



- Remember you can check the club out on the Web at www.psba.us. There is information there about speakers and club doings as well as directions to the Center for Urban Horticulture. You can also print out a map to CUH from that same site.
- Ask for the 2009 calendar of events when you attend the February meeting
- Dues should be paid asap.
- The deadline for articles to be included in the next newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding the newsletter. So...the deadline for inclusion in the March newsletter is February 15th. At least notify Morgia that you have something coming her way for inclusion.
- Don't forget to look for PSBA's presence at the Seattle Flower & Garden Show which begins February 18th and lasts through Sunday, February 22nd.
- We meet at the Center for Urban Horticulture on Monday, February 23rd. Plan to bring a plant that needs repotting.

PSBA News Clippings



From President Matt Fogata's Desk....

A new year—Mother Nature's battering is hopefully behind us and now it's time for us to begin our bonsai chores. It's time to apply those bonsai skills and techniques which we have learned from our roundtable meetings, our demonstrations, our study groups, and from the Pacific Rim Lectures conducted by David DeGroot.

We will start our new year with our February 23rd meeting featuring a roundtable led by Ken Wassum, Linda Breeden, Doug Bradley, and Tom Knoblauch (all members of the Boon Study Group). I recommend this as a "don't miss" session. Bring a plant and pot and plan to get some help repotting. Also see our "Now Is The Time" article starting on page 2 in this issue; it features Glenn Gardner as our 2009 author—with an article on repotting.

The week prior to the February PSBA meeting is the Northwest Flower and Garden Show being held in Seattle at the convention center downtown. If you haven't already contacted him, Don Guilliams would be happy to hear from you if you have time to help out. Don also can help you get a \$99 room rate at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel for any members who want to stay overnight during the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. Contact Don at guillie@comcast.net.

Vice-president Grant Rauzi is in the process of planning some exciting programs for 2009. These programs are planned for YOU, not only for entertainment, but more importantly for continuing our education and learning new bonsai skills. Please mark your calendars for upcoming events. Grant has been revising the calendar so please check your newsletters and the calendars that usually are available at the meetings.

Also—Don't forget to pay your dues!

On behalf of PSBA, I would like to extend a belated Happy Birthday to one of PSBA's founders and successful artists—Dan Robinson! May your bonsai art continue to grow, Dan, and thanks from all of us for helping to get PSBA started! You are appreciated...we look forward to your demonstration in March.

Thought for the month: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."—Norman MacEwan

Now Is The Time...

Glenn Gardner

...For repotting your bonsai. Hopefully you have been analyzing your bonsai to determine the requirements for repotting. February begins the time for repotting most species. Repotting is considered to be the most important task of bonsai cultivation, although there have been instances where plants have not been repotted for many years without any apparent problems. Usually a healthy plant will begin to push itself out of the pot, indicating it is ready for repotting. Once the plant is out of the pot it is easy to see that the roots have grown very long in search of nutrients and have circled around the pot and grown between the soil mass and the bottom of the pot, thus pushing the plant out of the pot. The tree is resting on a platform of roots.

The process of repotting has many useful benefits:

1. Removes dead and decaying roots
2. Discloses the condition of the roots and reveals any tendency for pot binding
3. Removes long and inefficient roots
4. Discloses the presence of pests or disease
5. Replaces old worn-out soil

The roots of plants grow constantly day and night absorbing moisture and nutrients generally through the tips and epidermal hairs of the roots. The rise of water and nutrients in a tree is facilitated by root pressure, capillary action, transpiration, and cohesion. Logically it can be seen that long roots will impede root pressure and capillary action because of losses incurred due to the complexity of the absorption and transfer process. The actual mechanics of these elements of transfer are complex. Suffice it to say that long, stringy roots are not efficient carriers of nutrients and are best eliminated.

Soils undergo both physical and chemical deterioration. The physical structure is broken down by freezing and thawing. Granules of stone and soil retain moisture and as this moisture freezes the moisture crystallizes and expands, breaking up the granules of stone and soil while reducing the soil to fine particles which clog the pores and diminish aeration within the soil.

The tendency is for the soil to become more acidic due to the carbon dioxide dissolved in the water, forming carbonic acid. Calcium in the soil, which helps to neutralize the acid, is dissolved in water and flows out the drain hole. Using water soluble or liquid fertilizers causes a build-up of salt in the soil, which can eventually destroy the plant.

The process of repotting itself is very straight forward.

1. Remove the plant from the pot.
2. Remove the old soil using chopsticks, a root hook or a root rake to loosen areas of packed soil. Make sure there are no sharp edges on the root rake, if one is used. Root rakes are stamped from sheet metal which leaves a burr on the edges of the rake teeth. These are removed with a file or sand paper. Generous applications of water from a hose greatly aid in removing the old soil.
3. Comb out the roots with the fingers or chopstick being careful to prevent breaking the roots or damaging the bark of the roots. As the roots are exposed, note that they are branched just as are the upper branches of the tree. Underground, the root structure is formed of primary roots, secondary roots, tertiary roots and so on. The long primary roots are removed by cutting back to just below the top two secondary branches of the root. This procedure is repeated until all of the very long roots have been removed. Do not however, cut the tips from all of the roots. The tips ...**(continued on page 3)**

...of the roots are the element which absorbs water and nutrients from the soil and if the tips are all cut off there will be no absorption until new root tips are formed. Surface roots are to be encouraged and preserved. Proceeding in this manner with the pruning will build a vigorous surface root system with short primary roots which are much more efficient and the plant will thrive.

4. Have a container ready. Repotting does not necessarily require a new container. The old container can be reused but it should be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized. Replace the drain hole screens and tie-down wires and cover the bottom of the pot with a coarse grit, followed by a layer of soil suitably formulated for the particular type of plant.

5. Make a mound of soil in the center of the pot.

6. Select the best side of the pot and the best side of the tree to be the front of the composition.

7. Set the tree on top of the mound and align the front of the tree with the front of the pot with the apex slightly forward and offset slightly left or right to accommodate the longest branch of the tree. The foliage mass of the tree should be centered on the vertical right to left center line of the container; the base of the trunk will probably be slightly off center depending on the length of the first branch. Press the roots of the tree into the mounded soil with a gentle twisting motion and then add soil to the top of the root ball slowly, all the while working the soil into the roots with a smooth chopstick. Do not stab the roots with the chopstick as this will damage the roots. Press the chopstick point into the soil and with a side-to-side and front-to-back motion at various points around the pot, work the soil into the roots until the tree is firmly placed in the pot. Immediately immerse the plant in a pan of water laced with a rooting hormone and let set until the bubbles stop rising from the soil. Remove the plant from the water and set aside to drain.

8. Tie the tree in the pot using the tie-down wires and finish the process by adding topping soil or grit to cover the surface of the soil. Use topping soil if moss is to be planted and grit if there is to be no moss. Use either approach sparingly because the finer soil and grit will work into the potting mix and affect the ability of the soil to breathe.

9. Moss is started by collecting the moss and removing the soil and roots for a thickness of about one quarter inch of the moss. Place the prepared moss on the surface, place the left hand on the moss to hold it in place and gently tap the moss between the fingers with the point of a chopstick forcing the moss into the top soil of the pot. Move the hand slightly to one side and repeat until the entire surface of the moss has been treated.

10. Do not fertilize the plant for 4 weeks and keep it in the shade. After a two week period gradually introduce the plant to its normal sun exposure. Mist the foliage daily to prevent drying out if the weather is unseasonably hot.

Some thoughts on bonsai soil...

Soil is the most important element of a plant's environment. It is the medium in which roots are anchored to support the tree and from which nutrients, water, and oxygen are obtained.

Soil is comprised of organic and inorganic material, and in the case of bonsai soil, it is formulated to fit the requirements of the plant. The organic component is decomposed plant and animal matter and the inorganic component is sand, silt, and clay. Proportions of each material determine the water holding capability of the soil. Water holding capacity is defined as the water content of a thoroughly wetted soil after surplus water has drained off by gravity. Increasing the amount of humus in the mixture increases the water holding capacity. Moisture held in the tiny spaces (capillary spaces) within and between the organic particles is the principal source of moisture for the roots of the tree. Clay particles in the soil bear electrical charges that attract water molecules. The bond between water and clay is hard to break; consequently much of the water in a clay soil is unavailable to plants. Clay soils lack porosity, leaving little space through ...**(continued on page 4)**

which gasses can be exchanged between soil and atmosphere. Carbon dioxide must be allowed to escape from below ground and oxygen must penetrate to a plant's roots to replace the oxygen lost as carbon dioxide. Water logging is common in "heavy" clay soils. Sandy and humus-loam soils are loose and porous, favoring drainage and the diffusion of gasses; however the sand must be at least one sixteenth inch in its longest dimension to be effective in bonsai soil. Bridge topping or chicken grit are two commonly used "sands". Soil mixes for plants requiring "fast" drainage capability will be comprised of one quarter inch diameter lava grit and fine bark or compost. Most horticultural species grow favorably in neutral soils—those soils which are neither acid (pH 1-7), or alkaline (pH 7-14). If a soil is determined to be too acid, lime can be added to "sweeten" the soil. Decomposing material causes acidity in the soil, so more humus can be added to adjust the soil to be more acid.

Good luck with the spring chore of repotting your bonsai!

New Member Workshops

Greg Hill is our workshop chairperson for the workshops which all new members are entitled to. He has announced that we have two workshops planned for 2009. They will be held at Bonsai Northwest in Tukwila on Sunday, April 19th and October 11th. Both workshops are from 10 am to 1:30 pm. New members wishing to sign up for one of these workshops should contact Greg at go2ghill@aol.com or call him at 425.649.8576 to get signed up. If you are a new member this is a great way to get started in bonsai. This opportunity is one PSBA provides for new members at no additional cost to you.

Convention 2008 Monies

Each year the Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs sponsor a convention. Last year's was held in Spokane. The hosting club receives a greater share of the profits but each club who has members in attendance at the convention receives a percentage of the profits based on how many members from that club attended the convention. Our treasurer, Annette Clark, has received a check based on the fact that we had 21 members in attendance. The check for PSBA's share of the profits was \$837.02. The convention made a profit after expenses of \$6,217.89. Thanks to all our members who attended. Let's hope we have another good representation at the 2009 convention in Victoria, British Columbia. Watch upcoming newsletters for details about the 2009 convention.

Dues for 2009

Renewal of dues for 2009:

Individual dues-----\$30.00

Two in same household-----\$40.00

Dues must be paid by the February meeting in order to have your name in the Roster and be considered a current member for attending meetings, workshops, study groups, and other PSBA activities.

Please bring payment to any meeting or send a check payable in US funds to PSBA with form which is printed below to the PSBA address:

Puget Sound Bonsai Association

P.O. Box 15437

Seattle, WA 98115-0437

Tear off and mail or bring to meeting.

Name(s) _____

Address if changed _____

Phone _____ **E-mail** _____

Adele Burnett

PSBA has received notice that long time member Adele Burnett died recently in Texas. She will be buried in Texas, but many PSBA members will remember her for her interest in and active participation in club meetings and activities. Your editor especially remembers Adele giving me helpful advice when I first became the editor. She firmly believed in the importance of bonsai education and saw the newsletter as one important piece in that process. She will be missed.

Puget Sound Bonsai Association

Puget Sound Bonsai Association
P.O. Box 15437
Seattle, Washington
98115-0437

Phone: 253-851-9636
psba.us

The PSBA News Clippings
Is published nine times each year by the
Puget Sound Bonsai Association: P.O.
Box 15437, Seattle, WA 98115-0437.
The newsletter is published in order to
share general information about bonsai
techniques, events, and other items of
interest to members. It is provided free of
charge to our members. Hard copies are
mailed once or twice a year to all
members. Members with e-mail addresses
will get all others via e-mail. Members
without e-mail may pick up hard copies at
meetings. If you are not receiving e-mail
copies, please contact Carol Sangster at
csangster@chubb.com.

Editor: Morgia Belcher 253.851.9636 or
morgia@centurytel.net

Production Editor: Jana Loyd

Mailing Labels: Carol Sangster
(csangster@chubb.com)

Questions about the publication should be
directed to the editor. Permission to
reprint articles is granted to other bonsai
clubs for use in their publications, except
where expressly prohibited or noted
herein.



News Clippings
P.O. Box 15437
Seattle, WA 98115-0437

Return Service Requested
Dues Notice Enclosed!

Calendar of Events:

February 18-22 Northwest Flower and Garden Show

**February 23 Roundtable on Repotting Bonsai—
7:30 pm at the Center for Urban Horticulture**

March 8 PSBA Board Meeting at Bonsai NW

March 23rd PSBA Demo—Artist—Dan Robinson

