

Ficus Microcarpa 'Golden Gate' progression

This Ficus was acquired in a workshop at Brussels Rendezvous in May 2017. The workshop was run by Pedro Morales (<http://artofbonsai.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=3592>) from Puerto Rico.

A quick diversion. Brussels Rendezvous is held each year on Memorial Day weekend at Brussels Nursery in Olive Branch Mississippi. For the bonsai addict it is worth attending at least once. Three days of workshops with well-known artists. And the chance to spend the weekend with fellow addicts and eat, breath, and live bonsai for three days.

Unfortunately, I no longer have before and after photos from the workshop. The first photo below is from September 2017 when the tree was moved indoors, 4 months after the workshop. The workshop consisted of cutting off the long and thick branches leaving only the smaller ones more in proportion to the trunk. This is typical of a first styling of a Ficus. Immediately after the workshop there was about 50-75% less foliage. The first wiring occurred in October after this photo.

September 2017



By February 2018, the wire was cutting into the branches. About 75% was removed and the tree was rewired and pruned.

In May 2018 all the wire was removed once again because most was cutting in. Also, in May it was moved outdoors for the summer.

In July it was repotted in a Japanese pot purchased from Mark Mills. The original soil mix was a combination of pumice and some kind of compost. It was repotted into equal parts akadama, bark, pumice, and lava. Then in September it was wired again and styled before moving back indoors.

July 2018



September 2018



In June 2019, after being moved outdoors, it was worked on again adding/removing wire, pruning, and thinning out the top where growth is dominant.

June 2019 Before



June 2019 After



Show picture for the September 2020 show.



Ficus are easy in the sense that they grow quickly producing lots of branches and foliage giving the owner ample material to work with and quickly growing past most mistakes. They are difficult, but not impossible in Colorado, because they are not native and extra measures are needed to provide a suitable environment.

Future plans for this tree include continuing to evolve the canopy focusing on more definition of the foliage pads, simplifying the left lower branch secondaries, and possibly adding some aerial roots.