



Serving the Pikes Peak Area since 1987

Next up:

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2013

Wiring techniques and practical application. Great opportunity if you have a tree that needs wiring. At the Senior Center. 10 am to noon.

The use of copper or aluminum wires to shape branches and lines of growth in bonsai is the equivalent of putting braces on teeth: a temporary measure to redirect features. For the past century, wire has been the preferred method to design [slower-growing] temperate-climate plants. (Faster-growing tropical plants can more often be shaped using the “clip-and-grow” method.)

In the old days, weights, guy wires, spacers, twisted lead bars, and even miniature bamboo scaffolds have been used to shape dwarfed potted trees. Weights, guy wires and spacers can still be used to some extent, but wire provides the best-known method for [re-]creating naturalistic three-dimensional designs.

A properly-anchored piece of wire or two, each half the thickness of the branch or trunk being used on, can bend the limb enough. To fill in a bare space, add interesting curves to a long straight branch, foreshorten a too-long limb, spread out or re-position a cluster of smaller branches, move branches into a windswept or more spread-out design, give the illusion of young upright branches growing downward as if they were older snow-bent ones, and other reasons.

Wire is left on evergreens longer than on deciduous trees because the former are slower-growing and have rougher bark which a wire will not necessarily scar. Most deciduous trees grow faster and their smoother bark can show a wire scar much longer after the fact. Wire can be left on a juniper for several months or longer; an elm, especially during summer, can start to show a wire scar after a few months even.

Wire is left on, ideally, until right before it starts to cut into the bark. Remove by snipping the wire into smaller sections – never unwind wire, it really isn't that expensive compared to the potential damage to the branch you could cause in unwrapping it to save it for re-use. If the branch then does not stay in the desired position, you simply need to rewire it again, with another piece of wire. Patience is a key component of this art/hobby in many ways.

It is acceptable to show a tree with wire on it, but the wire should not be shiny silver – most aluminum wire is copper-anodized brown or purple. Some *Prunus* species and a few other trees react badly to pure copper wire. However, aluminum is more commonly used because it is so much easier to work with, and thus you shouldn't have to worry about your tree reacting

to copper compounds formed by exposure of the wire to moisture in the air or from watering.

Wiring can be challenging to novices, but it is a necessary tool in our box of techniques. Do not cross wires, and do not wire too-loosely. Practice is important, and this workshop is meant to give you initial success.

Upcoming:

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2013

Repotting trees (regular meeting). You are encouraged to bring a plant that needs repotting (your plant, your soil, your pot). At the Senior Center.

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, MARCH 8 - 10, 2013

Spencer's 16th Annual Garden Success Show at 4720 Center Valley Drive, off of U.S. 85-87 in north Fountain, north of the Wal-Mart and right next to the Goodwill store. Workshop for about 20 people on Saturday from 10 am to noon. Fee is \$35 for a juniper that you will work on there and take home. Advance registration is suggested; best way is to drop by Spencer's ahead of time and leave your workshop fee. Also, volunteers will be needed for our booth.

Remember, we are now on Facebook,

<https://www.facebook.com/PikesPeakBonsaiSociety> .

** Please review the updated About Our Club page on our website

<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/PPB/AboutUs.html>

For our continuing education:

On-line Club Newsletters from around the world

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

Some of the many Bonsai Forums and Blogs

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

Videos of Some Public Collections and Teachers

<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BoldlyGrowb.html#Collections>

What Happened on This Day in Recent Bonsai History?

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

And, as always, the bottom line is: enjoy your trees.

Cordially,

Robert J. Baran
Secretary/Webmaster