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Please be aware that our club's newsletters are now archived on-line -- Google (and Bookmark!) "Pikes Peak Bonsai" and on the left side click on "Newsletter". While there, also check out the link to see some 70 other Bonsai Club Newsletters On-line from around the world.

In order to keep compliant with our club by-laws, we will be adding the presidents name, David Conlin, to our club checking account.

THIS MONTH'S MEETING:
FEBRUARY 13TH
@ SENIOR CENTER
POT MAKING

NEXT MONTH'S EVENT:
MARCH 12TH-14TH
@ SPENCER'S GARDEN
NO OFFICIAL MEETING

NEW LOCATION AND TIME FOR BONSAI SHOW

It has been expressed by many members of this club that they would like to see the annual bonsai show be held at a different time and place. So it was decided that various members would check into other locations that would be suitable for our needs.

This new location would have to be free of charge, have lots of room, supply tables for our display, attract a lot of potential customers and new members and, most importantly, be secure

overnight.

Of the three or four people that volunteered to check into a new place, Steve Alford was the only one that came to the January meeting prepared to present a new location.

next show would be held on July 17th and 18th at the Citadel Mall.

Our president, David Conlin, felt that in all fairness to the members that were not crazy about the Citadel Mall (four people), we would allow them

one more month to come up with a viable alternative to the Mall. They will present their find-

ings, if any, at the February meeting on the 13th and we will go from there.



After a much heated discussion, it was voted on and passed by the majority of the attending membership, that our

FEBRUARY'S MEETING—POT MAKING

Our February meeting should be a lot of fun. We will be having our annual pot making workshop at the Senior Center.

There will be a \$5 fee to cover the cost of the clay and the firing of your finished piece. Everyone will get a five-pound chunk of clay. If there is any clay left over, you may purchase more.

Be sure to show up earlier than we have in the past. Since the Senior Center has started charging us for our meeting space, they are allowing us an extra hour. So our meetings will now start at 9:30 AM and end at 12:30 PM.



ished piece on while it dries, please bring it in. They don't have a lot of these available at the Senior Center to share and ours will be tying these

If you have any flat boards to place your fin-



boards up for an entire month while our pieces dry.

FEBRUARY BONSAI CARE

FEBRUARY

Basic care of bonsai should be the same as in January. This is a good time for planning. Read books, and look at photographs; study your trees, and try to imagine what you want to accomplish. The truth is that most of us lack the gift of "inspirational pruning;" we need to plan carefully. To paraphrase words from another craft, "think twice, cut once." It is a good idea to "make a decision" about a particular tree, taking notes or tagging the limbs you decide to cut. Then put it all away, and come back a few weeks later to look at the tree all over again. See if you reach the same decision a second time.

This is also a good time to go out and look at trees in nature, in particular, deciduous species that now show the lines of their trunk and limbs.

- Plan and scout out areas for collecting native material. Be certain to get owner's permission before collecting plant material.
- Take special care in watering. Do not water when soil is frozen. Wait for warmer weather and then water thoroughly during morning hours before the next freeze sets in.
- Wait to pot up flowering trees such as Apricot, Plum, etc. Enjoy the flowers. However, don't hold off until you see tiny leaves showing - that's too late to root prune.
- You can start to prune fruiting trees this month. See above for re-potting and root pruning flowering trees - **much depends on local weather conditions**. Be careful! This is a cold winter for Colorado.
- If you want to try your skill at grafting pines and conifers they can still be grafted this month. You can also start grafting deciduous trees late in the month.
- If you haven't prepared a supply of bonsai soil mix for your trees do so this month. Otherwise you will be caught in the middle of your very busy re-potting activity playing "catch-up" or "catch as catch can" in providing soil mixes for your bonsai. Preparing soil mixes now will save you time and frustration in the months to follow. Don't delay mix up your soil NOW.
- **CAUTION** - watch the long-range weather forecasts and don't be too

hasty to root prune or to re-pot if forecasts call for continued freezes and below normal conditions. Since our weather has been very rough this year, take care.

- Take the time this month to clean and sharpen your bonsai tools. The months ahead will call for much use of scissors, pruners, knives, chisels or carving tools. **A SHARP TOOL CAN PREVENT INJURY BY CUTTING WOOD CLEANLY INSTEAD OF JAMMING OR SLIPPING AND CAUSING ACCIDENTAL INJURY.**

TRANSPLANT/ROOT PRUNE:

- Almond - after flowering
- Apple - as buds begin to appear
- Apricot - after flowering
- Bald Cypress - when leaf buds just begin to show color
- Cherry - after flowering
- Crabapple - as buds begin to appear
- Plum - after flowering
- Quince - Chinese when normal bud activity begins
- Redbud - as flower buds appear
- Zelkova - when leaf buds begin to show green color

BRANCH PRUNE:

- Bald Cypress **ONLY** when actively in growth with new foliage out to the tip of the branch or if dormant and the branch is at least ½" in diameter (pinkie-size)
- Pine - red/white
- Quince - Japanese after flowering
- Apple, Crape Myrtle, Juniper, Spruce, Sweetgum

WIRE:

Bald Cypress, Cedar, Chamaecyparis - Hinoki, Cryptomeria, Cypress, Fir, Juniper, Pines - all, Podocarpus, Spruce, Yew.





**Written, Illustrated, and
First Published in the
1960's by John Patrick**

of the New Orleans Bonsai Society.

INTRODUCTION

Routine maintenance and care is essential if you want the best performance from the hand tools used in pruning and shaping your bonsai. During normal use of your bonsai tools, sap, pitch and dirt accumulate on the blades; cutting edges get nicked; and rust forms from the accumulation of moisture in the sap and dirt.

As the cutting edges become dull, greater pressure is required to make a cut. The cuts are not clean, and tearing and crushing of cells occurs, causing damage to your trees. Severe damage to your cutters can also occur. The combined effect of increased cutting pressures, dulled edges and accumulated dirt causes the blades to separate. The wedging pressures can be enough to break the tip of steel branch and root cutters. Therefore, good tool care should become a daily practice.

TOOL CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

If you follow a few simple rules the life of your bonsai tools will be increased and the time between sharpening will be extended, making your hobby more enjoyable.

1) Examine your tools before and after using and look for bent tips on scissors, nicked cutting edges, dirt accumulations and rust. If any of these conditions exist correct them before using the tool.

2) Do not use your branch or root cutters when cutting roots in a soil mass. Sand or small stones in the soil will nick or break the cutting edges. Clean the dirt from the roots or use pruning shears, which are not only tougher and more able to take the punishment, but are a lot easier to restore.

3) Do not drop your tools or throw them down carelessly. This can bend or break the cutting edges and is the most common cause of tool tip failures.

CARE OF BONSAI TOOLS

4) Do not overload your tool. Use a larger cutter or make the cut in small, easy stages.

5) Protect the tips and cutting edges of your bonsai tools when they are not in use. Store them separately in a pocketed cloth roll or compartmented tool kit.

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR TOOL RESTORATION

Pruning and cutting tools can be restored to good working condition by cleaning, sharpening and oiling. The materials required are easily obtained:

- Turpentine or Rubbing Alcohol
- "Scotchbrite" or "S.O.S." Cleaning pads
- Emery Paper - grit #320 or #400
- Emery paper - grit #240
- "3-in-1" or "WD-40" lubricating oil
- Oil stone, Arkansas stone, Washita grade, Paper towels

CLEANING OF TOOLS

Cleaning of tools after use is relatively simple, IF you have carried out your routine care program. The first step is to wipe off all dirt and grit. Next, the tree sap that remains can be removed by wiping the cutting blades with a damp paper towel. Pitch from conifers may have to be removed with rubbing alcohol or turpentine. When stubborn stains or light rusting is evident, rub the blades with a damp S.O.S. Cleaning pad.

To remove severe rusting use the #320 or #400 grit emery paper. Remove all the dirt, rust and sap off with the tool in a dosed position first. Do this to protect your fingers from the cutting edges and sharp tips.

You will find it easier to work when you support the tool on a solid surface. When all the exterior rust, sap and dirt is removed, open the blades, clean the faces of the cutting edges. To clean rust from the inside faces of a scissor type tool, lay the emery paper on a flat surface and rub the inside of the blade while holding it flat on the emery paper.

When all the tool surfaces are bright, wipe off all the cleaning dust and grit. Oil the tool all over with a light coating of oil, remembering to oil the pivot joint and exercise the joint several times to penetrate the pivot and drive out dirt and old lubricant. This is especially important on rivet type joints but, it will prevent rusting and reduce wear on all joints.

Now your tools are ready for storage or for sharpening.

SHARPENING BONSAI TOOLS

There are two types of bonsai tools, each requiring a different approach to sharpening:

1) Those with a scissor - cutting action, e.g., trimming and pruning shears.

2) Those tools with a mandible (biting) action, e.g., branch, root and "knuckle" cutters.

SCISSOR TYPE BONSAI TOOLS - DEBURRING

To sharpen scissor type tools, first check that the blade tips and edges are not burred. Any burrs should be removed before sharpening. To remove burrs, put a small amount of light oil on the oil stone. An equal mix of light oil and kerosene is ideal for honing. The lubricant is used to carry away the minute metal particles removed during the honing process.

Now, open the scissors and lay the stone flat on the inside of the blade. (Figure 1). Push the stone over the blade, making sure that the stone remains flat, until the burr is removed. Turn the scissors over and stone the opposite, inside face, if necessary. Excessive or unnecessary stoning can eventually deform the cutting faces.

Depending upon the size of the tool and the shape of the oil stone, as well as your adeptness in handling them, you may prefer to reverse the process of moving the stone over the tool, to moving the tool over the fixed stone. A little practice will help you determine which is best for you.

(Continued on page 4)

CARE OF BONSAI TOOLS (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 3)

SCISSOR TYPE BONSAI TOOLS - SHARPENING

To sharpen scissor type tools, open up the blades with the outside face up and the cutting edge toward you. Support the scissor firmly on a bench or table top. Place the oilstone over the outside face of the blade, (figure 2), at an angle equal to the original tool cutting angle.

Cutting angles may differ, depending upon the type of cutter and the manufacturer. Therefore, it is most important to maintain the original cutting angle of each different tool, as closely as possible. Push the oilstone in the direction of the arrows shown in figure 2, over the cutting edge until all the nicks are removed. Examine the cutting edge under a bright light.

If the edge is dull, (figure 2a), you will see a highlight reflecting off the cutting edge and if you gently pull your finger across the edge, it will slip with no drag. However, the sharp cutter, (figure 2b), will not reflect a highlight and if you gently pull your finger over the edge you will feel some drag. Caution: do not pull your finger along the cutting edge to test the sharpness! If the edge condition is as described for figure 2b, your blade will be sharp.

Turn the scissor over and proceed to sharpen the other blade as previously described. Only three or four strokes of the stone should be necessary. Make certain that you are holding the stone at the same angle for each stroke, as changing the cutting angle while stroking the stone will continually "round" the edge and will not sharpen the blade.

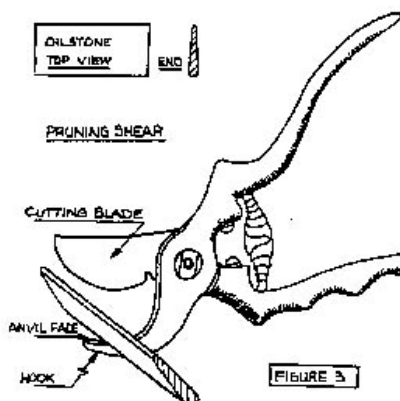
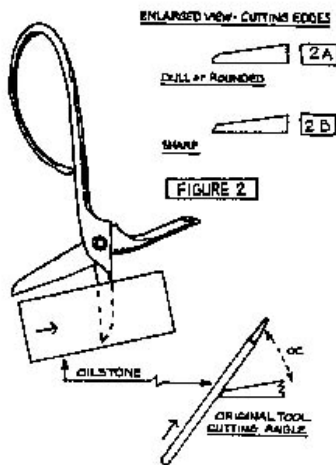
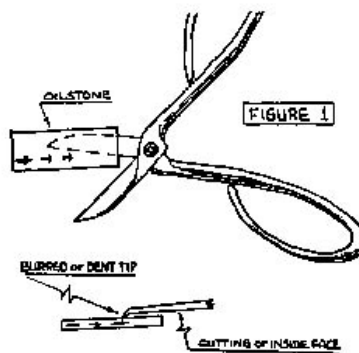
When you have completed the sharpening of both blades, wipe off all the stoning grit, oil the tool and wipe off all the excess oil with a clean paper towel. In the process of wiping off the excess oil, leave a fine coating all over the tool to protect it from rusting.

If your pruning shear, (figure 3), has only one cutting blade, sharpen it as described above. The anvil blade should be cleaned and examined for burrs. Remove the burrs from the inside face as de-

scribed above in figure 1. Wipe the shears clean and oil.

MANDIBLE TYPE BONSAI TOOLS - SHARPENING

The mandible type bonsai tools have a biting action, similar to your teeth. The cutting edges, when closed, should be in a straight line contact, (figures 4 & 4a), or a curved line contact, (figure 4c). If they are not in line contact, when you cut a branch or a root, the cut will be ragged or incomplete.



The first thing to do is to clean the cutter as described under cleaning of tools, then check for the line of contact, (figure 4b), by holding the cutter up to the light in a closed position. If any light shows through, the cutting edges are out of line. Nicks in the cutting edge can also be seen at this time.

Sharpening will generally not correct out of line and nicked conditions. To realign cutting edges and remove small nicks, place a six inch strip #240 grit emery paper, about half again as wide as the cutting edges, between the cutting edges. (Figure 4d).

With very light pressure on the cutting jaws, pull the emery through to hone the cutting edges. Do this several times then turn the emery cloth over so it is facing the opposite cutting edge, and pull it through several times. Repeat this process until the nicks are removed and the cutting edges are in line.

If only one cutting edge is nicked and the contact line is good, only the nicked edge has to be emery cloth honed. Any time this process is performed the tool will have to be sharpened.

In addition, after this process has been performed, the cutting edges may not close completely, because of the "stop post" on the handle of the cutter. (See figures 4 & 4f). If this condition occurs, grind or file a small spot off the cutter handle until you get cutting edge contact. Do not file/grind the stop post.

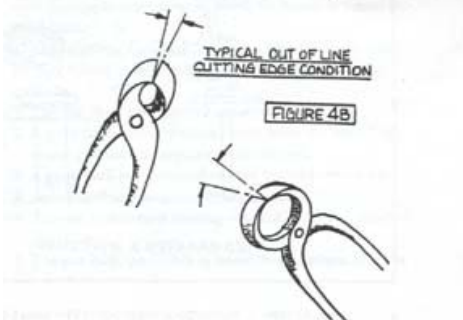
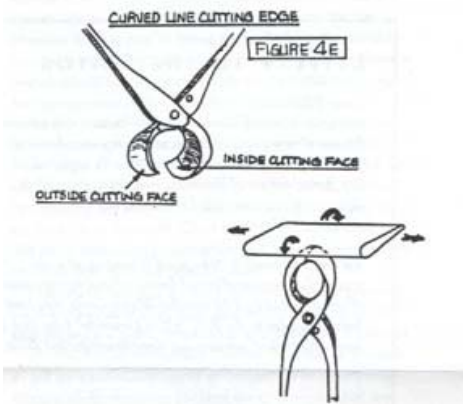
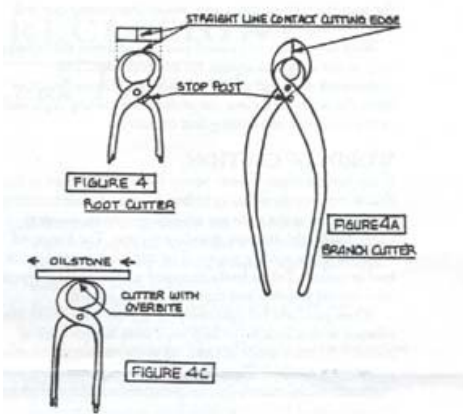
When proper, cutting edge contact is achieved, do not have more than three thousandths of one inch clearance between the stop post and the handle, as this will cause excessive pressure to be applied to the cutting blades, which may cause breakage or failure of the cutting edge.

When sharpening mandible type bonsai tools, place the cutter in a closed position on a bench with the outside face up. Place the oilstone on the outside face of the cutter and slide the stone over the face and along the curved cutting edge. (Figure 4e).

(Continued on page 5)

CARE OF BONSAI TOOLS (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 4)



Repeat the stoning motion until both edges are sharp. Do not worry about the cutting angles of the tool as they are established by the inside cutting faces, as shown in figures 4e & 4f.

If one cutting edge is still flat, from the emery cloth honing process, open the cutter and continue to sharpen that edge only. This should be done with care in order to maintain a cutting edge alignment and prevent the condition shown in figure 4b.

Both cutting edges of the mandible type cutting tool must be sharp. If one edge is

dull, it will act as an anvil and will not give a clean cut.

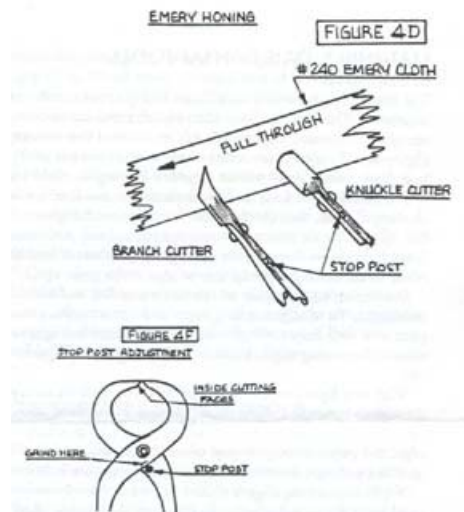
Generally, branch pruners, root cutters and "knuckle" cutters have an "overbite". (Figure 4c). The overbite is normal for mandible type cutters, and proper sharpening care will maintain this overbite.

With the cutters in a closed position, sharpen the exposed edge in the direction against the overbite edge. The underneath edge will not be touched by this process. Now open the cutter and stone the underneath cutting edge, taking care to maintain the cutting line contact.

WORDS OF CAUTION:

If the cutting edges of your bonsai tools are damaged so badly that they require the edges to be bench ground, do not attempt this yourself, as the tools are too lightweight to absorb the heat generated by the machine grinding process. The tempered hardness of the cutting edge will be removed, rendering the tool as useless. Take a badly damaged tool to a tool sharpener, with special grinders and experience to do the job.

When you have finished sharpening your tools, clean your oilstone with a little oil to help wipe away the particles of metal. Add a few drops of clean oil to the surface of the stone and store it covered. These simple steps will retain the sharpness of the stone's grit, keep the surfaces flat and prevent glazing.





Japanese Tansu Style Bonsai Tool Chest

- Handcrafted from solid hardwoods with dovetail construction.
- Two deep drawers to store Bonsai tools.
- Attached 10" turntable.
- Two solid doors with carved Bonsai trees.
- Spacious cabinet interior with rod to hang Bonsai wire. Plenty of room for larger tools and even a few Bonsai Pots.
- Wire protrudes through holes in back for easy dispensing.
- All for \$195 (wire not included).
- Contact Steven Alford — 719-633-9110
- **Also ask to see my new Bonsai Stands!!**
- **NEW!! Club T-shirts w/logo**
- **And now, coming to a meeting near you, bonsai pots!!**

Look to this space in the future for want ads, sales ads and a place to put that ad for your business!!

If you have anything to put in this space, let me know.

A 2x3 insert is \$5 for one issue, \$10 for 3 issues, and \$18 for one year.

A 3x4 insert is \$10 for one issue, \$20 for 3 issues and \$36 for the year.

For more information call Steve Alford at 633-9110 (evenings) or email me at pmpdchef@msn.com

Pikes Peak Bonsai Society

<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/PikesPeakBonsai.html>

Pikes Peak Bonsai Society
 Colorado Springs Senior Center
 1514 N. Hancock Ave.
 Colorado Springs, CO 80909
 Phone: 719-385-5933

Because of the situation with the Senior Center and the \$60 monthly charge for a meeting, it is strongly recommended that you check the above referenced website to confirm the location of the meeting you wish to attend.



CLUB MEETINGS

Non-members and those curious about this art/hobby are always welcome at no obligation!
 10 a.m. on the Second Saturday of each month, usually at the **Senior Center** (Ceramics Room),
 1514 N. Hancock Ave. (corner of Camarillo at the top of Hancock, 1/3 mile north of Uintah St.), just northeast of downtown Colorado Springs.
 (719) 385-5933