupt the composition.