



# the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly  
publication of the

**BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND**

## Upcoming Events

January  
2016

January 16 Sat **Mentorship 101** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
January 26 Tue **Monthly Meeting** 7pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
February 6 Sun **Mentorship 103** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
February 14 Sun **Mentorship 102** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
February 20 Sat **Mentorship 101** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
February 23 Tue **Monthly Meeting** 7pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
April 9 Saturday **Pacific Bonsai Museum** work party

## Words From Your President

Happy Bonsai New Year to All!!!

Our trees received a very thorough insulation of ice last week. I once again failed to take any photos of them to memorialize that rare occurrence but they sure were beautiful. Also the smidgen of snow on the branches looked so much like a winter forest scene. Again, no photos but I have my memory of it.

Onto the business side of life: Our January meeting on Tuesday the 26th is our business meeting. We will do our best to keep it short. We also have visitors from the Japanese Garden that will be telling us about their remodel.

Because of the remodel we will not be having a Spring show at the Japanese Garden in 2016. Your board is considering alternate plans for a different location or considering skipping this year.

If there is any time left after the above, we have a crazy president that will have a short presentation.

In closing, I want to thank the entire membership for all they did last year to make the BSOP the success that it is. A general rule of thumb is called the 90/10 rule and is defined as 10% of a group does 90% of the work. Well, our club can certainly be proud that our volunteer ratio is outstandingly better than that rule.

So see you on the 26th to kick start our bonsai 2016.

Thank you for your trust, *See*

# Happy New Year

I hope everyone had a great holiday season. Thank you to my co-chair Charlene Vojtilla who did an outstanding job with the annual BSOP holiday party and to the many members attending, making it a big success. Thanks to Barbara, Dean, Debbie, Eileen, Karen R, Lime, Pat, Shannon for set up and clean up. To Barry, Karen V, Lyle, Eileen, Jan, John, Lyle, Ron, & Paula for help with the auctions, to Shannon for handling the raffle, and to Lee and Harold for their entertaining auctioneering. If I left out anyone, thank you as well. Everyone's help in putting together events like this is ALWAYS appreciated!

Thank You to everyone who purchased Akadama & Kanuma from me. I will have the bags that were previously reserved ready for pickup at the January meeting. I am sold out again but will place another order in February if there is enough interest.

The meeting this month will be a three part one. First up we have our annual business meeting with the "state of club" reports. Our guest speaker is Margret Keeler from the Portland Japanese Garden who will give us an update on the Japanese Garden remodel.

In closing Lee Cheatle will be doing a presentation on repotting. Next month Scott Elser will be back for part II of his series on "Just Pines". Later this spring we will have Boon coming in for a presentation and Bob Shimon will be here to share his Redwood expertise.

*Steve Seaming*, VP Programs



A close-up of Matt Reel's work. For the full story, go to [reelbonsai.wordpress.com](http://reelbonsai.wordpress.com)

# Mentorship 102, 103

Mentorship 103 (previously Shohin Kai) met on January 2. About 10 members attended. Lee taught us about soil components, and preparation for potting season, which is quickly approaching. Then Alan Taft and Lee helped us all with our trees.

Mentorship 102 (previously Mentorship) met on January 10. Twenty members attended, most of whom were not at 103 the previous weekend, so Lee did a repeat presentation on soils and prepping for potting. Alan Taft, Ron Cascisa, and Keith Wingfield were on hand to chime in with their knowledge during the presentation, then all four helped us with our trees. Thank you guys! We learned a lot at both meetings. We are blessed in this club to have such an accumulation of knowledge!

The next Mentorship 103 is scheduled for February 6, and Mentorship 102 is scheduled on Valentine's Day, February 14. Both groups meet from 10-2 in the Oregon Grape room at the Milwaukie Center. The topics planned for the February Mentorship will again be soils; this time we will be sifting soil components and making soil. Components and sifters will be provided, but if you have your own sifters, please bring them. Repotting needs will also be reviewed. Remember that next to watering, the most important aspect to maintaining the health of your trees is proper potting. February is the time to repot some deciduous, but most repotting is done in March and April. So it's time to get ready!

Always try to bring more than one tree to work on. Bring your tools, wire, and turn table, if you have them. If you don't, we can help you out. Also bring a sack lunch and something to drink.

All experienced members are invited and encouraged to come and help mentor us newbies.

*Elisabeth Hardy*

## Mentorship 101 Dates for 2016

Mentorship 101 will meet on the third Saturday of each month through June. Here are the dates.

January 16th

February 20th

March 26th

April 16th

May 21st

June 18th

## 2016 Pacific Bonsai Museum Work Party is Scheduled!

Please save **Saturday, April 9, 2016**, for the annual Pacific Bonsai Museum Work Party.

In 2004 we started taking a small work party to Pacific Rim each year to help them get their grounds ready for the summer season. We don't work on the bonsai trees, but help pull weeds, trim ivy, and generally clean things up. People who participate get a free critique of one of their trees by Aaron Packard, the Curator. Please watch the March newsletter for details. But **SAVE THE DATE!**

*Jan*

# Ready. Set. Grow

Now that the holiday season has passed, it's time to get back to bonsai. And that means repotting season will be here in a flash. So this month we'll talk about getting ready for that crucial task. In a way, we are already into the repotting process for this year. Hopefully, we have utilized the fall season to fertilize our bonsai and fortify them for the winter, and in doing so have properly set them up for a successful repotting season. We need healthy trees before we can start working on the root systems. That is number one. Get your trees healthy BEFORE you repot, not BY repotting, unless they have no soil percolation. Healthy trees will be able to respond to our work without skipping a beat. If your trees are unhealthy, determine the cause and adjust their care and environment so that you can repot next year.

The hardest task in repotting seems to be lining up all of the supplies. Do you have any new pots that you require? Now is the time to get busy. There are lots of sources, from online to local suppliers. Actually, I am always in search of good pots. It's the number one reason to attend any bonsai show. Frankly, there is no one place I can go to find high quality pots of all sizes, shapes and color that I might need. There are just too many variables and too much inventory for any one outlet to stock. Plus, buying pots is sort of like buying shoes for me – I need to try it on first. Folks are always asking me where I find my pots. You just have to watch out and invest. If you don't buy it when you see it, then it won't be on the shelf when you need it. That is all there is to it. I remember helping one retiring member clean out her collection. She had but one unused pot on her shelves. Incredible. But many of her trees did not have pots that were a good match in size and style. Each tree that I acquired from her over the years was immediately repotted into something more appropriate. The trees and I were both much happier.

Second only to pots is gathering enough soil components. Be sure to read Mike Hagedorn's latest post on Turface ([crataegus.com](http://crataegus.com)). I like the point he makes that it's not whether you CAN grow a tree in a certain medium, but what is optimal for the tree, within budgetary and availability constraints. We are so lucky that we happen to live on a big pile of pumice and lava, and are close to Japan for imported soils like Akadama. So, now you have buckets of the stuff, make sure it gets dried out, sifted, etc... It can take weeks for pumice to dry out in a garage. Spread it out on plastic, or in mixing pans. Stir every couple of days. It really does need to be bone dry in order to sift out all the dust, and pumice makes plenty. And in case you haven't heard it before, the general formula is, 1/16-1/4 inch particles, sifted clean, mixed in a ratio of one third each, Lava, Pumice, and Akadama. Eliminate the larger sizes for shohin and top dressing. Increase Akadama to 50% for deciduous trees. Some folks still use fir bark for part of the mix, but I have had no problems with the above materials, using them for the last ten plus years. Don't forget your drainage screens, tie in wire, top dressing moss, and bamboo for securing trees.

OK. So now you have all of your materials. Let's make a plan. There might be some new info here. I tend to start later than some folks because I have no winter protection for trees. I never really had any. Just overhead cover from the rain, and that is gone now, too. So make sure that if your trees are tender that you can provide protection from freezing and that goes for just about any species. I would love to get a heat mat/bed set up to give everything a good jump start after repotting, but that is in the future.

The first trees up for me are usually maples. They start moving early, and generally I wait

until the buds start moving. But this year I am going to hold off on my Japanese Maples until they really do start elongating. I have not tried it yet, because the info is new to me. I will let you know how it goes. Tridents are hardier and can be repotted earlier, but can also be repotted while the leaves are still red. I often wait for my plums to finish blooming before repotting, but that overlaps with leaf elongation. Most of the repotting I do at this point is with more mature specimens and is not drastic, so I have more leeway. I find that the crabapples are quite hardy and I can repot young ones after they have already started to leaf out. They can really take the cold too, so I try to do them earlier than later.

Pines are quite hardy, root wise, so I can repot them early, but it seems like my general, deciduous first policy ends up pushing them back to April, when they really should be March. I have repotted them with success even after they start elongating. It all really depends how much you are disturbing the roots, and how many you eliminate. Junipers – save these guys for last. They enjoy lots of heat and recover much better if repotted later in the spring. And at the tail end of the lot are beeches. It seems like they started elongating in May last year, long after all of the rest of the deciduous trees. Later is definitely better for these guys.

So one last word of advice. Make sure to leave as much of the existing root ball intact as you can. The trees simply do better the less they are disturbed. When the trees are younger, you can really get after them. Older trees need to be treated with respect and changes made at a slower rate. But be ruthless and decisive when you need to be. Crossing roots will never make good bonsai, but you can't always eliminate everything at once. Be strategic. Some roots can also be moved, rather than pruned, and held in place with bamboo wedges or tied with string. I would hesitate to wire anything under the soil where you can't keep track of it. If you are new to the process, offer to help a more experienced member with their repotting, observing and getting your hands dirty a bit. Every tree is a different case, especially when dealing with wild, collected material. The more variety of situations you can encounter, the better you will be at dealing with your own trees. Have fun and be sure to send Peter photos of your results.

*Scott*



Ponderosa pine  
by Scott Elser

# Trees in Ice



Lodgepole Pine



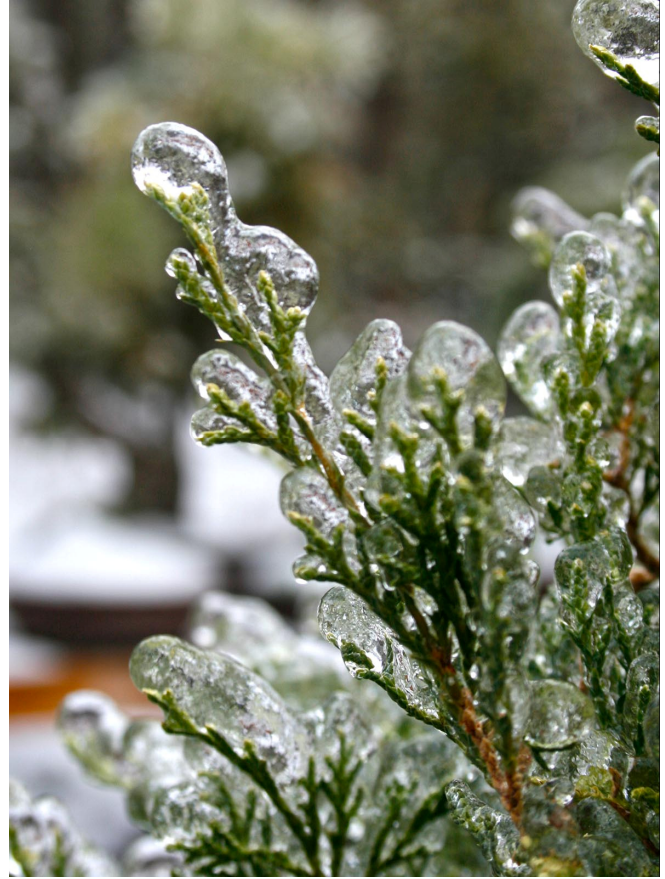
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Welcome to the Village



6707 SW Pine Street, Portland, OR 97223

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The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

**The Milwaukie Center**

**5440 SE Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie OR 97222**

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road

Visitors are always welcome!

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Librarian: Barbara Devitt [bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com](mailto:bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com)

Mentorship 101: Eileen Knox [eileenknox@me.com](mailto:eileenknox@me.com)

Mentorship 102: Lee Cheatle [leecheatle@msn.com](mailto:leecheatle@msn.com)

Mentorship 103: Liz Hardy [Lizchrishardy@comcast.net](mailto:Lizchrishardy@comcast.net)

Newsletter: Peter Pelofske [pelofskej@outlook.com](mailto:pelofskej@outlook.com)

Webmaster: Karl Holmes [thor13kah@gmail.com](mailto:thor13kah@gmail.com)

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