

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

July 2013



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### 2012 – 13 VIBS Officers

President: Randy Kowalchuk  
Vice President: Mark Paterson  
Past president: Bob Taylor  
Treasurer: Larry Phillips  
Secretary: Vacant  
Newsletter& Website: John Mitchell  
Librarian: Vacant

### Next Society meeting: Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Show & Tell:** Bring in your spruce! We'll talk a little about pruning & general spruce care. We encourage you to bring in any tree that you might find especially interesting this month.

**Demonstration:** Bring in your trees and work on them, with, or without advice from the "experts".

**Raffle table:** We will have the always popular raffle table – please bring in your donations to support the Society

**Arts & Music in the Gardens August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>** Once again, this incredibly popular & very well-attended event returns to the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific.

Last meeting: The mentors "discuss" pines (and other bonsai)



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### Arts & Music in the Gardens August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

For anyone who has been present at this event in years' past, Arts & Music in the Gardens is an event not to be missed. The very special ambience created in Victoria's finest "secret" garden by an eclectic mix of artists (numbering about 60) and musicians (from classical, to blues, and "beyond") makes this event one of the highlights of the year for those relatively few people "in the know". Here's the web site info: <http://hcp.ca/events/arts-music/>



The Bonsai Society has maintained a popular presence at Arts & Music in the Gardens over a number of years – here are photos from 2012 (back) & 2011 (front)

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## N E W S L E T T E R

### Bonsai Tips for July & August

Well ... the heat is most certainly on! Hopefully we are all watering as much as necessary to keep soil moist in the hottest part of the day. Automated irrigation really pays for the (usually) modest cost of installation during times like these.

Pines and other conifers will be entering a dormant growth period now. You can withhold fertilizer until early September, at which time you can apply a very low nitrogen, moderate P & K fertilizer to prepare for winter.

Leaf pruning to reduce leaf size should be curtailed by the end of July – new leaves won't have time to fully form, and function, before day length shortens and photosynthesis slows.

Of course ... you have moved your heat-sensitive trees, like azalea, hornbeam, etc to a cooler spot ... right? I'm even finding my Boxwood & Elm prefer a little open shade now. Misting your trees & the ground around them will reduce water losses through transpiration.

The heating of the bonsai pots presents as great a threat as lack of water. Many experienced bonsai-ists keep their trees under shade cloth in the heat of summer. Pot temperatures can easily get beyond 30° C (about 100° F) – tends to bring on sudden death in alpine firs and really isn't good for anything but perhaps those certain bonsai cactus that you really don't care about.



Here's that old warning, recycled!

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### Would you pinch a Juniper?

This article appeared last summer on **Michael Hagedorn's blog**. I found it interesting and thought that it would be sure to cause some lively discussion among members who have long pinched their Junipers. Michael is a gifted bonsai artist and very popular workshop presenter. He has given permission for this article to be reproduced.

### Never Pinch Junipers!

August 26, 2012 by [crataegus](#)

Basically, we don't pinch junipers. We cut new long extensions with scissors...and I know that will raise some eyebrows. I think the idea of pinching junipers with fingers started long ago in translated Japanese articles written by those who did not specialize in or have much experience in junipers. And then we bought into the idea of pinching because it seemed like a way to have fun with our junipers. But pinching, especially over-pinchng where every growing tip is removed, has been killing junipers for decades.



There's a lot of misinformation out there about junipers. For starters, needle and scale junipers are maintained totally differently. It's essential to know what you've got so you can train it properly. This really needs to be addressed. There are far too many weakened and dead junipers out there because of a misunderstanding of how we handle their growth—in fact, I doubt I'm far off from suggesting that 'pinching' is the number one killer of juniper bonsai.

Junipers build energy from their tips. If we don't let them grow we're going to weaken them—and the more finger pinching we do, the more they weaken. That goes for both scale and needle junipers. But please take a look at these photos and read the captions—

This Kishu shimpaku has no need of any kind of foliage restraint. Its growth is so slow and contained that it barely changes in size in one year's time. Eventually the tree will outgrow itself and then some longer branches will need to be removed, and shorter ones will replace them.

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This juniper is also a scale juniper like the Kishu above, and it has two strong shoots that have started to grow beyond the foliage pad. Unless you want a longer branch, basic juniper maintenance is to take your scissors and cut off these two extensions. ***Nothing else needs removal.*** If we pinched the remaining slowly growing tips, the tree would panic and weaken. Always leave many growing tips on scale junipers—you can cut shoots off, but don't touch the tips of those shoots that remain.

Read that again. And the selective strong shoot removal is only done a couple times a year, no more. Now we'll talk about needle junipers, which is totally different.

This is a needle juniper, *Juniperus rigida*. We treat Foemina the same way. Unlike the scale junipers, the needle junipers will create long shoots from every growing tip, not just a couple. We need to let ***all the tips*** grow out on these trees to ***at least*** this long. Longer is often better to develop the energy of the tree. Then we come in, usually in early summer, with scissors and cut almost the entire new shoot off. On refined trees you're maybe leaving 1/16" or a bit more—That's it! I know it's shocking, but a tree growing in good soil with lots of roots and strong shoot growth over the entire tree will burst out with many more shoots. Then you get great

ramification. If you let the tree grow out like this as you should, there is literally no way you'd be able to do it with fingers, by pinching. The shoot is partially hardened off by then. Both kinds of junipers need sharp scissors, but the growth habits of the two are totally different. Just identify which you have, and apply the appropriate technique and your junipers will flourish. One tip: the needle junipers love water and fertilizer. In the spring they can use as much water as a maple.



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Please check out Michael's very informative website & blog:

<http://crataegus.com/2012/08/26/how-to-pinch-junipers/>

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### **PNBCA 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention “Combining Two Worlds”**

**Remember ... the deadline for the \$250 registration rate at the PNBCA Convention in Spokane is fast approaching! Register by July 30<sup>th</sup> (now later than originally advertised).**

See their website: <http://www.inlandbonsai.com/convention/convention.html>

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### **Bonsai Garden Update**

With the Arts & Music in the Garden date of August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> less than a month away, and the official opening of the Garden scheduled for Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Larry and the volunteers are going full-tilt and working wonders as a result of their efforts.

This location will provide a venue for the **VIBS Annual Mall Show & Sale**, and I'm quite sure it has never been located in a more appropriate spot. Club members wishing to display bonsai will be limited to bringing in one tree or landscape – reduced display space necessitates this change. Anyone wishing to sell bonsai, or related items, will be asked to fill out forms with information that will help ensure that these trees will stand a chance of survival, once purchased.

We have recently arranged for the donation of some quite spectacular bonsai that have come to us through our contact with Tak Yamaura at Japan Bonsai. Five trees are on their way to the Garden. Here are four conifers; the fifth is a lovely Trident maple whose portrait will follow next month. I have included a young mugo pine in a 1 gallon pot for comparison in some pictures. Tak has very graciously offered to attend the Grand Opening in September and will give a styling demonstration. You definitely don't want to miss this event!

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### Bonsai Garden update (con't)



The first tree is a very old cork bark Japanese pine. Second is a lovely old Shimpaku juniper (*Juniperus chinensis Sargentii*) and the third is a Japanese black pine with extensive shari (deadwood).

This fourth tree is a cascade-style Japanese black pine sitting on an inverted two gallon pot with the little mugo in a one gallon pot for reference. I hope the little tree takes a lesson!



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## Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

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