

# *IBA News & Muse*

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*Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter*

*[www.iabonsai.com](http://www.iabonsai.com)*



## **NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES**

NOVEMBER 15, 1-4 PM

*BONSAI TECHNIQUES STUDY GROUP-  
MAGRUDER FARM- STYLES AND STYLING  
(directions, see below).*

NOVEMBER 18, 6:30 PM, Des Moines meeting,  
Des Moines Botanical Center  
*POTLUCK-Bring a dish to share and your table  
service. Drinks provided.*

*Spouses/ significant others are invited.  
ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS  
DEAD TREE CONTEST-awards will be given in  
three categories:*

*Best Story  
Saddest Story  
Best Decorated*

**Note time change---6:30 not 7 PM**

DECEMBER 13, 1-4 PM

*BONSAI TECHNIQUES STUDY GROUP-  
MAGRUDER FARM-  
WIRING TECHNIQUES*

News from the East

EIBA has had a very busy year, thanks to the many members who stepped up to support our activities. The club will wind down now for the year and celebrate with a dinner out. Then the new officers and board will begin planning for the next year.

Saturday Nov.8, Soil Making Day at Jim Vennemem's business

Nov. 20 Holiday Party at Beckett's Restaurant-  
vote on officers. We hope to unveil new club shirts.

Planning for Elm/Maple Study Group

## **TIMELY TIPS**

The time is approaching to put your trees into winter storage. We've had a couple of pretty chilly

nights this past week. Make sure your storage area is clean and sanitized. Clean up all the fallen leaves and spray for bugs and fungus. I use Orthenex. Stop fertilizing now, the trees are not growing so it won't do any good.

Trees in storage use very little water, they need to be kept just moist, not wet. They will need to be checked every so often but water only when they are becoming dry. Overwatering can invite root rot.

Now is a good time to check the wire on all your trees and remove any that has become too tight. Late fall is a good time to work on pines and junipers. The sap has slowed down in pines so it is safe to do some pruning.

*There are 10<sup>11</sup> stars in the galaxy. That used to be a huge number. But it's only a hundred billion. It's less than the national deficit! We used to call them astronomical numbers. Now we should call them economical numbers. -Richard Feynman, physicist, Nobel laureate (1918-1988)*

## **BONSAI TECHNIQUES STUDY GROUP**

The Bonsai Techniques study group is open to all IBA members. This Saturday, Nov. 15, 1-4 PM will be the first session. The subject will be on styles and how to go about styling a bonsai. It will be held at my studio (directions below). Please feel free to attend, I think we are going to have a lot of fun and learn a lot.

## **DIRECTIONS TO MAGRUDER FARM**

Go south on Hwy 65 toward Indianola. Pass the car dealerships and turn left (east) at the stop light on G36. Go 1.9 miles until the road curves north. DO NOT CURVE WITH THE PAVED ROAD. Turn right on gravel (150th St) and go 20 yards. Turn left (east) on Illinois St. and go 1.6

miles just past the T intersection of 165th Ave. and Illinois St. The Magruder farm is on your left. It has brown and white barns.

If you are coming in on Highway 92 go east from the intersection of 92 and 65/69 in town for 3 1/2 miles. Turn left on 165th Ave. (onto gravel). Go north 1 1/4 miles on 165th Ave until the road runs into Illinois St. Take the right fork and the house is just there on your left.

Telephone Number (515) 961-2323

*Let us enrich ourselves with our mutual differences. -Paul Valery, poet and philosopher (1871-1945)*

### **THE HEARTBREAK OF PSORIASIS (BONSAI STYLE)**

by Lee Slorah

Last year I moved my Ficus trees into my basement workshop for winter protection. After a short while, I noticed a lot of sap on the workbench & concrete floor. Being a novice (I still am), I didn't think much about it thinking it was just part of the trees' wintering process for tropics. In the spring I took my Ficus' to a meeting for help with repotting. Much to my alarm, Ron Heinen gasped, and told me both my trees had a major infestation of SCALE. Those little bumps were not bud nodes but insects living on the branches of the trees.

"NO REPOTTING TONIGHT" he said and then proceeded to explain what needed to be done. Each & every bump on each & every branch (there were hundreds) needs to be carefully removed & the spot swabbed with dormant oil (1 tsp./gal). Just in case anyone else in the room hadn't encountered scale, they were invited to take a close look into the dense foliage of the trees so they would recognize one of the common problems that attack bonsai & plants in general.

Bright & early the next morning, it was off to Earl May for some Dormant Oil. Since I didn't immediately find the stuff, I asked one of their always-friendly sales staff for help. He showed me the item, cautioning about its handling/use and the odor.

He also showed me another product, '2% Systemic Granules' containing Di-Syston (Disulfoton). He explained this was a systemic product that you sprinkled on the soil and via watering would provide six weeks of protection. Although I would have to wait about a month for the product to take effect, it would do the job and not harm Ficus. It was also less expensive than the Dormant Oil product, \$13 for 1 one pound container.

The results have been excellent; no scrapping, no swabbing, no smell, no cleanup, no side effects. The product kills other insects too and can be used on other plants, vegetables & roses. If you encounter an insect problem, you may want to try this product. Read the back label on the container to be sure it addresses your problem.

*ED. This is good insurance for your tropics. I also spray them with Neem Oil fairly regularly. I have found that putting a few drops of Pro-Tekt in the water every time I water does a good job of staving off pests.*

### **RECENT TRAVELS**

Alan and I have just returned from a trip to California. We attended the Golden State Bonsai Federation convention in Modesto. It is truly an eye-opener. I think California has more clubs than we have members in our club. They rotate around and one or two clubs host a convention every fall.

There was a beautifully presented show. Each club in the federation was invited to show one tree along with a companion plant. There were some very impressive trees.

There were several demonstrations by the guest artists. I attended one by Martin Schmalenberg in which he styled a Pitch pine he had collected in New Jersey. It started out as a scraggly clump and ended up an elegant clump with two major trees. Boone Manikitivipart demonstrated on a Japanese black pine with lots of helpful comments and Takashi Shimazu styled a gorgeous California juniper he had collected in the Mojave desert. It is always fun to watch the way the experts work and to observe their techniques.

I took an all day seminar with Kathy Shaner. I love working with Kathy, she has a wealth of information and she is a wonderful teacher and demonstrator. The subject of the seminar was about learning to judge your own trees, and then maybe someone else's.

Here are some tidbits I learned.

The three major things to look for when buying a tree are:

1. look at the base ( nebari) and the taper
2. look for balance
3. look for movement.

Kathy feels that movement is the most important.

Learn to read the tree and let it make the decisions for you.

Work all the way around (on all sides) the tree to keep it balanced.

Learn how each tree grows! Make it look like what it is, not a maple styled like a pine.

If you cut off the top of a tree to shorten it, instead of wiring up another branch to become the apex let a branch grow just below the cut and develop into the apex. (We had just crossed the Sierra Nevada and I had noticed a number of old pines which had had the top broken off and another branch had turned upwards and taken over as the apex.)

Use your imagination to improve a tree. Find hidden treasures in them such as a bit of jin.

Judging gives you something to work for. Learn what is good and what is better.

Keep the tree you are working on hydrated. Many people think you should let the tree dry out a bit and it will bend more easily without breaking. Kathy poo-pooed the idea. Instead she massages the branch she wants to bend. The cambium will pull away from the branch and that will stimulate bulk and budding.

For a refined tree don't repot in early spring as it will push a lot of growth. Wait until later in spring and defoliate when you repot.

When making a cut make a slight teardrop shape and it will heal faster.

To develop a branch on a deciduous tree don't cut all the way back to the trunk, leave a stub and let a shoot grow. Cut that back leaving a stub and let another shoot grow. Repeat over and over and you will create a branch with taper and movement.

Kathy likes to use a piece of cotton cloth such as an old tee shirt to keep the area around a wound moist. It speeds healing.

Use thread grafting to develop a branch where you need one.

Scrape calluses a little, seal with cut paste and wrap with damp cotton cloth.

A pot can change the whole feeling of a tree. Cut out pictures of pots from catalogs or calendars and hold away from the tree. Move it back and forward to get an idea of size and how the tree will look.

Use Min-wax wood hardener on jin after it has been cleaned up. You can burn off the little hairs being careful not to heat up the living tree tissue, or you can sand them off.

When repotting a tree which has deadwood that goes below the soil surface, keep a space free of soil around it (use a cardboard roll from a roll of TP or paper towel) and fill the space with something very granular (not sand) so air can get into the space. Keep the soil surface a little lower in that area.

*Journalists do not believe the lies of politicians, but they do repeat them -- which is even worse!- Michael Colucci, comedian and actor (1944-1986)*

There is no meeting next month so there will be no newsletter. I will be back in January to report the results of the election of board members and award winners. Have a happy holiday. ED