

# BONSAI *in* South Africa

Promoting Bonsai in South Africa



*Piet Geldenhuys—Polokwane Bonsai Klub—Japanese White Pine*

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“Nothing sucks more than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong “

# Louis Nel

On the 20th of April, the bonsai world woke to the news that one of our beloved fellow bonsai Masters had died tragically. There are no words to describe what Louis meant to us. In his own words, he said about himself:

“One of the great secrets for a successful and happy life is ‘balance’. The art of Bonsai has been that balance in my hyperactive and physical lifestyle. I love the high mountains, empty African plains, deep valleys, long distances, big dogs and small trees. I trained as a pharmacist and make a living by being actively involved in two Pharmaceutical companies as well as a cosmetic manufacturing company.

I was given a small Bonsai as a gift in 1974 – it very mysteriously died in my care within two weeks. That was something a 27-year-old male ego could not handle! The result was visits to the library, nurseries and generally making a nuisance of myself at flower and plant shows. Even the Department of Forestry and the Botany department at the University of Pretoria were not spared a visit or two by an ignorant seeker of knowledge on the subject of Bonsai.



Taking part in endurance events like the Comrades Marathon has taught me to ‘never give up’. At last I came in contact with the Pretoria Bonsai Kai and have been a member since 1975. While again training in the veld for the 1984 Comrades Marathon, I came across some *Buddleja saligna* trees, which I dug up and started training as Bonsai. The trees responded very well and my interest in Bonsai changed to a passion – (especially *Buddleja* Bonsai). One of my *Buddlejas* was selected as a top 100 tree in the Japanese Airlines competition of 2000 and another in 2003.

I have had the privilege to be a demonstrator at four previous National Bonsai Conventions. A great honour was to be invited as a demonstrator in Australia for their seminar. I have been invited as demonstrator at the WBBF convention in Puerto Rico this year. An article of mine about ‘Bonsai in South Africa’ has been published in the British and Dutch Bonsai Magazines and has also been translated and published in the Czechoslovakian Bonsai Magazine. Another was published in the American bonsai and stone appreciation magazine.

To gather more knowledge I try to attend conventions, partake in workshops presented by International artists like the late John Naka, Ben Oki, Roy Nagatoshi, Harry Tomlinson, Walther Pall, Salvatore Liporace, Marco Invernizzi and Gijs de Boer. I once even talked myself into, and participated at a workshop by the Taiwanese master Cheng Kung Cheng during the Munich convention of 2001! The brains of Vaclav Novac, Marc Noelanders and Danny Use have unobtrusively been picked during private discussions.”

For more, or to leave your own message, please go to: <http://rememberlouis.wordpress.com/>. For more pictures of Louis and his trees, please go to: [Louis Nel Gallery](#)

## From the editor.....



I had to spend a few days during the last month in Johannesburg, and unfortunately for me, it had to be during a very cold spell. That made me appreciate the temperate winter weather in Zululand. I am also grateful that we can potter around in the bonsai-en (almost) all year round.

Recently, at a club meeting, as well as some Facebook discussions, the issue of fertilising came up again. I have done some research and asked for comments from various people. The article on page 10 and 11 is the result of that, but ultimately, it is a personal choice and only YOU can know the needs of your trees in your region.

April was a sad month for bonsai. Louis Nel died tragically and condolences poured in from all over the world. A blog was started in his honour, for your messages and comments, please go to [.http://rememberlouis.wordpress.com/](http://rememberlouis.wordpress.com/).

For those interested, I believe there is still space on the BCI tour to Japan. And for the rest? Hope to see some of you in Cape Town at Oyama Bonsai Kai's 25th Birthday Bash.

## Essential Knowledge of Plant Physiology



FOR BONSAI GROWERS:

by Dot Henegan

Maybe it will be easier to remember all the rules and tips we heard if we understand the physiology of plants. **Plants need water, carbon dioxide, oxygen, sun energy, optimum temperatures and mineral salts for growth.**

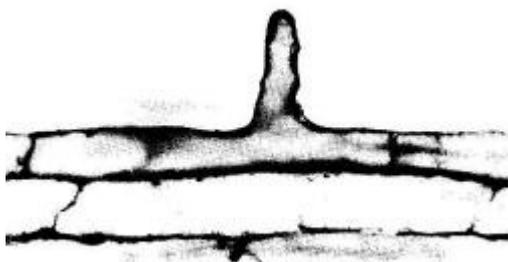
### 1 Water

The **microscopically small** root hair at the ends of every small root of the tree is responsible for the absorption of water and dissolved minerals through the process of **osmoses**.

#### Osmosis:

This is the process where **solutions move from a high concentration to a lower concentration** through a semi permeable membrane (the cell walls).

***Extension of cell wall to form microscopically small root hair to absorb water and dissolved minerals. It remains part of the epithelial cell and dies down after a few days and when exposed to air during transplantation of the tree.***



Normally there will be a **higher concentration of water molecules** in the growing mix than in the cell-sap therefore water will move through the cell wall into the cell.

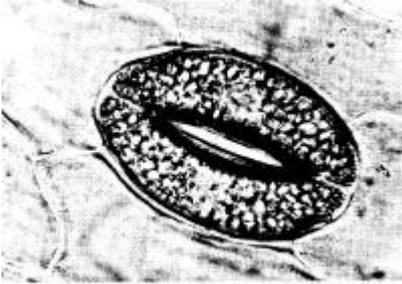
If the container is very dry during a hot windy day the danger of **reverse osmoses** is possible and dyeing down of parts of the tree will occur and if not corrected soon, the whole tree will die.

**These are the reasons why** trees must always be damp and **no fertilizers** are given in the hottest part of the year. The concentration of minerals will be too high and the water molecules too low to enter the cell. During the hottest part of the year growth also slows down and thus less nutrition needed.

# Essential Knowledge.....continued

## Transpiration:

This is the process where water vapor is secreted by the stoma at the bottom of the leaves.



The stomata's guard cells can open or close according to the amount of water available in the cells of the leaves. It contains chloroplasts contrary to the other cells at the bottom of the leaf.

If these stoma shut down too often it is detrimental to the growing process of the tree as the carbon dioxide and oxygen also enters through the stoma. The shortage of carbon dioxide is also a reason why the growing process slows down in the hottest season.

Transpiration is essential for the **transportation of dissolved minerals** from the roots to the leaves where it is used in the production of hormones, enzymes and starches and sugars to supply energy to the rest of the plant. If the growing mix is dry, this “**transpiration pump**” stops which will lead to condensation of cell-sap in the root hairs and lack of water and minerals in the leaves.

**These are the reasons why** you must keep your trees **damp all the time**.

When trees with leaves are **transplanted**, most of the leaves must be removed to reduce transpiration because the roots are reduced. To help the tree overcome this stress, put a transparent plastic bag over it and move it to **full shade**. This way it will still be able to produce sugars but transpiration is less till **new root hairs are produced**. After a week the bag can be opened and after 2 weeks remove it but do not put it in full sun yet. Wait till signs of new growth occurs.

**Digging deciduous trees** from the ground in spring before leaves break and **evergreen tree's** leaves must be reduced to the minimum according to the species. Remove all the leaves from Olives.

**This is also the reason why** all the leaves of **cuttings** are removed except the last leaf at the apex. This leaf is necessary for photosynthesis (production of sugar) to supply energy for root formation.

**Wilting sometimes occur while the growing mix is wet.** If you do not understand this, too much water will damage the tree even more.

Plants wilt sometimes because the roots cannot absorb the available water. There are two reasons for this:



**Root rot** occurs when the tree is too wet for long periods of time. Either the drainage is poor or it is watered too often.

Take the tree out, remove all the rotted parts and rub with **flowers of Sulphur** because this rotting is caused by a fungus. Plant it in a very coarse well draining mix and keep damp, not wet. This happens often with trees that have fleshy roots like Baobab, Kirkia Wilmsii, Greyea southerlandia, etc



Rub Flowers of sulphur to the open parts of the roots after all damaged tissue are removed to prevent further rotting.

Treat it with an appropriate insecticide (See article on [p12 & 13](#) on insecticides)

# Essential Knowledge.....continued

## 2 Carbon dioxide.

It is one of the gasses that compile the air we breathe. It is freely available and forms the building block of all organic substances. In the leaves of plants carbon dioxide combines with water to form starches and sugars (carbohydrates) in the **photosynthesis process**.

### Photosynthesis

It is the process in which carbon dioxide and water combines in the presence of chlorophyll (green colouring) in leaves during which **energy from the sun is locked in the starches and sugars** that are produced. These energy rich nutrients are stored in the different parts of the plant. The energy can be released where and when needed by the action of enzymes during the respiratory process.

**This is the reason why** the tree's leaves must always be **healthy and bright green**. If it is not bright green the cause must be corrected. Yellowing of the leaves is known as **chlorosis** and can be caused by different factors.

**Nutrition insufficiencies** must be corrected. Mostly it is a lack of nitrogen (N) or sometimes Iron (Fe), Magnesium (Mg) or Manganese (Mn). During spring supply a balanced fertilizer and once only trace elements like Trelmix or any the product. Seagro contains a high percentage of Nitrogen. To correct Chlorosis in acid loving trees, iron chelate or aluminium sulphate mostly can do the trick.

**Fungus infection** can also damage the chlorophyll. Usually it discolours the leaves. Spray with a fungicide or dust with flowers of sulphur.

**Insects** that eat the leaves will diminish the leaf surface for photosynthesis. Treat according to kind of insect.

Do not try to grow small leaves or plant the tree in a small container before the trunk has the desired diameter because **the bigger the total leaf surface the faster the trunk will thicken**. After the trunk reaches the desired diameter, you can plant it in a bonsai container. Now, for the first time cultivation of small leaves is the object. The following techniques can be practiced.

**Defoliation of deciduous trees** after the spring growth spurt, mostly end of November. Remember to remove the apical bud of every branchlet to ensure budding of all the side buds. The apical bud secretes a hormone that prevents budding of side buds.

In **evergreen trees** the biggest leaves must be removed continuously as well as in Maples. This reduces photosynthesis surfaces which will stimulate formation of more and smaller leaves.

## 3 Oxygen

It is also a normal constituent of air and thus freely available. It is necessary in all living organisms to set energy free from the carbohydrates and other organic nutrients.

### Respiration process

This is the process in which **energy is released** from the carbohydrates and other nutrients. Carbon dioxide and water are released. Energy is essential for formation of new cells (growth), renewing of cells and production of enzymes and hormones.

**This is the reason why** bonsai are planted in a **very loose growing mix** that will drain quickly. The empty pockets round the roots contain the carbon dioxide released in the respiration process. It must be replaced by Oxygen for respiration of the root hair. As the water runs through in the draining process, the pockets are filled with Oxygen rich air.

**This is the reason why** bonsai in a very course mix grows better than trees in ordinary soil.

## 4 Sunshine energy

During the Photosynthesis process **energy of the sun** is used to produce the carbohydrates which will supply energy when needed. When plants do not have enough direct sunlight the leaves are soft, pale green and the stems are sloppy.

**That is the reason why** Bonsai cannot be grown successfully indoors continuously.

Most of the chlorophyll is at the top of the leaves. If grown near a wall or under a tree the Bonsai tends to grow towards the light. To prevent it being skew, turn it every day with 45° or ones a

# Essential Knowledge.....continued

week with 90°. Do not turn it for 2 weeks before a show, letting it face the light. The leaves will then all face the front at the show. Trees that are tender to frost will have to be indoors during winter. They will degenerate because the **ultra violet rays cannot penetrate glass**. Prevent this problem by

- putting the trees outside on alternative days
- open a window next to the tree during the day even if it is cold,
- Install special lights to supply the necessary ultra violet light.

One of the best ways to grow bonsai is to install white shade nets of about 50%. This will supply enough sunlight but reduce transpiration (loss of water) and if installed correctly, protect the trees against hail to a certain extent.

## 5 Optimum temperatures

The optimum temperature for growing most plants is between 20°C and 30°C. Different species have different requirements according to their natural habitat.

Plants have an intrinsic characteristic that determines their **physiological cycles** like growing, resting, flowering, etc. These cycles are determined by hormones and enzymes and these are influenced by day and night temperatures and day lengths. Commercial growers manipulate this to produce their products at the most profitable times.

All plants have an **active growing phase and a dormant phase**. Different kinds of plants have different growing phases but most grow the fastest in spring and some, like Olives, have a second spurt when the temperature starts declining after high summer temperatures.

In early autumn deciduous trees prepares for the dormant period by **subtracting nutrients** from the leaves and deposit it in stems and buds to harden it off and store the energy for the next growing season. A high Potassium fertilizer in February will also help the trees against cold winters.

**Autumn colours** are caused by the subtracting of sugars and other nutrients from the leaves.

All trees must have a rest- or dormant phase. It is possible to keep trees constantly growing by manipulating their feeding, pruning, temperatures and day lengths but some researchers say trees treated like this will not survive for more than 4 years.

During periods of very **high temperatures no fertilizers** are given especially not high Nitrogen. It will cause more stress on the tree.

The **resistances against fungus** also diminish during high temperatures. Keep watch for a fungus that looks like black dust. It grows on Ficus species and also on the secretions of aphids on elms.



## ***Black fungus on Ficus Burt davyii's leaves and stems.***

Very high day temperatures can **increase the temperature inside a dry container** up to 60°C. This will burn the roots and can cause root rot. Put the trees in a spot where it is in the shade during the hottest part of day.

## 6 Mineral salts.

The necessary minerals for a healthy tree are supplied by fertilizer solutions absorbed by the roots but it can also be absorbed by the leaves. If fertilizers are sprayed on the leaves the concentration is a bit

stronger (see the directions on the container). Add an agglutinant for better results.

**Fertilizers on the leaves react quicker** but it cannot substitute root application. The effect of root feeding is obvious after  $\pm$  3 weeks but that of leaf feeding is visible after about 10 days.

**Illustrations from: *The Secret Life of Plants* by Gillian Beckett (p 85 and 101)**

## Doug Hall

After I killed my first bonsai tree (in the 80's) I bought another at a show in a Mall in Randburg... which I also killed. Aahh, then and only *then*, did I buy a bonsai book. My first book was "**Growing Bonsai in South Africa**" by Doug Hall and I still remember how impressed I was that a book on bonsai in South Africa was available. (Needless to say, it did not stop me from killing any more trees.)

Doug Hall was one of the pioneers in bonsai in South Africa. In the 1950's Doug became interested in bonsai through a Chinese friend. Kobanashi, one of the first bonsai books ever written, was one of his favourites as he felt it captured the essence and philosophy of the meaning of bonsai. He said it also connected HAIKU with the art of bonsai, and anyone with Doug's book, knows Haiku played a big part in Doug's bonsai life.

In the late 50's, a floral exhibition was held in Johannesburg City Hall with a first-in-South Africa Ikebana exhibition. By late Friday afternoon, only a few Ikabana exhibitors had pitched up and Bert Lacey, the then Secretary of the Transvaal Horticulture Society phoned Doug in a panic, asking for a few bonsai to fill the space. This event even led to a radio interview and as a direct result, a branch of the Bonsai Society of South Africa was formed.



He was a founder member of Eastern Bonsai Society which was formed in January 1972 which started holding informal 'meetings' in Primrose, Germiston. Initially the club insisted on running on a limited membership, but this soon had to be abolished. According to records, Doug stepped down as Secretary in 1989 due to ill health. Of Doug, people had said that he led by example and freely shared his knowledge of horticulture and bonsai alike. He continued to help structure club meetings and handled workshops. He played an instrumental role in the clubs financial situation by coming up with 'excellent sought after' raffle material. Doug is also fondly remembered for his total commitment to his wife, Steph. (Picture kindly supplied by Pam Norquay)

When Doug's health deteriorated to the extent that he could not look after his trees, he gave it all away. But at some stage, the club arranged to have a "Tribute to Doug Hall" and invited everyone who had owned a Doug Hall tree to participate. In 1996 he was invited to become the "Patron of the East Rand Bonsai Kai" which he accepted.

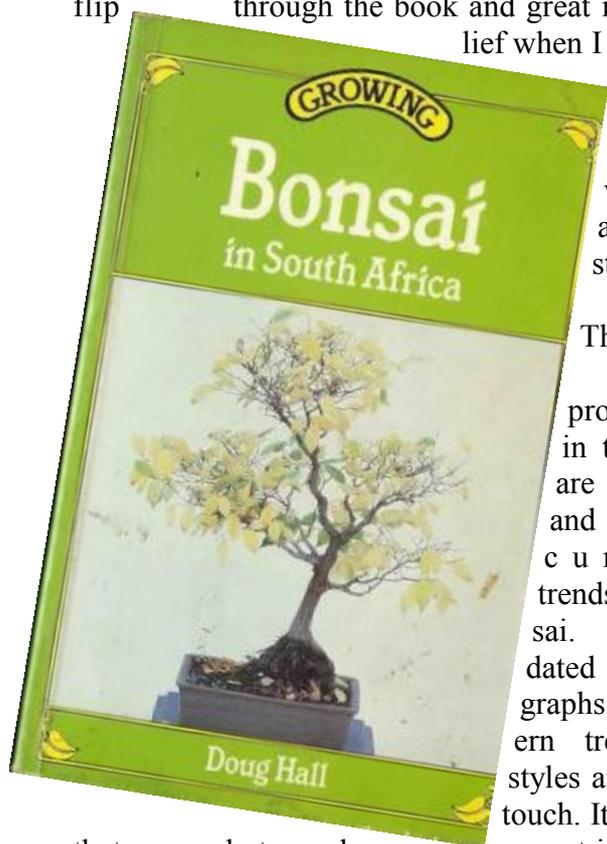
In the years that followed, Doug wrote many Haiku and introduced several new designs and styles namely: The Pien-tshu Style (Plaited Tree); Kuma Style (Spider Design) and Toobuku Style (Fallen Tree). He introduced the idea of Slate planting, using hard clinker as an alternative to rock, hypertufa (artificial rock) and the idea of threading a branch through a drilled hole in the trunk to create a new branch. He made famous the saying: "make room for the birds to fly through". He wrote two books, one with Don Black as well as a booklet :Bonsai Basics: with Pieter Visagie. The "South African Bonsai Book" had two impressions and an Afrikaans edition. "**Growing Bonsai in South Africa**" was first published in 1988 and has had five impressions. In 2002, Doug signed a copyright agreement with John Haw of Jo-Da Bonsai Distributors, who are also the sponsors, for a revision of his book. He could unfortunately not attend the launch of his book, a copy of his apology sent to the organizers is on the opposite page.

(All of the above information kindly supplied by John Haw of Jo-Da Bonsai Distributors)

When I approached John Haw about information about Doug, he did not hesitate. When John then gave me a copy of the revised "**Growing Bonsai in South Africa**", and asked me to do a review of the book, it felt as if I had 'arrived'. I couldn't wait and immediately started paging through the book.

At first, the improvements and additions were not obvious and I decided to wait until I got home. For, at home, I had a copy of the very first edition. The pages are yellowed and there are copious notes added by me as I studied his work and tried to learn from it. I struggled to understand the Haiku until a Chinese friend explained it to me .... And then I fell in love with it!

The very first difference I notice, is the price. I paid a whole R22.50 for the book way back in 1989 and I remember cringing—at the time. It was a lot for a poor student then. I next quickly flip through the book and great is my relief when I see that

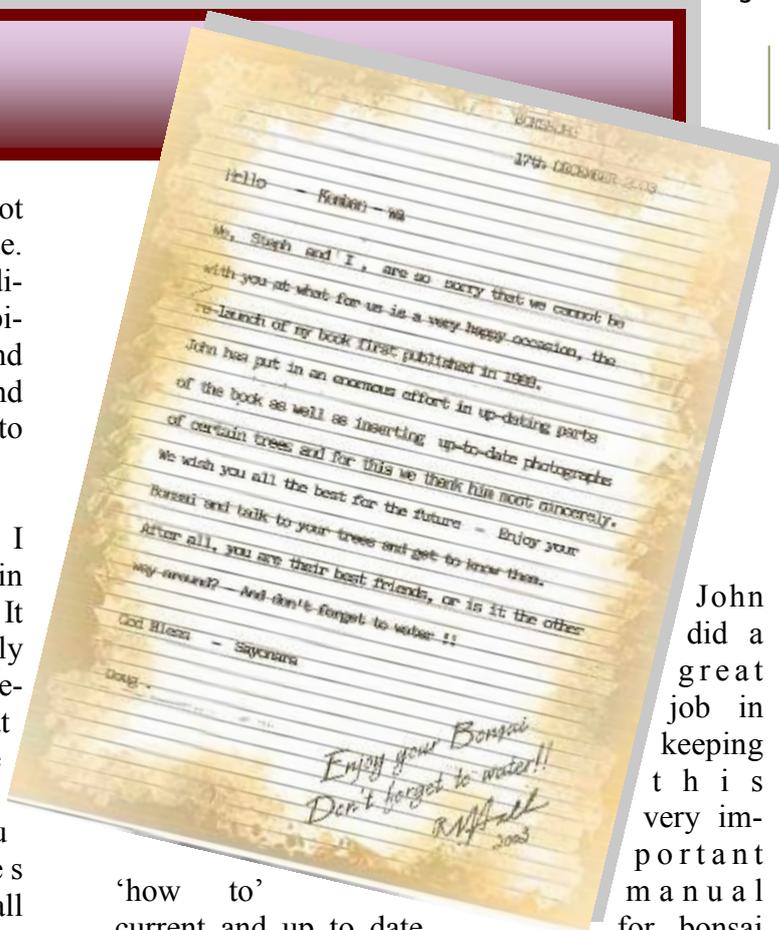


Haiku verses are all still there.

The improvements in the book are subtle and embrace current trends in bonsai. The updated photographs of modern trees and styles are a nice touch. It is a pity

that more photographs are not in colour, but one realises the restraints of a printing budget. This book is not a coffee table book, although it is lying on my coffee table next to my chair in the lounge and I find myself reaching towards it as I rediscover the text and lessons learned and half forgotten from long ago.

John Haw's style of writing compliments that of Doug Hall's and if it were not for the older version, I would not have picked up on any changes. There are some typing errors, which distract from the almost perfect instruction book, but hopefully it will be seen to in the reprint due out later this year.



John did a great job in keeping this very important manual for bonsai

growers and artists alike, in South Africa.



John Haw and his wife, Frieda are the owners of Jo-Da Bonsai Distributors in Dunnotar, Gauteng. You can contact them on 011 734 2765.

ISBN NO : 0620312556 available from [Jo-Da Bonsai Distributors](#) for R175.00

God made rainy days, so bonsaists can get the housework done.

# Fertilisers—Chemical or Organic.....Caroll

Organics vs chemical? An argument that does not necessarily be settled today, or, if ever, for that matter, but no-one can argue that a good nutrient programme is a must. Fertiliser is often referred to as plant food, but this is a poor concept. Real food for plants is carbon dioxide and water. Fertiliser more equivalent to vitamins. The nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and minor elements contained in fertiliser are necessary for cell division and enzyme processes that allow photosynthesis and growth to proceed.

Nitrogen, (N), is in part responsible for the green colour of the leaves, length of internodes, amount of the new growth and leaf size. Nitrogen is needed for cell division and the manufacture of proteins.

Phosphorus, (P), is also necessary for cell division and is a necessary element in DNA, RNA and fatty substances. It makes plant leaves dark green. It is necessary for good root growth and flowering.

Potassium, (K), activates some cell enzymes and is associated with healthy cell activity. A deficiency can lead to a chlorosis of the leaf margin.

Some fertilisers manufacturers will state on their labels an analysis or composition of the fertilisers. Three large numbers will usually be prominent on the front of the package. This is the NPK analysis. Numbers such as 15-15-15, 20-20-20, or 18-6-12 are common. These numbers are the percentage by weight of the N-P-K, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium contained in the fertiliser.

### Choosing the right fertiliser.

**2:3:2** - A good all-round mixture for flowers, shrubs, lawns and vegetables.

**3:1:5** - With extra potassium, useful for all vegetable crops (tomatoes, strawberries), fruit trees, sweet peas, roses and other flower production.

**4:1:1** - Good on all lawns to stimulate leaf growth of foliage and foliage crops (lettuce, cabbage).

**3:2:1** - Good to stimulate leaf growth and as a general feeder, particularly in sandy soils. This formulation is also available as **3:2:1 (28) SR**, which is a slow-release nitrogen fertiliser which can be applied at any time and does not need to be watered in immediately after application.

Other fertilisers available that contain mainly one element are:

**L.A.N.** - Nitrogen for leaf growth with a more alkaline effect on soil.

**Ammonium sulphate** - Pure nitrogen for leaf growth, but will also acidify the soil.

**Super phosphate** - Used when planting or preparing planting holes, as most South African soils are deficient in phosphorus.

**Bone meal** - Sold as Bone Phosphate. Does the same work as super phosphate but is an organic source of phosphorus.

Other sources of these elements are manures, and other organic materials such as guano and kraal manure.

| Manures | N     |
|---------|-------|
| Cow     | 49%   |
| Horse   | 5,9%  |
| Pig     | 4,9%  |
| Poultry | 9,4%  |
| Sheep   | 9,0%  |
| Guano   | 2-12% |

### Organic Versus Inorganic Argument

Major elements needed for plant nourishment are N, P, and K. The basis doesn't matter to the plant. The salts will ultimately be used by the plant in exactly the same fashion. The main benefit of organic fertilisers is its slow release of nitrogen. So what do we really want for our trees?

When applying fertilisers it is better to:

- Use small quantities at regular intervals, rather than large quantities less frequently
- Never pile fertilisers against the stems or trunks of plants, but always spread it evenly over the entire root area

Always apply to damp soil and water in immediately after application, except in the case of slow-release fertilisers, which do not have to be watered in immediately after application. If ordinary fast-release inorganic fertilisers are applied and not watered in, the plants will be burnt.

The Pretoria University had recently completed a study on Organic versus Chemical and they came to the conclusion that the use of Chemical gave better results. Jen-Hshuan, (2006) sums up the advantages and disadvantages of each as such:

|                     | ADVANTAGES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | DISADVANTAGES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chemical Fertiliser | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Nutrients are soluble and immediately available to the plants; therefore the effect is usually direct and fast.</li> <li>* The price is lower and more competitive than organic fertilizer, which makes it more acceptable and often applied by users.</li> <li>* They are quite high in nutrient content; only relatively small amounts are required for crop growth.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Overapplication can result in negative effects such as leaching, pollution of water resources, destruction of micro-organisms and friendly insects, crop susceptibility to disease attack, acidification or alkalization of the soil or reduction in soil fertility — thus causing irreparable damage to the over-all system.</li> <li>* Oversupply of N leads to softening of plant tissue resulting in plants that are more sensitive to diseases and pests.</li> <li>* They reduce the colonization of plant roots with mycorrhizae and inhibit symbiotic N fixation by rhizobia due to high N fertilization.</li> <li>* They enhance the decomposition of soil OM, which leads to degradation of soil structure.</li> <li>* Nutrients are easily lost from soils through fixation, leaching or gas emission and can lead to reduced fertilizer efficiency.</li> </ul> |
| Organic Fertiliser  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The nutrient supply is more balanced, which helps to keep plants healthy.</li> <li>* They enhance soil biological activity, which improves nutrient mobilization from organic and chemical sources and decomposition of toxic substances.</li> <li>* They enhance the colonization of mycorrhizae, which improves P supply.</li> <li>* They enhance root growth due to better soil structure.</li> <li>* They increase the organic matter content of the soil, therefore improving the exchange capacity of nutrients, increasing soil water retention, promoting soil aggregates and buffering the soil against acidity, alkalinity, salinity, pesticides and toxic heavy metals.</li> <li>* They release nutrients slowly and contribute to the residual pool of organic N and P in the soil, reducing N leaching loss and P fixation; they can also supply micronutrients.</li> <li>* They supply food and encourage the growth of beneficial micro-organisms and earth-worms.</li> <li>* They help to suppress certain plant diseases, soil-borne diseases and parasites.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* They are comparatively low in nutrient content, so larger volume is needed to provide enough nutrients for crop growth.</li> <li>* The nutrient release rate is too slow to meet crop requirements in a short time, hence some nutrient deficiency may occur.</li> <li>* The major plant nutrients may not exist in organic fertilizer in sufficient quantity to sustain maximum crop growth.</li> <li>* The nutrient composition of compost is highly variable; the cost is high compared to chemical fertilizers.</li> <li>* Long-term or heavy application to agricultural soils may result in salt, nutrient or heavy metal accumulation and may adversely affect plant growth, soil organisms, water quality and animal and human health.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |

**Please send all contributions in .pdf format or MS Word. Pictures are to be sent in .jpeg format and between 200kb and 500 kb.**

**Any other format makes it very time consuming and difficult to work with.**

**Once contributions have been received it will be presumed that consent has been given for publication.**

#### References:

Jen-Hshuan, C., 2006, *The Combined Use of Chemical and Organic Fertilisers and/or Biofertilier for Crop Growth and Soil Fertility*, International Workshop on Sustained Management of the Soil-Rhizosphere System for Efficient Crop Production and Fertilizer Use; 16 – 20 October 2006; Thailand, accessed on 5 March 2011 at [www.siennabionatec.com/.../paper-654299262%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.siennabionatec.com/.../paper-654299262%5B1%5D.pdf)

Tedla, AB 2001, *Direct and residual effects of organic and inorganic fertilizers on soil chemical properties, microbial components and maize yield under long-term crop rotation*, DPhil thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, viewed 3 March 2011 at <http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-07052010-112044/>

# Begin Bonsai at the Beginning—Caring for you Tree

In caring for Bonsai plants you must at least observe the following simple rules. Off course there are many more and you would get the most information from joining your local club.

## INSECTS

### Red Spider Mites

Usually found in warm conditions, the red spider mite is microscopic and barely visible with a microscope. They live in colonies on the undersides of leaves, and often make fine white cobwebs in the joints between branches. Use an insecticide that contains organophosphate to assist you with eradicating the mites.

### Aphids

Or greenfly/blackfly, are commonly found on deciduous trees, in particular, the maple. They prefer the new soft shoots and leaves as their place of residence. An insecticide containing bifenthrin would be more suited to the eradication of this pest, as any containing organophosphate may blacken young leaves.

### Root Aphids

Is white in appearance and appears on roots. If infection has occurred, soak the roots in insecticide or apply a spray.

### Woolly Aphids

Covered in a white woolly wax, this pest executes most damage on the bark of deciduous trees. Best way is to manually destroy it by squashing them with a cloth, or alternatively you can use a systemic insecticide. Unfortunately their woolly covering shields them from ordinary insecticides.

### Adelgids

Mainly found on pines, larch and spruce, these pests are sap – sucking insects and are very destructive. To ensure your caring for Bonsai plants is not in vain, year round attention to this pest is necessary through the use of insecticides.

### Vine Weevil

Usually found in Europe and most commonly found on maples, camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons, pines, and junipers. The beetle lays its eggs in the soil, and the larvae generate the most damage as they eat away the plants roots. *Not sure if this is*

*common in Africa.* Use an insecticide that contains permethrin, which can control larvae.

### White Fly

Common in warm humid conditions. These sap – sucking insects attack mainly indoor varieties, and can be easily spotted as they fly around when disturbed. Another sign that your bonsai is infected, is the yellow spots on leaves. Ordinary insecticide should do the trick, or alternatively you can use a sticky insect tape.

## DISEASE

### Root Rot

Is a fungal disease, mainly associated with conifers such as Juniper and pine. Root Rot is a fairly serious disease, and once a plant is infected, there is very little that can be done. To avoid root rot, water trees sparingly and allow for good soil drainage.

### Rust and Black Spot

Commonly associated with crab apple, hawthorn, cotoneaster, Prunus and Sorbus. The tree's leaves will appear yellow and drop prematurely during mid-summer. Use a general insecticide and burn all dropped leaves to prevent the disease from spreading.

### Coral Spot

Bright orange spots that form on the branches and trunks of Japanese maples and some elms. Coral Spot spreads easily through cross contamination, usually through gardening tools. Coral spot is easily managed by removing affected areas of your Bonsai and disinfecting gardening tools.

### Damping

A fungal disease that affects seedlings and is commonly mistaken for root-rot. Seedlings will die suddenly for no apparent reason. Your local garden centre will have a good product—use it, avoid over watering, maintain good ventilation, soil drainage, and good hygiene.

### Fireblight

Affects Rosaceae Family such as the crab apple & hawthorn. Symptoms include the blackening of stems and leaves. This bacteria is airborne and is very difficult to manage and eradicate. Immediately

## Caring for you Tree

after identifying these symptoms, remove affected areas and burn them to prevent further spreading.

### Galls

Affects many types of Bonsai and can be described as abnormal outgrowths on plant tissues and can be caused by fungi, bacteria and parasites. If you discover these abnormal outgrowths on your bonsai, cut off the affected portion and try spraying a Bordeaux mixture or copper fungicide. To help avoid Galls, provide your Bonsai with good ventilation in a spacious area.

### PLANT PREDATORS

There are plenty of well known Insects and Bugs that will hinder your caring for Bonsai plants by stripping off leaves and shoots, or damaging bark and branches. Such as:

- Caterpillars. Grasshoppers, Ants, Slugs, Snails, Wasps, Spiders, Grubs, Worms, Ladybugs, Praying mantis. Rodents can also damage your Bonsai by digging up soil in pots and leaving waste. Wire netting or fencing may be required. It is important to the health of your bonsai that you control plant predators by destroying them psychically, or by spraying with insecticide.

### References:

<http://www.bonsai-made-easy.com/caringforbonsaiplants.html>

## Cape Bonsai Kai

The winner of the Naka Bonsai Techniques book auction was **David Wilson** of **Eastern Bonsai Society and Shibui Bonsai Kai** - Johannesburg.

The winning bid was for R1000. There was another bid at the same amount but, according to the "rules" we published upfront David won because his bid was the first to be received.

Our thanks to all who tendered bids - unfortunately there could only be one winner.

*Pieter Bruyns on behalf of Cape Bonsai Kai*

盆栽

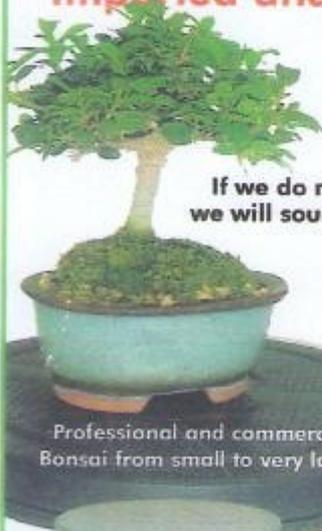
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# FRONT PAGE COMPETITION

An exciting new photo competition is about to be launched for the magazine. We are looking for pictures of bonsai to be used for the front page of the magazine. Send us your pictures of your bonsai as an art form. This may include the just the tree or as a set display against a back drop. Props may be used. Prize for the Winning Photo of the Month is a R500.00 gift voucher from Bonsai Boys in Durban and your photo will appear on the cover of the next issue of *Bonsai in South Africa* magazine.

## The Rules for the *Bonsai in South Africa* Front Page Competition are as follows:

This competition is open to any person agreeing to the rules and regulation as stipulated herein. By entering any of our competitions, you are deemed to have accepted the following:

Bonsai in South Africa reserves the right to verify the eligibility of all entrants.

1. By taking part in the competition, you warrant that all information submitted is true, current and complete at the time of submission. It is your sole responsibility to ensure that your details and e-mail address are accurate, and that the organisers are informed of any changes to these. Bonsai in South Africa accepts no responsibility for any changes which are not properly notified from the time of submission of your entry to the time of notification that the prize has been awarded.

2. Bonsai in South Africa reserve the right to disqualify your entry if it is incomplete or if there are reasonable grounds to believe that you have breached any of these rules.
3. Prizes are non-transferable and there are no cash alternatives.
4. All taxes, insurances, transfers, postages and other expenses resulting from the prize are the sole responsibility of the winner unless otherwise stated.
5. Failure to claim a prize within the time or in the manner specified may result in disqualification and/or the selection of an alternative winner.
6. Bonsai in South Africa reserves the right to alter, amend or close the competition as necessary.
7. Should any disputes arise regarding these rules, or the rules or instructions of a specific competition, the decision of Bonsai in South Africa and it's appointed judges will be final and binding, and no correspondence will be entered into.
8. The competition and these rules are governed by the South African Law.
9. The planting must currently be alive and the trees and image must be real, not artificially enhanced or changed in any way. Normal digital editing may be performed.
10. Entries will only be accepted in digital form with a minimum size of 500kb and a maximum size of 1Mb in Jpeg format.



11. Complete information on the tree (species, height, years of training, original designer and a brief history of the tree.) and owner (contact details and a short C.V.) must be submitted together with the photograph.
12. There is no limit to the amount of entries by any one person.
13. The closing date for entries will be on the following dates:
 

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 14. August/September 2011 Issue | 17 July 2011      |
| 15. October/November 2011 Issue | 18 September 2011 |
| 16. December/January 2012 Issue | 13 November 2011  |
| 17. February/March 2012 Issue   | 15 January 2012   |
18. Entries can only be submitted electronically to [info@bonsaisouthafrica.co.za](mailto:info@bonsaisouthafrica.co.za)
19. Bonsai in South Africa retains right to publish entries in newsletters, magazines, calendars and/or the web.
20. The prize will be awarded to the photographer.
21. Pictures may be re-entered if not at first successful.
22. The Editor reserves the right to change and alter the photos for the front page cover.



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We have a large range of Bonsais, Bonsai Pots, Tools, bonsai soils, bonsai muti, pebbles, stones, gauze, figurines and accessoires. Pop in for a chat and have a look around, Visit us on our Facebook Page - We are open 7 days an week from 08h30 till 16h30

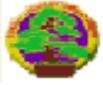


# D.I.Y. BONSAI WHOLESALE

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# Links

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PRETORIA BONSAI KAI

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Carl Morrow (PhD)  
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### **The real meaning of plant catalog terminology:**

"A favourite of birds" means to avoid planting near cars, sidewalks, or clotheslines.

"Grows more beautiful each year" means "Looks like road kill for the foreseeable future."

"Zone 5 with protection" is a variation on the phrase "Russian roulette."

"May require support" means your daughter's engineering degree will finally pay off.

"Moisture-loving" plants are ideal for landscaping all your bogs and swamps.

"Carefree" refers more to the plant's attitude than to your workload.

"Vigorous" is code for "has a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world."

"Grandma's Favourite" -- until she discovered free-flowering, disease-resistant hybrids.

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| Blaauwberg Bonsai Kai                       |                             | Dawn Collier           | 076 529 7848      | <a href="mailto:mrjade@mweb.co.za">mrjade@mweb.co.za</a>                               |
| Boland Bonsai Kai                           | Stellenbosch                | Coenie Brand           | 082 804 9195      | <a href="mailto:cijbrand@snowisp.com">cijbrand@snowisp.com</a>                         |
| Bonsai Society of South Africa              | Goodwood                    | Ben van Heerden        | 082 870 6212      | <a href="mailto:pekebonsai@vodamail.co.za">pekebonsai@vodamail.co.za</a>               |
| <a href="#">Bonsai Tree</a>                 | Somerset West               | Terry Erasmus          | 082 890 7927      | <a href="mailto:info@bonsaitree.co.za">info@bonsaitree.co.za</a>                       |
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| <a href="#">Helderberg Bonsai Kai</a>       | Strand                      | Ras Smal               | 084 655 0718      | <a href="mailto:info@bonsaigarden.co.za">info@bonsaigarden.co.za</a>                   |
| Kat River Kai                               | George                      | Tobie Kleynhans        | 083 635 1447      | <a href="mailto:toblen@mweb.co.za">toblen@mweb.co.za</a>                               |
| Olive Grove Bonsai Centre                   | Kraaifontein                | Rudi Adam              | 021 9874040       | <a href="mailto:rabonsai@telkomsa.net">rabonsai@telkomsa.net</a>                       |
| <a href="#">Oyama Bonsai Kai</a>            | Cape Town                   | Andrew de Pomeroy-legg | 083 628 8163      | <a href="mailto:andrew.depomeroy-legg@cobham.com">andrew.depomeroy-legg@cobham.com</a> |
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| Waterberg Bonaiklub                         | Mookgophong (Naboomspruit ) | Ian Pringle            | 083 468 3578      | <a href="mailto:pikkian@iafrica.com">pikkian@iafrica.com</a>                           |

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| Eastern Bonsai Society                | Highlands North, Johannesburg | Errol Rubin       | 083 419 3109             | <a href="mailto:bonsai@pixie.co.za">bonsai@pixie.co.za</a>                               |
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| Rustenburg Bonsai Kai                 | Rustenburg                    | Anton Cockeran    | 072 447 7172             | antonc@angloplat.com                                                                     |

# June 2011

| Sun                                         | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu                       | Fri                       | Sat                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             |     |     | 1   | 2                         | 3                         | 4<br>OYAMA BONSAI KAI<br>25TH BIRTHDAY BASH<br>PTA BONSAI KAI—<br>BEGINNERS WORK-<br>SHOP |
| 5<br>OYAMA BONSAI KAI<br>25TH BIRTHDAY BASH | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9                         | 13                        | 11                                                                                        |
| 12                                          | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16<br>PTA BONSAI KAI SHOW | 17<br>PTA BONSAI KAI SHOW | 18<br>PTA BONSAI KAI—<br>BEGINNERS WORK-<br>SHOP<br>SKETS & ONTWERP<br>WERKSWINKEL        |
| 19<br>PTA BONSAI KAI SHOW                   | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23                        | 24                        | 25                                                                                        |
| 26                                          | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30                        |                           |                                                                                           |

PLEASE SEND ALL EVENTS TO **THE EDITOR** FOR INCLUSION IN THE ABOVE CALENDAR. TIMEOUSLY. FOR MORE UP TO DATE INFO, GO TO

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# July 2011

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat                                        |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------|
|     |     |     |     |     | 1   | 2                                          |
| 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9                                          |
| 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16                                         |
| 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23                                         |
| 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30<br>BRAT OPEN DAY<br>PRETORIA BONSAI KAI |
| 31  |     |     |     |     |     |                                            |

