



the **TREE LINE**

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

March 2014

Upcoming Events

- March 16 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting** Sunday at Alan Taft's home
March 25 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** St. Marks 5415 SE Powell
April 5 10am - 2pm **Oregon Shohin Kai** St. Marks 5415 SE Powell
April 22 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** St. Marks 5415 SE Powell
April 26 **Pacific Rim Work Party** Pacific Rim Bonsai Exhibit see p 7
Oct 18 - 21 **Intl Bonsai Art & Culture Biennale**, Yokyakarta, Indonesia

Broken Record

No, not Olympic records, not meteorological data points, not economic benchmarks – it's more basic than all that. This is a replay of my previous plea for volunteers. We have a few critical roles to fill and a few new opportunities. These will impact the quality and direction of our activities for the next few years.

Several recent updates to our leadership include Board Member Alan Taft as Past President. Jan Hettick will chair our Nominating Committee. Charlene Vojtilla will chair our Holiday Party. Scott Tice is now handling our website calendar updates.

We have the critical role of Board Secretary to fill. Karen Vunkannon, one of our most dedicated Board members has stepped down after several terms. We need someone with organizational experience, good strategic and tactical perspective and focus on detail.

We're also looking for a Public Relations Chair to provide updates to regional calendars and organizations; an Outreach Chair to coordinate presentations to schools, garden clubs and nurseries; and a New Member Engagement Chair to assure new members know and take advantage of all the programs and resources available.

Our longer term need is for a Chairperson to lead the Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association Convention if we choose to host it again in 20?? .

It is our responsibility as a volunteer organization to support each other's appreciation, knowledge and skill in the art of bonsai. Our monthly programs over the past few years have continued to improve. But there is much more to a successful organization than attending demonstrations. Descriptions of the requirements for these open positions are available.

Contact me directly with questions and the energy to help others improve their bonsai experience. I hope the next record we break will be a full slate of officers and chairs before the next newsletter.

Thanks, *Chas Martin, President*

Spring Fervor!

As I write this I am in the international terminal at San Francisco headed on my honeymoon in Costa Rica via El Salvador. I will be back in plenty of time for our March meeting. It seems that just yesterday (Mar. 7) the plums began opening their flower buds. When my wife and I return in a week's time, we will be greeted by a full-scale bombardment of spring beauty.

This of course means lots of potting and repotting. By the time you see this some of your trees will have leafed out already. (An untrained bog birch in my collection was showing green long before any other trees.) This digression serves merely to suggest--get busy!

Gather ye pots, pumice, and root hooks! Spring Fervor is underway.

But be careful not to repot too often. Yearly repotting for most all species is NOT a good idea, despite what the bonsai books may say. Wait a few or more years. Roots should be quite dense--a chopstick should have a hard time penetrating most anywhere in the pot.

Of course there are exceptions, such as root rot and changing really bad soil. Never bare-root your conifers.

In March we are being visited by Peter Tea, who apprenticed at Aichi-En. While there he wrote a super-informative blog detailing what he was learning both in words and photos. His technical acumen and jovial demeanor suggest he will give us a great presentation.

See you in March. I'll be the tan guy...

Al Polito, Vice-President of Programs

Oregon Shohin Kai

Members attending the Oregon Shohin Kai on March 1st got a head start on repotting their deciduous trees under the leadership of Dennis Vojtilla. Although the program focused mainly on maples, we talked about other species as well. Conversation covered styling, shaping new growth, and transplanting.

The next meeting of the Oregon Shohin Kai will be Saturday, April 5, 10am to 2pm. We will continue to work on repotting, under the leadership of Alan Taft. First efforts will be concentrated on conifers - pine, spruce, larch, and many other types of trees. Then for fun the focus will switch to the wild and woolly world of junipers. Alan will show us what can be done and how far we can take them. He's talking styles and craziness!

As always, feel free to bring any kind of tree; it doesn't have to be conifer... it doesn't even have to be shohin! The meeting will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, SE Powell & 55th Avenue. Don't forget your lunch! If you have any questions, contact Jan Hettick at janhettick@comcast.net or 503-504-7760. *Jan*

March Mentorship Meeting

Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014

Time: 2:00pm to 5:00pm

Where: Alan Taft's house 5910 SW Idaho, Portland, OR 97221

Lee's cell # 503-312-4921: Call me if you have questions.

Subject: Repotting Shimpaku Junipers, Alan is tree sitting several older Shimpaku's that belonged to Masa Furukawa. We are going to repot these at the start of the class and then move on to repotting the trees you bring.

We have had some warmish days. A lot of trees are in leaf and that means the roots are growing too. Once the leaves are out on a deciduous tree, we generally do not try to repot it. Bring trees you want help repotting.

I will bring a handout from my notes from the last BSOP meeting. We had Ryan Neil and Scott Elser repotting their yamadori Douglas Firs. A lot of new and great information was shared during those 2 hours.

Special thanks to Steve and Deb Wilcox for allowing us to have the meeting at their house in March. They also helped the students with repotting techniques and were able to fill the needs of those who needed different products. Also, special thanks to Ron Cascisa for his assistance as well.

At February's mentorship there were a variety of trees and root systems that needed repotting so a lot was learned. As I said in the last message; so much can be accomplished at this time of year to improve your tree's look and health. You get to see how the root system is doing, maybe choose a new pot, change the tree's placement, and introduce perhaps a better soil medium.

Hope to see you at at Alan's house.

Lee

Organic Fertilizer For Sale

Many BSOP members are finding success with the Portland Rose Society Fertilizer, which is a specially blended organic fertilizer rated 5-4-4 with mycorrhiza. The pelletized fertilizer comes in 20 pound bags, selling for \$16 per bag.

If you would like to order a bag or two for delivery at the March BSOP meeting, please pre-order from Bill Hettick at bhettickco@comcast.net or 503-936-5629.

Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Repot Review

After last month's program on repotting, I thought that this would be a great time to review what was covered in that session, both to reinforce and amplify techniques for repotting. Next to watering, repotting is the most difficult aspect of bonsai to learn. I for one am still working at it. As such, it's not something that you can just put down on paper, especially without any pictures. So we are not going to try and cover everything, but hit some of the basic concepts and details that might be different than what you might already know.

First of all, know why you are repotting. There are just a few basic reasons:

1. Aesthetics – you want to change the pot size, style, etc... or change the planting position.
2. Loss of percolation – the soil is compacted and no water gets into the rootball.
3. Soil breakdown – the soil particles have broken down so far that they retain too much moisture for the tree.

Knowing the reason you are repotting will guide you in many decisions. Don't do it just because the calendar says so. A conifer can go six to seven years without repotting, and deciduous trees a shorter time. Before you start, have all of your pots and supplies ready. Have your soil sifted and mixed and ready to go. A good basic mix is one third each of Akadama, Pumice, and Lava, or 1-1-1. You can shift to 2-1-1 for more of a boost to the tree, and deciduous trees can even go to all Akadama. Sift all of the particles down to between one quarter and one sixteenth of an inch. For shohin, just use from one eighth down to one sixteenth. I find the easiest way to mix the components is to dump it back and forth a few times between two bins. That way you don't crush it.

Now that you are ready, free the tree from the pot. First, clip the wires at the bottom and clear the drainage holes. Delicately use a chopstick or sickle to free the edge of the tree from the pot. You only need to do three sides to get it out. Usually I find a piece of jin or something firm at the top of the tree to tip the tree out of the pot. Once it is out, make sure that you know where the base of the tree is and where the new soil line will be. Then start working the bottom into a flat plane that can sit flush on the bottom of the new pot. Once that is done, work in the sides the desired amount and don't get too greedy to get it into that new pot you bought.

Take care of the health of the tree and don't do too much at once. You can really do a lot when you have the proper technique and aftercare. Know your limits, as each tree will have a different challenge. If you are working with a collected tree, especially one due for its first potting, be very cautious and do not handle the roots too much. Make sure that you are spraying the roots with water before they start drying out. Double check your pot dimensions and how much root you need to remove.

Once you are ready to go, spray the root ball again and prepare your pot with tie down wires. Galvanized Steel is great as it does not stretch like copper or aluminum and it is cheaper.

16 gauge is great for heavier trees and 18 works for medium trees. For shohin I prefer aluminum because it doesn't take much to hold them in. I found that Orchard Supply or hardware stores have a great selection of sizes of rolls to choose from. Home Depot is a little short in this department. Be sure to pre-bend your wires before inserting them into which ever holes you use. A ninety degree angle, nice and sharp. Make sure the portion between the two holes is convex so that it pulls up against the pot. And speaking of holes, if your pot does not have holes in the right place to anchor the tree, drill some new ones. Use a tile bit in an electric drill and a spray bottle with water to cool the bit. Mark your hole and begin drilling. Once you start penetrating through and hear the sound change, stop and drill from the other side to finish. This will keep the bottom from blowing out.

Add in a single layer of drainage material of the same proportions as regular soil, but at one quarter inch size. Then add in some regular soil on top of that, with a mound in the middle. Place your tree on the mound and settle it in well. Use pointed bamboo chopsticks pounded into the side of the root ball to secure the tree. Wrap your tie wires around the bamboo and tighten while pushing down with your thumb. That should get things nice and snug. Now that the tree is secure, add in plenty of soil.

Use your beveled chopsticks on the sides of the pot to begin working the soil in. Plunge the chopstick all the way to the bottom, then move it up and down lightly to allow soil to fill in the space behind it. Repeat as you careful work your way around the tree. Feel for the roots with your chopstick so that you do not damage them. Use a fine chopstick around fine roots and check for voids under the root mass. Are you still using lots of soil? Heaps of it? Hold the soil firmly with your left hand and you chopstick with the right. That will keep all of those small roots in place. When everything is firm, brush off the excess soil and tamp it down. Be sure to leave a lip at pot's edge so that the water does not run off quickly.

Then sprinkle some shredded New Zealand sphagnum moss on top. This holds the soil particles in place and keeps moisture in the upper levels of the root mass. If you want to hasten the growth of new moss, shred some dried green moss into your sphagnum mix. You can find this moss, which is much cleaner than our domestic moss, at pet stores or places that sell orchids. Be sure to spray the moss with a fine mist before watering in or you will wash it all off. When you water, be sure run the water until it runs clear out of the bottom. Be sure to protect the tree from freezing and if it is particularly tender, it can go on a heat bed for a few weeks to give it a head start. I know this was rather quick and brief, but hopefully you have picked up something new to make the transition easier for your trees.

Scott E

Thank You BSOP

for Dan Robinson's Book Gnarly Branches, Ancient Trees. I have known about Dan since I visited Elandan Gardens shortly after its opening years ago. This book is a great biography of Dan and his Bonsai as I leaf through it prior to sitting down and reading it in depth. The Gallery of his trees is a beautiful ending to this book. I have been able to start reading during the snowy weather we are experiencing as I write this Thank You.

Norm Sandberg

IN MEMORIAM

Peter D. Adams,

January 4, 1939; November 24, 2013

by Keith Wingfield

On Sunday, November 24, 2013, the international Bonsai community suffered a tragic loss in the passing of Peter Adams. He passed peacefully in his sleep after a long hospitalization and struggle with a serious infection. He had been on holiday in his native England with his wife Kate at the onset of his illness.

Peter first became interested in Bonsai as an art form during his undergraduate studies at the Farnham School of Art and further advanced his interest and study of Bonsai with his post-graduate studies at the Royal Academy of Schools, Burlington House, London, which is the oldest art school in England. In 1977 and again in 1979, Peter was awarded the Gold Medal for his Bonsai displayed at the Chelsea Flower Show, which is the highest and most coveted accolade awarded for horticulture in England. Many of Peter's excellent and top class Bonsai reside today in the British National Bonsai Collection. Peter had over 50 years of experience in the medium of Bonsai, as a nurseryman; artist; teacher; lecturer; technical consultant and author. He was ranked in the top 6 Bonsai artist in the world outside of Japan. He regularly lectured and demonstrated all over the world, and conducted classes and study groups wherever he traveled.

His many books on Bonsai styling, care and development remain extremely popular and in high demand today. His drawings of raw materials for Bonsai development were featured in **Bonsai Focus** magazine. His regular contributions demonstrated his broad scope of knowledge and his skills at discovering the best aspects of the presented material and diagramming of the growth and sculpture aspects for its development.

I studied with Peter for 12 years. During this time I got to know him as a teacher, humorist, artist, advocate, lecturer, tutor and friend. He and his lovely wife Kate were regular visitors to my home and I and the other students who gathered in my workshop were never disappointed. I will treasure the times I shared with him; the Bonsai he helped me discover and develop; the drawings of the advancing stages in the development of the trees; and the personal insights he helped me to learn. Most of all I will always treasure the friendship we developed, and the Bonsai conversations we shared over a first cup of coffee in the morning.

Goodbye my Friend. May your Bonsai always prosper.

Keith

Recycle Wire

Please bring your used copper wire to the monthly meetings. Roger Case will have a five gallon bucket available to collect used copper wire to turn in for cash for the club. Take advantage of the fact that he has volunteered to do this for the club to generate income for BSOP.

2014 Pacific Rim Work Party

Saturday, April 26, 2014 is the date of this year's Pacific Rim Work Party.

Each year a group of BSOP members goes to the Pacific Rim Bonsai Exhibit to help prepare the grounds of the exhibit for increased public activity during Spring and Summer. Occasionally a couple of people might get to work on the trees, but our primary responsibility is the entry path and grounds; pulling weeds, trimming landscape plants and the like. We bring our own favorite gardening tools, such as loppers, pruning shears, buckets, gloves, knee pads, rain gear and/or sun screen. And please bring a lunch, as there is nowhere close to buy one.

We try to arrive no later than 10:00 AM, and work three or four hours with a break for lunch. Then, when we're done with the grounds, we meet in the main tent for a critique by Dave DeGroot. Each worker is encouraged to bring one tree for Dave's analysis, instructions and styling tips. This is also a great way to see the bonsai collection. As a bonus, we're usually done at the exhibit in time to visit Bonsai Northwest, only a short drive north.

If you want to car pool, we meet in the north parking lot at Elmer's Restaurant by Delta Park (Exit 306b) at 7:15 AM. If you drive direct, plan 2 ½ to 3 hours travel time. Please arrive no later than 10:00 AM. For more information, call Jan Hettick, 503-504-7760, or email at janhettick@comcast.net. There will be a sign-up sheet at the March 25th meeting.

Jan

How to Renew Library Materials

If you have library materials checked out and will not be at the meeting when they are due to be returned, you can renew them. Simply call or e mail Jan Hettick at 503-504-7760 or janhettick@comcast.net BEFORE THE DUE DATE and tell her you want to renew your items. That's all it takes. Just say "renew" and you are good to go!

BEGINNER LESSONS

It's finally here. We now have lessons available for all those people who would like to learn more about bonsai at a beginning level. Alan Taft is offering lessons at the Multnomah Community Center in Multnomah (on Capital Highway south of Hillsdale). We meet most Thursdays from 6:00 to 9:00. This first class of eight is almost full but another could be started. The fee is just \$25 for three hours with Alan where you can work on your trees, ask questions and get great advice from a great teacher.

Maybe you would like to start out slow, just put your toe in the water. If so, we are also putting together a list of substitutes that can be called to step in when a student has to be elsewhere. Be sure to sign up and get a taste of how much you can learn, meet new friends and take your bonsai knowledge to the next level.

Just call Alan at 503-245-1927, email him at tafta24@gmail.com or, though this is not a club activity, catch him at a BSOP monthly meeting or Mentorship meeting. He can put you on the sub list or get a new class started.

BSOP participates in Open Pavilion at the Japanese Gardens

The Bonsai Society of Portland participated in an Open Pavilion event at the Portland Japanese Gardens during the third week of February. The week long event featured exhibits and demonstrations in three Japanese arts: ikebana, tea ceremony and bonsai. Rotating bonsai displays were provided by Bob Laws, Lee Cheatle, and Scott Elser during the event. Dave De-Groot conducted a workshop on Saturday to wind up the event.



Lee Cheatle: Little Gem Spruce and Korean Hornbeam



Bob Laws:
Trident Maple
and
Shimpaku
Juniper



Scott Elser:
Japanese White Pine
and
Little Leaf Linden

Spring Show at the Japanese Gardens

Our annual Spring Show at the Japanese Gardens is coming up quickly. This year the show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 17th and 18th, with set-up on the 16th. The format this year is remaining largely the same as it has in the past - simply great trees from all of you. We hope to have as many trees from different folks as possible, so please contact Scott by phone or email if you wish to show a tree. There will also be lots of opportunity for volunteers. This is our big show of the year, so to put on an event of this sort we will need folks for tree sitting, exhibit tours, and back deck demonstrations, as well as set up and take down. If you haven't performed one of these duties, try stretching yourself into giving a half hour tour of the exhibit, or working on some of your trees on the back deck. Lee Cheatle will be conducting the mentorship class on Sunday on the back deck, so watch for more details there. Ryan Neil will be joining us for the critique on Saturday evening which promises to be a lot of fun and very informative. We are extending the talk to ninety minutes to pack in even more bonsai knowledge. Look for tickets at the next meeting. We will have more details on the entire show in the next newsletter.

Scott E



Patiently waiting for spring

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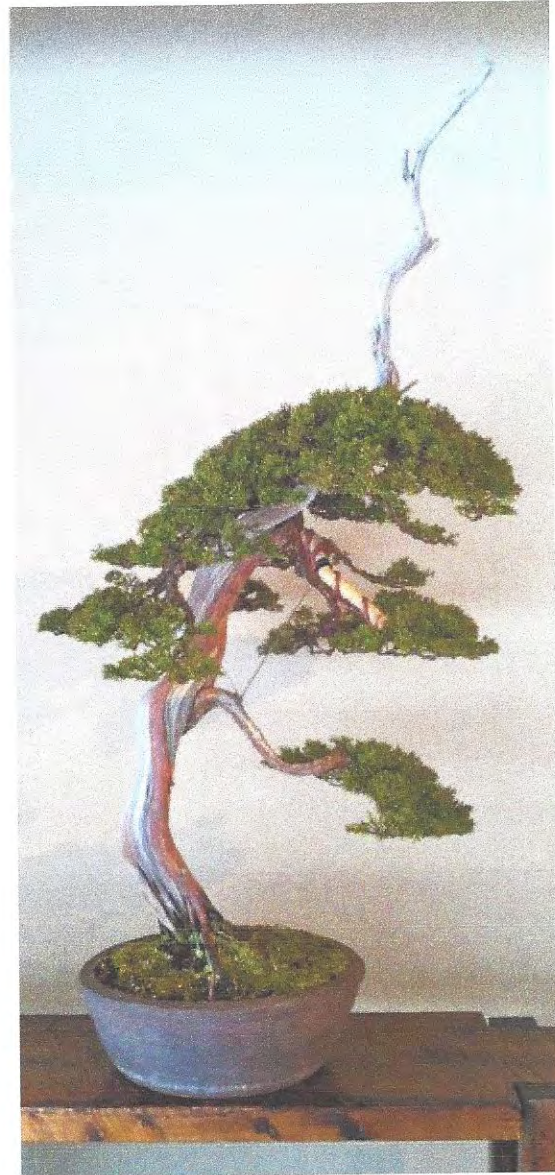
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