



Fog City Bonsai

Newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco
Hall of Flowers, 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way

John Boyce Caring for your 'Plucked Chickens'....

November 2006 General Meeting - John Boyce on Pines

For our November General Meeting our own John Boyce gave a presentation on pine care and culture. John has been growing trees for more than 35 years and finds that among his favorites are Japanese Black Pine (JBP). Although the culture of JBP can seem complicated to the beginner, the tree is actually quite forgiving and, given the right conditions, easy to grow. *(continued on page 2).*




BSSF Holiday Party!

On December 14, our annual Pot luck will be held in the Hall of Flowers recreation room. Plan to bring a favorite holiday dish to share.

Setup will start for the party at the Hall of Flowers on Dec 14 at 6:00PM (note later time). Help from anyone who is able to come at this time is appreciated. If you plan to arrive before 6:30, please bring appetizers, snack foods, or salad; for arrivals from 6:00 to 7:00, main dishes and after 7:00, desserts. Of course one can bring something of their own choice, but this plan will by-and-large serve the ravenous on demand! Wine and one entree will be provided by the club. There is a food heating facility, but you'll need to bring heating dishes, a trivet and serving dishes. We have a few serving utensils, but bring your own if you can!

Looking forward to another great holiday affair!

Please call Eric if you have any questions or to coordinate. 415-786-1349 

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Calendar at a Glance.....

Thursday, Dec. 14
BSSF-December Meeting
Holiday Party and Special
Raffle!

Thursday, Jan. 11
BSSF-January Meeting

Sat. & Sun. Jan. 13-14
Bay Island Bonsai 8th Annual
Show

Sat. & Sun. Jan. 27-28
Bay Area Bonsai Associates
25th Anniversary Annual
Bonsai Exhibit

(continued from page 1)

John has long referred to pines in training as "plucked chickens" because so much of the foliage and needles are removed each year that through the winter the trees look quite bare.

But only through years of this type of training do black pines finally mature into beautiful bonsai with full canopies of foliage.



Japanese Black Pine is one of the three "classical" bonsai species, the others being Shimpaku (Chinese, aka Sargent's juniper) and trident maples. From these three species most of the care and training techniques were actually developed; the result being that they tolerate the treatment better than other species.

Black pines are identified by a number of characteristics, some of which are shared by other pines and some of which are unique. JBP have flat, bright green needles that are straight with sharp tips and cool to the touch. The buds are white as opposed to many pines which have dark brown or green buds. The needles are two to a sheath (although you will sometimes see three, but generally only a few on a tree.) John gave many pointers for growing pines during the talk. What follows are some of them.

The culture of pines is entirely dependent on the weather and cannot be done by a calendar. Times for work depend on how the tree is growing. You should never do work on a pine that is not healthy.

-Pines are most commonly propagated by seed, but success can be had with "candle cuttings" (actually a 1-year air layer of new growth) and air layering. Air layering tends to be difficult and slow, sometimes taking five or more years.

-Pines are quite tolerant of work when healthy, and don't mind having branches bent severely or even cracked in places. Apply cut past to open cracks or use cloud cover or other sealant.

-The care of a pine differs depending on the age of the tree. Young pines are left to grow more freely to fatten the trunk, fewer needles should be removed than with older pines.

-Needle removal can be started as soon as the tree is dormant, typically at the beginning of November. Remove needles in stages with some in November, some in January and some in May, each time leaving more needles on the weaker inner and bottom branches than on the stronger top and outer branches. Needle pulling is the key to back-budding on a pine, candle cutting alone will not result in fine



branch structure.

-Repotting can be done starting in February and as late as May. Later repotting will result in weaker growth on the tree while earlier repotting will result in stronger growth.

-Feeding of pines is critical, John recommends balanced organic powder fertilizer applied once per month. For a tree in a 12-14 inch pot start with a cou-



-Young trees need to be repotted frequently, once per year, while old trees can go 3-5 years between repotting. Work on old trees more slowly, cutting back gradually.

John handed out a sheet of information on pine care which can also be found at <http://www.bssf.org/guides/tree-species-guides/japanese-black-pine-care-guide/>

John teaches the BSSF intermediate workshop where he dolls out this kind of information unbidden on a monthly basis. Talk to John if you are interested in joining.



-Eric Schrader

SOME NOTES ON USING GUY WIRE ON BRANCHES

by John Boyce

Guying is done by several different methods, the most common of which are outlined here:

1. Guying an outer branch to the pot: Stretch a #16 copper wire by jerking it with two pair of pliers (it is easier if you have two people.) Fold the wire in half and then make a 90 degree bend on the folded end to form a hook and insert it in a drain hole (around the outside of the pot) below the branch you are bringing down. Then bring the two ends of wire up tightly around the pot. Keeping tension on it will ensure that the hook inside the drain hole doesn't slip out. Then go over the branch that you are guying with one end of the wire, using a small plastic tube over the wire to protect the branch. Bring the end down to meet the other end and twist them together. Bending the branch down somewhat before you connect them will ensure that you don't have to twist endlessly to get the branch down. If all the pulling can't be done at once because the branch is too stiff, go part way, wait a month, and do more. Repeat until the branch is in the desired position. Because the branch will likely spring back somewhat when released, bend it down further than the position ultimately desired. Be sure to make all guying look neat so that the tree can be shown.

2. Guying down inner branches works differently. Stretch the wire as above and anchor the end on the outside of the pot in the direction of the branch. With the other end of the wire go up through the root ball and up over the branch, protecting again with tubing,

ple of tablespoons in March (really as soon as candles start to elongate) follow with 4 tablespoons in April, 8 tablespoons in May and 12 tablespoons in June. The fertilizer breaks down slowly so it will not burn the plant like chemical fertilizer can. Organic cakes of fertilizer can also be used in similar amounts and can be purchased or made using a combination of cottonseed meal and fish emulsion or fish meal and water, some people use bone meal as well.

-Cut candles in June (for San Francisco, later for Berkeley and other warmer areas) down to the base of the current years growth. Use one of the techniques (staggering cutting time or leaving a stub of differing size) to even out growth over the entire tree. When candle cutting be sure to remove small buds that are right at the base of the candle because these will prevent new growth from forming around the cut where the candle is removed. (they will grow much more strongly than the buds from candle cutting and cause uneven needle length and shoot strength.)

-Use large coarse soil in the bottom of pots, with medium soil in the middle and finer soil on top to promote good drainage and retention of moisture at the top of the pot. Remove old compacted soil from the roots with a chopstick when repotting. Roots need a lot of air; approximately 80% of the open space in the soil should be occupied by air and 20% by water. Watering a couple of times per day flushes CO₂ out of the soil and reinvigorates the tree, however this should only be done when the tree is growing and the weather is warm.


and guy it down. Move it in increments as above until the branch is in the desired position.

3. Guying a small branch to a strong root may also be done: Stretch the wire as above and protect the branch and root with pieces of tubing. Bend the branch down as wanted in several steps if necessary. Take care that the root is stronger than the branch and that the root is properly anchored in the pot.

4. Guying one small branch to another: Use a #18 copper wire for this. Loop the wire twice around the two branches, using tubing to protect them. Twist the two ends of the wire together to bring the branches to the desired position. Add more twist each month until the correct position is achieved.

5. Bracing branches to spread them apart can be done with heavy wire bent in a Z shape the width of the spread you want. Curve the ends of the wire to fit the curve of the branches. Move the wire Z down the branches toward the junction to achieve greater spread if necessary. Another way of doing this is by using a small branch or cutoff. Shape the ends to match the profile of the branches or trunks being braced. Wedge the piece between the branches. It will blend in better than wire or any other material because it is the same color and texture as the rest of the tree. Using larger pieces to brace where there is more pressure between the branches will avoid excessive swelling of the branch around the brace.

6. Rebar is also used for guying, but it is more difficult to explain because the methods vary greatly depending on the situation.

7. Specialized branch bending mechanisms available from bonsai vendors can be used in conjunction with guying to even greater effect. 

SOME THOUGHT ON *JIN* AND *SHARI*

by John Boyce

Creating and Maintaining *Jin*

When creating dead wood on branches, select branches that are heavy enough to produce good *jin*. Remember that when the bark and soft tissue are removed what remains is much smaller than the branch you started with. If you want to *jin* a branch in the future that is not yet large enough, wire it, shape it, and let the wire cut in so that the twist effect will show when the bark is later removed.

When *jin* are made here and there on a tree it is best to make them small, unless a very large branch is



jinned. If the tree is mostly *jin*, then mixed small and large *jin* looks good.

Once the *jin* is made, scrape it clean, sand it with emery cloth, (cloth backed sandpaper used by plumbers, available at most hardware stores) wire it and put movement in it if it has none. The *jin* can now be treated with lime sulfur. Once treated, wait until the wood is dry (months later) and then treat with wood hardener.

After the *jin* is dry and shaped by wire it can be worked on again. Soak the *jin* with water and remove the softer wood in one direction with a wire brush. This gives the *jin* an aged look with the grain showing. Then treat it with lime sulfur and wood hardener if you hadn't previously.

Lime Sulfur should be applied once per year to help preserve wood for the long term. If it appears too white tint the lime mix with sumii ink to the degree of grayness you desire. However, trees with naturally black dead wood, such as olive, should not be made white.

Jin can be made at any time of the year but if you are doing large branches it is best to wait until the tree is dormant and the sap is not flowing.

Apply lime sulfur months in advance of, or better yet, just after a show, so that it doesn't look painted on for showing. The effect of the lime sulfur will decrease over the course of a few months so that the *jin* looks more natural.



Thoughts on Shari

Shari is made to add age to a tree, or to disguise a bad scar or defect on the trunk. There must be a good reason to have *shari*. It should not be made just to have a *shari*. In nature *shari* are made by storms, rockslides and insect infestations, not to mention lightning and a dozen other things.

If two dead branches occur, one above the other, a *shari* can be made connecting them. This can have a very natural look and give age and beauty to an otherwise plain tree. Also, occasionally a tree has a large twisted branch with a *jin* at the tip; a small *shari* can be made further back on the branch to give it a more aged look.

Shari should be made in the direction of growth of the trunk or branch. Small *shari* can usually be done in one treatment. Larger *shari* should be done over a longer period of time because too much removal of bark and live tissue can seriously weaken or kill a tree. If a *shari* is made small at first, then enlarged, it will give the tree time to adjust to the change. When the wood that is exposed dries out completely it can then be widened. The process can progress over a few years if you desire the majority of the trunk to be deadwood. Man-made *shari* will look better if they do not go straight up and down the trunk. Natural *shari* can be in any shape but can be modified with care to effect improvement.

Shari is made by cutting into the hard wood. Since it cannot be wired it should be carefully shaped with a small gouge. Do not use an electric tool except for rough cutting. The marks from electric tools do not look natural, so always finish with hand tools. Treat the *shari* with lime sulfur and a wood hardener after it


SPECIAL RAFFLE FOR OUR COLLECTION NORTH VOLUNTEERS

At the beginning of 2006, BSSF promised a special raffle for our members who volunteered to docent at the Collection North. The prize is an outstanding 50 year old Kingsville BoxWood donated by Tim Kong. This special raffle will be held at our December Christmas Party. Each volunteer will receive one raffle ticket per day spent at the Collection. As of December, the final list of members and days volunteered is:

Linda Ferzocco (21)
 John Boyce (10)
 Phyllis Rizzi (9)
 Burt Meyer (3)
 Sandy Meyer (3)
 Lawrence LeClaire (4)
 John Edwards (3)
 Alex Hatch (3)
 Peggy Kelly (3)
 John Pennington (3)
 Joe Dellea (2)
 Craig Thompson (1)
 Diana Lum (1)
 Bernard Magee (1)
 Tim Kong (1)
 Ron Weaver (1)
 Eric Schrader (1)
 Aaron Newton (1)
 Andrea Borhoe (1)
 Keith Gidlund (1)
 Katie & Ben (1)
 Robert Smith (1)

Thanks for all your help and good luck in the special raffle

has dried as you would with *jin*.

A nice effect can be achieved with old *shari* that have a significant rollover. Rollover occurs when the cambium grows rounded at the edge of a *shari* to heal it. Kill the live section back further to create a double rollover on the trunk. 

From the Prez.....

-John Edwards


A cold rain and cooler temperatures have finally ushered in our dormant season. Now you can get your late fall/early winter bonsai chores underway. By now deciduous trees should be bare. Now is the time to study the bare structure and make the big cuts and styling changes before the sap starts running again. Yellowing leaves should be removed by cutting at the base of the leaf leaving some petiole as insurance against an early leaf out. Some elms and others left in full sun in our warmer areas may be refusing to go to sleep. Try moving to a cool shady part of the yard. Last night we had our first chilling night of the season where the temperature drops below 45 degrees. This is important for crab apples and other fruiting trees' spring performance. Old pine needles can now be removed from black pine. On regular black pines pull the needle up and out, on cork bark pull down carefully so as not to strip bark. To be safe needles can be sissored off at the base. While dormant weather gives us a license to make big cuts and bends, some trees become more brittle this time of year so proceed with caution. Branches should be massaged gradually before attempting big moves; Rafia applied with wire bracing helps this process.

The November elections saw three new members join the BSSF board. Diana Lum, Joe Nersveen, and John Pennington have all signed on to help plan the direction of the club in the coming two years. At our last board meeting for 2006, the new members joined the current board to discuss our show plans for next spring.

We have happier news from the Garden Show staff. Our display area will be expanded to 576 sq. ft. While this is still diminished from our past exhibits and without a sales area, we are confident that each of our members will be able to display one tree. Now is a good time to start determining which of your trees you will put on display for the

March 21 show. Our January, February and March workshops will be available to assist you in preparing your trees for show. Our March general meeting, which is 10 days prior to the show opening, will be a chance to show off your good work in a pre-show display and discussion about the art of bonsai display.

To address the loss of our sales area and to assure fund raising we will be holding a one day sale on a Saturday following the show, hopefully in early April, in our regular meeting space in the County Fair Building. Members can sell all bonsai related materials with no price or container restrictions. We will need all club members to participate and welcome your input as we plan this new event. Date and additional information to come.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our annual holiday potluck. Bring a favorite dish to share with other club members and guests. The club will be providing some beverages and a baked ham this year. In addition to all the good food and company we will have three special raffles. A free raffle assures that everyone goes home with a prize. Continuing our tradition begun last year we will be holding a special raffle as a fundraiser for the curator's fund at the Collection North. All precedes after expenses go to help fund this critical position. Lastly we will have an exclusive raffle of an aged Kingsville boxwood. Tickets will be held only by those members who participated in the docent program at the Collection North since last February when we began a monthly commitment to provide docents for the third Saturday afternoon shift. Those who participated in that or on other days of the month will be given one ticket for each shift they worked. A list of those members and their posted scheduled days is printed in this newsletter. Please check it for accuracy. If you have scheduled days in December that have not yet posted to the site let me know. We will continue this program in 2007. Please continue to support the Collection North by volunteering to docent. The Garden is especially needing people for December. Check the website for available openings. 

Upcoming Events

Bay Island Bonsai 8th Anniversary Show Jan. 13-14.

Bay Island Bonsai presents 8th anniversary show "An Exhibit of Fine Bonsai" at Centennial hall, 22292 Foothill Blvd., Hayward, CA. January 13-14th, hours are 10:00AM-4:00PM both days. \$5.00 admission. Auction of quality bonsai and *suiseki* on Saturday: Preview at 12:00PM, auction at 1:00PM. Guided tours of the expanded exhibit. A new sales area. Free Parking. For information call Boon Manakitvipart at 510-865-1008 or visit <http://www.bonsaiboon.com>



Bay Area Bonsai Associates 25th Annual Bonsai Exhibit. Jan 27-28

BABA presents its 25th anniversary bonsai exhibit at the Lakeside Garden Center (Lake Merritt), 666 Bellevue Ave. January 27-28, Saturday 5:30PM-9:00PM and Sunday 10AM-4PM. On Saturday, exhibit and plant sale opens at 5:30PM, Reception at 6:00PM and the raffle at 9:00PM. Dennis Makashima, bonsai consultant for the Bonsai book by Sunset Magazine and bonsai cultivation expert, will do a critique of the main raffle prize tree.

BSSF Meetings and Workshops

Dec. 14 - General Meeting

Our annual December Meeting/Holiday party will be held on December 14 at the Hall of Flowers. The evening will consist of a potluck diner so plan to bring a dish of favorite eats or drinks to share with your fellow bonsai members. **Setup begins at 6PM, drinks at**

6:30PM and dinner is served at 7PM. Three special raffles will be held at the party. The first raffle will be free for all members. The next, several special items collected by our own Tim Kong for the curator's fund. The third raffle will be for those who volunteered at the GSBF Collection North the past year. The special prize for the lucky volunteer will be a 50 year old Kingsville Boxwood.

Dec. 21 - 3rd Thursday Workshop

The 3rd Thursday workshop is canceled for the month of December. Keep working on those trees and see you again on January 18. Start thinking about which tree you plan to display at the Garden Show in March.

Announcements

Collection North Docents Needed.

The GSBF Collection North needs volunteers to be docents. This is a fun and educational opportunity for all bonsai hobbyists. No matter your skill level, you can help care for these wonderful trees and educate the public about the art of bonsai. Please check the docent calendar at <http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/collectionnorth/docent.htm> or call Hollis & Kay Hardy at (952) 933-9543.

BSSF Bonsai Library

Don't forget that the BSSF has on hand a large assortment of books, magazines, and other literature about our favorite hobby. Need inspiration about a new piece of material, information about how to ground layer for better *nebari*, or just appreciation of photos of master piece bonsai? Chances are the library has the book you need. To access the library, arrive early at either the monthly meeting or the monthly workshop and speak to Paul Hrisko or Rinda Burleigh. Checking out materials requires a \$5 deposit per item.

FOG CITY BONSAI is the monthly newsletter of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco. If you have advertisements or announcements for the BSSF or local bonsai community and would like them published in Fog City Bonsai, please contact Lawrence LeClaire at (415) 668-8456.



Board Members and Officers

President:

John Edwards
(415) 621-0935



Vice President | Website Guy:

Eric Schrader
(415) 786-1349

Treasurer:

Daryl Quijano
(415) 661-7214 | (415) 332-0657 x 104

Secretary | Website Guy:

Aaron Newton
(415) 235-7466

Newsletter

Lawrence LeClaire
(415) 668-8456

Board Members at Large

Tim Kong
JD Durst
Diana Lum
Joe Nersveen
John Pennington
Rebecca Williams
Ron Weaver

Librarians

Paul Hrisko - (415) 861-5244
Rinda Burleigh - (415) 931-2638

General Meeting Hospitality Host

Tim Kong - (415) 468-1664

About our Club

The Bonsai Society of San Francisco exists to perpetuate the enjoyment of the art of bonsai. BSSF General meetings are on the **second Thursday** of the month at **7:30PM**. The **members' workshop** is the following Thursday, **3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00PM**. BSSF Board meetings are held on the Fourth Monday at **7:00PM**. All of the meetings occur in the **Hall of Flowers (Strybing Arboretum)** at the corner of **Ninth Ave and Lincoln Way**. Enter through the parking lot at Tenth Ave and Lincoln and walk along the south side of the building to the club room.



BSSF Guide to Winter/Early Spring Bonsai Care in the San Francisco Bay Area



	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Black Pine (Including any two needle pined pine delay 1 week)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring Needle Removal	Finish wiring Finish needle removal	Feed	Repot as candles begin to elongate
Maple Japanese / Trident / Natives	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Finish wiring	Pinch buds / Remove water shoots	Repot as buds swell
Elm & Zelkova (Including Hornbeam, Hackberry, Willow (all alternate budding trees))	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Pinch buds continually Repot as buds swell		
Junipers-Common (not California or same)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Feed all year Repot all year - best time is Spring/Pinch and Wire all Year		
Spruce and Cedar	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Loose Wiring Leave wire on Spruce 3years Cedar 3years	Pinch 1/2 of emerging tips	Repot as buds swell
Oaks E:Evergreens D:Deciduous	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Wire	Pinch buds / Remove water shoots D-Repot	
Azaleas	0-10-10 Wiring (Aluminum only)	Fertilize with 5-5-5 Fish Emulsion every two weeks Repot as buds swell		
White Pine (5 needle pines)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring Cut needles, leave sheath on.	feed Repot as buds swell		
Fruiting and Flowering all apple, plum, umc, quince, cherry, etc.	0-10-10 Heavy pruning, spotting, wiring	Wire before blooming	Do Not Feed until done blooming Remove water shoots	
Beech			Pinch before leaves open as buds form crescent shape	
Redwood	0-10-10	Pinch Buds - Feed to promote vigorous growth. Light feeding for established trees		Heavy Pruning and Wiring Repot as growth begins
Wisteria		0-10-10 Repot as growth begins		Flowering
Olive	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Repot		Feed / Pinch new growth
Willow (weeping style training)	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Wire	Pinch to Vertical Leaf Place pot in water	
Hinoki Cypress	0-10-10	Wire	Feed D-Repot Pinch back Hard Repot	
All Quince	0-10-10 Repot, Prune to shape & Wire	Wire	Remove flowers as they fade	
Hornbeam	0-10-10 Heavy Pruning and Wiring	Wire	Remove Wild or Strong Growth	

Bonsai care is ultimately based on the weather and on the health and condition of the tree that you are working on. Please consult a qualified person before performing any stressful procedure.

Generally, feeding can be done on all but just repotted trees, other work may or may not be performed depending on the condition of the tree.

Remember that wiring, repotting, pruning, defoliating, needle pulling, etc. causes stress to a tree, so use discretion and allow trees to regain strength after large amounts of work are done. Darker shading indicates better times or increased activity. Please see www.bssf.org/guides for the complete Year-Round Care Guide.

Bonsai Society of San Francisco
Ninth Ave and Lincoln Blvd
San Francisco, CA 94122