

# THE BONSAI Wire

July 2020

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

## FROM THE President

**F**or those of you who plan to attend the July meeting – welcome back! And for those of you who may not feel comfortable returning at this time – we hope to see you soon. I'm excited to resume our monthly meetings, even though it will be conducted in a different fashion. We will be requiring all attendees to wear a mask, as per the Jefferson Parish mandate. We will also ask that people sit no more than two per table. This will still allow us to seat our normal attendance numbers. Our refreshments will consist of individual bottles of water and soft drinks, along with the usual individual packages of chips/snacks.

We realize that some of you may not attend with the requirement of wearing a mask. We also know that there would be those who would not attend if such a requirement were not in place. As a Board, it is our responsibility to do whatever is necessary to ensure the health and safety of our members. We put that responsibility above any personal likes or dislikes of any policy that may or may not be in place. We hope you

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## MEETINGS & Events

### MEETING IN JULY!

**GNOBS will resume our monthly meetings starting July 14th! Attendees will be required to wear a mask. Due to social distancing guidelines, we will not be able to conduct the study group at 6:00. With that activity being postponed for the time being, our regular meeting time will be moved up half an hour to 7:00.**

#### Tuesday, July 14, 2020

**Program: Tropical Open Workshop 7:00pm**

Bring your own tropical tree to work on. Club will provide wire. Bring your own tools (and soil if you intend to repot). Catch up on styling and maintenance or seek the advice and opinions of other experienced members. We will spread everyone out on the various tables for social distancing.

**Per the Jefferson Parish mandate, MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED!**

#### NO Auction in 2020

Due to the current virus situation and the uncertainty involved, the board has made the decision to forgo the annual auction this year. That means we will need to plan for a exceptional auction for next year. Please spend some time over the next year developing cuttings, air layers, nursery material etc for the auction next year. If everyone does that, we can have spectacular material for 2021!

#### Tuesday, August 11, 2020

**Program: Root Development by Dennis Burke 7:00pm**

Dennis will do a lecture/presentation on developing good nebari and correcting root problems. Bring any trees for which you need root advice.

Meetings cont. pg 4

Meetings take place 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](http://www.gnobs.org)

[facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai](https://www.facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai) [gnobs.org](http://gnobs.org)

## Japanese Black Pine Redesign

By Randy Bennett

**T**he subject of this redesign is a Japanese Black Pine from the collection of a client. He had the tree for a number of years. I am not certain about the age of the tree, but he stated that he had been growing it for 8 years. The tree stood 18 inches above the soil and was 25 inches across. It was potted in a dark brown, unglazed 14 inch oval that was 3 inches deep. It was obvious that the tree had been worked for a number of years due to the density of the foliage and the number of shoots.

The tree was healthy. It had good color and there was significant back-budding that had occurred. However, no matter how healthy a black pine may be, you should try to remove no more than 1/3 of the foliage at one time and certainly never more than half. Removing much more than that may weaken it beyond its ability to recover. The complete redesign of this tree took three years. What you see in this article took place in year one.

As a bonsai, this tree was not particularly remarkable. With selective pruning and proper wiring, its appearance could have been improved but the trunk was thin – about an inch and a half in diameter at the base and it possessed very little taper for an informal upright or slanting style bonsai.

The photo below shows the tree as it was brought to me in January. I placed a pair of pruning shears in the photo to give a sense of scale.



The second photo shows the back of the tree as I began to examine design possibilities by changing the viewing angles.



After viewing the tree from a number of angles, a decision was made. The tree had good movement but no taper. The best solution to improve the quality of the tree was to design it as a bunjin. However, the bunjin design was not brought to fruition for two more years after this part of the restyling was completed. As a temporary transition, it was styled as a semi-cascade so that the client could enjoy the tree until the final transformation into a bunjin could be achieved. The temporary styling into a semi-cascade allowed me to set up the proper inclination of the trunk, get branches wired to their correct angles and get new candle growth occurring in the proper direction in preparation for the final design which would take place in another year.

First, all of the foliage on the lower portion of the tree was removed and it was examined from various viewpoints. The amount of foliage removed was pushing the limits of the tree, but it was in good health and I was confident that it would recover quickly.



I liked the direction in which the tree was heading, but the angle was still not quite right. The pot was stabilized in a plastic garbage can so that a little more thinning could be done and wiring and shaping of the branches. You never want to prune and wire branches until you have the tree at angle it will have when repotted. Otherwise you may remove branches that you need and wiring and putting branches into the proper position will be done without proper focus.



The photo following shows the pine after more thinning, wiring the branches and repotting. However, the work is not finished. I removed a good deal of foliage in this initial redesign. But care had to be taken not to remove too much at once. To create a proper bunjin all of the foliage that was wired down and to the front will also be removed – but not this year.

The tree underwent a great deal of stress. It had to be allowed to recover and regain its strength. Therefore candle pruning and removal was carried out judiciously. You do not want to further weaken the tree. The tree was fertilized with organic fertilizer beginning March 1st. Fertilizing was repeated on April 1st and the final application was given on May 1st. You do not fertilize black pines beyond May 1st so that when you conduct candle-pruning around the 1st of June, you are not

getting unwanted, leggy growth on the new shoots.

Normally, you would not conduct candle pruning on a pine so quickly after repotting. But in this case, very few of the roots had to be pruned. And they could easily be placed in the deeper container. As such, the repot did not significantly weaken the tree and so selective candle-pruning could be carried out.

It is not the focus of this brief article to elaborate on how to candle-prune black pines. That is an exhaustive topic and one that can be quite confusing to a lot of people. My purpose here is simply to illustrate how a redesign was carried out to improve the value and quality of a bonsai.

The three largest and lowest branches on the tree did not have their candles pruned or pinched. Allowing them to grow unrestrained helped the tree regain some of the strength it lost through the redesign process. To allow the candles in the upper half of the remaining foliage to grow unrestrained would have been a mistake. Every candle was removed around June 1st – even the weakest candles.



During the 1st week in July, the new shoots that formed where entire candles were removed were thinned to only two shoots. In November, the new growth from July was strong. Given the fact that the roots were only lightly trimmed when repotting was done 10 months before helped ensure a quick and strong recovery. The two lowest large branches that were wired down and to the front, were then removed. All of the food that their needles produced during the past growing season were sent to the remaining foliage in the spring.

Pine cont. pg 4





The tree remained in the semi-cascade pot for one more year and candle pruning was carried out again during the next growth season. The following winter, the tree was repotted into a bunjin container.



## Tuesday, September 8, 2020

**Program: Preparing your Tree for Exhibition by Dawn Koetting and Randy Bennett 7:00pm**

Dawn and Randy will do a presentation on preparing your tree for exhibit as well as matching trees with pots and stands for the best presentation.

# PRODUCT Reviews

by Kathy Barbazon

## Gloves In A Bottle Shielding Lotion for Dry Skin

I have long coated my hands with the longest lasting hand lotion I could find when working with trees that irritate the skin (like junipers) because I dislike wearing gloves when styling a tree. I recently found a product sold at art supply stores to protect artists hands from paint, pigments and chemicals. It's also sold on Amazon.



### Part of the product description:

- Shielding Lotion that bonds with the outermost layer of skin cells to turn it into an invisible shield for your hands, arms, neck, legs, feet and face.
- Creates a pair of "invisible gloves" to prevent dry skin by helping to keep moisture-robbing irritants out while better retaining your skin's own natural oils.
- One application of Gloves In A Bottle lasts four hours or more and comes off naturally as you exfoliate the outer most layers of skin cells.

I recently tried this specifically working with junipers. Without protection, I will normally get red irritated bumps on my hands and arms. I had not a single red bump with this product. It does not wash off with a quick hand wash. I reapplied once during the day. It is not the cheapest hand lotion but I found that it doesn't take much product to cover your hands (probably less than dime size glob). An 8 ounce bottle at Amazon costs approximately \$17. It is sold there and elsewhere in both smaller and larger bottles. Judging by my experience, I would highly recommend it if your skin is sensitive to various plant materials.

## KNIPEX Tools - CoBolt Compact Bolt Cutter (7101200) - 8 inch



I saw Ryan Neil recommend these small bolt cutters as the wire cutters he prefers to use for everything. He actually sells them on his website - though they are considerably cheaper on Amazon (\$42.90).

I purchased a pair and have been trying them out. These are a great pair of cutters and cut at the end like a regular bonsai wire cutter. That being said, my personal take is that I prefer to use these on all the thicker heavy gauge wire and continue to use my regular cutters for the small wire. On the small wire, I find my regular cutters more precise and maneuverable and a little more comfortable for small hands.

However, I love these on the heavy wire. Cutting heavy wire off a tree can be challenging and sometimes requires more than one cut with regular bonsai cutter. These cut through heavy wire on a tree with ease.

Both my regular cutters and the new Knipex cutter have a permanent place in my tool bag. If you deal with heavy wire, I would highly recommend them.

### President cont. from pg 1

understand and we hope to see all our members at the July meeting.

That being said, our program for July will be a simple one... since it is time to work on tropicals, we are asking participants to bring your own tropical tree to work on. Our members who are knowledgeable and experienced with tropical will be there for advice and guidance. The club will provide wire. So bring your tropical material, tools and soil (if you plan to repot). If you do not have any tropical material to work on, bring something you do have on which you need advice. See you July 14th!

**Randy Bennett**  
GNOBS President



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