



MEMBER

HANDBOOK

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# KAWA BONSAI SOCIETY MEMBER HANDBOOK

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## A Letter to a Member

Dear Member,

Kawa Bonsai Society is pleased to have you as a member. We have been a club since 1980, and with your involvement, we look forward to a healthy future. Whether you attend one meeting a year, or several, we hope that you will learn something about the art of bonsai and that you will enjoy yourself while doing so.

During the year the society offers various benefits to its members:

Our Regular Meetings are held on the third Friday evening of each month, September through May. Our December meeting is usually a pot luck supper and gift exchange often hosted at a member's home. The June meeting has traditionally been an end-of-the-year picnic. There are no regular meetings held during July and August. Business is held to a minimum, and then a program on some facet of bonsai is presented. A list of programs conducted in the past is included in this Handbook. Members may bring their prides and problems for show and for help.

Study Group Meetings usually are conducted in the afternoon on the first Sunday of each month, year round. These are unstructured workshops to which members bring plants on which they want to work. There are always plenty of other members willing to offer advice.

Membership in Bonsai Societies of Florida (BSF). A portion of the dues you pay to Kawa each year is forwarded to BSF along with your name and address. This makes you a member of BSF as well as of Kawa. One of the principal benefits of this membership is that you receive a copy of the BSF quarterly bonsai journal, Florida Bonsai.

The Kawa Library offers a wide variety of books, periodicals and video tapes which are lent free of charge to members. All that is asked is that they be returned at the next meeting. There is a list of the library holding available in the library.

Public Exhibits of Bonsai are staged by our membership. The purpose of the exhibit is to inform the public about this horticultural art form and about our society. Our largest annual exhibit is staged in conjunction with Everybody's Flower Show held at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach in the spring.

Two Auctions are held each year in which bonsai, pre-bonsai and bonsai related items are sold to the highest bidder. Members may donate items to be auctioned or offer items on consignment. Consignment items net 20% to KBS and 80% to the owner.

Field Trips are conducted either to nurseries or to field locations to educate members on native plant material, endangered species, land rights, field safety, sanitation, ecology and selection and harvesting of cultivated as well as native plant material for bonsai. Educational programs are conducted at regular meetings before trips, orientations are conducted in the field prior to visiting the site, and field locations are inspected after collecting to insure they are in no less favorable a condition than before the collections were made. Field trips are usually held twice a year.

Visiting Teachers come to Kawa several times a year to provide expert, professional bonsai instruction and demonstrations. Often they will conduct a workshop at which members bring a tree to be styled, leaving with an excellent bonsai-in-training. Those who do not want to work on a tree may come as observers. A modest fee is charged for these events.

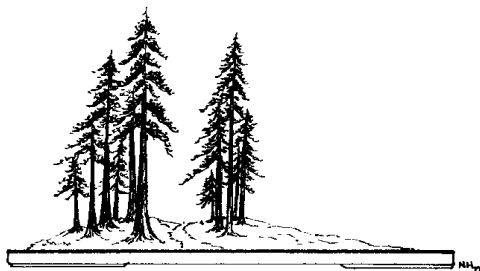
A News Letter is published ten times a year by the society to inform and educate its members. It summarizes the activities at the past meeting, presents the topics for the next, lists a calendar of future activities, gives tips on plant care, and provides other information to the membership on a timely basis.

Educational Programs are a continuing public service by the society for the general public. The first public program was conducted on Apr 15, 1981 during which a program on bonsai was presented to the Arlington Garden Club in Daytona Beach. Such public awareness programs usually cover the history of bonsai, tools used, styling considerations, pruning techniques, wiring techniques, pot selection, potting procedures, aftercare requirements of the newly potted bonsai-in-training. Often a slide show on bonsai will accompany the talk. In addition, a few bonsai are taken for show-and-tell.

Society members enjoy their meetings and workshops, use the ever increasing library of bonsai related written and video materials, read their expanded newsletter with its helpful hints for better bonsai, travel to State conventions, participate in field trips, use audio-visual resources available on the state and national level, learn in depth from visiting artists' visits, and relish the companionship of those who share this common interest.

None of these programs and activities are the sole property or activity of any one member. It takes involvement of many members for the organization to be successful. Don't hesitate to become involved. If you're not asked, volunteer. We learn by doing, and all of us have much to learn about plants in general and bonsai in particular.

We are pleased you are a member of our society.





## KAWA BONSAI SOCIETY



### A TIME LINE

Kawa Bonsai Society was formed in 1980 as a natural progression from Daytona native Tom Zane's basic bonsai classes. Tom had been stationed in Japan from 1972-75 where he studied this Oriental art and realized the satisfaction it could bring to others. After retirement from the Army and permanently settling in the Halifax area, he obtained a certificate in Horticulture from Daytona Beach Community College to become familiar with Florida's plants and to help prepare himself to teach the techniques of basic bonsai. After a year of teaching, his students wished for a greater involvement in bonsai outside of the classroom.

Therefore in November of 1980, 14 students and 6 enthusiasts informally met to form a Bonsai Society for the Halifax area. Nick Carter, and Al and Gerry Lake, long-time practitioners of the art lent their expertise and their enthusiasm. The name, Kawa, was suggested by John Naka, American Bonsai's most prominent Master. Kawa, "river" in Japanese, was the commonality of the Halifax area.

The Society was formed with many purposes in mind. The original members felt strongly about their art; they emphasized their reasons for formalizing their involvement in the by-laws of the organization. Briefly, their purpose was to advance the education of club members in the aesthetic, historical, scientific, business and social features of the art of bonsai, to promote the knowledge, interest, appreciation and enjoyment of the art on the part of the general public, and to engage in all activities to further these aims. The activities of the Society have always reflected these purposes. In addition to creating a set of bylaws, the members felt strongly that Kawa should be incorporated as a nonprofit organization in Florida. Kawa has been a nonprofit corporation in Florida since 1980.

During the first eight years of its existence, Kawa met in the Horticultural Building at DBCC where members participated in their bonsai society and where bonsai lesson continued to be taught through the College's Continuing Education Program.

Kawa's minutes and newsletters indicate that the first exhibit it presented was in conjunction with the Hibiscus Society's competition and exhibition in August of 1980. Since then Kawa has exhibited in various places in the community as well as presented numerous programs to organized groups of horticultural, social and civic nature in the Halifax area.

Society members realized at the inception of their group that resources in bonsai existed on a State level. Bonsai Societies of Florida had been organized in 1973. Its purposes and aims were a reflection of then-existing local societies, and it served as a model for subsequent societies. Kawa joined Florida's state organization and tapped its educational assets.

With Bonsai Societies of Florida as the sponsoring umbrella, a paramount asset was that recognized international and national masters of the art were able to travel to local societies to present workshops and demonstrations to further the art in ways which a local club with limited resources could not do.

Local and State involvement reward Kawa members, but the Society has made an effort on a National level also. Kawa has contributed to the North American Bonsai Collection housed in the John Naka pavilion located at the U. S. National Arboretum in Washington, D. C. There national trees will endure with time and dedicated care.

Bonsai takes years, as any involved student knows, and years also precipitate change.

In 1987 basic bonsai lessons became a Kawa function, not the function of an individual. Various club members assist in conducting the class. Kawa realizes that it is through instruction that interested area residents become aware of as well as a part of the art.

Monthly meetings have been supplemented by monthly Sunday afternoon club workshops. These workshops are devoted to styling trees and to discussing topics strictly related to the art itself; business is left to regular meetings. Now Kawa members may chose to join others on second Sunday afternoons all year for a workshop as well as on third Friday evenings for the regular meeting and program from September to June.

A vital change which more deeply involved Kawa's commitment to the Halifax area occurred in 1989 when DBCC dropped its horticultural program. The Society needed an anchor, and it happily became a member of the Council of Garden Clubs. The Society meets in the Council's Garden Center and uses the facilities for its classroom and workshops. It participates in the annual "Everybody's Flower Show" and cooperates in the Council's joint ventures.

In May of 1993, Kawa's presence as workers was quite apparent at the World Bonsai Congress in Orlando hosted by the Bonsai Societies of Florida. Then, a year later, during the Memorial Day weekend 1994, Kawa Bonsai Society, with BONSAI, SUN, AND FUN as the theme, hosted the Bonsai Societies of Florida State Convention at the Ramada Beach Resort in Daytona Beach.

During the summer of 1993 Kawa Bonsai Society become a tax exempt (501 (c)(3) organization. This means that most income is tax exempt and that contributions made to the society may be deductible from Federal income taxes.

Kawa was begun simply because people in the Halifax and surrounding areas enjoyed bonsai and wished to involve others in the appreciation of their chosen horticultural adventure. At times the quietest of motives can result in projects, activities, involvements, and pleasures original organizers did not imagine.

## Regular Meeting Program Topics



Following is a list of program topics which have been presented at regular meetings of the Kawa Bonsai Society:

Accent plants	Indoor bonsai
Art and esthetics of bonsai	Judging bonsai
Auctions	Literati style bonsai
Azaleas as bonsai	Mamé (miniature) bonsai
Bending dead wood	National Bonsai Collection
Buttonwood as bonsai	Native trees as bonsai
Carving dead wood	North American Bonsai Collection
Chinese bonsai	Pest and disease management
Chrysanthemum bonsai	Photographing bonsai
“Claf” planting	Power tools and bonsai
Collecting bald and pond cypress	Propagation (general) techniques
Collecting bonsai in the wild	Root-on-rock style bonsai
Companion plantings	Root-over-rock style bonsai
Critique of members’ trees	Rosemary as bonsai
Dead wood on bonsai	Selecting pots and repotting
Display bench construction	Selecting a bonsai container
Display stand construction	Soil and container preparation
Displaying bonsai and making stands	Soil for bonsai
Exhibiting bonsai	Summer care of bonsai
Fertilizing	Tool sharpening and maintenance
Flat-top style bald cypress bonsai	Tropical bonsai
Gardens, Japanese	Weeping style bonsai
Grafting	Winter care of bonsai
Group plantings	Wiring techniques
Harmony in bonsai	
Ikebana	





## Basic Bonsai Design Considerations

A well designed, artistically pleasing bonsai is the result of careful planning, shaping and controlled growth. While the art of bonsai allows for tremendous artistic freedom, there are some basic guidelines which are commonly followed. A person new in bonsai should keep the following artistic objectives in mind:

1. Bonsai should capture a natural look which recreates nature in miniature. Bonsai replicates the stately upright, the casual informal upright, the cascading trunk, forest plantings, landscape plantings, trees displaying dead wood and other trees which may be seen in nature. Keep in mind that nature is often harsh on her trees.

2. The ideal bonsai should look old. An ancient Oriental philosophy states that age creates wisdom and character. The look of age adds strength and dignity to a bonsai, and it is the artist's techniques and horticultural knowledge which present the illusion of age.

3. The scalene triangle is the ideal shape. In Japanese culture the triangle symbolizes heaven, man and earth. The triangle achieves oriental artistic beauty by having no two sides equal in length.

4. A bonsai, to achieve artistic beauty, should not be symmetrical. Nature is seldom symmetrical. There is beauty in asymmetry.

5. Bonsai may have an interesting accent piece in the design; a rock which adds to the artistic value of the overall composition. Figurines or other decorations are seldom used except in penjing (Chinese rock plantings).

6. The soil is usually covered with moss or other natural ground cover. This gives the soil surface a natural, mature appearance, helps to retard soil erosion, and aids in keeping the soil moist.

7. Nature takes a long time to produce its works of artistic beauty. Bonsai too take time to mature and to be artistically pleasing. A bonsai is never "completed"; it is a growing, changing organism. The tree teaches its owner patience.







## What Makes a Good Bonsai?

There are five areas to consider when evaluating the relative merit of a bonsai and they are listed below in their order of importance. A bonsai, to be judged a good bonsai, must be healthy, well groomed and give a good aesthetic impression to the viewer. Mechanical techniques used should not detract, and finally, the tree's maturity as a bonsai is evaluated.

### **Health**

To be judged a good bonsai, the tree must be in excellent health. Leaf color should be uniform and of the same color as a specimen grown in the ground. It should show evidence of good pruning practices which help the plant horticulturally as well as aesthetically. The soil surface, leaves, dead wood and bark should be free of algae, mildew and mold. There should be no evidence of pests. The bonsai style should be appropriate for the specie and the soil should be stable and capable of providing for the needs of the plants.

### **Grooming**

Oversized, damaged or off-color leaves and downward growing foliage should be removed. Soil surface should be free from debris. Moss or other ground cover should be healthy and clean. Moss should not cover the trunk or hide exposed roots. Pots should be clean and lightly oiled to bring out their best patina.

### **Aesthetics**

When a bonsai is first viewed it should create a strong impression which beckons the viewer to remain and take a second look. The overall composition should have a logical consistency about it; tree style, branch placement and shape, foliage size and pot color, shape and size should all contribute toward a unified composition. The tree and its container should convey a feeling of stability rather than one of stress.

### **Mechanical Techniques**

Wire, if used, should be applied evenly, in the appropriate size and without crossing one over the other. Wounds and dead wood should enhance the beauty of the tree, not detract. Branches and foliage may be placed to hide faults. Foliage and branch pruning should not leave dead tips and unsightly stumps.

### **Maturity**

The maturity of a bonsai's does not refer as much to chronological age or the number of years in training as it does to the aesthetic appearance of age. Maturity is simulated by ground-clinging roots, tapering trunk, downward growing foliage, branch ramification, reduced leaf size and internode length, aged bark and scars, dead wood and other technical means. A feeling that a bonsai is "completed" is an indication that it may have reached aesthetic maturity.



## Bonsai Terminology

Bonsai, as we know it, originated in the East and most recently migrated from Japan. Because of this a great deal of literature which you read and many discussions which you hear use words foreign to the English speaking person. To help you to understand the occasional unfamiliar term, the following glossary of terminology is provided.

Bonkei	Miniature landscapes using artificial trees, rocks, moss, statuary, etc.
Bonsai	Literally a tree in a tray. Aesthetically, a miniature representation of a mature tree in nature.
Bunjin style	The Japanese term for literati style bonsai. See literati.
Jin	A dead tip on a trunk or branch. When it is necessary to shorten the height of the tree or the length of a branch, rather than cutting it off completely, a jin may be created. This creates a natural aged appearance caused by lightning or weathering.
Literati style	A bonsai style in which the trunk is long and slender and the foliage is sparse.
Mamé bonsai	A miniature bonsai under six inches tall. It is pronounced “maw’-may”.
Penjing	The term for Chinese bonsai.
Saikei	A grouping of plants and rocks forming a miniature landscaped scene.
Shari	Bark is peeled from a branch or trunk to give the appearance of a mature tree that suffered a lightning strike or years of weathering.
Shohin bonsai	A miniature bonsai under nine inches tall. Pronounced, “show-hin”.
Suiseki	Viewing stones; stones which suggest specific views such as mountains, islands, waterfalls, lakes, plateaus, etc.



## Plants Which Don't Do Well in the Daytona Beach Area

Daytona Beach is located on the dividing line between two U.S. Department of Agriculture hardiness zones. Therefore growing conditions fifty miles north of Daytona differ from those fifty miles south. This affects what plants will and what plants will not thrive here.

One of the best sources of information concerning what will do well in a specific area may be found at local nurseries. If they sell it, it probably grows in that area.

Following is a list of plants which have been found to not thrive in the Daytona Beach area:

- |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Almond, flowering                  | Holly, convex                   |
| Arborvitae, emerald green          | Holly, okinawan                 |
| Arborvitae, pyramidal              | Linden                          |
| Ash                                | Maple, lace leaf                |
| Aspen                              | Maple, japanese                 |
| Barberry                           | Maple, norway                   |
| Bayberry                           | Maple, split leaf               |
| Birch                              | Maple, sugar                    |
| Cherry, weeping                    | Pine, five needle               |
| Cotoneaster (most dwarf varieties) | Pine, mugo                      |
| Cottonwood                         | Pine, ponderosa                 |
| Cypress, hinoki, dwarf             | Pine, scotch                    |
| Dogwood                            | Pine, white                     |
| Fir                                | Spruces                         |
| Hemlock                            | Yews (ones native to the north) |



*Norman Faddisile, '94*



## Bonsai Cold Hardiness

When the daily mean temperature gradually decreases in the fall, most plants adjust to the lower temperature in a process called hardening off. Cold damage can occur if plants experience a sudden cold spell without having had an opportunity to harden off. This adverse effect may harm even the hardiest of plants. If a sudden and extremely cold spell occurs, most bonsai will need to be given protection from the cold.

Under more normal weather condition when temperature changes are more gradual, those plants which are cold hardy do not need to be brought indoors on cold nights nor do they need to be given any other protection.

Plants should be watered in the morning during cold weather. Even those plants which are cold hardy should not be watered late in the day before a cold night. If the soil is quite moist it will freeze and this may kill the tender root tips. Additionally, the expansion caused by the freezing moisture may break the pot.

Many plants which will tolerate freezing temperatures when planted in the ground, will be damaged by such temperatures when they are being grown in a container.

A variety of plants which are not cold tolerant are grown as bonsai. They have to be afforded protection on nights when the temperature dips below their tolerance level. All plants classified as tropical and most which are classified as subtropical are not cold tolerant. The ones which we might be growing which need protection on cold nights include:

Any plant which is a "tropical"	Jade
Azalea	Lantana
Bougainvillea	Lignum vitae
Bucida spinosa	Malpighia
(dwarf black olive)	Mangrove
Buttonwood	Olive
Carissa (natal plum)	Pine, Australian
Cherry, Surinam	Pithecellobium
Gardenia	Pomegranate
Ebony, Texas	Portulacaria afra
Exora	(dwarf jade)
Fig (Benjamina, neriifolia and	Rosemary
salicifolia)	Sageretia theezans
Jaboticaba	(sweet Chinese plum)
	Tea, Fukien



## Plant Salt Tolerance

The U.S. D. A. hardiness zones give general guidance on whether a particular specie plant will do well in an area. But even if it will tolerate the climate in a particular area, it may not be able to tolerate the salt which is in the air. The closer you live to the ocean, the longer the list is of plants which will not tolerate salt. Azaleas are a typical example as they usually thrive on the mainland, but do not do well on the peninsula, especially close to the beach.

Following is a list of plants which are relatively salt tolerant:

Bottle brush	Juniper parsoni
Bougainvillea	Juniper, shore
Carissa	Lantana
Crown of thorns	Ligustrum
Cuphea	Maple, scarlet
Cypress, bald	Malpighia coccigera
Eleagnus	Myrtle, wax
Euonymus	Oak, live
Gardenia radicans	Oak, scrub
Hackberry	Pine, aleppo
Hawthorn, indian	Pine, Australian
Holly, dahoon	Pine, Japanese black
Holly, ilex vomitoria nana	Pittosporum
Ivy	Pomegranate
Jasmine	Sea grape
Juniper, hollywood	Surinam cherry





## Bonsai Annual Care Calendar for the Daytona Beach Area

Following is a general calendar of care activities. For more detailed care advice, check the "Tips" section each month in the KBS [NewsLetter](#).

### January

Organize your bonsai related activities for the coming year; do some reading, mark a calendar with important bonsai care dates, meetings, etc. , sharpen bonsai tools, bring plant records up to date. Dig bald cypress and any other dormant plant. Graft pines and pluck most of the old needles off pines. Shape azaleas and maples. Give full light to quince as they are early bloomers. Give one application of quarter strength fertilizer to all bonsai. Protect bonsai from any severe cold and don't let them freeze if they are already putting out new growth.

### February

Continue monitoring the weather for any severe cold that would damage trees which have started budding and continue the other care given during January. Root prune and repot plants which are about to sprout new growth, then protect them from severe weather after being repotted. Check fertilizer, pesticide and fungicide supply and buy any items which will be needed for the coming growing season. Get the necessary components for soil mixes and make enough of the various soil mixes to supply repotting needs. Clean pots and the potting area. Finish shaping azaleas and maples and any others trees which are dormant.

### March

Root prune and repot deciduous plants before they sprout new growth. Pot or repot the other material in the following order: bamboo, maple, hinoki cypress, pine and then junipers. Tropical plants may be repotted any time of the year. Pot or repot blooming and fruiting varieties after they bloom but before new leaves sprout. Prune winter damage when it appears that the last frost has occurred. Unwire any plants which were wired last fall. Increase watering as temperatures increase and growth begins. Begin half-strength fertilizing every two weeks. Begin an insecticide and fungicide preventive spray program.

### April

Complete repotting bonsai. Begin to fertilize at one-half strength every two weeks. Drastically prune wisteria after they flower. Take cuttings of plant material for propagation. Do any grafting needed. Pinch and trim to control new growth and to establish shape. Finish collecting specimens in the wild.

### May

Continue doing a lot of pruning and shaping of the bonsai by pinching and pruning to regulate new growth and to force ramification. Leaf prune zelkova and finish the leaf pruning of maples to create smaller second-growth leaves. Head back new growth on maples to one or two sets of leaves and loosely wire for shape. Do any air layering needed. Pot trees which recently finished blooming. Watch for pests and fungus on plants. Continue one-half strength fertilizing every two weeks. Propagate tropical plants by cuttings or air layers. Sulphur coat jin, shari and other dead wood on plants. Weed regularly.

## **June**

Finish air layering. Reduce fruit load on plants to preserve their health. Partially shade hinoki cypress, sweet gum and maple to slow leaf burn. Unwire most plants. Watch for the presence of pests. Prune to shape new growth. Set miniature bonsai pots into a larger container of calcinated clay to help retain moisture. Propagate tropical plants.

## **July**

Make no more large cuts on any plants until fall. Don't let plants get too dry; heat and wind act to remove moisture from the leaves as well as from the soil. Remove any caterpillars, snails or slugs. Remove wires from all plants. Give maples a soil drench of iron. Near the end of July remove all but two pine buds in each bud cluster. Shade maples, azaleas and other partial-sun plants from hot afternoon sun. Continue feeding every two weeks at one-half strength fertilizer. Apply time-release fertilizer to plants in nursery containers. Continue refinement pruning. Propagate tropical plants.

## **August**

August is another hot month during which your bonsai will need a bit of special care and consideration. Don't let plants get too dry, some may even have to be watered twice a day. Continue feeding every two weeks at one-half strength. Continue refinement pruning and pinching. Give azaleas a soil drench of iron. Continue to shade maples, azaleas and other partial-sun plants from the hot afternoon sun. Be watchful for insects and disease during August. Propagate tropical plants.

## **September**

Continue feeding every two weeks. Gather some wild specimens, especially seedlings. September is a good time to locate and mark larger specimens of deciduous plants which you might want to dig in the winter. Use a spade and do some initial root pruning. Insects and disease are especially attracted during this warm wet season so be on the lookout. Continue refinement pruning to better shape plants.

## **October**

Start preparing for the winter protection of your more tender bonsai. Reduce the amount of watering and the frequency and strength of fertilizing. Begin feeding the plants one-half strength once a month. Fertilize this month with a fertilizer which is either low in nitrogen or which has no nitrogen at all, ie: 0-10-10 to assist the "hardening off" process. Wire conifers. Once deciduous trees have lost their leaves, prune the plant's structure to shape. Do a final preventive insect and fungicide spraying. Take cuttings of junipers now.

## **November**

Continue watching the weather reports for predictions of low temperatures. Review plans to protect plants which are not cold hardy. Continue to pinch and shape any bonsai which are still growing. Wire conifers and plan on not removing the wire until repotting time in the spring. Make no major cuts on evergreens until spring. Juniper and some hardwood cuttings still may be taken. Critique your bonsai and make some tentative plans for spring repotting. Reduce watering, especially of deciduous plants which have lost their leaves. Fertilize once a month with one-half to one-quarter strength regular fertilizer.

## **December**

During the last month of the year continue to monitor weather reports and be prepared to protect non-hardy plants from cold damage. Cut back on watering and continue to fertilize only once a month at one-quarter strength. Collect moss and propagate it. Limit any pruning on evergreens until spring. Wire azaleas, maples and quince. Sulphur coat jins, sharis and other dead wood on plants. Plan to use bonsai as holiday party decorations. They may be brought in for a short period of time and while inside should not be placed near heaters, air conditioners or in drafts.



## Bonsai Information on the Internet

The Internet, or World Wide Web, has a number of web sites devoted to the art of bonsai. Three of the best sources for information and for links to other Internet sites are:

American Bonsai Society at: <http://www.absbonsai.org>

Bonsai Clubs International at: <http://www.bonsai-bci.com>

Bonsai Societies of Florida at: <http://www.bonsai-bsf.com>

### Internet Bonsai Club:

Anyone who has access to the Internet may subscribe to the Internet Bonsai Club which has some 500 subscribers. Each day you will probably receive 30 to 60 email messages on a wide variety of bonsai topics. Mixed in will be some social banter which you may or may not wish to read. You do not have to make postings; you can just be a lurker. But don't be shy about asking a question. You will most likely get an answer, probably several.

### To subscribe:

Send an email addressed to: [listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com](mailto:listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com).

In the subject block put whatever you want, it makes no difference.

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