

Triangle Bonsai Society

Another Outstanding October

As October comes to a close, we are able to take a look back at our successful participation in the Bonsai Exposition held in Asheville early in the month and our Bonsai Display and Competition at the North Carolina State Fair during the middle of the month.

Kevin Ray has done an outstanding job of displaying all the bonsai from the show in Asheville at our website. If you were not able to make a trip to Asheville and the NC Arboretum then you definitely need to check out the photos posted by Kevin at www.trianglebonsai.com.

Additionally, Arthur Joura, the curator of the NC Arboretum will be our speaker November 6th and he sent along this note ... "I am looking forward to my visit with the Triangle Bonsai Society - another annual event, with a history that goes back further than the Expo. This year I'd like to do a program focused on deciduous bonsai. This presentation will mostly take the form of a PowerPoint and lecture, although I will also bring some "show & tell" plants."...Arthur Joura

We all owe Kevin Ray a great many thanks for his continued job well done organizing and overseeing all the work that makes the State Fair such a good display of bonsai. If you were not able to make it out to the Fair...SHAME ON YOU!...just kidding. Again, Kevin has done a great job of showing all the bonsai that were part of the State Fair exhibit and competition. Thanks Kevin.

And since we mentioned competition, the winners of the awards from the Fair were determined by Randy Clark...Thanks very much Randy!

Here is a list of the winners including the People's Choice awards. We were able to give two People's Choice awards this year.

A summary of the event will be provided at our next meeting.

Open Division - Deciduous

1st - Merritt Barnett (Bald Cypress)

2nd - Harold Johnson (Crab Apple)

3rd - Steve Zeisel (Shefflerra)

Open Division - Evergreen

1st - Harold Johnson (Silver Berry - Elaeagnus)

2nd - Steve Zeisel (Hinoki Cypress Group)

3rd - Mike Brawley (Juniper)

Open Division - Shohin

1st - Steve Zeisel (Satsuki Azalea)

2nd - Harold Johnson (Boxwood)

3rd - Harold Johnson (Shimpaku)

Novice Division - Evergreen

1st - Bryan Mercer - (Boxwood)

2nd - Kevin Ray - (Shimpaku Juniper)

3rd - Caitlin Ray - (Shimpaku Juniper)

Novice Division - Deciduous

1st - Ted Prather - (Burning Bush)

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Open Division - Best in Show



Harold Johnson - (Silver Berry - Elaeagnus)

People's Choice - 1st



Steve Zeisel - (Hinoki Group)

Novice Division - Best in Show



Bryan Mercer - (Boxwood)

People's Choice - 2nd



Mike Brawley - (Juniper)

Do not forget...Mark your calendars !!

November 6, 2011

Arthur Joura will speak and do a demo

<http://www.trianglebonsai.com/>



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Above, Don Kimball giving an "introduction to bonsai" demonstration at the State Fair



Above, Harold Johnson giving one of his lectures and demonstrations



Above, Ted Prather, Harold Johnson and Kevin Ray checking out a boxwood at the Fair

While you are marking your calendar...DO NOT FORGET...December 4, 2011

TBS Christmas Party and auction

<http://www.trianglebonsai.com/>

Reviewing our TBS Meeting October 2, 2011

Our meeting was called to order at 1:30 by Dan Cormican and an announcement was made that we will be back at our regular meeting place in December.

We discussed the fact that we will have a guest artist in November. Arthur Jour will be coming from the NC Arboretum and he always entertains us with his discussions.

Kevin Ray asked club members to call about what trees they are bringing to the fair. He gave us details about when to bring trees and when to pick them up. He thanked members for volunteering to be at the booth during the time of the fair. He also thanked the members that will be demonstrating.

We did something at the meeting that we used to do, but have gotten away from and that was time set aside for help and critique with our plants.

Eric showed a blue rug juniper styled in a cascade style.

Steve showed a broom styled Chinese Elm.

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The 2012 Slate of Officers were presented and unless somebody wants to throw their hat in as a late entry, these will be your officers and people helping do the work for TBS for the next period of terms.

President – Dan Cormican (2010-2013)

Vice President – Harold Johnson

Treasurer – Ken Lorenzen

Secretary – Barbara Holmes

Director - Eric Eibelhauser (2011-2013)

Director – Elliott Kopp (2012-2014)

Immediate Past President – Ken Hallatt

Newsletter Editor – Curtis Richie

Webmaster – Kevin Ray

Finally for October, here is a contribution from Bryan Mercer, who deserves our thanks for taking the time to share his experience with us.

Naturalistic Bonsai by Bryan Mercer

“From my early youth, I hated someone telling me I can’t.”

-Walter Pall, Carolina Bonsai Expo 2011

All of us can relate to the above quote. We are each individuals with our own strengths and weaknesses. We like a challenge, and by challenging current thinking and always pushing the boundaries we make a better world. This is very true in the Bonsai community and was thoughtfully demonstrated during the 16th annual Carolina Bonsai Expo October 8-9 at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, NC.

<http://www.trianglebonsai.com/>

The guest artist was Walter Pall who traveled from Germany to the show. If you have attended a lecture, demonstration or workshop by Walter you know that you are in for a treat. Not only will you learn something, but you will be entertained and will have a chance to meet one of the most thought provoking, dynamic and exciting individuals in Bonsai.

The afternoon lecture/demonstration started out with a slide show on what Naturalistic Bonsai is. Naturalistic Bonsai is used as an addition to other styles of Bonsai which ultimately forms a very diverse and pleasing collection of trees. Walter stressed the importance of learning different techniques from all different types of artists. Do not get stuck trying to make every tree look like a Japanese pine tree.

Naturalistic Bonsai is about letting the tree be a tree. As Walter explained it is natural, with a soul, back to the roots and neither ideal or unique. But Naturalistic Bonsai is also seen as controversial as it does not follow all the traditional bonsai rules that create the postcard pictures of bonsai that we have all come to know and love. Some describe it as untidy, chaotic with no rules.

A bonsai that is “natural” is different than a bonsai that is “naturalistic”. The natural bonsai is left to grow uncontrolled with no purpose. A naturalistic bonsai is one that has been controlled by wire and other means to ultimately produce an eye appealing tree in a pot, one that you may see in nature. In order to illustrate this concept Walter showed many slides of traditional bonsai “electronically” removed from their pots and put in natural scenes. He also showed pictures of bonsai that had a naturalistic presentation to them and placed them into natural scenes. The difference was amazing. The naturalistic bonsai when placed into the natural

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scenes looked like they belonged there; one would never know that it was a small tree in a pot.

There are many styles of bonsai, but ones that look like what you would see in the natural environment catches the eye. When seeing it you would say, “Wow, that looks like a real tree in the woods, or in the mountains.” The naturalistic style is a true art, each an individual tree – no two are the same.



Walter Pall and the demonstration Scotts Pine

After the lecture part of the program, Walter started the demonstration with a large Scotts Pine. It was a pine that was part of the arboretum collection that had not been attended to for some time. It was grown in a container for most of the time, but might also have grown in the ground at some point. Walter cut a few small branches that were not necessary and crowding others out. He made a little jin and started to wire. In the end he made a tree that looked good from all sides. An ancient, large, stately Scotts Pine.

The next tree that he worked on was a Lodgepole Pine that was going to be donated to the arboretum. He worked on a rather large area of jin and then focused on the apex. He ran out of time but that did not stop him. During the weekend in his “spare” <http://www.trianglebonsai.com/>

time he finished the tree, right up to the last minute as people were leaving the expo.

To learn more about Walter, his style and bonsai visit his blog at:

<http://walter-pall.de/00gallery/index.html>

Collected Ponderosa Pine Workshop with Walter Pall



Workshop Participants preparing for the session

The workshop was five hours long and the seven participants were able to choose their specimens from a group of ten trees. Walter focuses his workshops on the participant learning by doing. He does not do it for you, but is there to provide guidance. I believe that all participants left with more knowledge, a superb tree and best of all five hours of eye opening experience.

Walter first started the workshop with all participants gathered around each tree and talked about the possibilities. Walter encouraged each person to present their two options for their tree and then each tree was discussed by the group. Finally, Walter would comment in the end if there were

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other options that the group did not notice. Most of the options that were missed were ones that included tilting the tree to help diminish any section of straight trunk or to accommodate any roots that were all on one side of the tree.



My tree before the workshop

Once the critique was over it was time to clean up the tree. Any stubs from branches were cutoff, last year's

needles plucked off and deadwood was completed. Walter recommends any initial jin and shari should be completed before styling of any branches take place because it will help in making the final styling decisions. Walter asked that when we were done with the cleanup he would point out five things that we missed. Usually he would point out at least five things that were missed just on the bottom half or top half of the tree, Oh well!....better luck next time.

Once this was complete, it was time to wire the branches. Walter explained that he prefers the modern version of wiring which changes the angle to be wider. This allows more room for bending and not damaging the branches. He prefers the 30 degree angle in place of the traditional 45 degree.

<http://www.trianglebonsai.com/>

We found that the spacing held the branches very well, especially with copper wire. He also insisted that we do the "sling shot" method at the end of each branch just below the start of the needles. This entailed wrapping the wire loosely around the branch in a circle just below the base of the needles.

When it was time to position the branches it was quickly realized how important that step was. By wrapping the wire around, one was able to position the end of the branch precisely - usually up in the air. Once wiring was complete each person moved their branches into place. Then Walter would come around and move them again. He focused on creating 3 dimensional bends which enhanced the ruggedness and beauty of the tree. He would achieve this by bending the branch up and down, and then right and left in each bend.

Throughout the workshop Walter ensured that each student complete all work and focused on each individuals apparent weakness. We would hear, "That is a bad Jin, keep working...That is really bad wire work, you need to work on that." He would make each person complete the work without doing it himself. At most he would demonstrate or talk for 30 seconds but then quickly hand it over. At one point he stated, "I will talk for no more than five minutes, then you have to do some work." This type of teaching was obviously very important to Walter and I think that all the participants can say that they appreciated it and came away better for it.

As the hours passed our trees were looking better and better. Walter would go around in a circle, spend a few seconds with each person then move on.

These trees were collected in the mountains of Colorado, quickly moved down the mountain and put into nursery pots with 100% pumice. Then transported within 48 hours to the nursery in

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Pennsylvania where they have been living for the last couple of years. The trees were estimated to be at least around 100 to 150 years old and had very impressive flakey bark. These Ponderosa Pines grow at about a rate of 1 inch diameter per 100 years according to Walter.

Repotting will not be completed the next spring, but the following. Walter explained that with collected specimens when repotting you should keep as much of the root ball as possible. Collected trees survive better and have a more difficult time producing roots so it is important to keep them. He also recommended removing as much of the mountain soil away as possible.

With today's soil mix he recommends watering and fertilizing much more frequently. Because most of today's soil mix consists of very coarse, consistent size particles most of any liquid is washed away.

He explained that the traditional fertilization schedule is not frequent enough and that trees would benefit from more feeding and watering.

In the end, all seven trees had their own individual look and we had all types of trees from slanting and semi-cascade to more upright and traditional. But all had a very naturalistic look that showed decades of rain, wind, sun and damage to them to give them a unique and beautiful look. We are all anxious to see them fill out over the years to come and look even more impressive.



Bryan Mercer with Walter Pall and finished tree

