

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

April 2015



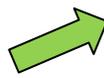
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### 2014 VIBS Officers

President: Mark Paterson  
Vice President: Vacant  
Past President: Bob Taylor  
Treasurer: Larry Phillips  
Secretary: Jim Haskins  
Door & Raffle: Susan Vidal  
Librarian: Kathi Morrison  
Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell  
Board member "without portfolio" Jim Morrison

**Next Society meeting: Monday, April 20th, 2015**

 **7:00 pm at Garth Homer Centre**

**Please note new meeting time!**

**Scheduled:** Bonsai shaping techniques - pruning, pinching and wiring talk & demo. Show & Tell: Flowering bonsai

**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.

**Club activities:** Please share your thoughts on activities that you would like to see. See the Activities Calendar:

<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca/bonsaiCalendar.htm>

**Raffle table:** Please consider bringing an item for the raffle table - it is a good fund-raiser for club events and this year promises to be a very good year for special events.

**Entering 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.

**Last meeting:**



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**Last meeting** ... Maurice led us through a thorough repotting talk and demonstration that covered the various elements of this all-important routine task. As any participant in a "Maurice lecture" can attest, there is a tremendous amount of information shared in these sessions.

I think I have proven to my satisfaction that I cannot take the photographs AND remember all of what Maurice has said. You have to be there – and take notes!



**Maurice re-potting**

"Bonsai is, after all, an illusion" ... Maurice Bombezin

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### Last meeting (cont'd)



Teague shaping an elm



Mark pinching shoots - Japanese maple



Maurice & Lili working juniper



Tibby & Bob with Japanese Black Pine

There were a number of interesting activities going on around the room at the last meeting: Teague working a rather striking elm, Mark refining a nice *Acer palmatum* (and isn't that a Maurice pot?), Maurice assisting Lili with a raffle-table juniper (Lili is legendary for her luck at the raffle table!) and Tibby assisting Bob with some late-season needle plucking of a Japan Bonsai JBP.

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### Literati bonsai

I'm going to take this opportunity to talk a little about my favourite bonsai style - actually more of an interpretation - that can translate across many bonsai categories: cascade, semi-cascade, informal upright, windswept, etc.

What we in the West know as Literati, the Japanese know as bunjin-gi and the Chinese as "wen-jin" (or "wen-ren"). Wen-jin is a name for Chinese scholars practiced in the arts and interpreted in Japanese as "bunjin".

I am particularly taken by the potential for clean, refined elegance of this form and the fact that trees like this are relatively easy to collect in the wild here on the west coast.

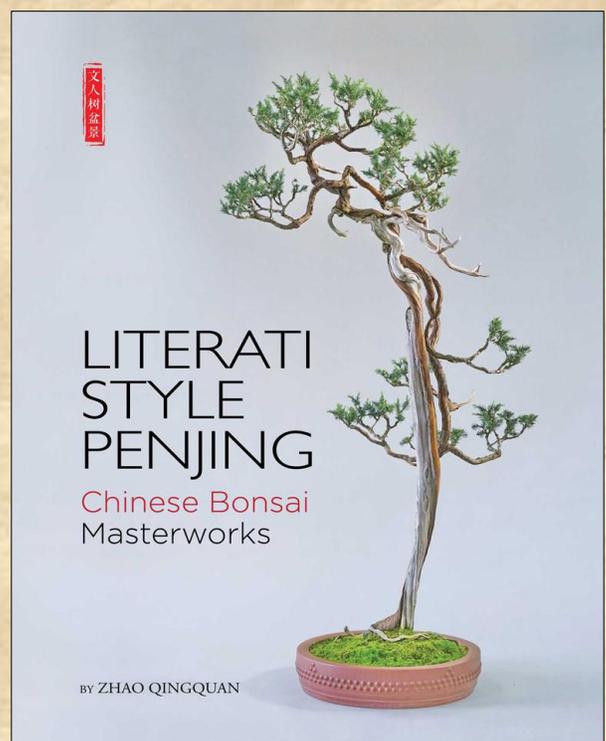
John Naka, the "father" of North American bonsai, said: "The bunjin style of bonsai is so free that it seems to violate all the principles of bonsai form. The indefinite style has no specific form and is difficult to describe, however, its confirmation is simple, yet very expressive. No doubt its most obvious characteristic are those shapes formed by old age and extreme weather conditions."

QingQuan (Brook) Zhao is a Chinese Penjing master who has appeared as a featured artist in bonsai conventions in Victoria. In his new book he describes four Chinese concepts that he feels define Literati:

- gugao - aloofness
- jianjie - sparseness
- ya - refined elegance and
- pingdan – plainness

"The term "literati style penjing" has been widely accepted by the bonsai community and is becoming more common within the bonsai world. It is well suited to melding concepts from Chinese painting, poetry and Zen into a stunning bonsai work, making it of interest to a wide variety of gardening styles.

(From Bonsai Bark - the newsletter of Stone Lantern)

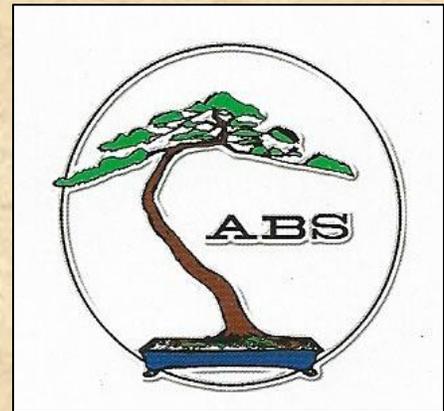


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In Literati, the line of the trunk flows or twists through often sinuous curves, often as a result of a long battle with extreme weather conditions.

Anton Nijhuis of Campbell River has created some striking forest planting bonsai that feature Shore Pine Literati (below)



The logo of the American Bonsai Society is a Literati-style tree.



Creating Shore Pine Literati at the PNBCA Convention in Victoria, October 2014

**Literati (cont.)**



The landscape bonsai demo by Tak Yamaura at the 2014 Convention was a Shimpaku juniper forest in bunjin style.

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The fact that extensive nebari (surface root spread) is not a desirable feature of Literati gives a huge flexibility in selection trees for this style of bonsai and opens a field to people who might have difficulty investing the dollars in trees with more massive trunks and root spread that are essential features of fine bonsai in other styles.

There are few specific principles as long as one attempts to distill the essence of the tree and evoke a natural grace, utilizing asymmetric balance and slender, dynamic rhythm.

Reading up on Literati will serve to entertain and educate - there are almost endless resources on the 'net. Why not try one?

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### **April Bonsai Care (ABC) - Timely seasonal tips**

After a mild winter and an early start to the "busy season", the longer day length and warm temperatures of April are giving our bonsai a real boost. Beech, oaks and wisteria are slowly coming to life. Larches are leafed out and still showing that wonderful fresh springtime green. Watch for insects - they'll be there, you just have to find them. I've had small caterpillars eating my apple blossoms even before they opened. Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is the answer for caterpillars - the larvae of moths and butterflies (which are quite lovely in their place but not on my bonsai!). You can find Bt at garden centres - long use has shown it to be safe for other insects (like bees) and animals of all kinds (like us).

Maples are well leafed-out and terminal shoots are rapidly elongating. Pinch these shoots back to enhance fine ramification and to keep internodes shorter. Pine candles are elongating. Pinching or breaking these candles (which give rise to needles and eventually become new branches) results in shorter internode lengths and thus shorter branches - all in keeping with the creation of a miniature tree. For specifics, talk to us at the meeting.

Fertilize (weak solution of fast-acting liquid or a small amount of slow release) if you haven't already done so (Holding back fertilizer for pines now can keep their needles shorter; I fertilize a little more heavily in June. Check old wiring to make sure it isn't cutting into the bark ... Allow new deciduous growth to extend to 3 leaves or leaf pairs, and then cut back to 1-2 leaves or leaf pairs. On weaker branches you can allow elongation to 5 or more leaf pairs before cutting back to two. Air layering can be done at this time - extending into early June.

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### Coming Events:

**May 2nd BONSAI WITH MAURICE BOMBEZIN** - postponed from an earlier date.

Time: 1pm - 3pm

**Cost \$20 per person** (plus GST)

Register at: [www.downtoearthgardensandnursery.com](http://www.downtoearthgardensandnursery.com)

Where: 1096 Derrien Place, Victoria **Supplies Extra**

**May 3rd Field Day** 10:00 AM - a morning visit to Elk Lake Nursery for the purpose of finding a "nursery tree" to use in creating a bonsai. Meet at Elk Lake Nursery. From **1:00 until 4:00 at HCP** - a demonstration shaping nursery trees for bonsai. Members are free to bring their own trees to work on.

**May 6 - 10** American Rhodo Society Annual Convention in Sidney. For Rhodo Society members but there is a sale open to the public on **Sunday, May 10th 9:00 AM until Noon**. Of particular interest: there will be cuttings of **Satsuki azalea from Roger Low's outstanding collection** of these rare and now extremely hard to find plants. Likely at Mary Winspear.

**May 16th** Mark Paterson will host **Bonsai 101 - Boxwoods** at HCP. Limit of 10 participants, 2 gallon boxwood provided. Cost \$70-\$85 includes a tour of HCP, including the Bonsai Garden.

**May 25th** Bonsai Meeting (regular meeting date fell on Victoria Day - new meeting date is May 25th) Theme: propagation with a panel of "experts" discussing air layering & cuttings.

**June 6th** Demonstration by David Rowe at HCP. David will be styling an azalea. David has been creating bonsai for 35 years and has conducted workshops and demonstrations at many events, including as headlining artist at two Victoria conventions.

**June 15th** Bonsai Meeting (our final meeting at Garth Homer Centre) Theme: Summer care

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### Coming Events (cont'd)

**June 28th** Open House at Maurice's. Directions to follow by separate email. 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm in the garden. Bring a small nursery tree for advice and to work on.

### Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

Membership Renewal / Application Form 2015

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

Attached is \$30.00 for single membership \_\_\_\_\_ or attached is \$35.00 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, B.C.  
V8W 3S2

