

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER



<b>Meeting Program</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Yamadori Paradise</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Winter Warnings</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bonsai Garden News</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A source for pots</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Christmas party</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Membership form</b>	<b>7</b>

**2012 – 13 VIBS Officers**  
President: Bob Taylor

Treasurer: Larry Phillips

Secretary: Tibby Solloway

Newsletter: John Mitchell

Website: John Mitchell

Mall Show Coordinator:  
Mark Paterson

**Next Society meeting: Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup> 2012**

**Show & Tell:** Please feel free to bring in any interesting tree. Winter silhouettes are often very nice at this time of year.

**Raffle Table:** The ever popular raffle table is a regular meeting feature – please bring any items that you might want to see go to a good home. The raffle table is a significant source of funds for the Society

**Demonstration:** Program to be announced

**Coming in December:** the Christmas get-together: always a good time! Food & refreshment pot-luck: please bring a favourite food item. “Decorate” a bonsai – a prize to the best tree!

**Memberships** are up for renewal in December. See inside

### October meeting Show& Tell: Fall colour



Once again Maurice shared his encyclopedic knowledge of trees – this time as regards the physiological effects of autumn’s approach. Thank you Maurice – it’s always educational & good fun!

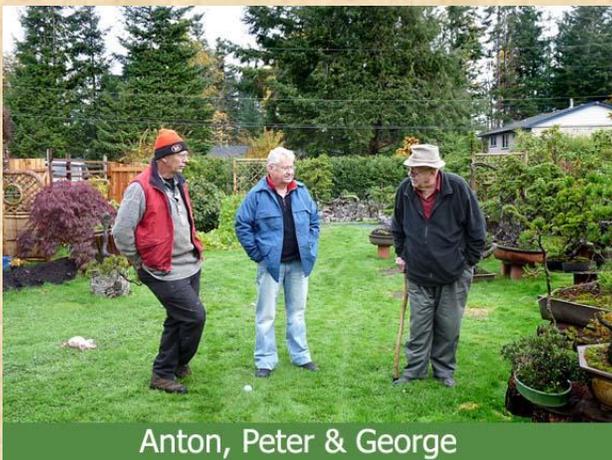
**The drought ...** you may have noticed in recent weeks that the drought has ended! It is time to bring trees down off benches. Hardy trees will winter well on the ground where they will gain several degrees thermal protection as compared to ambient air temperatures. See more on page 5.

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### A Visit to a Yamadori Paradise

Yamadori is a word of Japanese origin that translates as “collecting plants, or trees, from the mountains”. Pensai & bonsai are thought to have had their beginnings a thousand or more years ago, in what seems to be an almost universal human desire to bring certain aspects of the natural world to our own home environment, to have close at hand, for our ease of contemplation and enjoyment of those elements that most remind us of the rugged beauty to be found in Nature. There was great admiration for the gnarled, weather-beaten trees of the mountains that presented a testimonial to survival in the face of the most inhospitable conditions ... once again, perhaps, that metaphor for the human condition.



Anton, Peter & George

A few minutes south of Campbell River is a little known wonderland of native-species yamadori that almost defy description in their astonishing character and individual uniqueness. These incredibly beautiful trees have been found, collected, subsequently nurtured and made available for sale by Anton Nijhuis, a landscaper, artist and lover of gnarly trees.

I had embarked on a journey in late October, with George Heffelfinger, for the purpose of scouting out possible workshop trees for the annual PNBCA convention that our Society will be hosting in the fall of 2014.

Our very enjoyable trip up-island was a visual treat as we worked our way north through soft, misty landscapes and gentle rain, appreciating all the way this most incredibly beautiful island. After a stop in Coombs to check on a consistently good source of the perplexingly rare “bonsai pot”, and in the process hearing that they are becoming even more difficult to come by as the nature of Chinese industry changes, we continued on to Campbell River and met with Peter Wilson, a VIBS member, yamadori collector and bonsai artist extraordinaire.

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER



The following morning the three of us headed off to Anton's. It's a destination that some of the best-known practitioners of the bonsai arts keep as their "secret" source of workshop material – a source of the finest collected conifers on the entire west coast. It is not an infrequent event for Anton to have bonsai artists from mainland BC, Oregon and Washington State make the pilgrimage to this coniferous mecca.

Mountain hemlock, Shore pine, Yellow-cedar, Redcedar and Subalpine fir crowd Anton's property, some heeled-in, to be sold or worked on in future, after sufficient re-growth of roots. Other magnificent specimens of these trees are displayed on stands and stumps around the yard. We were most impressed - talk about kids in a candy store!

If you haven't been there, and you are serious about coniferous bonsai, Anton's is a destination worthy of serious consideration.



A bonsai hobbyist won't find trees of this caliber, or character, in any nursery on the island. This character only comes with great age and from growing, usually at significant altitude (1500 metres+), in truly rigorous conditions.

If a person is not in above average physical condition, they will not likely find themselves collecting trees of this quality, either. My advice? Leave it to Anton.

Also, it is not likely that one would save any money by mounting their own collecting expedition to the north island. Several hundred kilometers of travel (from Victoria), time spent exploring for specimens (with little chance of success), overnight accommodation, meals, and, of course, the medical expenses and time lost in recovering from that fall off the mountain (inevitable). Leave it to Anton!

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER



Bonsai at Anton's



Prices appeared to begin in the hundred dollar range, and moved up into the \$200-\$300 range for very worthy trees, to, I'm sure, the very high hundreds, or more, for absolutely stunning examples of what nature has wrought.



Bonsai shore pine



Anton, Ernie & a literati pine

I'll be back there soon, I hope. I'd like to get there before you do, and have first pick of those lovely trees!

<http://www.anijhuis.com/index.html>

... photos & article by John Mitchell

**Membership** – Remember membership renewal fees are due by the end of December. It is very convenient to pay while you are at the December meeting. Members who renew before the end of January will have their names entered in a

## The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

# NEWSLETTER

draw. You might win something very nice, maybe one of those little trees you like so much. New memberships (from October 1<sup>st</sup> onward) will be good through 2013.

**Winter Warnings** Every year members lose trees to the effects of winter – usually in the form of a ‘cold snap’. Cold, dry “outflow winds” are a result of very cold polar air that is funneled westward from the interior of the province, through the coastal fjords, inlets and valleys, invading our usually temperate shores.

The greatest winter harm to bonsai, it would seem, is done by these very cold, dry winds that desiccate the trees and, if it has been warm enough that trees haven’t achieved dormancy, or if warm weather has started the sap rising, trunks & branches can rupture, causing significant, often fatal, damage to a tree.

Our bonsai pots also suffer, usually our favourite ones, when the moisture that has permeated any tiny cracks or porous portions expands and causes the pot to shatter. Soil components like fir bark retain moisture that can freeze & expand.

If we receive sufficient notice from Environment Canada, we will send out an “outflow wind warning” by e-mail to our members so that trees can be covered with something or moved to an area of greater protection from the wind & cold.



### **Bonsai Garden Update**

The Bonsai Garden at the Horticulture Center of the Pacific is in a state of winter season dormancy. The construction activities of summer and fall have wound down. The efforts of volunteers William and Jim have made for considerable progress on the viewing shelter and we are all looking forward to spring when we will be back on

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

task with our usual bonsai-fuelled enthusiasm. The key to success in the creation of this unique garden is the donations that we receive from individuals and companies. Cheques can be made out to The Horticulture Center of the Pacific with a notation on the cheque that the donation is for the Bonsai Garden. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued to the donor by HCP.

Photos by Jim Haskins



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### A local source for quality pots ...

Our club member, Sue Martin, has a limited selection of quality Japanese bonsai pots for sale. She will be attending meetings whenever she is able and will have pots available for purchase. These pots are priced very well ... \$10 for under 10 inches and \$20 for over 10 inches. Incredible prices considering the value. Many of the pots are Tokoname.

Japanese-produced pots are becoming prohibitively expensive and many Japanese bonsai hobbyists have been using Chinese-made pots for some time now. Not all pots pictured above are available – some styles have sold out.



Some of Sue's pots at the Mall Show 2012

In our travels this fall we have learned that the usual local vendors of Chinese bonsai pots are having a great deal of trouble finding dependable factories in China. I was told at Quonley's in Victoria that many of the old potteries are being converted for use in the production of electronics in the transition from low value, labour-intensive industry to high value, technology-oriented (if I may ...) products. This information was reinforced by the information that we received while in Coombs – dependable sources are hard to find and prices are rising.

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

**The December meeting** – we are eagerly anticipating the usual riotous seasonal fun at our annual Christmas party.

Come and join in the festive spirit with your bonsai buddies. Please bring finger foods, either savory or sweet, for pot-luck snacking.

There will be tables set up for anyone wishing to sell or swap bonsai or Christmas-related items.

**Show & Tell:** Decorated Christmas bonsai contest. Let your imagination run wild in decorating your tree. (You could win a prize for the best tree).

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### Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

#### Membership Renewal / Application Form

I wish to renew my membership \_\_\_\_\_ or I wish to apply for membership \_\_\_\_\_ (new member)

Attached is \$25.00 for single membership \_\_\_\_ or attached is \$30.00 for family membership \_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your e-mail address for information about various activities and notification of the posting of the Newsletter to the website: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are mailing this form, please mail to:

Vancouver Island Bonsai Society  
Membership Coordinator  
PO Box 8674  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 3S2