

# Florida Bonsai

A U T U M N 2 0 0 7

## Jaboticaba

A Tropical Fruit Tree for Bonsai



**Bonsai Societies of Florida, Inc.**

秋

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# Florida Bonsai

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**ON THE COVER:** This issue's cover photo is a 32" h. x 44" w. jaboticaba originally styled in 1957 by the late Jim Wilkens and currently in the care of his son Gary. For more information see page 12.

## Tropical Bonsai – Jaboticaba

BY MARY C. MILLER

Jaboticaba is a sub-tropical fruit tree native to the Minas Gerais region of Brazil. Although considered a shrub or small tree here, in its South American homeland it can reach heights up to 35 feet. The fruit skin can be tough but the pulp is grapelike, pleasant to taste and perfect for jellies, jam and wine.

For greater detail of discovery and distribution of *Myrciaria c.* see <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/jaboticabas.html>, which includes the following: “The word ‘jaboticaba’ is said to have been derived from the Tupi term, *jabotim*, for turtle, and means ‘like turtle fat,’ presumably referring to the fruit pulp.”

*Cauliflorous* is an adjective referring to the production of flowers and fruit forming on the trunks and often older branches of trees.

### AS BONSAI

*Myrciaria cauliflora* makes a graceful bonsai. The leaves are soft and almost pink when new, they develop into a somewhat glossy

dark green as they age. The bark is thin, reddish and flaky. Occasionally patches peel off, leaving an attractive variation in color. Both the creamy white flowers and

dark purple (almost black) grape-sized fruit grow directly on the trunk.

Young seedlings are slow to mature and rarely endure the transplanting and trimming of bonsai

hobbyists. Older plants however, are very tolerant of the necessary pruning of both roots and branches. Jaboticaba are upright trees and are rarely styled otherwise. Even the very straight trunks have gentle movement and two or three together make nice groupings.



## Japanese Black Pine in Florida

BY STEVE PILACIK

I had the opportunity to visit Florida a few summers ago over the Fourth of July at the Convention at Cape Canaveral. This was my first visit to the state for a Bonsai-related activity. The convention was outstanding and I learned many things, especially about the fine Tropicals that are grown in Florida. It was a real surprise when talking with many people that they felt that Japanese Black Pine did not grow well in Florida.

I thought about that many times after I returned to the nursery in North Carolina. The climate in North Carolina is not that much different than in some sections of Florida. Granted, the southern parts of Florida are warmer in the summer and winter than my State of North Carolina, but the USDA shows the JBP will not only grow in the north of Florida but will flourish throughout your fine State. I wondered why more people did not grow the king of trees (*Kuro Matsu*)! It should not be because of the State's climate. The climate is great for the tree. My thoughts went to a level of understanding. I did write many articles during the mid-eighties

for Gulf Coast Bonsai on JBP. That meant that maybe there was a new group of Bonsai growers who did not see those articles or maybe thought that JBP were much too complicated for bonsai.



I had the pleasure of returning to Florida in January 2006 to speak at two bonsai clubs and a wonderful bonsai nursery. The nursery was operated by Jason Schley and located in Holly Hill, Florida. Jason had many JBP growing at his nursery and they were doing very well. He has learned to grow this tree. I also had the pleasure of meeting Mike Rogers and see two specimen JBP that were grown to perfection! Mike also told me

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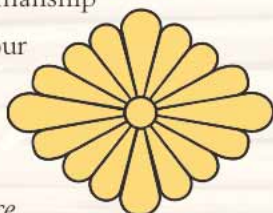


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## Taking That Next Step...

BY HENRY ROBBINS

**H**ave you ever looked at the exhibit trees at the Miami show, or perhaps at the show in Fort Myers, and wondered how the artists created such magnificent bonsai? Did you ever wonder if you would ever be able to create a masterpiece like the ones on exhibit? Have you ever watched Ed Trout, Jim Smith or Ernie Fernandez put on a demonstration and wonder how they make it look so easy? Did you ever tell yourself that one day you would like to be able to create masterpiece bonsai?

Early last year, I asked myself all those questions, and I decided that if I wanted to become better at bonsai, I needed to get off my butt and do something about it. I've never been good at studying at home, I learned this while I was in college. For me, I had to get out of the house and study someplace where I couldn't be distracted. So I decided that if I wanted to learn bonsai, I had to get out of Florida, which is what eventually led me to studying with Boon Manakitivipart.

Boon conducts a 3-day "Intensive" hands-on learning experience about 10 times per year at his home. Boon lives in Alameda, California,

which is a short drive from San Francisco and Oakland. I arrived in Oakland on a Sunday and spent the better part of the day recuperating from the trip, I knew I had a long week ahead of me, so I wanted to be well rested at the start. On Monday, the adventure began at



8:00 a.m. with Boon picking me up from the hotel and driving me to his house, along with five other students. At 8:30, Boon called us all into his living room where he sat us down and we watched videos. The first day we watched a video (in Japanese) on black pines. Boon translated the important points for us and it was actually quite interesting to watch. Once the





video was over, we were led to the kitchen table where we each took a seat. Boon handed out some educational material, which we all read through and discussed. Around 9:30, we all went outside to start working on trees.

As you step out on the back porch, you really get an eyeful. The trees in Boon's backyard were absolutely amazing, trees in all shapes, sizes and varieties. I cannot begin to describe all the trees to you, so I have included some pictures of Boon's backyard for you to look at. All the students were given a station at which to work, and Boon started bringing in the black pines. I have not seen any black pines in Florida that even come close to the trees that Boon brought in, they were Huge!

The first thing Boon taught us was to pull the old needles from the pines. We pulled needles for hours until we took a break for lunch. The time went by so quickly that I didn't even notice that I was starving. Boon took us to a Thai restaurant and we ate like kings. I don't remember what I ate, but it must have been good, because I ate it all. By the way, I should mention that Boon pays for both lunch and dinner each day, and he always goes to the best restaurants. For a little guy, he can sure pack away the food. After lunch, Boon took us over to the bakery next door and *forced us* to eat some pastries. Boy, was I stuffed.

After returning to Boon's house, we pulled needles from one pine after another until 6:00 p.m. We

## HAIKU

Charged mind at sunup  
Clip clip – tea – chop chop – wee pot  
Bunjin at sundown.

JOE SAMUELS

## IN MEMORY

Sadly Julie Trigg's husband, Peter,  
passed away on June 12, 2007  
after a battle with cancer.  
Our thoughts are with Julie and her family.



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The nursery is open to the public the fourth Sunday of each month, weather permitting, for a free workshop. You may bring your own plants, purchase from the nursery or just come to visit. Jim Smith, Jim Van Landingham, Doug Smith or one of the other regular visitors is always willing to help you.



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