



Open Workshop

Anson Nixon Park, Kennett Square, PA, Pavilion 1

Saturday, August 20th, 2016, 10:00AM

A number of experienced members will be on hand.

Communal tree workshops are becoming a featured and valued portion of our annual agenda. The influx of new members makes these valuable teaching and learning opportunities. And the success of the July auction means that there is a lot of new material available within the club to be styled. Take the opportunity to learn from others. See if there is a consensus about how your tree ought to be styled or let multiple conflicting views fight it out until you decide you don't like any of them and then style it your own way! Be bold and cut away while not let anyone touch your tree or be a wimp and hesitate, preferring to let someone else cut away – your preference.

August Meeting

The August meeting will be held at Anson Nixon Park so that we can down a dirty with our trees. It will be another open workshop. If you bought material at last month's auction, you will be able to get help styling it at this month's meeting. There should be lots of inspiration from all the bonsai magazines you bought.

We will hold out the hope that Dennis will be bringing a selection of pots for sale.

July BBS Picnic

The club underwrites the annual picnic as a thank-you for members who participate and support club endeavors during the year. It was quite a success, though we sorely missed Dennis Donald's auctioneering skills. (And his promised pots.)

Directions to Anson B. Nixon Park

For those of you who get into Kennett Square by taking Route US1 southbound, take the Kennett Square exit and drive into town on State Street. Turn right onto Walnut Road, near the bottom of the hill. (The Kennett Square YMCA is opposite.) You will soon see the sign for the Anson B. Nixon Park on the left. Park in the main parking lot.

Members coming through Kennett Square from the opposite direction on Cypress St. can take the first street on the left after the YMCA, drive one block, and cross over State St. onto Walnut Road.

Styling Junipers

Much of our club's juniper heritage has been passed down from John Naka through members of "Bonsai Camp. The short version is, "Never pass your juniper without pinching some tips." There is a newer philosophy which Michael Hagedorn at Crataegus has posted and I would like to pass that on to our members.

Never Pinch Junipers!

August 26, 2012 by crataegus

Basically, we don't pinch junipers. We cut new long extensions with scissors...and I know that will raise some eyebrows. I think the idea of pinching junipers with fingers started long ago in translated Japanese articles written by those who did not specialize in or have much experience in junipers. And then we bought into the idea of pinching because it seemed like a way to have fun with our junipers. But pinching, especially over-pinching where every growing tip is removed, has been killing junipers for decades.

There's a lot of misinformation out there about junipers. For starters, needle and scale junipers are maintained totally differently. It's essential to know what you've got so you can train it properly. This really needs to be addressed. There are far too many weakened and dead junipers out there because of a misunderstanding of how we handle their growth—in fact, I doubt I'm far off from suggesting that 'pinching' is the number one killer of juniper bonsai.

Junipers build energy from their tips. If we don't let them grow we're going to weaken them—and the more finger pinching we do, the more they weaken. That goes for both scale and needle junipers. But please take a look at these photos and read the captions—



This Kishu shimpaku has no need of any kind of foliage restraint. It's growth is so slow and contained that it barely changes in size in one year's time. Eventually the tree will outgrow itself and then some longer branches will need to be removed, and shorter ones will replace them. I'm greatly simplifying, but this is the normal process of working on a conifer.



This juniper is also a scale juniper like the Kishu above, and it has two strong shoots that have started to grow beyond the foliage pad. Unless you want a longer branch, basic juniper maintenance is to take your scissors and cut off these two extensions.

Nothing else needs removal. If we pinched the remaining slowly growing tips, the tree would panic and weaken. Always leave many growing tips on scale junipers—you can cut shoots off, but don't touch the tips of those shoots that remain. Read that again. And the selective strong shoot removal is only done a couple times a year, no more. Now we'll talk about needle junipers, which is totally different.



This is a needle juniper, *Juniperus rigida*. We treat *Foemina* the same way. Unlike the scale junipers, the needle junipers will create long shoots from every growing tip, not just a couple. We need to let all the tips grow out on these trees to at least this long. Longer is often better to develop the energy of the tree. Then we come in, usually in early summer, with scissors and cut almost the entire new shoot off. On refined trees you're maybe leaving 1/16" or a bit more—That's it! I know it's shocking, but a tree growing in good soil with lots of roots and strong shoot growth over the entire tree will burst out with many more shoots. Then you get great ramification. If you let the tree grow out like this as you should, there is literally no way you'd be able to do it with fingers, by pinching. The shoot is partially hardened off by then. Both kinds of junipers need sharp scissors, but the growth habits of the two are totally different. Just identify which you have, and apply the appropriate technique and your junipers will flourish. One tip: the needle junipers love water and fertilizer. In the spring they can use as much water as a maple.

For more great information, on bonsai care presented in an understandable manner, please see <https://crataegus.com/>