

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the authors of these talks for their contributions. Thanks to each for your willingness to make some of your precious time available and to share your knowledge – often built up over years of practice. Many thanks to Charles Ceronio who made precious time available out of a busy program – not only to provide his own sketches for his article but also to edit and proofread the manuscript. And last but definitely not least, Poppie Engelbrecht for the remaining sketches and cover.

Allow me a further word in an attempt to place this publication in a wider framework and to take stock during the 21st year of the Pretoria Bonsai Kai's existence.

Throughout the world there is a growing awareness of nature and of its conservation. Words like ecology, ozone friendly, greenhouse effect, acid rain, etc. have all become everyday words. We have not escaped this in South Africa and there is a growing awareness of resources becoming exhausted as we approach the end of the 20th Century. The critical question being asked is: How are we going to link up with this ecological awareness? Or will we continue to practice our hobby in isolation, on an island?

The question may also be asked in future whether our artform is environmentally friendly. This is a question we will have to answer for ourselves, particularly in regard to our collection of trees from nature. To my mind, we are the last generation which has been granted the privilege of collecting trees from nature. Especially in view of the population explosion and the greater pressure being placed on the limited surface area of our country. It is already being stated in conservation circles that no land will be available for conservation in the next century. This places a tremendous responsibility on us to preserve these treasures from nature for future generations.

There is probably still time for us to get our house in order. If we do

not get involved with things like Arbour Day and nature conservation, and climb onto the nature awareness bandwagon, we run the risk of one day being branded as people who are careless of nature.

There is also reaction in the mass media against the use of agents that are harmful to nature, the elements and even the ozone layer. If we are involved in bonsai in order to really get into contact with nature, should we not, for example, start looking at alternative methods of controlling garden pests? I'm thinking of biological control using natural predators, whether by means of other insects or by birds. Should we not, each year, make plant material grown from seed or cuttings available free of charge for planting in parks and gardens? Trees are the only way to counteract air pollution and to make more oxygen available for the bonsai of our children.

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Editor