**Inland Empire Bonsai Society**

**Club Meeting Notes, September 15, 2024**

**Present:**  Cass, David, Dotty, Ed B, Jeffrey, John B., John K., Josh, Mitch, Roger

**Items of Discussion:**

1. Ed led a discussion about insults to our trees The tree needs to be healthy before we work on our trees.  Bonsai is a demanding hobby.
   1. Only perform one “insult” on the tree per year.
      1. Repotting:  No matter how good you are at repotting you are doing damage to the feeder roots of the tree.  Make sure the tree does not move when you are done.
      2. Wiring: Perform during the correct season.
      3. Extensive branch bending or wedge cuts (pines only for wedge cuts)
      4. Extensive pruning
   2. Unintentional insults:
      1. Heat: can mitigate by moving in to shade or positioning shade cloth.  Keep in mind that late afternoon sun will come in at a lower angle.  Note that pots can get very hot in the sun, can cover.  Can mist to help cool the trees down.
      2. Early season hard freezes: note that the stated temperature tolerances on nursery trees assume that the trees roots are in the ground. Can move into protection or bury the pot in mulch to help insulate the roots.
      3. Watering: surprisingly the most difficult bonsai skill to learn/master.  Over-watering is just as bad long term as under-watering.  Need to pay attention to each tree.  Check percolation of the soil.  Watering during the winter can be tricky
2. Roger led a discussion on fall pine care.
   1. This is the time of year where pines are starting to shed their 3rd year needles and these can be cleaned off.  Also can pluck the bottom needles off for defining branch pads.
   2. This is a good time for pine wiring, bending and heavy styling.  This is the main time period for vascular production in pines which will help with healing wounds and breaks.
   3. Consider balancing the needle mass across the tree.
   4. Fertilize heavily to help promote strong vascular production, starting early September.  Probably can get one more dose in early October unless starting to get really cold.  That is probably the last fertilization of the year here in Spokane.  Remove the fertilizer from the soil surface going into the winter.
3. Discussed putting material in the ground to thicken up faster.  Raised beds are a good option.
4. Cass made a motion to move the club show & sale to the 3rd Sunday of June next year to avoid high temperatures.  The motion was seconded and the vote of the board members and other members present was unanimous in favor of this motion.
5. Josh reported on our display at the Spokane County Fair last Friday.  Kurt headed up the effort and Josh, Jeffrey, and Ed R. were also on hand.  There were a number of trees on display and club members were actively working on trees during the afternoon of our display.  We generated a lot of interest from fair goers and hopefully will see a couple of new members come in the future, though none came today.
6. Discussion of what would be most helpful to newer members at the meetings and at workshops.  Discussed challenges of repotting at the actual monthly meetings.  Discussed the brew pub workshops done by Gray to Green Nursery.
7. David is planning to do a yamadori collection trip up around Kettle Falls in October if anyone is interested in joining him.  Will set a date and let us know.  Discussed collecting techniques.
8. Members’ trees presentation & discussion:
   1. Ponderosa Pine (Roger) - yamadori obtained from Randy Knight in 2006.  Planted on a lava stone 3 years ago that he obtained from Bonsai Northwest in the past.  Discussed the building of a sphagnum/soil wall.  Discussed anchoring to a stone.  Will never come off the stone.  If loses percolation, can removal and replace areas of soil as needed.
   2. Colorado Spruce (Mitch) - yamadori obtained from Todd Schlafer, initial styling in 2021.  Repotted in 2023.  Discussed watering differences between elongating species, versus pines & junipers, versus deciduous.
   3. Ponderosa Pine (Mitch) - yamadori obtained from Randy Knight in 2021.  Repotted this year as had been fairly week initially.  Will wire this fall, intending to bring the branches down and in.  Discussed guy-wiring technique and process.
   4. Austrian Black Pine (Jeffrey) - nursery stock, his first tree from 2020.  Still working on development. Debating a wedge cut, but consensus was not to.  Planning to decandle next year.  Discussed outlier pine nuances.
   5. Siberian Elm (Josh) - nursery stock, obtained from NWS&P in 2022.  In a pond basket for last year.  Working on backbudding.  Discussed removing shoots coming from bases of branches to keep them from sapping the energy.  Discussed deciduous branching patterns - up & out.  Discussed holding back apical dominance.
   6. Fragrant Sumac (Jeffrey) - nursery stock.  Potted in 2023 and first styling spring of 2024.  Started with quite small leaf size.  Discussed a potting angle change on next repot.
   7. Lilac (Cass) - literati-ish.  Was a volunteer from her yard.  Had a small bloom 2 years ago.  Discussed deciduous timing of wiring and pruning after leave drop.
   8. Japanese Maple (John B.) - nursery stock, clump style.  Potted in 2023.  Discussed pruning strategies at both fall leaf drop and spring post-flush harden time points.
   9. Bloodgood Japanese Maple (John B.) - needs repotted next year and some branch selection pruning.

**Next Club Meeting:  October 20, 2024, Manito Room, Manito Park.  Planned Topic:  To be determined**