

BSGNY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 7

JULY 2019

Upcoming Meetings Schedule. July 12 meeting will be an Organic fertilizer workshop presented by Chris. August 10 meeting is a Picnic and Swap Meet, hosted by Mary, from 11 am – 3 pm at Fireman's Park in East Meadow. Please RSVP to Mary and let her know if anyone has any dietary restrictions. She will be providing hot dogs, hamburgers, potato and macaroni salads. We need volunteers to bring deserts. Please let her know what you're bringing. Mward412@aol.com or 516.765.0253. Display for Art in the Park, held at the Farmingdale Village Green from Noon - 4 pm will be held on September 15 (The rain date is 9/22) Bring a bonsai or two to display.

More details are continued on Page 3

July Meeting

Organic Fertilizer Workshop
presented by Chris

8:00 PM- 10:00 PM
July 12, 2019

William C. Odol Community Center
Located at the H. Garrick Williams Park,
Ritter Avenue, Massapequa, NY 11758

Directions:

On southern State parkway exit at 32 South (route 110). Proceed to Ritter Ave. and make right turn at taco bell (the second traffic light). Proceed thru the traffic light on County Line road. The William Odol, building is on the right with the parking lot just passed the building.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Meeting Notes
- 2 BSGNY INFORMATION AND OFFICERS
- 3 More Meeting Notes & Events
- 4 Bonsai Outlet articles

WELCOME

Membership dues for the 2019 year are due. Please make your payment in check or cash to our Membership Secretary Mary Ward.

2019 BSGNY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	JOHN CAPOBIANCO
VICE PRESIDENT	CHRIS ARBONO
TREASURER	PAUL FOGELBERG
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	MARY WARD
RECORDING SECRETARY	JOE LESNICK
DIRECTOR	FRANK KONDRICH
DIRECTOR	CLAIRE LANE
DIRECTOR	MARY WARD
PROGRAM CHAIR	CHRIS ARBONO
WEB MASTER	
NEWSLETTER	FRANK KONDRICH and JOE LESNICK



Like the article reprints in this and the previous newsletter? BSGNY had printed a “Bonsai Bulletin” for almost 30 years. They have been scanned on to a DVD disc. The DVD disk is now here. The price will be \$29.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling. The DVD will also be available for sale at our meetings for (\$29.95).

Please mail this form to:
BSGNY, PO BOX 115, Baldwin, New York 11510.

➤ *Make out your check to “Bonsai Society of Greater NY”* ◀

Name _____

Street _____ Apt. # _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Enclosed is my check for an Annual Membership at:
 \$17 Student \$40 Regular \$45 Joint (2 people at the same address)

Or sign up at the next meeting. www.bsgny.org

MEETING AGENDA: Our September 13 meeting will be a demonstration by John C. of slab planting technique, featuring chrysanthemums. Members can bring their Chrysanthemum Bonsai from the June Workshop for a follow up potting in preparation for the fall show.

The September, October and November meeting agendas are yet to be defined. If you'd like to help our club, we could use your help on the program committee, suggesting and coordinating workshop and demonstrations. It's simple but it takes a little work; but it is fun & rewarding. What would you like to see?

Upcoming events:

October 25 – 27, Long Island Chrysanthemum Show at Starkie Bros, Main Street, Farmingdale
Our December meeting will be our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting which includes elections, so start thinking for what office you'd like to run for to help make our club better!

Five articles from **BONSAI**OUTLET.COM

Bunjin Bonsai: Take Your Bonsai to Extremes

Do you have a Bonsai that wants to be daring? One whose natural growth just doesn't seem to fit any of the standard Bonsai styles? Or perhaps you're just looking to craft a Bonsai that's so unusual it stands out, even among other Bonsai? Then the Bunjin technique might be for you and your Bonsai.

Bunjin (which is also sometimes called *Wenjen* in Chinese or *Literati* in English) is the abstract expressionist form of Bonsai crafting and cultivation. While it's not entirely without rules, a Bunjin design deliberately breaks most traditional Bonsai styles. A Bunjin might even be considered "ugly" in contrast to the standard forms, but only by those who are bound by convention.

Bunjin isn't for Bonsai beginners and requires a good familiarity with the use of tools to train your tree into deliberate shapes. As an advanced technique, however, it can create Bonsai which are truly unique and distinctive.

What Makes a Bunjin Bonsai?

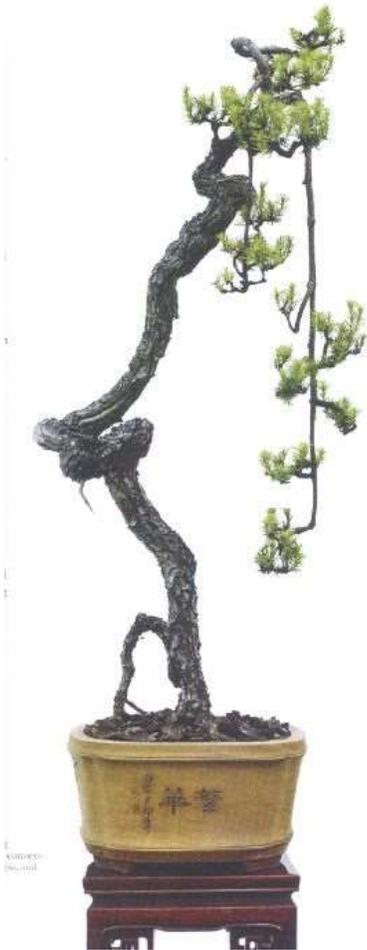
Bunjin celebrates the uniqueness and diversity of tree life. Trees are among the most adaptive plants on Earth, and those in challenging situations can often grow in truly surprising ways. Bunjin seeks to replicate this, taking the growth of a Bonsai to innovative extremes.

The Bonsai master Quinquan Zhao defines four key characteristics of a Bunjin Bonsai:

- Aloofness
- Sparseness
- Plainness
- Refined Elegance

A Bunjin Bonsai is usually quite tall, with little or no tapering in the trunk and sparse leaves. Generally, foliage is trimmed off except at the very top of the tree, with no branches occurring below the top 1/3 of the trunk. This may require significant cutting away of the trunk as it grows, to maintain the thin look.

However, while many Bunjin are simply tall and thin, that's only the beginning. All manner of trunk designs are acceptable as long as the trunk is long and thin, including designs which would be unthinkable in other schools. For example, the trunk could be curly, or crisscross back on itself, or have extremely hard/sharp angles which would rarely occur in nature.



It's also relatively popular to have a cascade look on top of a tall tree, so it that it appears hunched over. A Bunjin tree could have a downright painful appearance, twisted in ways no plant ever normally achieves. This can be done to achieve a beauty-in-agony effect for an "emo" Bonsai.

Or taken to real extremes, this "painful" twisting could even achieve a comical effect; a sort of slapstick tree.

To be clear, the Bonsai should actually be completely happy and healthy. It merely gives the *appearance* of pain, since trees can bend in ways animals cannot. This dichotomy is one of the alluring elements of Bunjin.

Warnings When Creating a Bunjin Bonsai

The Bunjin style will be more stressful than traditional styles of Bonsai, and should only be attempted on breeds which are particularly hearty and resistant. The Chinese Elm and similar species would be good for learning to craft Bunjin.

The other major concern is that a Bunjin will almost always be top-heavy. Keeping them outdoors is not recommended, as they'll be more vulnerable to weather. Likewise, a wider pot is suggested, to help lower the center of balance a bit. Or, if you want to have a bit of an optical illusion, you might try a thinner pot that's glued to its base so it can't tip over.

Bunjin isn't for the faint-of-heart, but it can create Bonsai which are absolutely unique and filled with personality. Just be sure to consult the appropriate care guides for your species, to ensure it stays healthy throughout the training process!

Article 2: **Five Reasons Everyone Loves Chinese Elm**



Chinese Elm is a dwarf tree has been among the most popular Bonsai species for centuries, and continues to delight both beginners and experienced Bonsai enthusiasts alike. It's a perfect tree for Bonsai cultivation: Hearty, adaptable, long-lived, and lovely to look at.

Five Things That Make Chinese Elm Such an Awesome Bonsai

1 - Beginner Friendly

While any Bonsai tree *can* die with sufficient neglect, the Chinese Elm is one of the heartiest breeds available. With its thick bark and great leaf coverage, a Chinese Elm is able to put up with a lot of abuse and still grow strong. This makes it perfect for beginners who are worried about accidentally killing their tree.

The main thing beginners should know about Chinese Elm Bonsai trees is that they are very fast-growing, especially when they're young. Most will need to be re-potted roughly once a year, rather than the 3-5 years for slower-growing breeds.

2 - Beautiful Curves

One of the goals of Bonsai cultivation is creating miniature trees that resemble aged, graceful trees. The Chinese Elm delivers this in spades. It naturally grows with graceful curves along its trunk and branches which give it the "windswept" look effortlessly. Even young trees have that "old look" very shortly after their initial growth spurt.

3 - Easily Trainable

Because the Chinese Elm is so adaptable, it's also a great option for intermediate Bonsai cultivators looking for their first experience in tree-training. It can tolerate the stresses of wires and deliberate cuts far better than most other species.

We won't lie: It's relatively common for people to accidentally kill the first Bonsai they try to train, but don't let that deter you. Learning to train a tree takes practice, but it's what separates true Bonsai masters from all the rest. And you're much less likely to kill a Chinese Elm than most breeds.

4 - Lush Foliage (most of the time)

When it's in bloom, a Chinese Elm is covered in lush, dense green leaves with a slightly leathery feel. These add to its resilience, since even the leaves are tough! A particularly healthy Chinese Elm can grow such dense foliage it can resemble a bush.

The exception here is that Chinese Elms are semi-deciduous and will usually lose the majority of their leaves during the winter. ***This is completely normal.*** Don't panic, the tree will bloom again in the spring.

5 - Indoor/Outdoor Options

And to top it off, a Chinese Elm is almost equally at home both indoors and outdoors. They want a lot of light, so if it's kept inside, be sure to keep it in a sunny area. If kept outside, they should bloom and thrive with very little difficulty.

Just keep in mind that the Chinese Elm comes from a warm climate, and doesn't deal well with cold. If it's an outdoor tree and you live in northern areas, we suggest bringing it inside for the winter.

For more info, check out our detailed [Chinese Elm care guide](#) (Article 3)

General Background:

Native to East Asia the Chinese Elm is one of the most popular bonsai trees, especially among beginners. These lovely semi-evergreen trees can grow up to 65 feet tall in their native habitat, but have been cultivated in miniature form for Bonsai for generations. It is an ideal choice for those just starting out because it is slow-growing and tolerant, the Chinese Elm allows beginners plenty of time and forgiveness to grow accustomed to bonsai care making it one of the most loved and most undemanding of miniature trees.

Trees Features:

The Chinese Elm has beautiful, distinctive dark gray to reddish brown bark that turns fissure and corky when mature. It has a lovely branching shape with delicate, oval shaped toothed leaves that showcase a fresh green color and a delightfully tiny leaf. It has a highly predictable growth pattern, making it ideal for beginners who are just getting used to training Bonsai.

Temperature:

Though generally tolerant, the Chinese Elm does not like drafts or a lot of variation in temperature. Most indoor tropical bonsai trees prefer temperatures between 60- and 70-degrees Fahrenheit. In the summer, Chinese Elm trees can be kept outdoors. However, you must remember to bring your bonsai tree indoors when the temperature drops below 60 degrees.

Lighting:

Like most bonsai, Chinese Elms need a lot of light. Direct morning sunlight is great for almost all bonsai because of its low intensity, so choose a room that gets the most light during the day. Keep in mind that, during warm months, the direct afternoon sun through a standard household window can burn delicate leaves.

Watering:

Chinese Elms prefer their soil to be slightly moist and allowed to dry out a little between watering sessions making it a practical choice for the frequent traveler. To get familiar with when to water the Chinese Elm Bonsai, stick your finger a half-inch in the soil: If you do not feel much moisture, then it is likely time to water. Never let the soil become completely dry for long.

During the winter months your Chinese Elm will require less water. In the spring and summer, it may need water every day or so, depending on location and climate. Watering cycles will vary, so avoid

strict schedules. Get to know when your tree needs watering by observing its foliage, testing the soil with your index finger, or by weighing the pot in your hands. The drier the tree, the lighter it will feel.

If you have a water mister, try misting your tree a couple times a week to help with humidity. Misting is beneficial to your tree's health but it is not a replacement for watering. Make sure you elevate your pot on pebbles so that its roots do not sit in water, this will provide your plant with moisture, without contributing to root rot.

Fertilizing:

Fertilize your Chinese Elm bonsai once every two weeks during the growing season (spring through fall) with a bonsai-specific or organic fertilizer. Water your tree well before fertilizing.

Pruning / Training:

Pruning is necessary to maintain the right shape of your bonsai and also to encourage new growth. That means removing small branches, buds, and new shoots. Chinese Elm trees are ideal for beginners because their branches can be pruned all year and doing well when new shoots are allowed to develop eight leaf pairs, and then trimmed back to two or three.

Wiring your Chinese Elm can be done to branches at all times throughout the year, but only do the shoots once they have become slightly woody. The Chinese elm is beautifully suited to the classical umbrella shape but can be shaped in most other styles with proper pruning alone.

Insects / Pests:

Bonsai are susceptible to the same pests and diseases as common house plants. The best defense is to keep your tree clean and healthy. Keeping the leaves free from dust will allow proper circulation in your tree. If you notice any abnormal leaf drop, stickiness to the foliage, or visible insects, you need to treat the problem promptly. Start by spraying your bonsai with a solution of 1 tsp dish soap to 1-quart tepid water or Neem oil spray and spray till mixture runs off the leaves; Rinse solution off leaves with plain water and repeat every few days as needed.

Propagation:

The fastest way to propagate the Chinese Elm is with 6-inch cuttings taken with sharp, clean scissors in the summer. Place in a glass of water and roots will soon develop. Repot rooted cutting in a quality bonsai soil or a mixture of 2 parts loam, 1-part peat moss, and 1-part sand.

Repotting:

Chinese Elms will need to be repotted approximately every two years in the early spring. Sometimes Chinese Elms do not react well to extreme root pruning, so avoid pruning the roots too far back when repotting. After repotting, water thoroughly and keep the plant in a shady location for several weeks in order to help the new roots grow.

WATERING BONSAI (Article 4) The old Japanese adage is to water your bonsai tree three times; once for the pot, once for the soil, and once for the tree. By going back and forth over your collection three times it allows the water to soak into the soil and the pot and leave water for the tree to take in.

Watering your bonsai tree is a tricky thing to get a handle on, even in the best conditions. When it's 100 degrees out, it's a whole other matter. During the summer, bonsai trees are in maximum capacity mode. They're not putting on new growth like they did in the spring. The roots have all the foliage they can handle and they're not taking on any newcomers.

Things to remember:

- Some bonsai species require "full sun." Full sun does not mean blazing, all afternoon, direct July sun. Even full sun varieties of bonsai appreciate afternoon shade in the summer.
- Don't forget about soil temperature. A bonsai lives in a very small world. Its pot and the soil temperature can rise to very high degree when left in the sun, cooking its tender roots like a pot of linguini.
- Avoid the temptation to water your bonsai tree just to "cool it down." Wet foliage can increase the sun's rays - each drop acting like a little magnifying glass that ultimately does more damage than good. Besides, the water belongs in the soil, not on the leaves.
- Watch where you point that thing. The water in a hose laying in the sun can reach temperatures of scalding levels. One blast of hot water to your bonsai tree, whether on the foliage or into the soil could kill it. Turn on the hose and give a nearby ant pile a good dose of boiling water for a few moments before you water your bonsai tree.
- When it comes to water, it's always slow and steady. When soils are dry, you can water them until the water flows over the top of the pot, yet only effectively wet the top 1/4 inch of soil. Dry bonsai soil is a little bit like the dry sponge next to the kitchen sink. Initially, the water runs off the sponge and does nothing to saturate it. It's the second and third application of water that does the trick. ONSAI

BONSAI and REAL-LIFE LESSONS (Article 5)

While I enjoy all aspects of bonsai gardening, I especially love pruning. Not only does it offer a relaxing break from daily stress, but I've found it offers a creative outlet as I try to shape my trees into miniature art forms.

As I was trimming some bonsai the other day, it occurred to me that the lessons I've learned can really apply to real life. So here are five of my pruning secrets, and I hope they help you with your bonsai and help you navigate life a little better, too!

Five Bonsai Pruning/Real-Life Tips

1. Start slow. I learned this lesson the hard way one year when I rented a power washer to clean my front deck. Instead of starting in a far-away corner, I began right under my front door. Turns out I had the machine on the wrong setting and promptly blasted an ugly scratch in the wood that still shows today. My advice: Whenever you're unsure about what you're doing, start in an inconspicuous area until you feel comfortable. That way, mistakes won't be quite so glaring.
2. Focus on the big picture and don't waste time with the small stuff. I've wasted a lot of valuable time (in pruning and in life) by focusing on those things that didn't really matter. With bonsai, I used to start by cutting the smallest branches first, only to discover that I wanted to cut the larger branches they were attached to. Not only did this waste time and create more of a mess, but it made me reluctant to prune further, which had an adverse effect on the overall shape of the tree. Which leads me to my next point ...
3. Take risks. Sometimes you have to be bold, so if you're going to cut, cut. I've found that sometimes the only way to bring out a new angle or shape is to get a little aggressive and try something new. Like they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained, so don't always play it safe. But at the same time ...
4. Be disciplined and in control. One time, I was trimming a Japanese Maple and got frustrated in the process. A certain amount of apathy set in, and I kept snipping away. When I was finished, the poor tree looked like some sort of sheep-shearing incident gone horribly wrong. So, take it easy and step back and take a look every so often, so things don't get out of control.
5. Stand up for your vision. Bonsai, like life, is a constant learning experience. So, don't be worried about your day-to-day results, be proud of yourself, and apply a little of what you learn to the next interaction. That's all we can do.

So in many ways, bonsai emulates life and can even teach us more than we'd ever expect. Next time you're pruning, pay attention to the process and you may just learn something new you can apply in your own life, too!

Bonsai Outlet is located at 914 South Main street in Bellingham, MA 02019. Their web site is a great source of bonsai knowledge such as these articles. Their web site has a complete line of bonsai tools, plants and accessories.

HAVE A QUESTION, TOPIC OR AN OPINION (RELATING TO BONSAI) YOU'D LIKE RESEARCHED AND REPORTED ON? LET US KNOW.