Brandywine Bonsai Society

Promoting the art and horticulture of bonsai since 1967

July Picnic and Auction is Canceled. Things are headed the wrong way!

Stay at home. Work on your trees whenever you like

Pre-meeting coffee and tree counseling will not be available. **No refreshments served.**

Fix your own coffee, or better yet, have a drink.

Jin that tree with a gin and a grin.

July, 2020. COVID-19 Edition

These headlines are getting annoying and boring!

July Auction/Picnic Is Cancelled

There was every hope to hold the July Auction in a way that exceeded the COVID-19 PA State regulations and CDC recommendations. With the membership having "their temperatures taken" about attending the auction if it were to be held (pun intended), several members volunteering to do whatever was necessary to assure that all plans for a safe auction were upheld, and the county going "Green" with its associated lifting of more restriction, the evaluation of safely holding the auction continued . The decision to cancel the auction was made when it was seen in many areas of the country that as they went "Green", a second surge in the number of people testing positive for the virus occurred.

Please continue to be safe. We will continue to evaluate the situation as we approach our August and September meeting dates.

\- Rob

Longwood show is on. Longwood show is off. Uh?

Do you get the impression that things are still up in the air about what will be going on at Longwood this fall? It would be good to have a Plan A and a Plan B.

Plan A) We will have the show but social distancing and all of the other requirements will be in place. That will include set-up and tear-down as well as while it is open to the public. This will be largely Longwood Gardens' decision. Each member would have to make their own decision about if and how they could participate.

Plan B) We will have some type of virtual show. This is still in planning and we would appreciate input from any and all of you. I presume that it would be based upon our club website. Possibilities would include live segments via Zoom or just well-posed pictures of trees with stands, etc.

What are your thoughts and would you be willing to put in the effort required for something that is not real.

Club Survey #2 - Favorite Species, Styles and Sizes.

Fifteen people took the survey. Of those, 80% had a favorite species. Of those who had a favorite species 87% preferred a temperate species while the rest preferred tropicals. Deciduous species were slightly preferred (54%) over evergreens.

Species that were mentioned most as a favorite species were junipers (39%), maples (31%) with yew, dawn redwood, American beech, chrysanthemums, and portulacaria aura rounding out field with one vote each. The reasons that people favored a certain species fell into two groups. The first was that the artist appreciated the innate beauty of that species of tree, and second, that it was a species that allowed itself to being easy to work with.

Most members do not have a favorite bonsai style (60% said no favorite). Those who did have a favorite style favored that style because (1) it

matched the artists' personality, and (2) it challenged their design skills.

The 3 preferred sizes were Kifu Sho (8 - 16"; 47%), Chu/Chumono/Chiu (16 – 24"; 31%) and Shohin (6 - 8"; 23%). The most common reasons that people preferred a certain size was (1) easier to handle/carry, (2) maximizes bench space, and (3) bonsai that size are more elegant.

The Last Word *from Steve*

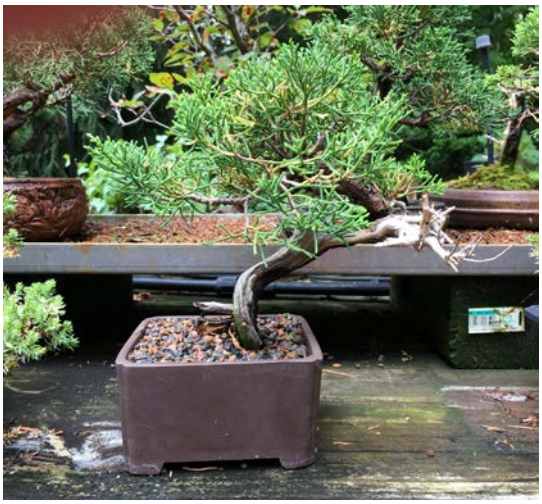
About the survey - there are certain things I need to get out of the way right off the bat. I don't do tropicals. I have a slight preference for conifers, but I love my deciduous trees. I didn't think I had a strong favorite species, but then I started counting and junipers won – by a landslide.

One reason is simply availability to me. Liz has provided some wonderful shimpaku over the years. I have taught bonsai at Longwood and there is always at least one left-over juniper (often the runt of the litter) and why would it be thrown away? A local nursery has a junk pile of semi-dead trees that customers have tried to kill, and trees that have had a near-death experience can be interesting. I had neighbors who wanted to get rid of foundation plants and I was happy to oblige.

Now, let's talk about style and size. The only style I do not have in juniper is formal upright. They can go up. They can go down. They can be petite. They can be monsters. I can't afford the yamadori juniper that I want, so these are all East Coasters directly or indirectly from local nurseries.

Now an aside: If I had planned this rant better, I would have taken good pictures of all my trees with a good backdrop. But I didn't, so you will have to use your imagination at times.

Now let's run through some of those things you can do with a range of Junipers. junipers.



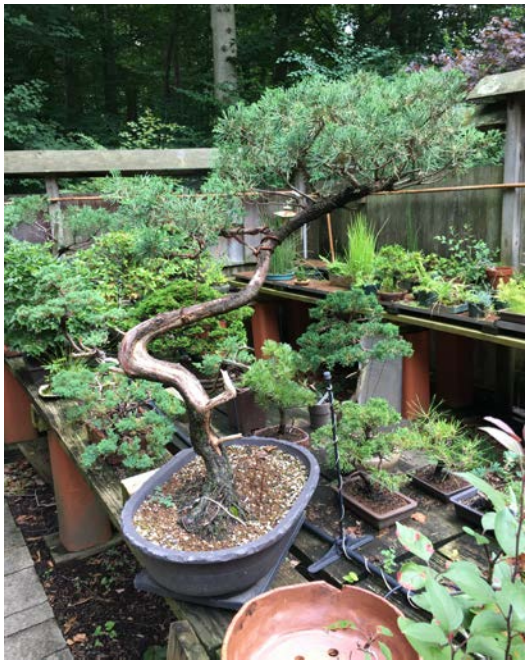
Small shimpaku with nice movement and plenty of jin and shari.Needs more lime sulfur on trunk.

Small procumbens with lots of movement. Needs pruning and I need to get the moss off since I was recently preaching about how moss is not good for the trees.

Another small procumbens with lots of movement and lots of wire.

A Dorie Froning San Jose juniper as a semi-cascade. I wire it to the pot when I am going to be doing some heavy wiring because it is not terribly stable.

A tiny blue rug juniper doing the cascade thing that they like to do (hence, the name “rug.” A bit of a “piece of junk,” but I keep it.



A monster (48”) literati Rocky Mountain (?) juniper in its second year of training. There is a single live vein wandering up the trunk that will be refined. It will go into the pot I just made for it shown right in front of it. I don’t particularly like the loose foliage for literati and may graft it over to a tighter shimpaku foliage.

A mid-sized twin-trunk literati procumbens nana. The pot is all wrong (despite being Sara Rayner) because it was just re-positioned to vertical during the recent re-styling and the roots told me how it was going to be potted this time. The pot will be corrected in another year or two.

Big slab forests have gotten too unwieldy for me. This is my latest forest that will be a three-pot job. The trees are blue rug junipers doing what they hate to do – growing vertical. This is supposed to be a high-mountain Colorado ski-resort mountainside and I love the fact that the trees have a wonderful silvery blue tint. In real life, they would be lodge-pole pines. Branches train down easily and there is a big, dead, momma tree toward the center of the composition in the right pot. As soon as I can get some more suitable material, the center pot will be added to the composition.

This is a huge San Jose juniper getting some maturity in the ground, but I am already starting the jin and shari dead-wood process. It is a 4" trunk and currently has way too much foliage, but it will be opened up some time soon this summer to promote the inner buds. I will probably dig it in 2022.

A huge (36") procumbens nana cascade. Movement all over the place. It is currently heavily wired and guy-wired. The layers will be cleaned up when the branches finally learn where they are supposed to be.

This is one of the junk-pile trees I mentioned. It was an upright yard tree. Someone managed to kill the top and one entire side of the tree so the nursery scrapped it. It sat bare-root in the summer sun for several weeks before I got it for $1. No branches on one side? Perfect for a slant style. Lots of jin and shari, much of which is real from the hard life it has really lived.

Stay apart. Stay happy. Stay healthy.