

Newsletter of the  
**Hukyu Bonsai Society**

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of Tampa

MARCH 2006

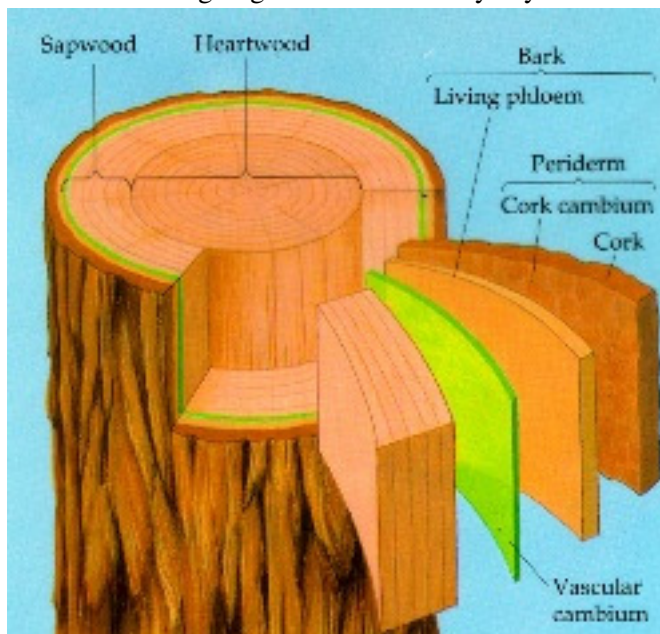


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### AIR LAYERING IN BONSAI

by Lucy Skelley and Steve Chapman  
of the Gainesville Bonsai Society

One process of removing a large branch or section of the trunk of a tree to create another tree is known as air layering. Before the branch is removed it is girdled, wrapped with peat moss and then sealed with plastic or other media, and the girdled section is allowed to root. After rooting, the branch is removed from the tree. This is a very common practice in bonsai to obtain another tree from an unwanted branch or to save a thick trunk section that was going to be removed anyway.



During the process of air layering, it is necessary to remove the bark, the cambium, and the phloem layer cutting away about a 1-inch wide ring of these tissues from around the circumference of the tree. The layer just under the bark is a layer of actively dividing cells called the cambium, the next layer of cells called the phloem it is responsible for the transportation carbohydrates and other photosynthates down from the leaves to the lower parts of the plant. The layer beneath phloem is called the xylem; it transports water and mineral nutrients from the roots and soil up to the leafy parts of the tree. Removing the bark, cambium, and phloem prevents carbohydrates and photosynthates from flowing down the trunk. It still allows water and mineral nutrients to flow upward to the leaves via the channels in the xylem, thus keeping the leafy portions of the tree from drying out and maintaining them with an adequate supply of nutrients. Removing the cambium layer pre-

vents the regeneration of phloem and healing over of the wound; the carbohydrates and photosynthates flow down the trunk and collect at the girdling site. The presence of this excess of carbohydrates and photosynthates at the girdling site, plus the presence of the water in the sphagnum moss, causes dormant adventitious buds in the area to grow into roots.

### THE PROCESS of AIR LAYERING

Materials needed to perform air layering include a sharp instrument, fresh sphagnum moss, root tone, clear plastic (saran wrap, etc), wire for tying the plastic (garbage bag ties), gloves to protect cuts on your hands from varying types of fungus that have been found in some mosses. The moss must be soaked in water for about 20-30 minutes before using.

**Continued on Page 3...**

## March: Guidelines for Care

Weather Protection and Location - If the temperature is staying above 50, tropicals can be moved from winter protection.

Watering - Plants will probably need to be watered more often, especially on windy days.

Feeding - As the buds begin to swell start feeding lightly with a balanced, relatively higher nitrogen fertilizer about every two weeks (ex. 1/2 strength 10-10-10). It's a good idea to rotate between organic fertilizer - full strength - and inorganic fertilizer at 1/2 strength.

Styling - Follow your normal routine. Keep after the new growth.

Repotting - It is getting late to repot unless it is an emergency.

Pest Control - Especially watch for caterpillars this month, also aphids, boring insects, spider mites, mealy bugs, etc. Use appropriate insecticide and follow label instructions. Sometimes soapy water will do the job (ex. 1 T. Basic-H in 1 gallon of water) used as needed to drown insects on any plant except succulents and the flowers of most plants. Spray two weeks after seeing white fly swarm. Repeat in 10 days except for spider mites, then spray every 3 days for at least 9 days.



## FUTURE EVENTS

**Saturday, March 18, 2006: Toby Diaz** will be the speaker at **our March meeting**. Toby is an outstanding bonsai artist from Miami. He is known for his close attention to detail and fine wiring techniques. He will work on a black olive ordered from Jim Smith in Vero Beach. **The tree will be sold to the highest bidder at an auction following the meeting.**

**April 21 to June 11, 2006:** The EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival. BSF members' bonsai will be displayed at the Japanese pavilion torii along the shore of the World Showcase Lagoon and at the "Meadow" behind the Pagoda, as well as on the porch of one of the restaurants. Since 2005, more bonsai exhibits have been added to include the Chinese Pavilion.



**May 25-29:** BSF Convention "Bonsai Bridges" in Gainesville, FL. For more information visit [www.bonsaibridges2006.us](http://www.bonsaibridges2006.us).

**See this month's insert for all the planned club activities for 2006.**

**AIR LAYERING** continued from Page 1.

Utilizing a sharp blade the area must be cut (ringed) continuously around the limb or trunk and then repeated approximately (1) one inch above or below the original cut, the larger the branch the greater the distance between the cuts. The area between the cuts must then be removed by cutting or scraping, taking care to NOT go too deep and cut into the xylem. Taking the sphagnum moss that has been soaking in water, squeeze out minimal water and form a square pad 2-3 inches wide. Sprinkle the rooting hormone on the pad liberally and form the pad around the branch or trunk. Wrap the entire pad with the plastic.

The top and bottom of the plastic must be tied securely with the bag-ties or wire to help hold in place and retain moisture. Be careful that no moss is exposed; this will act as a wick and cause maximum evaporation. Ensure that the upper tie is in a position that can be removed to inspect occasionally and add water as needed.



Place the tin foil with the glossy side in over the entire air layer, forming it tightly to resemble a baked potato, this will help to ensure contact and prevent over-heating.



Depending on the species of tree, roots should normally start to show in 4-6 weeks, although many take longer and some shorter. By removing the tin foil and checking while you water you can observe the development. They will start, as little white nodules on the branch or trunk, be careful they are very fragile at this stage. Once the roots have developed enough, the rooted air-layer can be separated from the original. Caution is once again required, cut the branch or trunk long if you are not sure about hurting roots, they can be recut at subsequent repotting. ☘

**SOIL FOR SALE**  
**\$3.50 per Gallon**

**Want to go to the BSF Convention...  
But not an active member?**

**It's not too late!**

**Rates are as follows:**

Individual 25.00

Senior (60 and over) 22.50

Family 35.00

Make checks payable to Hukyu Bonsai Society and mail to:  
Cindy Petterson  
2844 Prestwick Drive  
Lakeland, FL 33803

This includes your dues to BSF (Bonsai Society of Florida), which will send you a nice publication quarterly. If your State dues are paid by another club, you may deduct \$9.00 (unless you are on the Hukyu board of directors). I must have the name of the other club in writing. If you want to order a club name tag pin, (\$10.00 ea.), you can include this with the dues.

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### 2005 OFFICERS

**President:** Faye Miller  
**Vice President:** Wes Miller  
**Secretary:** Christy Herringshaw  
**Treasurer:** Cindy Petterson  
**Web Masters:** Esther Searfoss  
Jim Fergus  
**Newsletter Editor:** Esther Searfoss  
**Yearbook Editor:** Faye Miller

### 2005 DIRECTORS

Bill Henderson  
John Petterson  
Robert Yarbrough

### LOOK FOR US ON THE WEB!

<http://hukyubonsai.com>

Are you in need of tools for our very important hobby? If so, please contact **Steve Varn**. He sells the **Joshua Roth Tool** line at a very reasonable price. See him at a meeting or contact him at: **813-949-7778**.

### HUKYU SHIRTS & NAME TAGS

Contact Cindy Petterson @ 863-683-3555 to order magnetic name tags @ \$10.00 each. Contact Wes Miller @ 231-6837 to order club shirts @ \$25.00 each. We have men's shirts with pockets and a lady's style shirt. The name tags and shirts really look good at club events and club trips.

- Do you have a special concern or interest you would like to see highlighted in the newsletter? Would you like to write an article, provide a picture, or profile to share with your fellow club members? If so, please email them to me at: [esearfos@admin.usf.edu](mailto:esearfos@admin.usf.edu)

March 2006 Newsletter Insert  
Planned Hukyu Programs and Events

Month	Master	Program
January	Eric Wigert	Workshop/Beginning Styling
February	NA	Club Workshop @ USF (Club Trees)
2/25/05 - 2/26/05	Field Trip	Miami Area
March	Toby Diaz	Black Olive
April	NA	Club Picnic & Workshop - Setup Storage Shed/Improve Appearance of Tables
4/22/2005	Eric Wigert	Beginner Class for the Public
May	TBA	
5/26/05 - 5/29/05	BSF Convention	Gainesville, Fl.
June	TBA	
July	Master's Critique	Club Masters Critique Your Plants
August	Chris Frye	Black Pines
September	Alan Staford	Moss & Accent Plants
October	Club Auction	Donations, Club Trees, Etc.
10/21/2005	Eric Wigert	Intermediate Class for the Public
November	Mike Rogers	Bending Trees/Trident Maples
December	Christmas Party	TBA