



# the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly publication of the **BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND**

June 2015

## Upcoming Events

June 23 7pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

July 19 10am **OSK/Mentorship** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

August 23 **Summer Picnic**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

September 25-27 **The Artisans Cup** Portland Art Museum

October 17 **Fall Show**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

December 13 **Holiday Party**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

## Words From Your President

Our goal, for every meeting, is to have something of interest for each member and that is a rough row to hoe. But, apparently your club is doing something that is working. I have never seen the meetings so busy and have so much attendance, as well as so many new members signing up each and every month. The challenge now, is to keep that energy flowing continuously. You know the axiom; easier to climb to the top than to stay on the top. In order for us to do just that, we want your input. Please feel comfortable approaching any board member and letting us know what else we can do to make you want to attend the meetings.

We do not have a general meeting in July or August but we will have other events so please check the calendar, within this newsletter, to see what is coming up.

Our thanks to Scott Elser for refining our BSOP logo.

The Spring Show was once again a resounding success. I did my best to thank those volunteers involved in its success at the May meeting and I always hope I did not leave anyone out.

The show filled more than 60 slots to have the success that it did. Our club survives on its volunteers. So I want to give another enormous **THANK YOU** to all those that made it a success. By the way: on the first day of the show, The Japanese Garden set a record for attendance and then broke that record on Sunday; your efforts contributed to those milestones.

To our professionals: thank you to Matt Reel for his excellent performance in critiquing the show. And, a warm thank you to Mike Hagedorn for his excellent discussion of the trees we brought to the May meeting.

Thanks for your trust, *Lee*



**BONSAI SOCIETY  
of PORTLAND**

# Water... Water... WATER

Watering has become my new favorite thing to do...OK maybe not FAVORITE but certainly most important. I find myself spending an hour (30min. X 2) minimum watering every day during the heat. When you add that to trying to keep up with pruning, weeding and fertilizing and not to mention yard work and the vegetable garden, I think I spend more time outside than in the house! The upside is my trees are happy which makes me happy.

We still need help to cover a few shifts at the Portland Nursery / BSOP event on June 20th. Morning shift is 10 - 12:30; afternoon is 12:30 - 3. Just bring a couple trees to work on while visiting with the public, answering their questions. All helpers get a 10% off certificate from the nursery. If you can help, please contact me at [stevenleaming@gmail.com](mailto:stevenleaming@gmail.com) or 503-750-4552.

We also need people to enter trees in the show part of the event. This year Portland Nursery is having a special category just for BSOP members. The prizes are gift certificates for Portland Nursery....1st is \$100, 2nd is \$50, and 3rd is \$25. Trees are voted on by the customers. Contest information and registration is online at [http://portlandnursery.com/events/bonsai\\_event.shtml](http://portlandnursery.com/events/bonsai_event.shtml) , or register your tree the day of the show (8-9am). All entrants receive a 10% gift certificate (one per person).

A big Thank You to Michael Hagedorn for his informative tree critiques at the May meeting. Remember to visit Michael's web page at [crataegus.com](http://crataegus.com) for more information about the Portland Bonsai Village.

This month our guest speaker is Aarin Packard who is the Curator of the Pacific Bonsai Museum. Aarin recently relocated to the Pacific Northwest after serving as Assistant Curator of the Nation Bonsai & Penjing Museum in Washington DC. He will be doing a presentation called "South of the Ranges: An Overview of the Lingnan Style of Penjing"

Look for my monthly meeting email with more details about happenings at the meeting on June 23rd. Hope to see all of you at the Portland Nursery event on June 20th.

*Steve Leaming*, VP Programs



Saikei Entry at the Japanese Garden Spring Show



Prize Winning Entries at the  
Japanese Garden Spring Show



# 2015 FALL SHOW AND PLANT SALE

The 2015 Fall Show and Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, October 17th, at the Milwaukee Center. Because last year's show and sale was such a success, we will style this year's event after 2014. It will consist of several sections: a bonsai exhibit, a vendor section, a member sale section, refreshments, children's activities, door prizes, and auction(s).

This exhibit is more casual than the Spring Show at the Japanese Gardens. Rather than showcasing our best trees, this show is for FUN. We'd love to have at least one tree from every BSOP member. We want your favorite tree (not necessarily your best tree). It need not be fully styled, but should show some effort and its bonsai potential should be recognizable. The aim is to show the public how much FUN we can have raising bonsai. The only rules for trees entered in this show are that they be free of bugs and diseases and in clean pots. Start now thinking about which tree(s) you can show, and let Steve Leaming know your plans.

Tables will be available in the Marketplace for members with bonsai businesses and for members who just have a few trees to sell. Because this is a fund raiser, there will be a small charge per table. If you think you might need a table or two (or three!) contact John Thomas.

Other fund raising ideas include silent and oral auctions. For this we need donations of trees, pots, tools or other bonsai objects. If every member donated one thing we'd have about 250 auction items! This is where we make the most money, so take a look at your collections and let Lee Cheatle know what you can donate.

We need someone to oversee publicity, which includes sending press releases to local media and getting posters at local nurseries. Contact Jan Hettick if you can help with this critical job.

Details are still being worked out for other event features, including children's activities, raffle, door prizes, refreshments, whatever! We're open to suggestions so let us hear from you!

There will be a planning meeting Wednesday evening, June 17th, at Chevy's Mexican Restaurant, 14991 Bangy Rd, Lake Oswego. Bangy is off of SW Kruse Way at the south end of Hwy. 217. Come at 6:30 if you want to eat, and we'll start the meeting by 7:00 pm.

The agenda is brainstorming fund raising ideas and refining ideas we already have. All members are welcome, but please RSVP if you expect to attend. Chevy's wants to know how many to expect. Comments and questions may be directed to Steve Leaming or Jan Hettick.

## MENTORSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE

NEWCOMERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME AND JOIN THE FUN!!!!!!

In addition, the following are our scheduled upcoming dates for this year's mentorship meetings. Dates are subject to change.

July Sun 19th

Aug Sun 16th

Sept Sun 13th

Oct Sun 11th

Nov Sun 15th

Dec Sun 13th

*See*

## NEWER MEMBERS THIS IS FOR YOU

I want to take a moment to write to you personally and thank you for giving the BSOP a chance to be the kind of club that you want to be a part of. I hope that what you have encountered thus far has appealed to you. By now, many of you have been contacted by Eileen Knox. Eileen is one of our vice presidents who takes care of membership. If you have heard from her, she has informed you of all the things the BSOP offers. I hope you latch on to all of them.

It is easy to get overwhelmed, at the start, with bonsai and joining a large group. All of the other members got caught up with it too. The remedy is to latch onto a/or some of the members and allow them to guide you. Week by week you will pick up on how to develop bonsai and how the club operates.

During our general meetings, I try to keep the club's business really short so we can get right to the educational aspect of the program.

I also want you to know that the board has recognized the need for some more basic beginner instruction and we are in the process of developing that.

So, again: WELCOME and please feel outstandingly comfortable with letting us know what your needs and desires are; we are here to help you get started confidently into the world of bonsai.

Your President, *Lee*



BSOP members at the Spring Show



Matt Reel discussing at the Saturday Night Critique

## Website World

For several years and a few boards, we have been creeping along with bringing the BSOP into the “Web World.” Along the way we have had several contributors who have moved it along and their time and effort is very much appreciated. But I think we all should be aware of what it takes to, not only set up a quality website for the BSOP, but to maintain it as well.

First and foremost, it takes someone with years of expertise and experience to do it. But, even more importantly, it takes someone willing to volunteer to do it and then to spend countless hours and I mean hours and hours and hours of time in front of a key board and monitor transferring years and years of information into the cyber system.

In addition, it is all done in the background and does not get all the fanfare like some of the other things this club does. So, with that said, I want to recognize the individual who has all the qualities and dedication to successfully create what we now can proudly call the BSOP Website. The person, who has taken on this enormous task and done such an outstanding job with it, is Chas Martin, our President that preceded me.

Please take the time to thank him for not only his expertise but also for his hundreds and hundreds of hours at the keyboard and for all the other things he has done for our club.

Thank You Chas!

From one who appreciates all you have done, *Lee*

PS: You should go on line and visit the website: [www.portlandbonsai.org](http://www.portlandbonsai.org) I am sure you will be impressed with it.

If you have any problems gaining access, contact Eileen Knox at [eileenknox@me.com](mailto:eileenknox@me.com)

## OREGON SHOHIN KAI

The OSK group will take a break over summer. Our next meeting will be September 12, 2015, delayed to the SECOND Saturday because of Labor Day weekend. The meeting will be at the Milwaukie Center. Check the website or watch your email for additional details.

## Fertilizer

Portland Rose Society 5-4-4 organic fertilizer with mychorrizaee is a specially blended organic fertilizer proven to work well for bonsai, as well as other ornamental yard plants. The pelletized fertilizer comes in 20 pound bags, selling for \$16 per bag. Contact Bill Hettick if you would like to pick some up: 503-936-5629 or [bhettickco@comcast.net](mailto:bhettickco@comcast.net).

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Fifteen new members since the last newsletter! Welcome to: Bo Snyder, Ian Carstairs, Roger Andrews, Kathiann and Wes Brown, Feitzoo and Kai Cheng, Ethan Erickson, Joe Holliman, Rob Mcilwain, Nghia Tran, Shannon Wells, Alex Crump and Robert and Sheila West. We look forward to getting to know you, and encourage you all to participate in the many opportunities available within BSOP.

# Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

## Case Study #1 Lodgepole Pine. Compacting the design

OK. You have ALL asked for it. Design information for bonsai. So we are going to try and tackle this subject through specific examples. Each tree is different and requires a different approach. Even if you go to a workshop, where there are ten trees to choose from that are all mass produced together, there will be a tremendous variation in the style and individual qualities of each tree. Therefore, the more insight into design that you have, and the more technical skill, the greater ability you will have to make your trees better. And that all comes with being exposed to more trees and more situations.

Our first case involves a Lodgepole Pine that I collected sometime in the nineties, up on the backside of Hood, in a ditch somewhere on a side road off of Lolo Pass. Not being deceptive here - I really don't recall much more than that. Ditches and road cuts seem to be the best place for me to find trees at lower elevations – places where all of the trees normally grow very straight. At one time, I had more lodgepole pines than any other single species in my collection. This specimen was somewhat of an upright tree when collected and initially planted. Somewhere along the lines, I decided to make it a semi-cascade style. These guys grow very slowly and don't back bud reliably, so I needed to work with what I had, in terms of branching and trunk thickness. At this time the trunk had no deadwood on it. I stripped and carved the jin you see at the right from a live branch and was rather proud of the carving



work. One of the only trees I have ever really finish carved for aesthetic purposes. At that time, I was studying with Boon Manakitivipart in his Intensive program. I brought the tree down to Boon's club and the Bay Island Bonsai Club show in January 2006. This is the first photo you see of the tree. Take a look and see what you think.

2006  
Lodgepole Pine shown  
at the 2006 Bay Island  
Bonsai Club show.

What did you notice? The trunk is rather thin, but not really a bunjin. The needles are nice and short, but the pads are not all that dense. The trunk has some reverse taper. But more than that, the foliage mass is a long ways away from where the trunk emanates from the soil. That makes a big, unsightly hole in the visual composition. Lodgepoles didn't seem to get much respect at the time, down in the bay area, it was being considered maybe a common tree. But I never saw one on display, so that thought bewildered me. I had a lot of fun showing this tree, along with a group of vine maples growing on a lava rock, which I also still have.

Fast forward to 2013. I had not been keeping up with my trees, and this one was no exception. I was already working on thinning my collection down and this tree was on the chopping block. It was going to have to become a better bonsai, or die trying. That may sound harsh. But lodgepoles really are a dime a dozen up in the woods, and this tree was purely my own investment in time and money. My goal is to make the most out of every tree, and if this tree was going keep using my resources, like watering every day and precious bench space, it was going to have to improve - drastically. Back in about 2010-11 I decided to change the container into something smaller and lighter in appearance. But the repotting happened to take place after the new shoots had started to elongate. Not a big problem, even if not ideal, as I had done this before. The problem here was that I had to reduce the root mass much more than expected to fit into the v-shaped pot. I should have just stopped – but that is not always on my radar. The result was that, even with my extra effort at aftercare, the tree barely survived. It lost some foliage, and most definitely it's strength. Now I had to let it recover for a few years.

With all of the above in mind, I had a few intrepid folks help me and in the spring of 2014 we proceeded towards styling the tree. In the intervening years, a small portion of deadwood



had expanded to cover a much larger area on the trunk, mostly on the back side. The only way to feature that element was to change the front. Once the new front was decided upon, we proceeded to bend the trunk in two places. Then we stopped to let the tree recover. It did very well, and in the early spring of 2015 I was able to complete the restyling.

2013 The state of the tree before restyling. Obviously it has lost some branching and grown raggedly.



The process for bending the trunk was straightforward, but not for the faint of heart. For the first bend, we used a saw to separate the dead part of the trunk from the live part – dead and dry parts don't bend, they just break. We probably could have just split it, but I wanted a little more control. We then used the rebar that you can see in the photo to anchor the wire as we bent the tree back on itself. This move was largely horizontal and meant to make the trunk shorter. The second bend then, was to move the crown back over top of the trunk. To get the trunk to bend, we hollowed it out, creating space for the wood to move lessening the force needed. We were able to anchor this second bend to the same rebar. Mission accomplished. This work is really much easier with more than one set of hands.

When I got ready to wire and style the rest of the tree this year, I was struck by the nature of the curves that we had created and how much I enjoyed them. But darn, I was planning to feature the deadwood. After a brief debate in my mind, I went back to the fundamental hierarchy for bonsai design – 1. Base, 2. Trunk Line, 3. Special Features, 4. Branching. A beautiful trunk line trumps special features, especially when they are not so special. So now we are back at the original front. But the larger mission has been accomplished – to compact the design. The open spaces are now smaller and less intrusive and are now within reach of the foliage, another mitigating factor. Lodgepoles are quite rewarding to wire – the needles are not sharp and there is a good amount of space between branching to get in and out of. The only caveat on this particular tree is that the foliage is rather wild. Hopefully that will settle down with a more consistent growing pattern. Since I rotated the angle of the tree during styling, I built a little stand so that the tree could grow at the new angle, keeping the needles upright, and until I can find an awesome new pot.



2015  
The tree after restyling.



### Overlay

Compare the old and new silhouettes. You can see just how far that jin traveled. Notice where the crown sits in each version. It has moved considerably.

That's my mission at the Artisan's Cup come fall. Notice the dam of soil added to make sure the water permeates evenly through the soil column. Ready to show next year with a new pot? You decide.

*Scott*

## Gresham Japanese Garden Tsuru Island

Save the date for Fukkatsu (rebirth) of the Gresham Japanese Garden on August 8 at Gresham Main City Park. This grand re-opening will feature environmental groups, local community organizations and the 4th annual Skosh Japanese Cultural Festival. See more on facebook.com



On Sunday August 8th, The Tsuru Island Japanese Garden in Gresham will celebrate the completion of a new bridge. I am helping organize an informal outdoor bonsai exhibit. I am asking club members for help in bringing display items or doing demos, etc. Please sign up at July meeting or call me.

*Mark Vossbrink*



## At the Japanese Garden Spring Show

Past meets President. Seen at this year's Spring Show, BSOP's first ever president, Maggie Drake, meets her latest successor and current president, Lee Cheatle. Yes, that's a span of about 50 years!



*"Don't try to make your tree look like a bonsai, make your bonsai look like a tree."*

*John Yoshio Naka*

## Bonsai Supplies from Wee Tree Farm

We have a large selection of pottery, trees of all sizes and price range, tools, soils and miscellany. Our retail store is located inside **Garland Nursery** which is a destination in itself with 5 acres of plants and displays to delight and inspire. Come see us, we promise it is worth the drive!

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Welcome to the Village



6707 SW Pine Street, Portland, OR 97223

The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month except in summer, when other group outings are arranged.

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

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road  
Visitors are always welcome!

**Board of Directors**

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

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