

IBA News & Muse
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Iowa Bonsai Association Newsletter
www.iabonsai.com



JANUARY ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 19, 7 PM, DES MOINES MEETING

Des Moines Botanical Center

Finding Bonsai Things on the Internet, Mike Adams

BONSAI EVENTS COMING UP IN 2010

APRIL 17-18, IBA SPRING SHOW

Des Moines Botanical Center

MAY 28-30, RENDEZVOUS

Brussel's Bonsai, Olive Branch, MS

www.brusselsbonsai.com

JUNE 12-13, 2nd US NATIONAL BONSAI EXHIBITION, Rochester, NY

www.internationalbonsai.com

JUNE 25-27, MID-AMERICA BONSAI ALLIANCE (MABA) CONVENTION, Grand Rapids, MI

Kathy Shaner, headliner

www.mababonsai.org

TIMELY TIPS

Give some thought to the events listed above. If nothing else plan to be involved in the club spring show at the Botanical Center in April.

Rendezvous is a unique bonsai adventure. Top bonsai artists give workshops with great material selected for them from Brussel's seemingly unlimited supply. There are several demonstrations, unlimited shopping and you are fed like royalty. It's a treat to visit with other bonsai enthusiasts too.

The National Bonsai Exhibition isn't very close by but I would love to see it. It is the US equivalent to Koko-Fu in Japan. Well, maybe not quite yet but it is the best of American bonsai. Bill Valavanis deserves kudos for making it happen and I hope it becomes a tradition as Koko-Fu has.

MABA is an organization of midwestern bonsai clubs and every other year a club in the organization hosts a convention. This year it is held in Grand Rapids, MI. Kathy Shaner is one of my favorite bonsai artists and she is the headliner. There will be lots of workshops and demonstrations as well as numerous vendors selling trees, pots, tools, books and just about anything related to bonsai. Again, it is a place to meet and enjoy other bonsai enthusiasts.

Check them out on the internet.

Wow, I just came back from my lunch break and my studio cat took over as editor. He erased all my work and stood on the 7 key. Interesting. I'm thankful for the "revert to saved" command.

IBA 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Feel free to contact board members with any concerns you may have.

TIMELY TIPS

I hope everyone's trees have survived the bitter cold. Most of our trees are much tougher than we give them credit for but just like our kids we pamper and spoil them a bit. Of course, there are a few that can't handle being frozen but most will survive. Far more likely to kill them is overwatering while they are in dormancy. Check them often to make sure they don't dry out but keep them just moist not wet.

This is a good time of year to read bonsai books or check out some issues of Bonsai Today or a DVD from our library. Browse the internet for bonsai information. Mike Adams is preparing some information on finding things on the internet for our next meeting. If you have a favorite website share it with the group.

Now is the time to take stock of your bonsai collection and make plans for springtime activities. Start accumulating supplies for soil if you mix your own. Jon Hultgren gave me the name and phone number of the company that carries Turface, a very popular ingredient for soil mixes. It is D & K Turf Products at 515-262-9352. It is located in an industrial area east of East 14th St just north of I-80. Most of us just scratch our heads and try to remember the name of it but Jon had it in his cell phone.

There are several sites on the internet to look for just the right pot for that tree you want. Some of my favorites are:

Bonsai Outlet: www.bonsaioutlet.com

Wee Tree Farm: www.weetree.com

Bonsai Monks: www.bonsaimonk.com

Dallas Bonsai: www.dallasbonsai.com

Hollow Creek Bonsai: www.hollowcreekbonsai.com

Osga Bonsai: www.osiga.com

There are many more, just beware you don't get carried away and end up paying shipping costs from Australia or the UK.

One of my favorite winter pastimes is tree watching while driving around the countryside. I am fascinated by the variety of shapes and ramification, especially of deciduous trees. It is easy to pick out the wonderful craggy oaks, elms and maples. It doesn't matter if you can identify them, just appreciate how they grow.

Here are a few shots of some of my favorite trees.

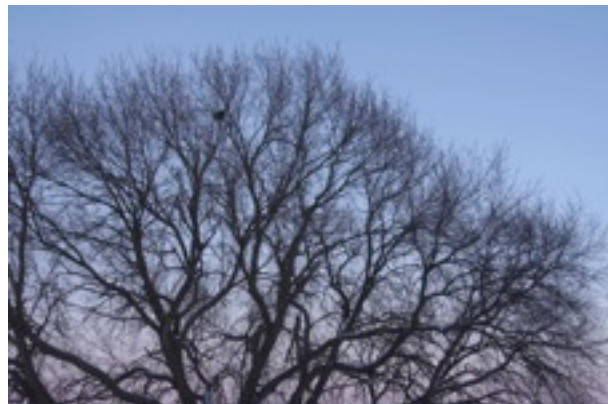
A civilized society is one which tolerates eccentricity to the point of doubtful sanity. -Robert Frost, poet (1874-1963)



An ancient White Oak



Storm damaged Hackberry



A magnificent old American Elm

STATE FAIR JUDGE HIRED

The 2010 Iowa State Fair judge will be well known Ficus expert Jerry Meislik. Set aside the weekend of August 14th & 15th for a great opportunity to learn & be judged by noted authority Jerry Meislik. Jerry is best known for his work with tropical bonsai and the use of artificial lighting. You may review his varied accomplishments on-line in detail at <http://www.bonsaihunk.us/meislik2.html>. His book, Ficus The Exotic Bonsai, is considered a definitive work on this genus of bonsai.

There will be a group workshop on Saturday afternoon before the show. Plan to bring a tree (or two) with which you would like some help. Or, Dave Lowman can supply new stock for those of you who order in advance. Dave can get you copies of Jerry's Ficus book too; I'll bring my copy to the January meeting to peruse.

Lee Slorah

MIDWINTER MUSINGS

By John Denny

I am often not where I am supposed to be. We are supposed to be in the present moment. But, much as I try, I am a day dreamer. This is not always bad – especially when it is 10 below zero in the middle of our Iowa winter.

I miss working on my trees during January. I watered them today, but there is not much else to do. Or is there?

My trees are dormant. But my mind is not. Winter is a great time to learn, question, plan and dream about bonsai. Let me toss you some bonsai ideas for midwinter pondering.

Plan a bonsai trip. You can travel to Brussel's Rendezvous in May or DaSu anytime. Visit the bonsai collection at Chicago Botanical Gardens or trek to St. Louis to see the one at Missouri Botanical Garden. Seeing great bonsai is a must if you wish to improve your own collection.

Check out web sites. If you want to buy tools, pots, supplies look up dallasbonsai.com or stonelantern.com or bonsaimonk.com. If you want to learn about bonsai, look up Mike Hagedorn's blog at crataegus.com or check out bonsai4me.com. Or search for a specific bonsai species using your favorite search engine.

Read a bonsai magazine. There are several to choose from – International Bonsai, Bonsai Focus are two I subscribe to. Borrow issues from your club library or a friend. Find motivation looking at great trees. Learn new techniques. Discover new species. Read a bonsai book. Stone Lantern has many bonsai books to choose from. I have more books than you can read – borrow one.

Plan and purchase pots for repotting season. Figure out which of your trees will need repotting this spring and which ones will need a new pot. Measure the height and width of those trees and determine the size of pot needed. Then have a blast looking at all the pots at bonsaimonk.com or stonelantern.com or dallasbonsai.com. When those new pots arrive, you will shake with excitement opening the shipping box to see what you have acquired!

Find a workshop to take this year. Workshops are great. New material. Help from a bonsai guru. Check with IBA, EIBA, Quad Cities club to see who is coming. Or you can take a pottery class or workshop and make your own pot.

Update your bonsai records. What – you don't keep records? Did you repot that black pine last year or was it two years ago? Or three? Hmmm. Do I need to repot it this year? I have too many trees for my memory bank to handle. I keep repotting records. I also lay out a plan for the upcoming year of all the things I want to do for each tree. My red pine – I will repot from nursery pot into a bonsai pot or Anderson tray. I will give it more sun. Fertilize more aggressively. Candle a week earlier. And the boxwood – I will ground layer this spring and move it to a new location. You get the picture. Record keeping helps you to plan and it helps you to follow up. Winter is a perfect time for this.

Bonsai Side Trips. Folks who like bonsai as a hobby might also like Japanese Gardening, Suiseki, Ikebana, orchids, etc. Dabble in a hobby close to bonsai. Find a book, DVD, or magazine and explore a new area of interest.

Buy a Tropical bonsai. If you miss caring for your bonsai during winter, buy a hardy tropical – perhaps a Ficus or Schefflera. Now you have something to water, something to care for in the dead of winter. It will keep you going until your outdoor bonsai begin bud swell.

There you are - all kinds of bonsai related activities to consider over winter. Day dream a little – or a lot. Your trees will thank you.

Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric. -Bertrand Russell, philosopher, mathematician, author, Nobel laureate (1872-1970)

DUES ARE DUE

Your membership dues are due ASAP. Please fill out the membership form which you can download from our website and mail it with your check to the treasurer, David Richmond. He will be at the next meeting with some blank forms if you prefer to renew then.

Anyone who joined late last year is already paid up.

Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You. -Dr. Seuss, author and illustrator (1904-1991)