



REDDITCH BONSAI

NEWSLETTER.

Edition of mid November 2020.

EDITOR'S REMARKS.

There is little to report on the wider bonsai front I am afraid.

We have heard nothing whatsoever from either Moseley C.C. or Webheath Village Hall, although I believe that our slots are still open in both locations. There seems little prospect of either venue opening again anytime soon. We are therefore limited to meeting virtually on Mondays – see below.

Please also note that an AGM of the MBS will take place virtually on THURSDAY 3rd DECEMBER @ 7.30 p.m. You will hear shortly from Alex Watt about how to join that meeting. If any committee member has not already replied to Judith's request for information as to their intentions in 2021 would you please do so. All MBS members should have received the usual paperwork by now. If you have not please let me know asap.

GARDENING TIPS FOR NOVEMBER.

Your essential November checklist

- Cheer yourself up with the promise of colour in the spring by planting bowls full of tulips. Make sure they're well covered to protect them during the cold winter weather.
- Lift dahlia tubers after the first frost, clean them off and allow them to dry before storing them in a cool, dark place
- Clear any remaining perennials and mulch beds
- Prune roses back hard, remembering to cut the stems at an angle just above a bud point
- If you have containers of alpines then they'll need protection from heavy rain so move them into a sheltered spot
- It's time to take hardwood cuttings from fruit bushes to bolster your crop next year
- Protect winter crops with cloches, especially during very wet or windy weather

- Spend time in the greenhouse or potting shed cleaning your stock of pots for next season
- Keep a close eye on the temperature and fire up the greenhouse heater if necessary
- The lawn may need one last cut during mild spells, but make sure you raise the cutters.
-

Once again I make no secret of the fact that I have culled this item from a circular but would make the following additional comments, and apologise if you have heard this before:-

Dahlia tubers should be stored upside down for 3 weeks after lifting to drain and as much soil as possible should be removed as well. Stalks should be 4” to 6” in length and don’t forget to clearly label each tuber – they will all look the same in April!

You can place a sheet of glass or perspex over alpine containers/sinks etc if they are too big to move easily.

I have just taken some cuttings of *Viburnum Bodnantense*, so fingers crossed.

BONSAI TIP FOR THE MONTH.

Malcolm Hughes confirms that all trees can be treated with a dilute mix of Jeyes Fluid. He suggests 15/20ml Jeyes Fluid to 1 litre of water.

Feeding should be stopped by now I think.

Keep pot surfaces clear of leaves and other detritus.

I always find it useful and interesting to make a list/inventory of all the trees in my collection.

TEANAH’S NOTES **SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 AND BEYOND.**

21st September 2020.

Zoom Meetings in the future?

Presentations: David Cheshire, Mark Skan happy to present. Corin Tomlinson later in the year – nursery Broadband being updated.

Teanah - Tour of Anne’s garden may be difficult c/o darker nights but one for the future!

Virtual Show next Monday - Send pictures to Judith THIS WEEK! Problems tree photos for another session.

John Clark will do 15 mins about trees!

Pub Quiz c/o Russell – general knowledge & Bonsai/ trees.

Zoom raffle c/o Wes – tickets on trust!

Judith will host a Committee meeting via Zoom soon.

John Clark videos (VHS) - Harry Tomlinson/ RHS/ Kevin Wilson – can these be converted to use digitally? Bonsai Presentations (Paul Gough).

Record Zoom presentations? (Paul O’Connor) - Sell to members who couldn’t make the session. Royalties for presenter?

John Clarke or John Ville?? :D

Newsletter contributions, PLEASE – send to Richard BY WEDNESDAY

28th September 2020.

White Pines (John Ville) – Have a look at Peter Chan – video for what to do at this time of year. Yellow needles are normal – just pick them off!

<https://www.herons.co.uk/Video-Tutorials/How-to-Clean-Needles-from-a-White-Pine/>

Number of needles? (Alex) – different species of pines have different numbers of needles – like deciduous trees have differing leaves!

Crab apples (John Ville) – left alone all summer should I trim it back now? Wait until the leaves have fallen off – when the tree is dormant. But cuts heal quicker in spring when they are coming into life.

Air Layering (Alex) – Did on an apricot tree - about now as tree is turning dormant - energy being stored in roots. Cut through cambium. Wrapped around cut with different layers – sphagnum moss, clear plastic bag then covered with black plastic bag. Can inspect growth without losing moisture.

Cuttings – Hard wood now/ soft wood late spring. Root Hormone powder?

Animals digging the garden up? Badgers, Foxes, Squirrels

Zoom technical discussion...

Judith showed some show pictures she has taken – winter image. Stand made using planks of wood.

5th October.

Started with Wes's Lego modelling!

Richard feeling better! It was good to see you looking so well.

Colour changing – Acers in particular looking good at the moment.

Pines

Put your pines away or cover to reduce amount of water. At least cover the soil. Scots pines don't mind! They don't like being wet. White pine - needles yellowing is natural (own root stock). Peter Chan – some evergreens do turn quite brown over winter. Rake through branches to remove dead ones. Don't leave them on the soil to decompose – especially in smaller pots.

What to do with trees when it's getting cold? Wrap with insulation or cold greenhouse – especially mame. (Wes)

Talk on Pines (Russell) – specific species in specific age/ pots need different methods of care! Difference in pines, e.g. number of needles.

Russell to liaise with Alex re: quiz - Variety of rounds

Larch (Wes) – 80 oldest tree/ 35/ 6 – Shed its needles but older ones haven't.

Perhaps get your trees under cover sooner rather than later...

Deciduous trees don't need so much light so can be under benches with evergreens on the benches!

Slab planting? – Do they dry out quicker than pots?

Upcoming events (provisional dates):

Russell's Pine Show – Monday 12th Oct.

Russell's Pub Quiz – Monday 19th Oct.

14th October 2020.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Russ was not able to lead his talk about pines. Hopefully, we will be able to reschedule.

Thank you, Judith for your short notice fill-in photography talk.

My 40 Year Obsession

How I got started

I visited a garden centre with my Aunt and saw Black Pines. I quite liked them but they were too expensive. My Aunt sent me a DIY set for my birthday BUT it wasn't very successful. Only the Black Pine grew. I started buying any tree to have a go at!

The *Black Pine* remained with me until a couple of years ago. I was sad, even though I didn't really like it, because it was the first tree I grew from scratch.

I ended up with over a hundred – that was too many, so I now only have about 60!

My first *Hawthorn* from a seedling in the garden, now flowers in the spring & has berries in autumn.

Found a *European Larch* growing on a dead log in Scotland. I've also grown some from seeds from a cone. Larch are my favourite – my grouping has won prizes.

Cypress – left it alone for some time. Finally, I cut off some low branches (made them into jins) now the tree fits into the photo frame!

Chinese Juniper – young nursery stock - took a long time to fill out.

Acer – popular with many varieties and lovely leaf colour which changes depending upon weather!

Cotoneaster - easy to Bonsai and pretty growth. (Perhaps flatten the leaf pads around the branches?)

My Advice:

- It is illegal to collect trees from the wild without permission!
- Trees can die – even if you are really careful!
- Pleasure comes from creating something out of nothing.

Further contributions for the Newsletter this week, please? (Richard)

Upcoming events as per Richard's e-mail:

'Forthcoming Zoom Meetings' (sent Thursday 8th Oct.)

Cacti (Peter Clark) to be added to agenda 30th November. Russell's **Pines** talk for week after?
AGM on Zoom?

19th October 2020.

Judging Bonsai– Malcolm Hughes

Design – artistically beautiful. Balance – shape & position of roots, trunk, placement of branches & foliage, apex.

Movement – direction of eye. Emphasis – focal point? Simplicity – get rid of non-essential features/ details. Contrast -variations for interest. Should enhance the beauty, e.g. colour Proportion – relation in size/ amount of tree parts. May also refer to additional feature (moss, rock, container, accessories). Take care with any fruit, they are not as controlled.

Space – distance between branches & foliage pads. Negative (empty) space – part of the design. Unity

Harmony – fitting together as a whole (balance, style, colour, space) to please the eye. Giving a positive emotional response.

Visual balance – illusion of balance across the tree as a complete composition. Placement in the pot – what is the form & shape of the tree? Pot should complement the tree.

Health & vigour – no sign of disease or infestation. Branch development – correct placing, developed network of branches - ramification. Thick & tapered.

Quality of workmanship with wiring – correctly placed & not too obvious! Proper wire!

Carving – should show care & skill but used appropriately! Not to just show off the carving. Keep it natural – exposure to the elements! Not usually seen on deciduous.

Tapering – Should be thick to thin. Branches taper from trunk.

Nebari – Root spread of deciduous trees. Lowest part of the trunk & roots visible on surface.

Care & presentation – weed free, algae free, clean pot, no damaged leaves, no dead leaves or needles, no disease or infestation, trim long shoots back, no wire cutting in, clean soil (moss should be trimmed & one variety preferably not sphagnum), Stands should be ¼ - 1/3 size of pot. Accent plant or suiseki in proportion. Leave space between trees & stands. Not cluttered. Avoid creases in for display fabric.

Refer to summary of 'Points to look out for'.

2nd November 2020

Malcolm Hughes – Winter Care

Most trees should be under protection e.g. greenhouse/ shelter. Scots & mountain pines will survive snowy conditions. Typical conditions = cool temperature (occasionally freezing) Sometimes there may be a hard frost, Heavy snowfall for longer than 3 days, period of intense cold (dry, Easterly winds) – soil will dry out, exceptionally mild temps with spring like temperatures that cause early growth. Some preparation is therefore needed. Pre-winter prep – Late Sept. / early October – give a low/ zero nitrogen fertiliser to all trees to prepare roots & buds for following year. (High phosphate – blood, fish, bone...) will help harden previous year's growth without too much stress caused. Storage area set up – Greenhouse/ poly tunnel Clean & weed - remove any dead leaves/ needles to protect from frost – except beech & hornbeam where it provides some protection for new buds for next season. - Remove weeds & mosses especially sphagnum as they hold moisture and encourage root rot. If some roots are left exposed, then cover with additional soil mix. - Clean the pot to ensure drainage hole is clear & no slugs! Winter wash – likelihood of having picked up pests (especially during moist summer) also green algae covering on trunks & branches. "tar wash" using diluted (1:10) Jeyes Fluid/ Armiltox (patio cleaner). This eliminates infestations or disease. Spray entire tree including under branches. Repeat in early spring before growth begins. (Mortegg c/o Richard!) October onwards: - Check trees are free draining. - Compacted soil should be aerated by poking holes. - Clean pots & remove debris. - Check drainage holes for slugs. - Spray trees & soil with systemic bug killer (e.g. provado) to kill any overwintering pests. Don't apply any fertiliser during winter months – trees are dormant. Zoom Meeting Notes – 2nd November 2020 Watering – relatively inactive. Only water if beginning to look dry. If necessary, ensure that it is done early in the day allowing time to drain

before temperatures drop at night. No misting, only surface watering. Prolonged periods of rain – take care not to allow waterlogged pots. Maples particularly susceptible. Ensure the correct environment for each species: Some can stay outside; others will need unheated poly tunnel/ greenhouse. If winters are much colder trees may need to move outside trees into shelter temporarily. Shohin & Mame should be under cover throughout to better control of moisture level. Trees under cover: poly-tunnel, greenhouse, plastic sheet, Fleece covering sides. Deciduous trees under cover Nov – March. If you have no covered area, place under benches & cover with plastic to keep rain off. Trees need adequate natural daylight. Avoid warming up to avoid trees coming out of dormancy early. Take care in late winter/ early spring – if the weather warms, the trees will come out of dormancy & use more moisture. Check & increase watering to avoid drought. Only water when almost dry. Place a brick/ block under one end of pot – elevation allow better drainage. Trees left Outside – Don't cover for prolonged periods but cover overnight with fleece when severe frost. Take it off in the morning. (Avoid newspaper, fabric or polythene as they get wet & don't allow good air circulation) Have frost protection i.e. fleece ready to cover trees as & when weather suggests minus temperature at night. Impact of frost on pots – Trees should be elevated off the ground. Take care because of shallow roots. Species specific factors: Deciduous – No leaves allow a close look at trunk & branches. Keeping under cover prevents severe frost or heavy snow damaging... Conifers – Scots & Mugo pines can tolerate winter conditions. Exceptions = when prolonged period of cold (minus temps) during day & night. After this bring them inside to thaw for a day or so. Some non-indigenous species need extra protection (e.g. Japanese white pine, black pines, cedars/ olive, bougainvillea) Zoom Meeting Notes – 2 nd November 2020 Require all year-round daylight. Accidental frost damage – may be able to save...observe new growth in spring then trim off damaged part. If left the damaged part helps protect core of tree. Some snow covering can act as insulation as long as not too heavy (that can break branches) Impact of Mildew – Can occur in many forms. Develops initially on underside of leaves. Becomes established during summer. Dampness & lack of adequate air circulation encourages spread. Overwintering results in spores developing in spring. Remedy: Improve air circulation. Don't fertilise until problem has gone. Don't water the tree – only water surface of pot. Apply fungicide – including potassium bicarbonate & copper Simple recipe: 1tbsp baking powder 1tsp liquid soap ½ gallon water Mix well & spray all effected parts, allow to dry before putting outside. Check trees for early frosts or snowfall...brush the snow off & get them under cover – especially maples!

9th November 2020.

John Clarke
Air Plants

Genre – tillandsia. Bonsai connection = trees as they generally live in tropical trees. Sometimes known as sky plants. ~600 different species from a range of habitats. Been growing them for about 5 years. Overcoming disappointments... Air plants only have 'roots' for anchorage. No roots & no soil – get nutrients from air. Foliage is covered with tiny hair-like cells – trichomes almost looks like a covering of white dust. They live off moist air rising from forest floor. Moisture lands on foliage and gives minerals. Care of the plants is not made clear when you buy them. Often just left in cardboard box or hanging in nets. Problem is that they can't get the moisture: Place the plant in a bowl of rainwater. Immerse for at least an hour to rehydrate the plant. Remove and leave for a couple of hours & shake off excess water. Spray mist - 5-6 drops Baby Bio + 500ml water - every couple of days. They generally don't like too much sun but do like light. Spray regularly – little but often. In natural habitat – flowers leave seeds that are easily dispersed by wind. In some more industrial habitats, they will catch on telegraph wires & hang. You may like to replicate this! Flowers – vibrant colours. Can display on wood or bark (or even rock) for a natural look or simple pots. Group 3-4 plants together. To keep in place, glue them with silicone rubber sealant. Caution: Don't get it on the bottom of the plant otherwise it will inhibit growth. Commercial output of bark – aquarium outlets are good. The Range also have a good source. May make nice accent plants! Outlets for plants – Webbs of Wychbold or some local garden centre/ nurseries. Internet may not be best as you can't see the quality but: Andy's Airplants <https://andysairplants.co.uk/> Key Essentials (Love Tilly's) <https://lovetillys.co.uk/>

16th November 2020.

David Cheshire - Mame

Small trees & how they're grown...

Not commonly grown in UK – they shouldn't dry out any quicker than larger trees!

Smaller trees are easier to move to protect them!

Forsythia – Regular pruning makes it appear quite gnarled but will be a good tree.

Focus on the root system not just the trunk!

Dwarf Spruce – from a cutting – cut a lot root off, leave one! Choose one that has natural movement. Repot and wire into the pot. Bend wire over side of pot to act as a hook whilst the other end can be twisted around trunk. Allows tree to sit high up in pot exposing root to use.

Other good species to use:

Japanese Maple, Cotoneaster, Japanese Black Pine, Juniper, pyracantha,

Remove tree from pot & add soil to the bottom of the pot. Replace tree in pot to expose the roots (Soil around the top

of the roots will wash down with water).

Pots

Smallest can be around the size of the end of a finger! Best in slightly bigger (2 fingertips) to allow for adequate nutrients.

Do they grow better in terracotta pots (Judith)? Terracotta can 'breathe' and roots won't get too wet. Porous pot keeps roots cool – water out & oxygen in. Roots will stay within the pot – growing around in coils.

Defoliate to encourage smaller leaf growth. Remove leaves in winter so they'll throw out new leaves.

Can be left in a tray of wet sand when you go on holiday for a couple of weeks! (Wes)

Can you use standard soils (Richard)? Usual mixes but sieved so using finer material (sift the dust out so it doesn't compact).

Root in deeper pots (either cutting or seed) & let settle before transferring to final pot. Can produce results quite quickly!

ZOOM.

These meetings continue on Monday evenings at 7.30 p.m. I have included Teanah's notes in this edition for convenience and thank her for the trouble she goes to to prepare and send same.

This coming MONDAY sees the return to Zoom of RUSSELL ANDREWS who will be presenting a talk about PINES.

The remaining talks in the current calendar are as follows:-

NOVEMBER 30th PETER CLARKE on CACTI and I believe WINTERBOURNE GARDEN.

DECEMBER 7th. JUDITH DAVISON on HOW TO TAKE A DECENT PHOTOGRAPH!, and

DECEMBER 14th RUSSELL ANDREWS with a CHRISTMAS QUIZ.

If anyone else feels like making a presentation, on any subject, to the members then would they please let me know. This would be very welcome indeed. We look forward to hearing from you. Equally, if anyone wants to make a request for a presentation to be given on a particular subject then let us know.

THE LIBRARIAN'S BOOK AND VIDEO OF THE MONTH.

The librarian's 'Book of the Month' recommendation from the Society library for November is: 'Trees In Britain, Europe and North America'. The book is a unique encyclopaedia of the trees found in Britain, Europe and North America. Well over 500 trees are illustrated in full colour, accompanied by comprehensive descriptions set out according to botanical classification, and a unique leaf index. The trees are identified for the reader by leaf, flower, fruit, silhouette and bark.

Please contact Gary Callaghan via email should you wish to borrow this book so that suitable arrangements can be made for its delivery to you.

The librarians 'Video of the Month' choice was produced by 'Herons Bonsai'. Peter Chan discusses a variety of soil mixes suitable for use by Bonsai growers.

Type the following link into your address bar to view the article on 'YouTube': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcuYHllBmaM>
Gary.

FOR SALE.

Russell Andrews still has a quantity of bonsai and ordinary pots of varying sizes for sale. Why not give him a ring to check what he has available? His telephone number is 07929 061195

Please also remember that we are always willing to advertise items for sale or wanted in our pages at no charge - now there's an offer that you can't refuse!

PHOTOGRAPH COMPENDIUM.

Please keep sending us your photographs. For example, why not send in a photograph of your bonsai winter quarters? If there were sufficient this would be an interesting edition, so, go to it!

Richard Gilkes, Ed.
20th November 2020.