



www.midlandbonsai.org



REDDITCH BONSAI

www.redditchbonsai.co.uk

EDITION OF MARCH 2024.

EDITOR'S REMARKS.

Below you will see a flier which we recently received from Cancer Research UK. David tells us that he has volunteered to give a general talk about the basics of Bonsai to support this fundraising event. The organiser tells me that they have raised an enormous amount of money for the charity over many years now. If you wish to support this event/David then the tickets are available at £12.50 each. Let us know. We also remind members that we have available DAVID'S article about the feeding of pines. If anyone would like a copy please let us know.

Even at this early stage arrangements for the Show are proceeding apace – see below. The Gardens have appointed a new Events Co-ordinator and we hope to meet with her in early March. (Update – meeting arranged for 8th March.)

COMING UP AT THE MBS.

The March meeting features a Photography Evening with Judith and former member Phil Holroyd. It promises to be an entertaining evening and we are sure that you will be able to improve your photographic skills to enable you to produce even better photographs of your trees. Members should consider bringing the following along next week in order to make the evening interesting, entertaining and worthwhile:-

1. Trees that you wish to photograph/experiment with,
2. A camera (!), and
3. If possible a (small) tripod.
4. A stand, if you wish.

Phil asks that trees should be presentable, i.e. weed free and in clean pots!

COMING UP AT REDDITCH.

The March meeting at Redditch, on the 21st features, a presentation by DAVID CHESHIRE. As yet there is no particular theme for the evening, so, if you have any requests please let us know and we will see what we can do.

Members will please note that following the AGM Wes has amended the accounts by the addition of £25.60 to the profit figure to reflect the raffle held that night.

GARDENING TIP OF THE MONTH.

Blitz any perennial weeds that might make an appearance with the warmer weather
Keep topping up bird feeders, small birds need the extra energy! Start sowing seeds like sweet peas, tomatoes and kale indoors Start chitting first early potatoes
Deadhead winter pansies for spring flowers Start planting summer bulbs like agapanthus and lilies Use garden fleece to start warming the soil in raised beds.
By the time you read this we hope to have cut back our autumn raspberries and the buddleia on the allotment, provided there is no threat of frost. Both types can be cut back really hard. We have taken the opportunity to replace some of the weaker raspberries with suckers that “escaped” from the rows. Green bin collections start next week in Birmingham.

THE SHOW.

Your Show Secretary, John Ville, is not so well at the moment and has therefore temporarily relinquished his role. We have taken over and will be communicating with you upon a variety of issues from time to time. We wish John a speedy recovery.

Teannah Rowland will be in charge of the Tombola. She is recruiting supporters. Are there any volunteers? Let Teannah know if you can/will help her.

We have already asked whether any member wishes to sell trees/products at the Show. There has been a negative response so far. If you change your mind we DO need to know please.

DAVID CHESHIRE NURSERIES and FUNKY FISH CERAMICS will be the traders supporting the event.

If anyone wishes to volunteer to give a short presentation to visitors then please let us know as soon as possible. This would be much appreciated. The item does not need to be extensive, just interesting and informative. Have a think about it please. The Show is formed of many parts. More about Redditch later but in the meantime remember that apart from trees for competition you can also:-

1. Simply display your trees,
2. Display any Suiseki or
3. Display Accent plants.

Trees in competition will be judged by former member JONATHAN MOULT who has agreed to provide feedback, as he deems appropriate, to individual members about their trees.

BONSAI TIP OF THE MONTH.

Re-potting should be underway. Remember that we have David’s informative article about soils for bonsai if anyone wants a copy.

We saw a note on WhatsApp about oak trees and the removal of terminal buds. We have been doing this too and, for our part, found it much easier to use finger and thumb to do the job rather than a pair of small scissors. We tended to remove only the well formed buds rather than every one.

We have discovered another incidence of Pear Rust on one of our Junipers. More about this next month. We are going to try and treat it. Watch this space!

ANOTHER ARTICLE ABOUT SOIL.

Peter Clarke has sent along the article below which he found on his Facebook page. We thought that it might encourage some discussion?

“It seems like there have been a lot of posts lately on growing media aka substrate aka "soil". There are a couple of factors that have a strong effect on mixes that aren't well known but should be to understand what goes on in a plant's root zone. My intent isn't to promote one mix over another but to introduce those couple of factors. Call it the Why behind the What.

(And just for simplicity I'll refer to it as "soil", even though most bonsai media contains none if that)

The first factor is the depth of the soil column: the deeper the soil the better it will drain. You can prove this yourself with an ordinary household sponge. Immerse the sponge in water until it's completely soaked, then remove it laying flat in the palm of your hand- be careful not to squeeze it!-and measure what drains out. Now repeat, only this time hold the sponge on edge, so its longest edge is parallel to the ground. Repeat it a third time, holding it so its longest axis is vertical. What you should see is that the higher the orientation of the sponge, the more water drains out. The composition of the sponge doesn't change; the drainage is affected solely by the orientation of the sponge. This replicates what happens in a pot of soil; the deeper the container the better it will drain.

The second factor is something called a perched water table or PWT. The PWT is a layer of water that exists at the bottom of any container. It is unaffected by the number or size of drain holes; if you could somehow design a bottomless pot that would still hold soil the PWT would still exist. (Which us not to say drain holes aren't essential!!!) In a fine textured soil, the PWT will be deeper which is a big reason why the mix in a shallow pot needs to be so coarse; otherwise the PWT could be so deep the entire soil volume would be waterlogged.

Either or usually both of these factors illustrate the Why's (or Why Not's) of choosing a particular medium. Not only does it show the importance of a coarse mix in a shallow pot, but why it might not be as critical in a deeper container like a training pot. It explains why the same soil that grows awesome crops in a farmers field or your veggie garden is crap in a pot. It explains why a so-called drainage layer in the bottom of a pot actually hinders drainage (it actually creates a second PWT higher in the pot). It also explains why tipping the pot on edge after watering is

useful (drains the PWT). Hopefully understanding these two factors will help you sort out your trees' "soil" needs. 🌱"

(Editor's Note:- We, and we suspect Peter, are uncertain of the background/credentials/experience of the author of this piece, so your views would be appreciated as part of a wider discussion. Don't forget that we can distribute David's article about soil if you require a further copy.)

THE LATE ALISON HADDLETON.

Please be advised that the funeral service for Alison, the late wife of Jeremy, will take place at Waseley Hills Crematorium on Friday 8th March at 1.00 p.m. There will be a reception thereafter but we do not have the full details of that although the order of service will no doubt tell you all you need to know. We extend our most sincere condolences to Jeremy and his family at this sad time. R.I.P.

A REQUEST FROM THE CHAIR.

As you may know one of the several consequences of Judith's recent motor accident is that she is prevented from driving for at least the next six months, quite apart from the fact that her car was written off in the incident.

She is therefore asking that someone might consider taking responsibility for looking after the table cloths/coverings used at meetings and actually bringing them along to those meetings. Volunteers one pace forward please.

What Judith hasn't asked us to mention, and she might well have done, is that one of the many inconveniences of not being able to drive is that her attendance at meetings is now compromised for the foreseeable future. As far as Redditch meetings are concerned we can pick her up if we are actually going. The MBS meetings are a bit trickier, however. Peter Clarke has very kindly offered to help out next week. He and ourselves may have to share the task bit, if there is anyone else able to "chip in" do let us know.

DAVID MAIDMENT.

Having told you about David's unfortunate accident we are pleased to be able to report that he is now out of hospital and back at home. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him at the next meeting.

TEANAH'S NOTE OF THE MEMBERS' FORUM HELD IN JANUARY.

Teannah has sent along a comprehensive note of this event. It is quite long and the editorial decision was that it should be made into an addendum of the March edition. So, look out for a further email. Well done, Teannah.

R and A Gilkes. Editor. March 2024.

CANCER RESEARCH UK

SOLIHULL VISION TEAM

PRESENTS

A Bonsai Evening with David Cheshire



David is the owner of David Cheshire Nurseries located at Baginton, Coventry and is a grower and producer of bonsai and rare plants including trees, shrubs, bulbs and herbaceous focusing on Japanese garden plants. RHS Chelsea Gold Medal Winner + numerous RHS awards at other shows. He studied and continues to study bonsai with masters in Japan.

7:30pm - Wednesday 20 March 2024

Copt Heath Golf Club

1220 Warwick Road, Knowle, B93 9L

