



SANSUI-KAI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Hank Fawcett

A big thanks to everyone who participated in the workshop last month. In case you missed it, Roy Nagatochi and Alex brought their wonderful talents to create and improve our trees. Not everyone needed to bring a tree. Many times, simply observing a talented bonsai master transform a tree is truly a rewarding experience. Unfortunately, this was the only workshop scheduled for 2018 but we will certainly do more in 2019. **See photo bottom right**

On April 11th, we will be honored with the masterful talent of Jim Barrett who will create an olive forest. Amazingly, Jim started bonsai in 1955 and over the span of 63 years he has taught hundreds of students and created thousands of bonsai. We are extremely pleased that he has agreed to showcase his expertise to us.

It is definitely Spring and the bonsai are loving it. The growth on my trees is amazing. The elms have virtually exploded with growth and keeping their shape is a daily task. The pines are budding nicely and the junipers are continuing to flourish.

As many of you already know, I use a venture system to fertilize my trees. However, because of the tremendous growth of the trees, I increase the typical fertilization rate by 20%. To encourage pine growth, I place an ounce of organic fertilizer in a tea bag and put 2 to 3 around the trunk each month. For the large unstyled but established California junipers, I add a gallon of prepared Miracle Grow monthly until the extensions are 1' to 2' long.

My grafting is done for the year. Typically, I bag the grafted trees but this year I decided to try something different. I placed them in the greenhouse without bags and increased the humidity in the greenhouse

with misters overhead. The evaporator cooler is on most of the day to ensure good circulation as well as increased humidity. I started grafting in January and already I am seeing some very good results. If you enjoy your tree but feel something is missing, maybe it is time to consider changing the foliage to a kishu or itoigawa. It is too late to make that decision this year but January will be here before you know it.

Remember to enjoy your trees. You will be happier and so will they.



Roy at the Sansui kai workshop

ROY NAGATOSHI

by Mary Tatro

Ed Henjyoji's shimpaku, Mary Tatro's olive, Sonjia Koebler's elm, Joe Pando's boxwood, Rick Nabor's foemina, Greg Frankel's elm, Eric Percifeld's Brazilian rain tree, Keegan's pomegranate, Philippe's azelia got the Roy Nagatoshi treatment first hand at the March meeting's "Bring Your Own Tree" workshop.

The Nagatoshi standards of "no crotch growth, removing thick branches that compete with the apex, choosing a front that honors nebari, spraying tools with Lysol to control for infections," -- well known prime directives from one of the club's favorite Bonsai masters along with Alex his trusted assistant. His keen eye made no exceptions for beginner or advanced practitioners. The popular event brought a full house of Nagatoshi enthusiasts.

Mary's olive got a full bodied trim and new front, Eric's Brazilian rain tree needed a top cut, Keegan's pomegranate had roots and growth cut back to develop inner girth, Greg's elm got an interesting wiring plan to follow turns of the trunk, Steve got the talk on separating the pads, and Joe's boxwood got a new apex and a settled back nod of, "pretty good!" -- a rare approval coming from Mr. Nagatoshi.

Above right Roy performing at the Bonsai-a-thon. He had just returned from Japan and as he worked he reflected on the beautiful and technically advanced work done there. The perfection there however left him longing for a more natural look. He felt his personal direction was towards a natural look.

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Roy's Demo at the Bonsai-a-thon



Steve's Niche Display at the workshop



Naka Notes

Lessons from a Master

by Jack Reynolds

Ahh... spring has sprung, and it is time to do everything at once. First, general care; everything has sprouted and is growing well so remember to rotate trees to keep their growth even.

WATER

Water is very important as always. Make sure that everything is getting enough but not too much (tilt your trees when raining heavily to promote drainage). Deciduous trees will be very thirsty as they put on new leaves. Naka recommends that pines be kept on the dry side to insure that needles are short and sturdy. If you are courageous you can even let them wilt a little before watering. This practice is recommended for mature trees that have achieved their desired growth.

TRIMMING

New growth on deciduous trees can be trimmed but wait until it has hardened (gotten woody) before doing so, then trim back to no more than three buds. If you are careful, you can direct the new growth by trimming a bud that is pointing in the direction that you would like the branch to go.

PINES

This is the first month that you can candle prune older pines that have achieved their growth. You should wait to prune candles on young trees until May or even June. This is a good month to create jin, because growth is vigorous and healing is rapid.

TRANSPLANTING

Almost anything can be transplanted this month. When transplanting pines be sure to take some of the old soil with the tree because it contains a fungus that is beneficial to the tree. In general

these fungi called mycorrhiza, increase the tree's ability to take up water and phosphate from the soil. Speaking of phosphate, this is the first month to fertilize deciduous trees.

FOOD

Conifers can be fertilized all year in southern California because they do not go dormant in our warm climate. Fruiting and flowering trees should receive low nitrogen, high phosphate fertilizer that will promote flower and root growth. Bone meal or super phosphate is good. Most things will love Miracle Grow used at half strength.

BUGS

Watch for insects. Aphids can be bad, as can spider mites. Spraying with the hose can dislodge some of these pests but sometimes we must resort to insecticides. Malathion and Volk oil or Ultra-fine leaves will get many pests. The Safer Soaps can be used on delicate things. Sometimes insecticides will burn so be careful and follow directions.

Next Meeting
Refreshments Reminder
Mel, Mike Kelly and Steve

BAD BONSAI

BOOK OF RECORDS WORST BONSAI WIRING

by KK

I take my title seriously but with humbleness; an achievement years in the making.

These are some of the rules I recall after having ruined a project that must be shared with the reader in hopes that you will not follow me down this road to despair.

First, ask if the branch is ready to be wired and bent. You may have to wait. Some are quite brittle before the sap is flowing. When wiring and especially bending protect the branch with your hand or a plier where it comes out of the trunk or when it splits in two branches. This is where they break (your heart).

If you have funky hands wire with the aid of a bonsai pliers. Bending the branch with two pliers on the wire one at the weak point of the branch and the other at the bend is a good technique. Afford yourself the best vision to wire looking straight into the branch (don't get poked). Anchor

your wire properly (there are different ways) so you don't scrape off cambium. Use proper size wire for each branch diameter. Copper is different than aluminum in that regard. Many instructors insist on turning the end of the wire under so as not to poke or allow the wire to unwind. Don't keep bending and unbending a branch. Give it a rest. Do unto others.

Turn your wire before a secondary branch. Wiring to the tip is always advised. Some will wire an entire tree when they get it. I have never done that.

Removing wire before it cuts into the bark is a must. Do not unwind to save wire but cut at each turn.

When you are getting distracted annoyed or sleepy stop for refreshment before you do something to regret.

If you do a good job by chance, allow yourself to feel properly smug.

Advanced bonsai artists can of course, ignore all of this.

Send in your rules and they will be published next time.



If you want to know how to wire the right way and many other matters re bonsai ask Alex (left) Roy's trusted assistant



Sansui-Kai is dedicated to the learning, use and teaching of the horticulture techniques and artistic principles needed to grow, design and care for bonsai. Regular membership is \$22 & \$27 for Families.

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www.Sansui-Kai.org

Come see Jim Barrett this Wednesday put together an olive planting. You may win it. Mr Barrett has a foemina in the National Bonsai Museum in Washington DC and over 50 years of bonsai experience and leadership.

One last pic of the workshop with Roy Sonia, Rick with his cool hat and other members of Sansui-kai

