



CHINA TRADE BONSAI SOCIETY

<http://www.chinatradebonsaisociety.org/>

Monthly Meetings: 1st Wednesday of each month, March-November 6-8pm at the Connecticut College Arboretum, New London Hall. Visitors Welcome! For further information contact Tom Lee (President) at twcl@comcast.net

April 2005

China Trade Bonsai Society

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President – Tom Lee
Vice-President – Steve Tomicheck
Secretary – Joe Purtill
Treasurer – Alice Kuo

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Winter Pruning of Deciduous Trees with Todd Hansen

It continues a cycle that began last fall. Days grew shorter and temperatures cooled as summer became autumn, and autumn slipped into winter. Chemical processes inside the tree drew the sugars and nutrition from the leaves, storing in its roots food for the spring. Then the leaves fell and the tree slept.



Todd demonstrates winter pruning techniques on a Korean Hornbeam

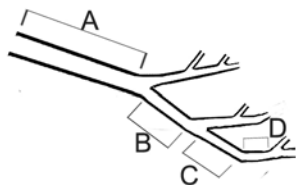
On March 2, 2005, Todd Hansen, former president of the Bonsai Society of Greater Hartford, now Vice-President and Events Coordinator, Runner-Up of 2004's Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition and student of Colin Lewis presented an extremely informative lecture focusing on one of the most neglected practices in the world of bonsai...Winter Pruning of Deciduous Trees.

Every spring, the cycle continues. Warm weather, longer days result in buds swelling followed by the rampant growth of spring. This can be literally thousands of buds on some species, and left unchecked, the bonsai becomes a bush inside of a season. The theory behind winter pruning: Remove unwanted growth BEFORE it starts, putting as much energy into desired growth as possible. Done properly, it results in double (or more) the desired growth and helps prevent unsightly knots.



Example of a "knot" formed by improper pruning and concentrated growth. Note the area circled is larger than its branch to the left.

Trident maple, hornbeam, hawthorn, and elm are excellent candidates for winter pruning. Birches and Japanese maples are not. Birches suffer too much natural dieback, and Japanese Maples can bleed even during dormancy, therefore reducing spring vigor.



Basic Taper with Decreasing Internodes

The hardest part of winter pruning is deciding what to prune and what to leave. Start by removing any dieback. This cleans up the tree and allows time to "feel" the structure. Next, remember basic characteristics such as taper and internode distance separate good bonsai from bad. The tree should have good taper in all aspects. The trunk should narrow from base to crown. The largest branch is the first branch, with each successive branch getting gradually smaller. Branches taper from trunk to tip. Additionally, as ramification builds, so should the internodes get smaller. The smallest internodes are at branch tips while the largest are toward the trunk. Prune that material which does not support good structure or tree health. If two branches are in conflict, choose which to keep based on health, taper, and movement. An excellent book outlining these principles is: Basic Bonsai Design by David DeGroot.

When winter pruning, drastic changes such as major branch removal should generally be done in the spring and not in the winter. Because of winter's low relative humidity, wounds tend to dry out faster if not properly tended. For this reason, if a major branch is removed in the winter, use of a proper cut paste is essential to ensure healing. Cut paste (as seen in the figure to the right) resembles sticky gray modeling clay. This is different from undesirable graft paste, which looks more like roofing tar. The former is easily removed as the wound heals, whereas the latter is permanent and will stain the tree. Additionally, products similar to Preparation-H are said to increase healing when used in conjunction with the cut paste.



Wound after cut paste is applied

A few last thoughts in parting. Winter pruning is generally February and March, but can be done most any month after hibernation is set and before spring budding starts. When winter pruning a branch, leave the branch collar to aid in healing. Also, leave at least ¼" beyond the desired bud for dieback.

Best of luck and happy pruning!

From the President

Welcome to our newest member...Ralph Romito who contacted us via our website!

Reminder, we will be meeting next Wednesday (April 6, 2005) 5-6pm, just before our monthly club meeting, to discuss status of the festival. This meeting is open to all volunteers wishing to assist.

Thanks again for all the comments to the poster, which came out great. Evan is going to bring a limited number of copies to be posted at strategic locations. Susan and Kathy will be in charge of distribution to make sure we have appropriate coverage.

As a supplement, feel free to email all your relatives, friends and acquaintances that we are pleased to announce our First Annual Bonsai & Asian Arts Festival, on Saturday June 18, 9am-5pm. This unique exhibit will be in a fantastic setting at the Cummings Arts Center, Connecticut College. It is co-sponsored by the China Trade Bonsai Society and Connecticut College Arboretum. The festival will have Bonsai and Penjing, Asian Landscape Art from Charles Chu and Arnold Chang as well as from the Chu-Griffis Art Collection from Connecticut College. There will also be vendors, demonstrations and more. Detailed information can be found in the sites below.

http://www.chinatradebonsaisociety.org/bonsai_festival_final.pdf

<http://www.chinatradebonsaisociety.org/annualshow.htm>

http://www.chinatradebonsaisociety.org/JTCGallery_Virt_Tour01.htm



Dues Reminder

Just a quick friendly reminder...it's that time of year to renew your membership.

We have an excellent program scheduled for this year, with some of the best talent around. Well worth the price of membership.

Please bring your checks (\$25, payable to China Trade Bonsai Society) to Wednesday's meeting, or if you won't be able to attend, mail them to:

Alice Kuo
P.O. Box 40422
Providence, RI 02940

From The Secretary

Sponsoring the First Annual Bonsai & Asian Art Festival is an excellent opportunity for us to show off our best bonsai.

We expect to display between 40 and 60 trees, and hope that all members will want to contribute at least one exhibit. These can be Bonsai, Penjing, Saikei or Scholar Stones.

Please think about what you want to display, including trays and stands. It's not too early to start preparing. June is just around the corner.

- Joe Purtill

Tree Care for the Month of April

April starts the real Spring weather here in New England. Days average in the 50's, warming into the 60's by month's end. Although frosts are not uncommon, nighttime temperatures average above freezing. By May 1st consider moving some of your more hardy tropicals outdoors. Things to think about this month:

- If not already done, move bonsai out of storage to get more sunlight. Early budding trees (crab apples, maples etc.) will be budding out shortly if not already.
- Transplanting season starts this month for most non-tropical species, particularly deciduous trees.
- Do not start fertilizing bonsai for about another month. The exception being; for flowering bonsai, mix a little bone meal in with the soil.
- Increase watering to support new growth.
- After fruiting bonsai have blossomed, pick off blossoms not intended to allow to fruit to minimize sapping of tree strength. Minimize number of fruiting blossoms left, again to minimize sapping of tree strength.
- Collecting and transplanting native trees begins this month.

Club Calendar

- **April 6, 2005** - Control of Pests and Diseases with Jeff Smith from the Connecticut College Arboretum
- **April 2005** (Saturday TBD) - Exhibition/Demonstration at Holdridges Nursery
- **May 4, 2005** - John Romano Returns!
- **June 8, 2005** - (Second Wednesday due to The World Bonsai Convention in Washington DC) - Preparations and Displaying Tips for First Annual Bonsai & Asian Arts Festival
- **June 18, 2005** - First Annual Bonsai & Asian Arts Festival presented by China Trade Bonsai Society and Connecticut College Arboretum
- **July 6, 2005** - Restyling Tropical Bonsai with Suthin Sukosolvisit
- **August 3, 2005** - Gongshi, Scholar Rocks and Suiseki with Kemin Hu
- **September 7, 2005** - Guest Speaker - Joe Stempien from the Bonsai Society of Greater New Haven
- **October 5, 2005** - Extreme Bonsai Makeover with Kenji Miyata
- **October 2005** (Saturday TBD) - Exhibition/Demonstration at Holdridges Nursery
- **October 2005** (Saturday TBD) - Exhibition/Demonstration at Connecticut College (Annual Plant Show)
- **November 2, 2005** - Bonsai Tools: Care and Use with Tom Lee
- **December 7, 2005** - Christmas Party

From The Editor

Each month I learn a couple of new things, either about bonsai, publishing, and sometimes both. New this month, in case you didn't notice, I've finally figured out how to make active links (click and there you go!).

Bonsai-wise, I've included an article I've been working on for a couple of months regarding pot selection. I wrote this for two reasons... 1) because most of my books have only a smattering on this topic, and 2) With the BAAF coming up in June, now is the time to choose your show pot for spring transplanting.

Enjoy the newsletter. - Rob

In The Region

- April 15, 2005 - Deadline for 2005 Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition
- April 15-17, 2005 - Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies - Regional (New Jersey)
- * April 18, 2005 (4:30 p.m.) - (Wesleyan University) Lecture / Tour of the Freeman Family Japanese Garden.
- April 23-24, 2005 Rhode Island Bonsai Society Annual Exhibition in Roger Williams Park
- April 26, 2005 - Bonsai Lecture with Todd Hansen At The Barney Library, 71 Main St., Farmington, CT
- * May 2, 2005 (4:30 p.m.) - (Wesleyan University) Japanese Tea Ceremony Demonstration and Tour of the Freeman Family Japanese Garden. Seating limited to 25 guests.
- * May 14, 2005 (10 a.m. - noon) - (Wesleyan University) "Open Days" Garden Conservancy Garden Tour of the Freeman Family Japanese Garden
- May 21-22, 2005 - New Haven Bonsai Society Annual Exhibition in Edgerton Park
- May 28-31, 2005 - 5th World Bonsai Convention in Washington D.C.
- July 23-24, 2005 - Hartford Bonsai Society Annual Exhibition in Elizabeth Park
- September 7, 2005 - New England Bonsai Gardens Annual Exhibition in Bellingham Mass.
- September 17-18, 2005 - Tower Hill Bonsai Society Regional Exhibition in Boylston Mass.

* For Wesleyan University Events, contact Shirley Lawrence at (860) 685-2330, or email slawrence@wesleyan.edu for more information reservations.

The Pot

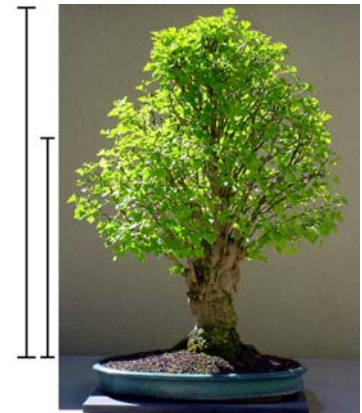
When it comes to bonsai, tree is only half the word, and while most enthusiasts agree the container is secondary, choosing the wrong pot will surely detract from the overall aesthetics. Face it; sometimes choosing the right pot can be more daunting than cutting the first branch. Buying a pot, only to decide later that it doesn't "work" for one reason or another is frustrating.



Like the rules of bonsai, rules for pot selection are general guidelines that can be bent as needed to achieve the desired effect while maintaining the health of the tree. Color, style, and texture depend largely on the style and species of tree. What follows are a few general guidelines to help as we move into spring transplanting season.

First, consider the dimensions of the tree. The size of the bonsai determines the size of the pot. Measure its height, width and trunk diameter. The length of the pot should be roughly 2/3 of the predominate dimension of the tree. Pot width should be slightly less than the front to back branch profile. Depth rules are less stringent since the health of the tree comes first. Cascade pots are traditionally deep, but can be also be shallow. In general, the pot should be no deeper than the width of the trunk at its base, but certain species such as Shimpaku Juniper require deeper pots to keep the roots cool.

Examine the image to the right. Beside the photograph are two guides, the shorter measured to pot length, the longer to tree height. Note also, pot depth is slightly less than trunk width.



Ginkgo Biloba (from Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection) with guides showing pot length in relation to tree height.

Next, observe the overall bonsai appearance. The shape and style of the tree dictate the style of pot, usually, the more formal the tree, the more formal the pot required. Upright trees (formal, informal, slanting and windswept) display well in rectangular and oval pots. Square and round containers complement cascading styles (formal, informal, and semi-cascade). Group plantings sit well in shallow containers that are longer than they are wide, and literati look best in small containers that accentuate their trunk.



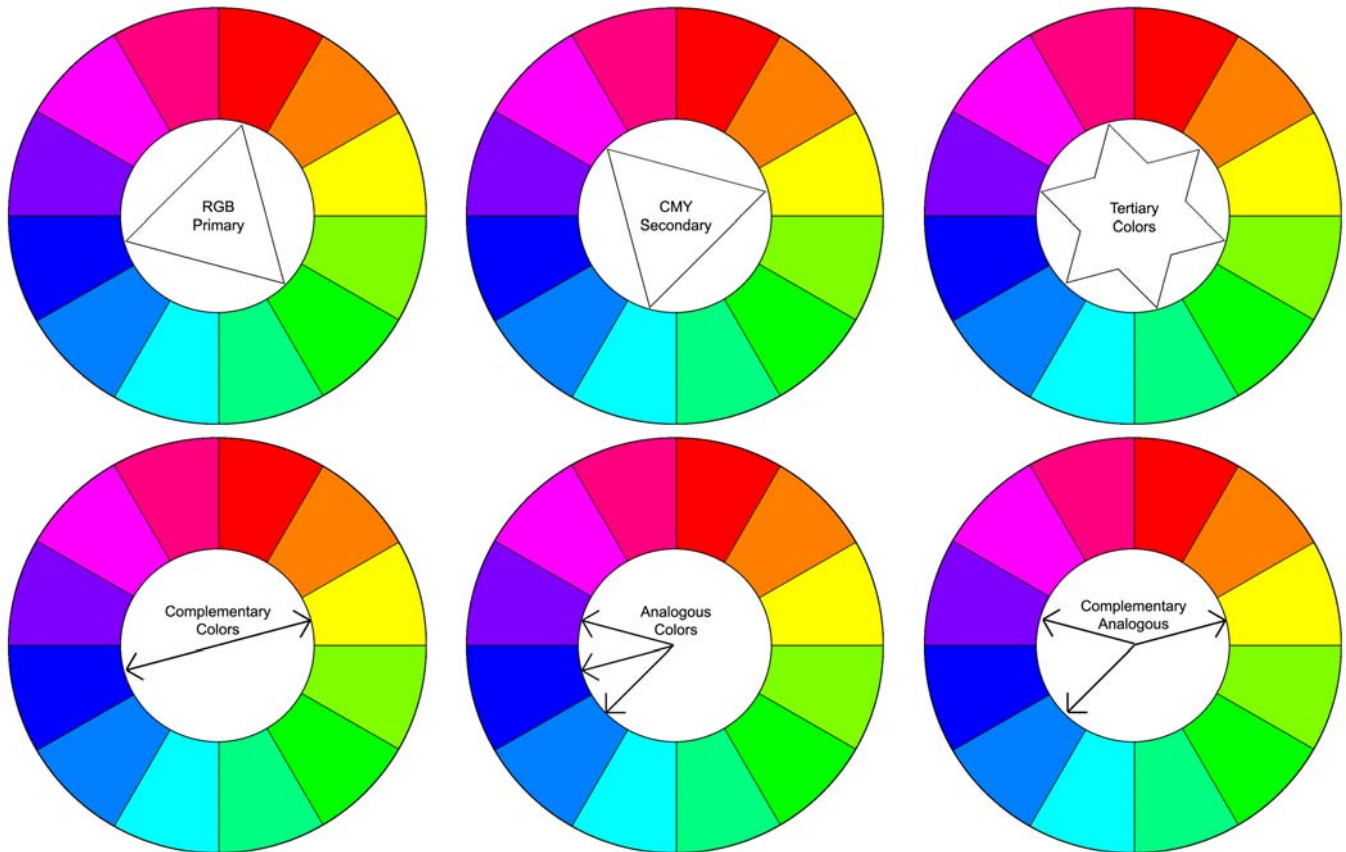
Eastern White Cedar (Tower Hill Botanical Gardens 2003) in unglazed rectangular pot

Use of an oval or rectangular pot is largely a matter of taste. A rectangular pot conveys strength, the oval pot, grace. Conifers are frequently (but not exclusively) planted in rectangular pots, while deciduous trees use both. For overall guidance, older (thicker) bonsai favor a heavy rectangular pot, while an oval or light rectangular container accentuates a thinner trunk in the younger tree. The artist chooses which image he or she wishes to convey.

Examine the image to the left. I shot this picture at the Tower Hill Botanical Gardens (in Boylston Mass.) during the 2004 exhibition. This striking little bonsai belonging to Sally Cartright was originally designed by Nick Lenz (my thanks to Doug Taylor of the Bonsai Society of Greater Springfield for this information). The actual tree is shohin, around 6" tall, but at first glance its illusion is much larger. The rectangular pot complements this bonsai well, adding strength to an already powerful little tree.

After determining size and desired style, next determine the desired color. Proper color coordination is a highly subjective area, sometimes requiring nothing more than a "good eye". A color wheel can be a useful tool for determining a color-scheme with two general types available. When choosing between a Red-Yellow-Blue and a Red-Green-Blue color wheel, I prefer the RGB because the human eye uses red, green, and blue receptors.

The color wheel (shown below) is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary colors. Complementary colors are opposites on the wheel (e.g. Red-Cyan, Blue-Yellow, Green-Magenta) each calling attention to the other. Analogous colors are adjacent colors (e.g. Periwinkle, Blue, Light-Blue) that blend, often found together in nature. Complementary-analogous colors are colors adjacent to the complementary color (Yellow with Light-Blue or Periwinkle) to create a less pronounced contrast than the complementary color.



To simplify what can be a complex topic, choose the feature (foliage, bark, flowers, or fruit) you wish to emphasize or de-emphasize. To bring it out, use the complementary color, to hide it, use something analogous. Examine again the Ginko Biloba (above) from the Pacific Rim Bonsai collection. Summer leaves are a light green, but in the fall this tree becomes a striking yellow. To emphasize the yellow, use a blue pot. But since the autumn color season is very short, consider a color that doesn't clash with its summer foliage. Blue also works here since it complementary-analogous the light green.

Expand this thought process to include your evergreens. Conventional wisdom is to use unglazed earth tone pots for conifers. While this is true, not all clays are the same. Clay colors vary from off-white to near black. There are grays, browns, purples, reds, oranges, yellows and light greens. Consider this...for species possessing light-blue foliage (Colorado Blue Spruce, certain cultivars of Japanese White Pine, some Chinese Juniper)...try a deep-colored purple or reddish-orange unglazed pot to bring out the blue even more.

Finally, consider the pot's texture and how it reflects the bonsai it holds. A rugged tree, one that speaks of long days on a barren mountain, struggling to survive year after year needs a pot testifying to its fortitude. A beautiful example of both tree and the pot can be found in this literati larch in a stone pot from the Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection near Seattle Washington. To place this same bonsai in a small, smooth pot would not do it the same justice.

In review, pot selection does not need to be hard and confusing. Using the above guidelines to aid in determining size, style, color and texture will make your bonsai experience more rewarding.



Literati Larch (from Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection) in rough stone pot

First Annual Bonsai & Asian Arts Festival

Sponsored by:
China Trade Bonsai Society
Connecticut College Arboretum

<http://chinatradebonsaisociety.org>
<http://www.conncoll.edu/ccrec/greenet/arbo/>



Admission:
\$6 at the door
Children under 12 free.

Featuring:

- CTBS Members Bonsai & Penjing
- Artwork by Charles Chu & Arnold Chang
- Art from the Chu-Griffis Collection
- Gongshi and Suiseki (Scholar Rocks)
- Demonstrations and Vendor Sales

Saturday, June 18, 2005 • 9a.m.—5p.m.
Cummings Arts Center • Connecticut College
270 Mohegan Ave. • New London, CT • 06320
For more info call 1-860-663-4260