

Podocarpus nagi
A Tropical Classic



Bonsai Societies of Florida, Inc.

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Florida Bonsai

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ON THE COVER: Spectacular yamadori *Pemphis acidula* bonsai created by Cheng Cheng-Kung, headliner of the BSF 2008 Convention in Cape Canaveral.

A Message from the President

All is here and we are in full swing for our next convention “*Si-Diao BSF 2008*”. I hope everyone has received their Newsletters and the convention registration form that was sent to the membership via e-mail from BSF. The Convention Newsletter will be a monthly addition to your e-mail correspondence from BSF and you will receive them until June 2008. This Newsletter will keep you up-to-date on all the convention details and important information needed to make the 2008 Convention a most memorable experience. Please make sure any changes to your e-mail address are reported to Narelle Robbins, Corresponding Secretary, narelle.robbins@gmail.com and Carol Partelow, Membership Chair, gpartelow1@cfl.rr.com. If you don’t update your file with us you will not receive the information from BSF. This is very important information and we trying very hard to keep all BSF members current with the events of BSF. We have made many changes to BSF to bring us forward into the future and up to par with the modern age of e-mail and internet information. We can’t reach you if we don’t have your correct e-mail address, so please keep us informed so you don’t miss any important communications.

With that said, I hope everyone enjoyed the first newsletter introducing Mr. Cheng Cheng-Kung as our headliner. I also suggested visiting his website to learn more about *Si-Diao* carving. I hope everyone has had the opportunity to do so by now. There are many pictures and



information pertaining to his work and techniques which will help you understand his art of carving. Much can be learned from his website prior to the convention to become well acquainted with him. I think you will all be very happy watching and learning from this very humble, talented artist.

Along with Cheng we have many other talented artists to round out this convention, all of whom I am sure you will enjoy. We have included Florida’s own Ed Trout in a spectacular *Bougainvillea* workshop and a Bring Your Own Tree workshop. Mike Rogers will present a Shimpaku Juniper workshop, Toby Diaz will do two workshops: one with Shohin *Neea buxifolia*, and a second with large old *Ficus nerifolia*.

Other artists who will be traveling to us are Sean Smith from Pennsylvania doing both a Daiza Carving workshop and Tool Sharpening workshop. These will be hands-on programs, and details will follow in subsequent newsletters. Gustavo Bures from Puerto Rico will be conducting a workshop with *Bucida spinosa*, a tree native to his homeland. The material is again world-class and we searched long and hard to make sure it was worthy of these artists. We continue to strive for the finest quality material to make our members proud when leaving their workshops.

We have added another feature to this year’s program, which is the addition of several all-day workshops with the artists. This was done to insure that everyone has ample time to complete their project with the artist, and the full design is worked into the tree before the sessions are over. With the use of such challenging material, you will need more time to complete the work, so please notice that many of the workshops are full-day programs giving you an enjoyable learning session and ample time to complete your bonsai. They are listed on the schedule of the registration form as Part 1 & Part 2. Please take notice of these. More details will be included in the newsletters that follow.

As you now know, much work has been going on behind the scenes to put this event together. We want to make the convention a great learning experience. Please read your newsletters and if you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail the convention team

Pemphis acidula – A Tropical Classic

BY CHENG CHENG-KUNG

Assessing intricate branch patterns and rich shari, *Pemphis acidula* is an excellent subject for bonsai creation. To my knowledge, it is a volunteer native species that grows among rocky crevices along the coast. Its natural habitat is distributed from the region of southern Malaysia to Okinawa. Influenced by the climate, the species that grows in Taiwan has hard trunks with small leaves. However, the natural occurring specimens that grow in the Philippines have stronger character and bigger leaves. The former case is suitable for compact-to-medium bonsai cultivation but the later one is more suitable for large scale bonsai. As both the Philippines and Taiwan are often attacked by typhoons during summer, the trunks of *Pemphis acidula* always have a tortuously-wavy character.

Recently, cases of failure when cultivating *Pemphis* have been frequent and common in Taiwan. The main problem resides on serious leaf fall and branch loss during winter months. As a



result, many horticulturists thus conclude that *Pemphis acidula* cannot endure cold weather. In fact, *Pemphis acidula* can withstand a cold winter, but is indeed sensitive to sudden temperature changes. The following facts will evidence their cold hardiness:

1. Okinawa is also one of the native regions of *Pemphis acidula*. It is located at a higher latitude, where the climate is a lot colder than Taiwan.

2. If low temperature were a determining factor, *Pemphis acidula* would not grow naturally enduring the sea breeze of Okinawa's rock-faced coast.

So, *Pemphis acidula* is able to withstand cold winter (at least in the subtropics) if proper cultivation is provided.



Pemphis acidula bonsai created by the author.

What is the proper cultivation? It is a well accepted notion that it's a good practice to emulate the original environment conditions of each species, as close as possible, in order to cultivate healthy trees. Only with strong, healthy material the aim of artistic creation can be achieved. If one has a chance to observe natural occurring *Pemphis Acidula* (as can be seen in FIGURE 1) you will notice that they grow on spots

where both sea tide and sea breeze reach. Seawater serves as a water source on one hand and eliminates the frost harm in winter on the other. FIGURE 2 shows that their twisted roots simply cover coarse rocks or coral reefs! According to these observations, we know *Pemphis acidula* prefer to grow on places with good air ventilation and need lots of salt water and fertilizer. In addition, it's roots like to breathe freely.

Tropical Bonsai – *Nashia inaguensis*

BY MARY C. MILLER

*D*r. Popenoe, a former director of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, was the first to recognize *Nashia inaguensis* as a potential bonsai subject. He pointed it out to me during a Fairchild distribution day back in the 80s. He was right...woody trunk, small leaves, tiny flowers and fruit, fast growing, and fragrant too!

In its natural habitat the shrub is rangy. The secondary branches appear in whorls and shoot out long and straight. A full-grown *Nashia*, with ideal growing conditions, reaches about 7–8 feet in height. Fully matured in the ground, the trunk develops to 2–3" in diameter.

The leaves (approximately ¼" in length) when brushed or touched exude a delightful, spicy aroma. The flowers are even smaller than the leaves, white and very close set in groups on the branch. The flowers attract many pollinators, especially the Atala butterfly. Fruit of the Bahama berry is smaller still and develops in tiny orange to reddish-orange bead-like clusters.



SWEET NASHIA

Most people know *Nashia inaguensis* has fragrant leaves. Just brush lightly and they give a pleasant herbal aroma. During a particularly heavy blooming of my *Nashia* bonsai, I noticed a stronger, sweeter smell. It was the clusters of tiny flowers. Two scents on one tree, what a prize!

NASHIA AS BONSAI

This is a tropical plant with excellent potential as a shohin bonsai. The trunk of *Nashia inaguensis* acquires an almost fluted, old look very quickly. Rootage at ground level is consistently abundant and adds to the aged appearance. It does not develop a trunk very



Scale on the underside of branch is infected with *Asterolecanium* (pit scale).

quickly in a small container. For best results grow it for girth first.

The fast growing angular development is ideal for training in the clip-and-grow manner. Wire can be used to add movement to otherwise linear branches. The mature plant has very hard wood. When removing an unwanted branch, consider breaking it and cautiously tearing a shari rather than using a concave cutter. The results are very natural looking.

During the growing season development is rampant, sprouts

appear on the trunk as well as on branches. To keep an established Bahama Berry bonsai looking good . . . prune, prune, prune.

LOCATION AND WATER

Nashia is a true tropical, not a sub-tropical plant. It demands sun, heat, humidity, water and good air circulation. Meeting these needs can paradoxically create a bit of a problem as a bonsai. Full sun and good air circulation, where it is most happy, can cause this plant to dry out very quickly; primarily because the

Scientific Name: *Nashia inaguensis*

Family: *Verbenaceae*

Relative of: Lantana

Common name: Bahama Berry, Moujean Tea, Pineapple Verbena and sometimes known as "I Dry, I Die"

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Convention 2008 – An Overview

BY YOUR CONVENTION TEAM

At the 2007 convention, we wanted to set a new standard for the quality of the workshop material being offered. We wanted to provide quality workshop trees at a reasonable price, and judging by the fact the 100% of the workshops were sold out, I think we accomplished that goal. If there was a complaint, it was that there wasn't enough time to work on the material using the advanced techniques that we were encouraging people to learn and use in the workshops. I think that you will see that we addressed this problem in 2008, so please read on!

The theme of the 2008 convention is called "Si Diao" bonsai, which means silk thread carving and was created by our headlining artist Cheng Cheng-Kung from Taiwan. Another of our guest artists is our friend Sean Smith from Pennsylvania who is world-renowned for his daiza carving abilities. Since we have so much talent in carving at this convention, we thought it only fit to

provide our members with some material worthy of carving.

Our first workshop dedicated to carving will be on *Podocarpus macrophylla* and will be conducted by Cheng. These *Podocarpus* are unlike anything you have ever



seen in a convention workshop before. They are *big*. We were fortunate to get these large *Podocarpus* from our friend Robert Pinder at Dragon Tree Bonsai in Palm City. If you haven't

been there, you are truly missing out on some spectacular material. These *Podocarpus* are just screaming to be carved, so with the guidance of Cheng, that's what you are going to do. You may ask, how can we carve such large trees in three hours, to which I answer, you can't. So, you have a full day to carve to your hearts content, and I don't mean two-tree hour sessions, I mean a full day – eight hours!

Our second workshop is with one of Florida's favorite artists, Ed Trout. For Ed, we decided to get some *Bougainvillea glabra*, and being that this convention's theme is carving, it just wouldn't be appropriate to give Ed trees that weren't worthy of carving.



So, thanks to our friend Erik Wigert of Wigert's Bonsai Nursery in Bokeelia, we have extra large *Bougainvilleas* for you to work on. We brought several people over to Ed's house to take pictures of them, and I swear their jaws hit the ground when they saw the trees. It's really nice to have people tell you to sign them up for the workshop without knowing the price. Oh, nearly forgot to mention that this workshop goes all day too! And I do mean *all day* – eight hours!!

Our third workshop, builds on what we learned from David DeGroot at the 2007 convention and that is how to care for our tools. Sean Smith will be conducting a four-hour workshop on how



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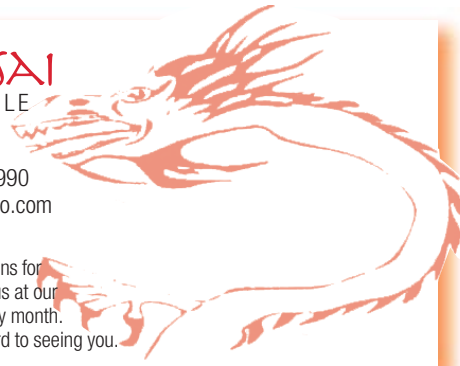
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