



REDDITCH BONSAI

Edition of March 2023.

EDITOR'S REMARKS.

Members are reminded that the ANNUAL SHOW will take place on SUNDAY 11th JUNE 2023 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Both Societies are once again participating and the attending traders will be:-

1. David Cheshire, and
2. Funky Fish

The Committees of the two societies are already busy with preparations for the event. If you want to make a contribution please contact the Show Secretary, JOHN VILLE, but remember that we shall need YOUR help in many different ways to make this event a success. For example we know that JOHN VILLE, Show Secretary, will be looking for 2 speakers to give short talks on the day and 2 volunteers to engage in a little demonstrating as well. So, if you fancy having a go do let us know as soon as possible.

Many years ago members, we think mainly Redditch members, went on a day trip to various bonsai related venues and the last port of call was a fabulous Japanese Garden in a large back garden in Oldbury. Members have asked me to make enquiries, after Ben Coyne and Peter Clarke came up with an address and even a post code, to determine whether the garden is still in existence and, if so, whether it is open to the public. Watch this space!

Adding Fertilizer to Re-potting Mix – A Cautionary Tale.

In the last (February) edition of the Newsletter Wes mentioned that he adds Bonemeal to his repotting medium. Apparently this has been without problems. I, however, have used another slow release fertilizer - Naruko - with drastic results. Naruko is a Japanese Bonsai fertilizer, in small pellets, that one normally sprinkles on the surface and the rain and watering gradually dilutes the nutrients into the soil. A problem with Naruko is that when it becomes exhausted, after a couple of months, a fuzzy mould develops and one has to rake it off.

I thought “how about adding it to the soil when repotting?”. Foolishly I used this with an Akadama and Kyodama mix on a number of trees. Sadly most, if not all, have eventually died - one taking a couple of years to succumb. At the same time I had also undertaken some root pruning. I suspect the problem was that the roots were scorched. Probably Naruko is more concentrated than bonemeal or the roots were too sensitive - or a combination of both.

The advice to Members is that you do not attempt to add fertilizer to your soil mix. If you do want to experiment be very very wary and only use it on one inexpensive tree and leave for at least a year to see the results.

It is said that one only becomes a Bonsai Master when one has more trees alive than have died.

Gil Murray.

GARDENING TIP OF THE MONTH.

Prune autumn fruiting raspberries, cutting all canes down to c. 4 inches, but do wait until there is no threat of frost for a few days. Clear ground of weeds. Use fleece to warm up the soil.

Snowdrops can be transplanted “in the green” once flowers have faded. Plant in small groups not large clumps.

Deadhead winter pansies and you may get a second flush in spring.

It’s time to take chrysanthemum cuttings. This year I am using a soil warming cable in a bed of builder’s sand to aid rooting. You can arrange this on the greenhouse bench or in a large box elsewhere.

Pruning of Buddleia can take place in March. I usually prune mine quite severely – often down to about 30cm although if your bush is at the back of a bed and/or you want a taller plant cut back to 60cm. Cut out dead, unwanted or crossing branches back to the trunk. In the average garden it’s probably best to aim for about 5 or 6 main branches.

Fork over the ground and apply a mulch when finished. The butterflies will love you!

BONSAI TIP OF THE MONTH.

Get on with your re-potting if not yet started. Don’t forget that your accent plants will also benefit from some attention!

COMING UP AT THE MBS.

The March meeting will feature a presentation by DAVID CHESHIRE which will include news of his recent trips to Japan and tips on propagation. The table display will be “your most recent addition”. April’s meeting will be a WORKSHOP.

COMING UP AT REDDITCH.

The March meeting (16th of the month) features the AGM followed by a QUIZ and the TABLE DISPLAY will feature ACCENT PLANTS.

THAT GREENHOUSE!

The saga of my new greenhouse continues, but hopefully, this will be the last.

After the first abortive attempt on Friday 13th, I was assured that the Company would contact me on the following Monday (they don’t work at weekends) to arrange a new date, but by 4 pm – no phone call so I rang them only to be diverted to an answer phone ☺ so I left a message. At ten the next morning I phoned again and had better luck this time, they were in the process of working something out and would phone me back in half an hour – which they duly did ☺. They said they could bring it back, complete with new panel tomorrow, Wednesday! Result!

It was my good luck that the men who would bring and install it should have been going to a job in Aberdeen, but as Aberdeen was knee deep in snow that job would have to be postponed and so instead of kicking their heels in the office, they were free to come to me. They arrived at 8 am and were finished and gone by 10 am, very efficient and the total opposite of the first two, so, at last I can get my garden back to some semblance of normality, although I still have some of the wood and glass from the old greenhouse to get rid of, but at least I can finish repotting my trees.



Footnote: - I have recently watched two programmes on BBC4, one called The Magical World Of Moss and the other is The Magic Of Mushrooms and I

found both programmes absolutely fascinating. They can be watched on BBC I Player.

DISCOUNTING.

Redditch member David How has asked whether anyone has a recommendation for a nursery with a discount section. He is aware that Beechcroft Nursery has such an area but was wondering if there were any others around. Answers on a postcard please.

THE TREASURER.

The Treasurer of both societies, Wes, would like you all to know that after much coming and going he has managed to arrange for bills and payments to be made on line. This procedure, not straightforward, is necessary because our Redditch venue will no longer accept cash or cheques, despite the fact the former is "legal tender". So, having been dragged into the modern age he and I wonder what the world is coming to?

MONEY TREE OFFER.

We have had a telephone call from a lady who is moving house and wants to dispose of what she described as "bonsai crassula" free of charge. At our request she has sent some pictures of the plants. They are all relatively small plants but obviously well looked after. They may make fine specimens when developed. If anyone is interested in acquiring some or indeed all of these plants do let me know asap and we will make the necessary arrangements.

THE WEBSITE.

Here's part of an email received by the Committee from Alex. It follows his concern that access to the website was not entirely satisfactory. He says:-

"Hopefully, you should be able to see the Website if you type in EITHER www. OR JUST midlandbonsai.org OR JUST midlandbonsaisociety.co.uk

Originally, there was an 'issue' with the .co.uk whereby although it was correctly 'pointing' to the .org, it wasn't displaying the Home/Web Page. This issue has (SHOULD) now have been resolved."

We are pleased to say, on initial trial, that the issue would in fact seem to have been resolved. Well done Alex!

Richard Gilkes, Ed., 28th February 2023.

