

This is a “Peace Tree” bonsai. It was created from saplings that were grown from seeds collected from trees that had survived the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

Every year volunteers gather the seeds and grow them into trees that are planted in public parks, college campuses and botanical gardens all over the world. They are living reminders that life and recovery are possible even after the most profound destruction.

The idea of using saplings sprouted from seeds of trees that had survived the Hiroshima nuclear blast as the subject material to create a bonsai is intriguing and something that, as a museum of bonsai, would be a worthy project, serving as a reminder of the need for mankind to live in peace and harmony.

Creating a bonsai from young Camphor saplings presented several challenges. First, the slender, top heavy saplings with small root balls created technical and mechanical problems for arranging and securing them into a suitable bonsai container.

Additionally, the nature of the saplings, being a collection of straight lines of similar in size and dimension, offered limited choices for a bonsai design. Achieving a harmonious yet visually interesting composition, a paramount goal for any bonsai would be difficult.

As with all bonsai processes ensuring that the subject plants remained healthy and vigorous is a primary objective. Fortunately, these saplings were healthy and strong. Their root structures would lend themselves well to the shallow confines of a bonsai pot.

The technical issue of how to secure top-heavy saplings into the pot was addressed by forming a bamboo grid on the bottom of the pot and laying a second grin over the roots with all being secured by twisting copper wire to roots, grid and pot.

A traditional bonsai styling approach used when the composition consists of multiple slender trunks of similar size was selected and the saplings were planted close together forming the image of a small forest or group of young trees.

The exact arrangement of saplings in the composition was determined. The young “trees” were placed in their assigned locations and a small amount of “muck”, a mixture of shredded moss and clay, was applied to help the exposed roots adapt to their new home.

Bonsai soil was then “chopsticked”, a process of diligently working the soil around the roots, to ensure the healthy roots. A layer of shredded moss was laid over the surface to stabilize the new soil and to help retain moisture while the roots adapted and extended new growth.

The choice of container or pot is important to the creation of all bonsai. In this case a shallow oval to accentuate the slender nature of the trunks. The cream-colored glaze of the pot compliments the fresh green of the young trees to provide a harmonious feel to the entire composition.

As an added element of cultural connection and respect for tradition this pot is an antique being well over 70 years old. It is also a rare and highly valued “signature” pot having been signed on the underside by the original artist, a renowned Japanese bonsai pot maker.

All combining for this bonsai to tell the story of connection to history, reverence for tradition and accomplishment and hope for peace and cooperation among the peoples of the world.

Link to video

LEADING QUESTIONS

Grades 3rd -5th

KEY IDEAS & DETAILS

In your own words, explain the why this tree is called a Peace Tree.

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE & IDEAS

Can you explain why a peace tree would be a good addition to a museum? Use supporting details from text to explain your reasoning.

CRAFT & STRUCTURE

Take each word below and make a new sentence to show your understanding of each word. Each word is used in the text above, try to use context to infer its meaning if needed.

- saplings
- suitable
- composition
- paramount
- stabilize
- accentuate
- reverence

Grades 6TH - 8TH

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Summarize the author's purpose for writing this piece.

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

In this text a sapling from a tree surviving the Hiroshima bombing is supposed to bring a reminder for humans to live in peace and harmony. Explain using text and additional material.

KEY IDEAS & DETAILS

Explain how the description of the steps of arranging a bonsai support the author's goal explaining the importance of the peace tree.

Grades 9TH - 12TH

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Explain what is inferred about the peace tree and what is explicitly stated in the text.

CRAFT & STRUCTURE

Explain how the introduction differs from the body of the text, why did the author do this? What are the questions in the introduction lead the reader to do?

PRESENTATION & KNOWLEDGE OF IDEAS

Explain your new understanding of how bonsai are intertwined with history, use the text.



ADDITIONAL LESSON PLANS from GSBF-Clark Bonsai Collection

From the Welcome to the Clark Bonsai Collection Series

1. An Outdoor Museum (link to video)
 - An Outdoor Museum (link to document)
2. Yamadori and the Contribution of Japanese Americans to the Art of Bonsai (link to video)
 - Yamadori and the Contribution of Japanese Americans to the Art of Bonsai (link to document)
3. How Old Is It? Age in Bonsai (link to video)
 - How Old Is It? Age in Bonsai (link to document)

ADDITIONAL LESSON PLANS from Shinzen Friendship Garden

From the Welcome to the Shinzen Garden Series

1. Design Concepts (link to video)
 - Design Concepts (link to document)
2. The 1939 Lantern (link to video)
 - The 1939 Lantern (link to document)
3. The Koi Pond (link to video)
 - The Koi Pond (link to document)
4. The Toro Nagashi Ceremony (link to video)
 - The Toro Nagashi Ceremony (link to document)

ADDITIONAL LINKS TO JAPANESE CULTURE & GARDENS

Visit us at: <http://shinzenjapanesegarden.org>

1. Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony (link to video)
2. Japanese Chado Matcha Green Tea Ceremony (link to video)
3. 45 Japanese Garden Design Ideas (link to video)
4. Portland Japanese Garden (link to website)
5. Oregon Koto-Kai Performances (link to website)
6. Green Legacy Hiroshima (link to website)
7. Hiroshima Peace Tree Planted in Clovis (link to website)

ADDITIONAL LINKS TO GSBF BONSAI COLLECTIONS & BONSAI

Visit us at: <https://gsbfclarkbonsaicollection.org>

1. CBC_Behind the Scene with Bob Hilvers, "John Naka – California Juniper" (link to video)
2. CBC_Behind the Scene with Bob Hilvers, "The Dwarf Oak" (link to video)
3. CBC_Behind the Scene with Bob Hilvers, "Basic Bonsai 01" (link to video)
4. CBC_Behind the Scene with Bob Hilvers, "Basic Bonsai 02" (link to video)
5. CBC_Behind the Scene with Bob Hilvers, "Basic Bonsai 03" (link to video)

