



BONSAI NEWS & NOTES

Fort Walton Beach Bonsai Society Newsletter Vol. XXVIII, No 3

March 2015

Club Happenings

Please sign up for host and tokonoma. This is the only way we can have snacks at each meeting and distribute the logistics evenly among the members. If you do not have appropriate trees, accent plants, stones or backdrops for the tokonoma, ask one of the older members to assist you. Most of them have the necessary materials to make a good looking tokonoma.

Club Library

Take advantage of the club library. There are wonderful bonsai books with beautiful pictures for examples to style bonsai and more advice than you can use in a lifetime. New books and CD's have been added to the club library so check them out.

A new maple book, The Gardeners Guide to Growing Maples, has been donated to the library by the Pickers and will be available for checkout as soon as it is catalogued. Our thanks to Fran and Nancy for the wonderful donation.

Cleaning Wood Carving Tools by Harry Harrington

Note: American explanations have been added where British and American English terms differ.

Haiku

In spite of cold and chills

That usher in the early spring

We have the daffodils.

Kikurio



© Harry Harrington

Photo by Harry Harrington

In This Issue

- Club Happenings
- Club Library
- Cleaning Wood Carving Tools
- March - The Finest Time of the Year
- Dates to Remember

Wood carving bits, used in Dremel and Makita carving machines, are notorious for clogging up with sap and wood chips after relatively short periods of use. Although they are still capable of carving once they have become clogged up, their efficiency is reduced.

Unfortunately, cleaning the bits can be very difficult, in particular the sap that becomes very hot during use seems to weld itself to the metal bit!

In the past I have used proprietary tool-cleaning products to clean my carving bits, however these can prove to be expensive (around GBP7-8 (\$9-10 USD) for 100ml bottles).

In search of an alternative, I knew I would need to find an easily obtainable fluid that was not only capable of breaking down hardened sap and resin as well as wood chips, but safe enough to use at home and in the garden, and would not leave a residue on my tools that could potentially harm my bonsai.

Garden and bonsai tools are also difficult to clean quickly and efficiently. "Domestic" products such as HP Sauce (a sweet, fruity British brown sauce) and Coca-Cola can be used to help clean tools. A pair of secateurs (garden shears) left overnight in a jar full of Coca-Cola will be cleaner in the morning, after some wire-brushing. However.....standing your tools in a jar full of fizzy-drink for hours isn't particularly efficient.....

It was only while I was spraying the alloy wheels on my car that it occurred to me to try using Alloy Wheel Cleaner. Such cleaning products are sprayed onto alloy car wheels, left for five minutes and then simply rinsed away with a jet of water leaving a clean and shiny alloy wheel.

I first tested out the alloy wheel-cleaner on a heavily spiked, 4"/10cm diameter wood carving disc that I use in my angle grinder. Although the spikes, or teeth, on the disc are excellent for wood carving, they quickly become clogged up with debris and sap which greatly reduces their effectiveness.

I sprayed the wheel cleaner onto the disc, left it for 30 minutes and then jetted it off with water from a hose pipe. Other than a small area of congealed resin/sap left on the inner rim, the plastic coated surface of the disc was incredibly clean!!



Bonsai Carving Power Tool Set

I then sprayed my heavily encrusted secateurs with alloy wheel cleaner and left them for just 30 minutes before jetting them off with water. The pine resin had been cut away from the blades without any effort.

Finally, I stood my spiked carving bits in the cleaner for 20 minutes, rinsed them with a jet of water and they were instantly clean and ready for use.

Such a cheap and easily available product has now got to be a useful addition to the tool kits of all wood carvers, gardeners and bonsai enthusiasts!

About the author: Harry Harrington was born in Oxford, UK, in 1970 and after 20 years in and around Manchester now lives near the Chiltern Hills in Aylesbury. Harry started bonsai as a hobby nearly 20 years ago while working as a gardener. Harry started working professionally as a bonsai artist and writer in 2000. Read more at his website www.bonsai4me.com.

March – The Finest Time of the Year by Lee Vanderpool

March is probably the best month of the year in northwest Florida. Temperature as well as humidity are up but not too hot or too damp. Azaleas, quince, crabapples and other spring blooming plants are in flower while deciduous trees are just beginning to show green. Fine candles are sprouting on pines at a prodigious rate but junipers are still waiting for the correct time to begin growth. Most of your repotting should be completed while tropicals and maybe some junipers and azaleas are left to finish off during this month.

Now is the time to increase watering frequency, begin to spray with fungicide and make the first application of half strength fertilizer to your bonsai. Trees and shrubs in pots may get full strength fertilizer. About the middle of March is the last frost day - but beware! The odd cold night could still happen. Most of your trees should be back on their benches by 15 March and enjoying the spring sunshine. Again, be careful. If a tree has spent the past couple of months in a greenhouse or inside your home, it can sun scald rapidly if put directly into the sunlight. Move tender plants into full sun gradually. Azaleas will need trimming and repotting after they flower if you didn't repot in early spring. Pines require only to have their candles trimmed if they become too long. Leave small, weak candles to form new branches since they develop into small branches. Enjoy this time of year - your trees are probably at their best.

New Florida Representative to the Board of Directors of the National Bonsai Foundation

Ed Fabian announced at the February 19th meeting that he has been selected to become a member of the Board of Directors to NBF. This is a wonderful opportunity and we offer our heartiest congratulations to Ed and wish him a fruitful three years on the board.

BSF Convention 2015 - May 21-25 at the Florida Mall in Orlando. See the BSF website for more information and for registration forms. Early registration deadline is March 14th so time is short. The good news this year: registration fee is just \$100 for a single if you stay at the Florida Hotel in conjunction with the convention.

Fort Walton Beach

Bonsai Society

Visit the Club website for more information.



Dates to Remember:

| 2015 | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>March 21</p> <p>Mobile Bonsai Society Day of Bonsai, West Regional Library Branch, 5555 Grelot Rd, Mobile, AL 36609</p> | <p>April 25</p> <p>Ft Walton Beach Spring Show, Westwood Atri- um, Westwood Retire- ment Community, 1001 MarWalt Dr., Fort Walton Beach, FL</p> | <p>May 21-24</p> <p>Rendevous 2015, Brussel's Bonsai Nursery, LLC, 8125 Center Hill Road, Olive Branch, MS</p> | <p>June 6</p> <p>FWBBS Annual Auction at the Extension Annex</p> | <p>August 15</p> <p>Greater New Orleans Society auction</p> |

Meetings:

Fort Walton Beach Society – 1st Tuesdays and 3rd Thursdays, County Extension Building, 127 Hollywood Blvd, Board Meeting at 7 PM, Membership Meeting at 7:30 PM.

Hama Matsu: One day a month at a members home.

Pensacola Gulf Coast Bonsai

Society:

2nd Thursday, Pensacola Garden Center, 1850 9th Ave, Board Meeting at 7 PM, membership Meeting at 7:30 PM.

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Photo by Rosemarie Voelker

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