

The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

NEWSLETTER

July 2014



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2014 VIBS Officers

President: Mark Paterson
Vice President: Teague Griffin
Treasurer: Larry Phillips
Secretary: Tibby Solloway
2014 Convention chair: Bob Taylor
Door & Raffle: Susan Vidal
Librarian: Kathi Morrison
Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell

Next Society meeting: Monday, July 21st, 2014
7:30 pm at Garth Homer Centre

Theme: Phoenix grafts - Mark P and Bruno B will demonstrate & talk about phoenix grafts ... aka Tanuki grafts.

Expert advice: There is a standing invitation to all members to bring in any tree that you would like an opinion or advice on – tap into several hundred years of collective bonsai experience.

Raffle table: Any contributions to the raffle table will be very much appreciated by all. One of our few fund raisers for the club and a very popular feature of our monthly meeting.

Club activities: Please give some thought to what you would like to see happening in the club this year. Feedback from the membership about what you would like by way of bonsai-related activities helps us structure our meetings.

Buy & Sell: trees or stock – members are invited to bring bonsai-related items and sell them at the meeting.

Show & Tell: bring in any trees of interest to discuss with us!

Work on your tree – please feel free to bring in a tree to work on, if you like. Assistance is always available.

July/ August meetings: We decided at the June meeting that these meetings would go ahead as planned.

Entering the building: Please be aware that the front door is the only entry/exit to the building. Security has become a significant issue for the Garth Homer administration and access to the building is now limited to the front door.

Library: Please return library books that you have borrowed so that others may enjoy them, too.

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Some photographic evidence of a bonsai meeting in June ...



Teague assists David Rowe from Parksville in styling a Shore Pine

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... and Maurice, of course!

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Arts & Music in the Gardens

August 9th & 10th 11:00am until 5:00pm both days

Don't miss this wonderful event showcasing the specialty gardens at the **Horticulture Centre of the Pacific** with artists and musicians in attendance throughout to enhance your sensory experience for the ultimate summer garden stroll.

See: <http://hcp.ca/events-functions/arts-music-gardens/>

Vancouver Island Bonsai Society members will be in the Bonsai Garden. There will be bonsai stock and related items for sale again this year.

The 25th Annual PNBCA Convention

October 3rd to 5th, 2014

At the Harbour Towers Hotel in Victoria - registrations received **before July 31st** result in a savings of \$20 per person.

This is a great event for people passionate about their bonsai. Exceptional workshops and demonstrations by guest artists make these Conventions memorable and extremely worthwhile events. There will be a display by select bonsai artists from Vancouver area and Vancouver Island.

Clicking on the link below will bring up our ad on the PNBCA website. The "Received before" registration date shown in the ad is in error, the date should be **July 31st**

<http://pnbca.com/conv2014/PNBCA%202014%20Convention%20Ad.htm>

Links to the various registration documents are included there as well. There is a link to the hotel for those of you coming from out of town. When registering be sure to mention that you are attending the PNBCA Convention to get the special room rate (the hotel has maintained the same room rates that were offered in our 2009 Convention).

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Seasonal comments from Maurice

July is a time to enjoy your bonsai!

I enjoy flowers on Abelia (see pictures),
Potentilla , Escalonia..

I enjoy viewing the fruits on Crab apples ,
Plums etc...

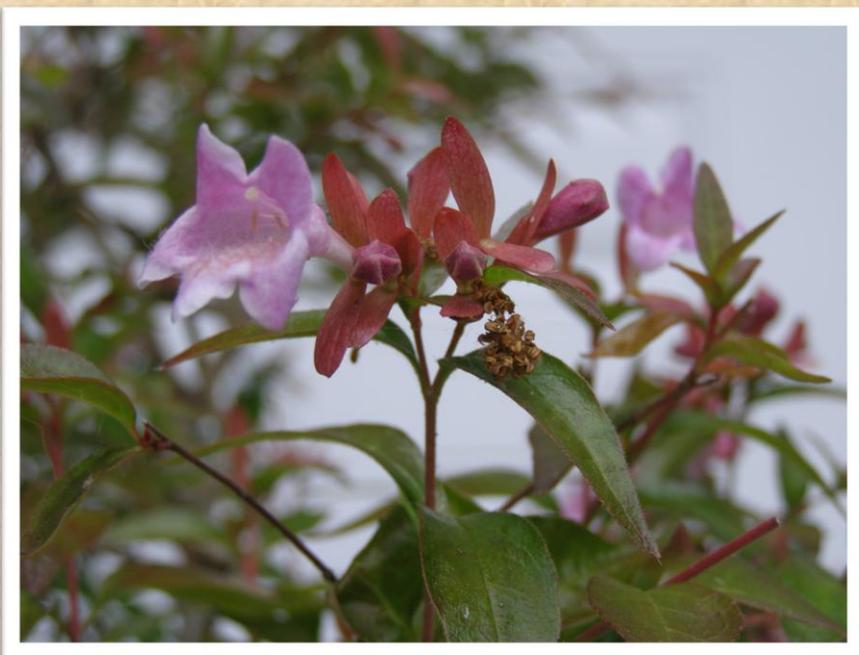
I keep pinching or reducing new growth
on deciduous trees

I try to keep up with the weeds!

I stop fertilizing for at least a month

I do not always trust my "automatic"
watering system...

check for insects ... leaf cutting bees are
out to do their job ... white flies love to
"colonize" under the leaves of trees in
shady areas



I try to mist leaves and keep some
trees "moist" but not soggy...even
in hot weather !

I do some early styling on "bargain"
nursery plants...

When I am finished...I sit down and
watch them grow!

Happy "bonsai-ing" and stay cool,

... Maurice

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Jack Douthitt - Some of the Things Learned Along The Way ...

Jack Douthitt is one of the best known names in North American bonsai with in excess of 40 years committed to the fine horticultural art of styling & nurturing little trees. Jack is a retired architect who lives in the American Midwest but has travelled the world studying and teaching bonsai. He belongs to a number of bonsai clubs and organisations. Jack has won numerous awards for his bonsai.

George Heffelfinger passed on an article from the BCI Journal (First Quarter 2012). In the article Jack shares some of what he has learned on his bonsai journey; I've extracted most of the pertinent points of the article here:

Bonsai is a slow art

You can't hurry Mother Nature ... bonsai, like trees growing in the ground, take years to grow to maturity. As a bonsai artist you can guide the tree somewhat but the tree will only grow according to the dictates of its heredity ... you have to be patient ... let the tree progress at its own pace. Relax & enjoy the ride. It's the journey that's important.

You need more than one or two trees

If you only have one or two trees, you will be constantly picking at those trees ... it will take them longer to grow into what you want them to be. If you have more trees there is always something to do, but you will not be constantly picking at the same tree. Bonsai are living objects. They need time to do their own thing.

Don't believe everything you hear or read

There is a lot of bonsai information available. Start by reading everything you can on the subject. Ask someone whose knowledge you respect. Continually research. If you decide to apply a technique, don't try it on your best tree. Regardless of the outcome at the end of your research, you will know more than you did when you started. Knowledge is cumulative.

Read between the lines

When you read a how-to article about a particular tree species, pay attention to where the writer of the article lives. Vastly different climates where people practice bonsai mean that things won't necessarily work the same for you in your particular climate. Sometimes what isn't said is more important than what is said.

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Things learned along the way ... (cont'd)

Learn to use the proper tools

There are many different bonsai tools available, many of them quite expensive. Buy the best tools that you can afford. The right tool does the job easier, quicker and better. If you see someone using a tool you're not familiar with, watch how they use it and what they use it for. Ask yourself: Does it do the job better than the tool I already have? Is it a tool that I would use? If you buy that new tool, learn how to use it. Buy good quality tools and learn how to use them.

Good technique is important

We use many different techniques in bonsai - techniques for watering, repotting, trimming, grafting, wiring, etc. You will get good results using time-tested techniques developed over many years. Learning, knowing and using proper techniques will allow you to concentrate on what you are trying to accomplish without struggling with how to do it. Good technique relieves frustration.

Learn the reasons behind the rules

The "How-to" books give us many rules of bonsai but seldom tell us why the rules are important. Learning the reasoning behind rules like "Avoid 'bar branches' (bar branches are branches that form a strong vertical line across the trunk and have the effect of stopping the eye as it follows the movement of the trunk). If you disguise the bar branch with your styling so that the eye does not stop and focus on that point, then you have done a masterful job of creating a good piece of art, regardless of the rule. Use your head, not (necessarily) the rules.

You always have more to learn

No one knows it all. There is always someone out there that knows more than you do. Sometimes they know more than you do, about many things. Be willing to learn from these people. If you are open to learning ... you don't have to keep re-inventing the wheel. Keep your eyes, ears and mind open for new information.

Bonsai progress through different stages

Bonsai go through specific periods of development. The initial styling sets up a framework for the tree's future development. After the major branches have been developed work can begin on ramification of those branches. Once ramification has progressed one can worry about leaf size - worrying about leaf size when you are doing the initial styling is putting the horse before the cart. Know which stage each tree is in and what needs to be done at that stage.

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Bonsai is all about balance

A good bonsai design is asymmetrical, with a pleasing, stable and balanced composition. Artistic ability can create a balanced composition but we have to know the growth habits of the specific tree to balance the growth. Balance is also important in maintenance procedures. We provide the right amount of water at the right time. We use soil mixtures that are properly balanced to provide the best growing environment for our trees. Everything we do for our trees must be in balance and in harmony with nature.

Start with good material

Over time, almost any material can be made into a decent bonsai, but the really good bonsai, the one that makes viewers stop and stare, generally starts with excellent material. The more you have to work with when you start a bonsai, the faster the tree will develop and the better the result will be. Good material gives you a head start in creating your bonsai. Only buy a tree that "speaks to you" in some way ... that way you and your bonsai start off with a positive attitude.

Learn your horticulture

Many different species of plants are used for our bonsai. In order to make good progress with your bonsai you need to know how your specific tree grows. How hardy is it? How much winter protection does it need? Does it like a free-draining soil or something a little more moist. How and when do you prune it? Every species that you grow has slightly different horticultural requirements ... and you have to learn about them in order to keep your tree alive, healthy & growing into a good bonsai.

You will make mistakes

Every bonsai artist has killed some trees, but as your knowledge of trees grows, the mistakes will be fewer and farther apart. Be curious. If one of your trees is doing exceptionally well, try to figure out why it is so happy. If one of your trees is not doing well; do some research to try and understand why it isn't happy.

Trees cannot be in "show condition" all the time

Every two or three years, just let the tree grow. Don't do any wiring, shaping or trimming except minimal pruning to maintain basic shape. Your trees will grow more vigorously and become more healthy.

Reach beyond your comfort level

If you only do what you already know how to do, you will never learn anything new. Once a year pick the worst piece of raw material you can find and try to make a bonsai out of it.

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Regardless of how successful your attempt is, you will be a better artist for pushing the envelope a little.

Expand your bonsai world

There are a lot of good bonsai and bonsai teachers out there and you can learn something worthwhile from every one of them. Take a workshop when the opportunity arises. Go to bonsai exhibitions that are within driving distance. Study the trees in exhibits closely. Attend every bonsai convention that you can ... they are great places to learn more about bonsai.

Bonsai is a solitary art

Your best work as a bonsai artist will be produced when you are working alone. Set up a place to do your bonsai work - anything from a corner of the garage to a fancy bonsai studio. Do make it a place where you can be comfortable and do accomplish some serious work. The best bonsai are created in solitude.

Bonsai clubs are social organisations

Bonsai clubs are great places to get acquainted with other bonsai enthusiasts. They are great places to learn and expose their members to many teaching experiences and are hopefully free of "bonsai politics" that contribute absolutely nothing to the advancement of your bonsai skills. Enjoy the social aspects of a bonsai club and take advantage of the educational opportunities that they present.

Improve your bonsai every time you work on it

Good bonsai are not created in hours. Articles in magazines make it look like something that can be done in an afternoon. Trees grow slowly and progress is made in small increments over long periods of time. Make sure that when you work on one of your bonsai that it is somehow better when you finish the session, than when you started it. Small improvements add up.

Enjoy the time you spend with your bonsai

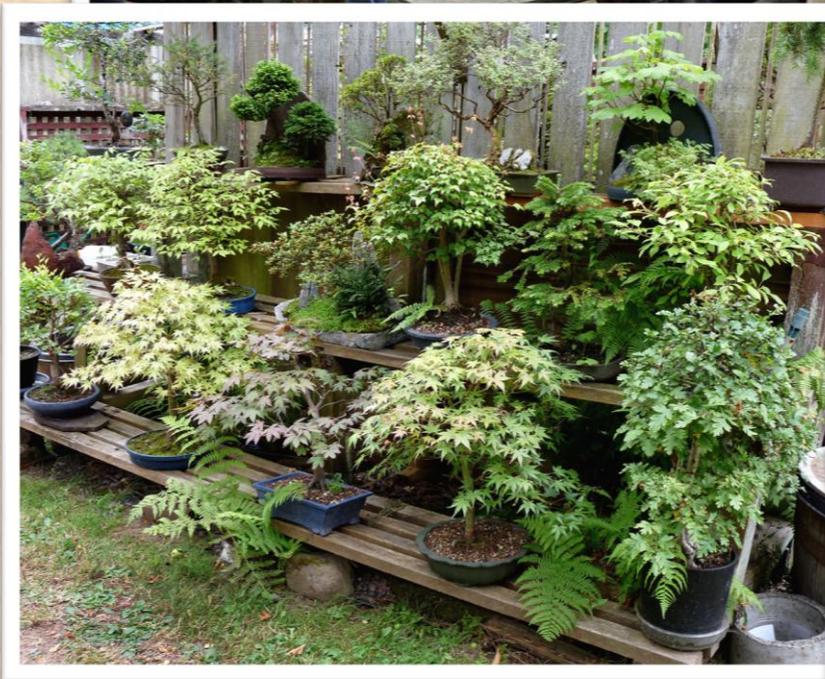
The real joy of bonsai is the satisfaction you derive from working hand-in-hand with nature. Every stage of a bonsai's journey can offer delight. The process of caring for bonsai; the watering, fertilizing, trimming, repotting, wiring and all those other things that must be done, should not be chores but a source of personal pleasure. Studies have found that just taking a walk through "nature" can clear our minds and reduce the frustrations of everyday life. As bonsai enthusiasts, we are not limited to occasional walks ... we are involved with the rhythms of nature on a daily basis, day-after-day- after-day ... that can be the real pleasure of bonsai. Above all, enjoy your bonsai journey.

Extracted from: 40 Years in bonsai & some of the things I've learned along the way by Jack Douthitt
BCI January/February/March 2012

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An Open Garden at Maurice's

Sunday, July 20th saw a good number of us out to an Open Garden event at Maurice's quite remarkable bonsai collection. We were warmly welcomed, fed & refreshed and educated as well by this remarkable chap whose bonsai energies know no bounds. Many thanks from all of us Maurice ... a lovely afternoon!



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... Monsieur Maurice!



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VANCOUVER ISLAND
BONSAI SOCIETY

PNBCA - 2014 October 3-5, 2014
Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association
Harbour Towers Hotel, Victoria, B.C.

Single Full Registration\$265
Received before July 1st, 2014
Family Full Registration \$470
Received before July 1st, 2014

25th ANNIVERSARY!
1989 - 2014

PNBCA Bonsai Convention 2014:
Colin Lewis Michael Hagedorn John Romano Tak Yamaura

The cut off date for early registration is fast approaching (July 31st!) - as is the Convention. It is time for all good people to sign up for the party! A separate mailing will be sent out this week to club members containing registration documents, etc.

There are some very nice trees available in the workshops, waiting to be styled with expert guidance, into lovely bonsai! There are incredible bargains to be had as the cost of some of the trees is almost what we're charging for the workshops. Workshop enrolment is limited!

We will continue to leave sign-up lists for volunteers at the monthly meetings. Thanks to all who have already volunteered!



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

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Vancouver Island Bonsai Society
Membership Renewal / Application Form 2014

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



... a bonsai plum