

TECHNIQUE Tips

Propagating Figs From Root Cuttings

by Jerry Meislik

F

igs can be propagated from seed. This is a long process taking years to get reasonable sized plants that can only then just begin bonsai training. It is a good way to obtain unusual or rare material that can not be found as cuttings or plants.

Cuttings are the easiest way to propagate figs. Cuttings of branches of even large size can successfully be rooted and provide a

rather quick way to obtain new plants that are ready to bonsai.

Many people do not realize that some figs can be propagated from root cuttings. Large roots can be buried almost up to their tops and watered when nearly dry, kept warm, in good light they will sprout leaves from the cut end. It can take up to 6 months for sprouts to appear from the top of the root cutting.

Interesting shaped trunks can be derived from these root cuttings without using complex wiring.

Species that can grow from root cuttings include Ficus salicaria, the Willow Leaf fig and Ficus natalensis. Until recently my efforts to grow Ficus microcarpa, the Chinese Banyan from roots were all total failures; although the roots remain alive from one to two years they just do not sprout leaves and finally die having exhausted their stored energy reserves.

Jim Stone of Santa Fe, Texas provided me with photos of root cuttings that he took that did sprout for him. So I guess Ficus microcarpa can be sprouted from root cuttings.

Visit Jerry's website bonsaihunk.us



Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

PO Box 13212

New Orleans, LA 70185

GNOBS Auction is August 15

It's not too early to start going through your trees and deciding what to donate to the auction - so you'll have room for your new and exciting Auction buys!

Members are always encouraged to bring any tree to meetings that they wish to discuss or about which they need advice.

Meetings take place on the second Tuesday each month at 7:30pm (pre-meeting activities begin at 7:00pm) at the **Marine Corps League Hall**, 2708 Delaware St., Kenner, LA. For more information, articles and everything bonsai, check us out on our website at www.gnobs.org

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THE BONSAI Wire

May 2015

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

FROM THE President

I don't know about you - but I'm really looking forward to watching Guy do his magic on a multi-tree planting at this month's meeting. Having recently tried one, I can tell you it's not that easy to achieve something that looks both artistic and natural. I really want to see and hear Guy's take on these plantings. In case you missed the big bold print to the right - the program has moved to **Saturday Night, May 16.**

A few notes on upcoming programs - For our July competition, I would like to encourage everyone to participate. If you are a newbie, don't worry about whether your tree is "up to snuff". It's just about presenting what you consider to be YOUR best tree at this point. For our advanced members - we really want to see your best tree and have an opportunity to learn from observation and talking to you about the work you did on your bonsai.

In October we will now have TWO programs. Besides the Lowell Tilley program, Jim has managed to acquire some nice Hinoki Cypressess at a good price and Guy has agreed to do a workshop on them (Oct 24). This is the first time the club has had this species for a workshop. We will have a sign up sheet at the June meeting along with pictures of some of the trees. Remember - bring your checkbook or cash - payment is due at sign-up.

Kathy Barbazon,
GNOBS President



MEETINGS & Events

NO Tuesday Night Meeting this month - changed to Saturday night!

Due to a scheduling conflict the Guy Guidry Boxwood demo has been change to Saturday, May 16 at 7pm

Saturday, May 16, 2015

Program: Guy Guidry Boxwood on Rock Demo 7:00pm

Guy Guidry, a GNOBS member, nationally recognized bonsai master and owner of NOLA Bonsai will do a demo on a slab with rocks and Kingsville and Saunders boxwoods. Guy's demo's are always entertaining, highly informative and fascinating. Make plans to attend.

Members are encouraged to bring a boxwood or group planting for display.

Friday, June 12, 2015

Program: Joe Day Nerifolia '89 Demo 7:00pm

Alabama bonsai artist Joe Day will be doing a demo on a large Nerifolia '89 (a version of Nerifoilia that mutated after a hard freeze in Florida in '89). Nerifolia, for those not familiar, is a very hardy and easy to work material that will take a lot of abuse. They also are one of the better figs for bonsai. Come out to see Joe, an excellent teacher and skilled artist work on this great bonsai subject.

Saturday, June 13, 2015

Workshop: Joe Day Nerifolia '89 8:00am

Due to an illness in Ed Trout's family, Joe Day has graciously agreed to step in to conduct the workshop. Workshop spaces are filled but all members are invited as **FREE silent observers.**

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Program: Member competition Johnny Martinez Award 7:00pm

Program: Suiseki by Jim Osborne

All members are asked to bring in their best tree for a friendly competition. All members present will get 3 votes for their favorite trees. The 3 trees with the most votes will be displayed at the Auction. Auction attendees will vote for their favorite tree from the 3 for the Johnny Martinez award. We will have a sign up sheet at the meetings of who will be bringing a tree so we can determine what will be needed for display.

As the other part of our program, Jim will do a presentation on **Suiseki**: the collection, preparation and appreciation of stones that suggest a natural scene.

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STYLE Spotlight

Connected-Root Style

Adapted by Dave DeGroot from a translation by Mrs. C. Graves

The connected root style is basically the same composition as the raft style in that it represents a tree which has toppled and had its branches grow up to form a compact group of trees, with the old trunk becoming part of a large common root system. Some bonsai growers distinguish between raft style and connected root by referring to only compositions with a single, straight original trunk as “raft style”, and all others, having original trunks which are curved, forked, or multiple, as “connected root”. (Fig. 1)

Mr. Yuko Miyazaki, writing in *Bonsai World* magazine, has given several hints for making attractive connected-root style planting: Use fairly young (4-5 years) and flexible plant material such as one of the Chinese junipers, with three trunks. Wire all of the trunks. Allow one of the trunks to remain upright, but bend the other two trunks down until they lie horizontally. The bends must be very sharp and right at the base. Additional bending of the prostrate trunks from side to side will create the feeling of depth in the finished composition. Placing smaller trunks

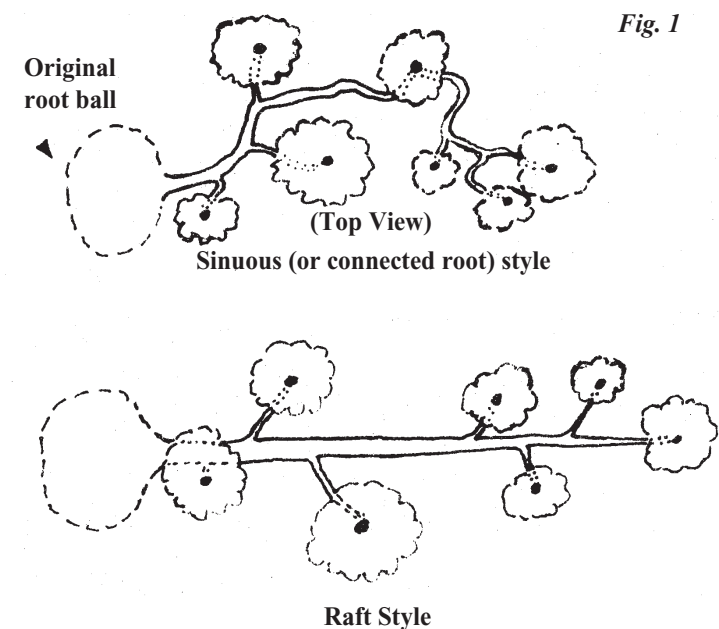


Fig. 1

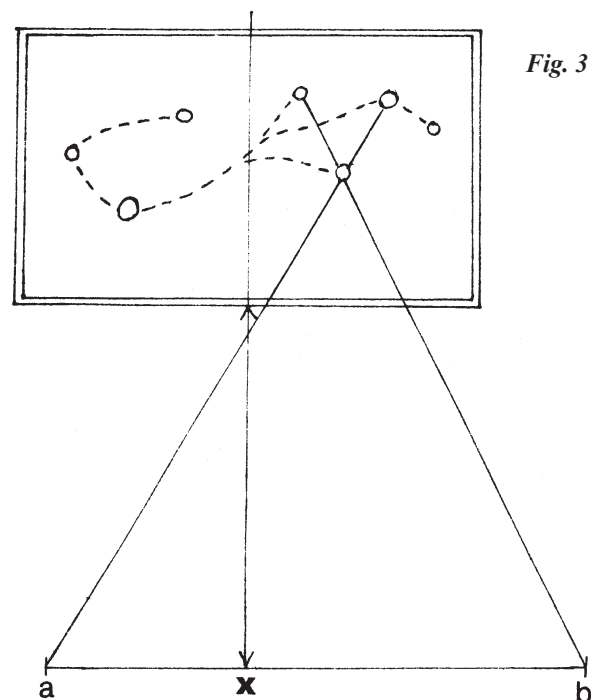


Fig. 3

When constructing group, step back to the ideal viewing distance before positioning trunks. Arrange group from stationary viewing position (x). However, a group planting, being wider than a single tree, has a wider angle of view. Try to construct the group so no two trunks overlap when viewed from any point along line a - b.

to the rear of the group will help create a sense of perspective. Select branches which will be trained as individual trees for their placement in the group. Keep the total number of trees an odd number. Wire all of the “trunks” whether they are to be made straight or curved. If you make curves in the trunks, do not make sharp bends, for that does not work well in a close group. Rather, make the curves gentle and similar to look natural. Now arrange the branches on each “trunk” keeping the following points in mind:

- Branches of adjacent trees must not touch.
- The first branch of any tree should not be lower than 20% of the tree’s height.
- The angle of the branches should be kept at the horizontal or lower.
- Branches must get progressively shorter toward top of tree.

- No “bar” branches (2 branches emerging at the same height on trunk, growing in the same plane).
- Branches should not grow directly to either the front or back.

The initial planting of the connected root group should be in a wooden training box that is deep enough to accommodate the entire root ball and allow the prostrate original trunks to be covered with about 1/2” of soil. Train the trunks and branches for the next 4-5 years, until the group begins to show some maturity, then transplant into an



Fig. 4

Compound row, formal arrangement (straight trunks) After four years of training, roots have developed along original trunks.

appropriate bonsai tray. The tray must be large enough so the group does not look crowded. There must be empty space in the composition. Make sure the main tree in the group is not in the center of the tray. Contour the soil with high and low areas to look natural. Figures 2 and 3 show group arrangement and viewing position.

Another connected root style using the same kind of material is as follows: Select a tree with twin trunks and wire them both. Turn the tree so the trunks are horizontal and trim off all branches pointing downward, plus any which are not needed for the composition. Adjust the wired original trunks by binding to get the proper group arrangement and

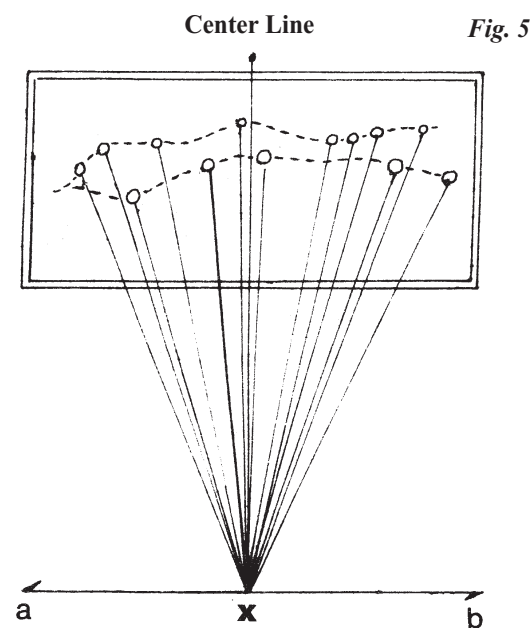


Fig. 5

No overlapping trunks when viewed from point “x”. However, try to avoid overlap when viewed from moving line a - b. The wider the spacing of the trees, the better for viewing.

feeling of depth. The wire can be removed at a future repotting by cutting at each turn and allowing it to fall off. After the group is arranged, plant in a training box as described earlier. Keep a mulch of sphagnum moss on the soil surface. The mulch helps maintain a stable soil temperature and moisture level, aiding the formation of new roots along the buried trunks. An example of the compound row connected root group with straight trunks is shown in figures 4 and 5.

STYLE Spotlight

Berberis/ Barberry Bonsai

by Harry Harrington

Berberis is a genus of over 450 species of evergreen, semi-evergreen and deciduous shrubs from all over the world, preferring rocky soils in mountainous areas. Barberrys are commonly recognized for their sharp spiny stems. Though Berberis are not recognized as a classic bonsai subject, there are many species that have small leaves that back bud easily, numerous small, showy flowers in a variety of colors and on mature trees can display beautiful bark markings.

Species suitable for bonsai include:

Berberis thunbergii varieties / Barberrys

Dense, rounded, deciduous shrub with ovate leaves to 3cm long, fresh green above and bluish-green underneath. Racemes of 2-5 yellow flowers are produced in Spring followed by glossy-red fruit to 8mm long in Autumn. Reaches heights of 1metre in its native Japan. There are a number of varieties of B.thunbergii of which the red-leaved varieties are preferred, Berberis thunbergii Atropurpurea has dark purple-red foliage and vertically-stripped bark. Variegated red-leaved varieties are generally far weaker and more susceptible to mildews than the plain red varieties.

Berberis darwinii / Barberry

Vigorous, evergreen Barberry reaching heights of up to 3metres in its native Chile and Argentina. Dark green leaves up to 3cm long are kept on the tree year round, while dark-orange flowers appear in Spring followed by glaucous-blue/black fruit appear in Autumn.



Berberis buxifolia / Barberry

Evergreen/ semi-evergreen Barberry that loses leaves only when exposed to low temperatures in Winter. Has leathery, dark-green leaves up to 2 cm long, dark orange-yellow flowers in Spring and dark purple fruit in Autumn.

Bonsai cultivation notes

- Position** Full sun or partial shade, protect from frosts below 23°F to avoid twig die-back.
- Feeding** Every two weeks
- Repotting** Every two years before bud break in Spring, use standard soil mix.
- Pruning** Trim back after flowering unless fruits are required. For trees that require stronger growth, remove dead flowers to avoid wasting energy on fruit production. When pruned, Barberrys display unusual yellow inner stem, root and trunk color.
- Propagation** Sow seed outside in early-Spring, root softwood cuttings of deciduous species in Summer, take semi-ripe cuttings of deciduous and evergreen species in Summer. Air-layer or ground layer in Autumn or Spring.
- Pests and Diseases** Powdery mildew can occasionally be a problem, aphids.
- Styles** Informal forms in single or multiple trunk groups. In small to medium sizes. Try to avoid stiff, angular trunk forms.

Visit Harry’s website bonsai4me.com

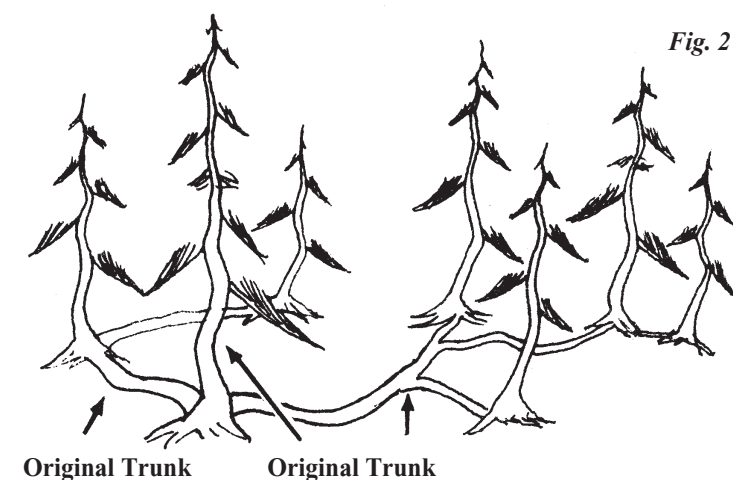


Fig. 2

Compound row, connected root style bonsai from three trunks, informal arrangement (curved trunks)