

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

May 2013



### Contents:

Field Day	2
VIRAGS bonsai	3
Beginner's Luck?	3
April meeting	4
Show & Tell change	5
Elk Lake G.C.	6
May-June care	7
Retail bonsai	9
Lace rock	9
Bonsai Garden	10

### 2012 – 13 VIBS Officers

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

**Next Society meeting: Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 @7:30**

**Show & Tell:** Bring in your Satsuki azaleas – show off some of those amazing blossoms (we hope they're in blossom now!) We'll talk a little about pruning & general azalea care (& other things). Any tree of interest to you is welcome!

**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



Last Month:

Maples

This month:

Satsuki azaleas



# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### Field Day

Our annual Field Day was held at Highcroft Farm on April 21<sup>st</sup> with a number of hardy attendees braving cool conditions and a fairly steady rain to repot bonsai and talk miniature trees. A few photos should substitute quite nicely for several thousand words:



# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### Vancouver Island Rock & Alpine Garden Society Spring Show

Jane P, was the overall winner in the Bonsai category at the VIRAGS Spring Show & Sale. Our hearty congratulations to you, Jane, and our compliments on your lovely shohin willow bonsai...



---

**Beginner's Luck?** ... It has occurred to me over a respectable period of time that there appears to be a trend to "good fortune" for new members at the raffle table. Although I didn't get any pictures, I was very impressed with the number of visits to the table by Simon J, one of our newest, and I'm sure our youngest, member. Nicely done, Simon!

Here's a photo of new member Stacy A. with a nice little pine she chose from the table at the April meeting. Have fun with it, Stacy!

I think this phenomenon first became apparent to me not that many years ago, when as a new member, I found myself making several trips to the table, hardly believing my good luck.



# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER



We asked that members bring in trees to style, and/or seek advice on at April meeting. George H. brought in a lovely Japanese maple that he entrusted to Bob Taylor for a pruning and styling session at centre stage. Bob gave an entertaining and informative demonstration & the result was a nicely proportioned Japanese maple in its glorious spring colour.

Other members set up their trees at tables around the room and gave demonstrations or helped others with their trees.

In future meetings we are hoping to find more time for this important interaction.

Here is a sampling of the activity around the room:



# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER



Maurice discussing branch position with Marianne.

Teague talking styling with Richard & Eric



Photos: John Mitchell

### Changes to our Show & Tell Format

In order to spend a little less time on our Show & Tell segment, thereby freeing up some time for demonstrations and advice sessions, we will be asking that people who bring in trees for S&T station themselves beside their trees and talk about their particular trees to those members gathered about. We welcome feedback from everyone as to how this new format meets, or doesn't meet their needs. We will take any feedback to the Executive meeting for consideration.

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### Favourite Garden Centres

Welcome to another in a series of very short articles complimenting those too few garden centres who really make a point of catering to those of us with the bonsai affliction. This month:

**Elk Lake Garden Centre 5450 Patricia Bay Highway, Victoria 250-658-8812**

While not specifically bonsai experts, owner John Derrick and his staff have a long history of listening closely to the needs of bonsai hobbyists and doing their best to bring in bonsai-suitable species from their suppliers on the mainland and in the U.S.

From early spring until fall, there is always a great selection of miniature trees & shrubs in 4" pots and often hard-to-find species like dwarf white pine, red pine, Japanese larch, Morris Midget boxwood (and other *Buxus* sp.), Japanese maples, and many other bonsai favourites in one gallon (and larger) pots. Their summer and fall sales are a particularly delightful feature (but if you see something you really like, like a rare red pine, grab it quickly before Randy finds it!). Here is a quick peek at what I found on my several trips there this spring.



These conifers in 1 gallon pots are perfect for creating bonsai ...

Photos: John Mitchell

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### May-June Bonsai Care

Locally, the relatively warm, very damp weather continues. The long-term forecast for this summer is for our usual hot and dry – maybe even a little warmer than usual. We shall see. In the meantime these highly humid conditions are very favorable to the establishment of fungal diseases, in particular, powdery mildew. Watch for the tell-tale signs of white fuzzy patches developing on, and under, the leaves and, if present, use an organic anti-fungal such as Safer's or other similar product. In past I've had some luck mixing 1% milk with water, at a 1:3 ratio, and spraying it on my trees (and other plants, like peas, etc). The Victoria Horticultural Society, I believe, recommends a similar mix for repelling deer – most definitely as great a threat to our trees as fungus!

A higher Nitrogen fertilizer is quite appropriate for June and into July for most of our trees, however many of us will continue to stick with a 15-15-15 or 20-20-20 balanced fertilizer. A half-strength solution can be applied biweekly during these periods of high growth, but plan to taper off on the nitrogen into July and early August. From mid-August onward plan on using a fertilizer that has a minimal N content and relatively high phosphorus & potassium (10 or 15%+ each). The same applies to granular, slow-release and cake fertilizers

Once the Jet Stream decides to settle somewhere north of Vancouver Island, as it does most every summer, we can expect our usual high pressure to settle in and bring the scorching summer heat that we must take very seriously as a bonsai-health issue. Be sure your irrigation system is working well and plan on setting for twice per day soakings at least, in the hottest weather. If you don't have automated watering, be prepared for the same schedule and water by hand. Early morning and late afternoon/ early evening is the best time to water to avoid the wastage that comes with watering in the heat of the day.

Be prepared to move some of the more sensitive trees, like hornbeam and maples, to shadier and wind-sheltered locations, as the leaves tend to desiccate rapidly on hot days.

Insects and mites are becoming very active now. Mites favour dry conditions, so our highly humid months previous have likely kept their numbers down. Watch for aphids & scale and prepare to do battle in the most ecologically responsible way possible. Soap solutions usually work well on aphids and dabbing with rubbing alcohol is usually effective, if time consuming,

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

for scale insects. Diatomaceous earth worked in at the base of tree trunks can be an effective deterrent to infestations. I can usually find it at Buckerfields or Borden Mercantile.

Watch carefully for caterpillars – in quantity, they can do phenomenal damage in a very short time. A few are not usually disastrous for healthy trees – not unlike a bit of leaf pruning – but they can spoil the look of your trees and less-than-vigorous trees can be put under a lot of stress. I found a fascinating caterpillar on a Japanese larch last week & actually talked it into posing for a portrait. I was amazed at its



Photo: John Mitchell

protective colouration... on the larch branch it was virtually invisible... I noticed it only because I dislodged it and it was hanging by a silken thread, 'treading air' as it were. The photo really doesn't do justice to what a beautiful little nuisance it is.

Branches are well into active growth by now – check for any wire cutting into branches, especially in pines, larch, hornbeams & maples. To remove wire use a flush-cutting tool rather than trying to unravel wire from a branch – it prevents damage to branches & new buds.

Pinch back soft new growth on junipers to maintain the shape of foliage pads. New growth on deciduous trees can be pinched back to stimulate new growth from adventitious buds & also promote ramification. If you have questions about the process, please ask at our meetings.

Leaf pruning on healthy, established trees helps reduce leaf size & shortens internode length.

---

It is a pleasure to announce that, after an exhaustive talent search and interview process, the position of **Club Librarian** has been awarded to **Laurie Kowalchuk**. Many thanks, Laurie!

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### A New Retail Outlet For Bonsai

The Society's Vice President, Mark Paterson, sent along a note to inform us that, as of mid-May, he has established a retail bonsai operation with the folks at Urban Oasis Gardening Co-Op 4649 West Saanich Rd, Victoria Tel: 250-479-6868 Website: <http://urbanoasisgardening.net/>

Mark says he will be selling trees, tools and bonsai pots from this location. Mark will carry Joshua Roth bonsai tools.

---

### The Return of Lace Rock (at least for now)

Bill Thompson of Hillside Stone & Garden, just south of Duncan on the Trans-Canada, informs me that the unique rhyolite or "lace rock" is again available in limited quantities.

Apparently his supplier in the U.S. found several pallets of old stock and sent them north. The supply from his Utah source was exhausted after conservation measures were enacted to protect an endangered frog from the "mine" near Craters of the Moon National Monument.

Rhyolite, or lace rock, is a favorite rock used by local bonsai practitioners in the creation of Saikei (Japanese miniature landscapes), Penjing (Chinese miniature landscapes) and the art of Japanese & Chinese stone appreciation (suiseki and gōngshi).



Photo: John Mitchell

---

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

Remember, when on the mainland...



**JAPAN BONSAI**  
Garden Art

**TAK YAMAURA**  
Owner

16164 - 24th Ave.  
S. Surrey, B.C.  
Canada V3S 0B9

Ph: 604.536.9220  
info@japanbonsai.com  
www.japanbonsai.com

---

### Bonsai Garden Update

Progress continues on the Bonsai Garden. Larry and his group of volunteers meet on Wednesday mornings and are usually on site until noon. If you have any availability on Wednesdays, please consider volunteering. One doesn't need to be a bonsai "expert" to make a significant contribution to the creation of Western Canada's only bonsai garden. Please sign up or talk with Larry at the meeting ... or meet the group inside Gate 3 at the Hort Centre Wednesday mornings around 9:00.

We will be working toward an informal opening for the Arts & Music in the Gardens event this August where we will hold our annual Show & Sale (everyone's been asking!)

---

### **PNBCA 24th Annual Convention "Combining Two Worlds" September 19 – 22, 2013**

Hosted by the Inland Empire Bonsai Society, Spokane, Washington

**The deadline for early registration** (end of June) is fast approaching. Registration permits one to be a "silent observer" at the various workshops – you won't come away with a tree, and won't receive individual instruction, but the learning opportunities are great and it's fun. The cost is US \$250 for the weekend; other costs are accommodation, meals, etc. Spokane is about a 6½ hour drive from Vancouver via Seattle (kind of like a drive to Port Hardy, only a bit longer). See: <http://www.inlandbonsai.com/convention/convention.html>

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

### 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