

View from
6:00



9:00



12:00



3:00



Styling a Cascade Juniper

I start with four views of the procumbens nana juniper used for this demonstration. It was a one gallon nursery stock with good growth in the pot. The views of the tree are the views looking inward from 6:00 (the species label), 9:00, 12:00 and 3:00 o'clock. The pot was about to be trimmed back over an inch and then about a half inch of the soil was going to be removed to expose the surface root structure. Even before this was done, it was clear that the plant had a single major direction of growth at about 7:30.

The next step was to get in under the plant and remove all of the “downers” and any small bits of growth that impeded the view of the trunk and root base. Initially, there was an option to have either a one-layer cascade or a two layer cascade. This is readily apparent in the 9:00 picture to the left. After the initial cleaning of the underside of the tree, one issue was immediately apparent. There was a relatively heavy limb cutting across below the two cascade branches. While difficult to get a proper perspective, the two higher branches in the picture are coming out to the front while the branch circled in red is going away from the view.



It was almost certain that this branch could not be used in the design and it was decided to remove it in the very early stages. A one inch stub was left for potential future *jin*.

After the cleaning process, the design of the tree was apparent. As seen in the next picture, the tree curved coming up out of the soil and then swept down-hill. There was an early branch that would lead to a good apex.



The major cascade branch looks small because this is the view from 3:00 and it is running away from the viewer.

A heavy wire was applied to the trunk starting from the soil line and continuing the length of the cascade branch. The potential secondary cascade branch was found to originate below the main branch and that would lead to an unsatisfactory double cascade, so it was cut back for use as a side branch. The result is shown in the next two photos.



The wire now needs to do the job it was applied for. Substantial bends are put into the cascade branch. The result is shown in the next picture. The cascade branch was not shortened, but all of the curves put into it make it seem shorter and thicker than in the picture to the immediate left.



Another larger branch coming off the trunk was removed, leaving a 1" stub. Because there would be several sources of *jin* on this tree it was decided to go ahead with the *jinning* process. The bark of a branch was crushed with pliers. After being crushed, it was quite simple to peel the bark off the branch.

The tree was taking shape nicely and it was becoming clear which portions of the tree would be maintained and which portions would be eliminated. It was time for some minor pruning and lots of fine wiring to lay the pads out to the left and right of the cascade branch. The apex also required fine wiring.

When the tree was removed from the pot, it had a substantial root system. Very little soil dropped as the tree was removed from the pot. The potting medium used by the commercial grower was a mixture of peat, sand and something like pine bark. Almost all of that material is carefully removed using a chop-stick. What remained was the entire root system of the tree. The root system was almost a perfect repeat of that seen during the styling of the informal upright, so that picture was used again.



There were two root systems, one close to the top of the pot and a second connected to the tree via a single large root. Because a cascade goes into a deeper but more narrow pot, the second root mass was retained but reduced in size. Some of the longer, thin roots from the upper mass were trimmed back.

Wire staples were prepared and then used to a secure screen into the bottom of the pot.



After placing about a 1/2 " layer of bonsai mix into the bottom of the pot, the bottom root mass was lowered into the pot. Additional mix was sprinkled into the pot and the upper root mass was placed into the pot. The pot was filled with bonsai mix and then a chop-stick was used to carefully work the mix down into the roots. The mix had to be replenished several times during that process. Particular care was taken to work the bonsai mix toward the center of the pot just below the tree because most of that area was taken up with the roots.

The tree was then watered thoroughly until the water coming thru the bottom of the pot was clear.

The tree is off to a good start, but the apex foliage is too wide while the cascade foliage is under-developed. Because this styling was done in September, the tree will be protected and allowed to rest. There should be some root growth before winter, though no foliage growth is expected before winter.

The tree will be fertilized routinely starting in the spring. It is expected that there will be substantial foliage growth and that some of the small buds left on the trunk will sprout into branches. If any of these buds are needed, they will be maintained, but most will be rubbed off. The outer edges of the apex will slowly be worked back toward the trunk to give a more pleasing look. The branches on the cascade will be trained to grow into nice horizontal pads toward the outside of the curves.

Two final pictures of the tree follow. I have not yet decided which orientation of the tree I prefer, but that can be a later decision. The pot should have been taller, more narrow and with more taper top to bottom. The stand is too small for this particular pot. If the final orientation is the one on the right, the pads will have to be rotated slightly so they show to better advantage. One reason, I have shown both views is because the movement of the trunk should be not only left and right, but also forward and backward. Not the curves in both views.

