



the TREE LINE

the official monthly publication of the BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

April 2014

Upcoming Events

- April 13 Mentorship Program – St. Mark’s Lutheran Church
- April 22 Monthly Meeting – New Location The Milwaukie Center
- May 3 Oregon Shohin Kai – Location to be determined
- May 17-18 Annual Bonsai Exhibit – Portland Japanese Garden
- May 17-18 Mentorship Program – Portland Japanese Garden
- June 14 Pacific Rim Work Party
- August 16 Summer Picnic/Party – Daybreak Gardens

Important: New Meeting Location Update!



The Milwaukie Center is the location of our next monthly meeting and also the Relocation Committee’s recommendation as our permanent meeting place. The Board has reviewed the list of new sites and has voted in support of the recommendation. We want the full membership to attend a meeting here and vote to make the move official.

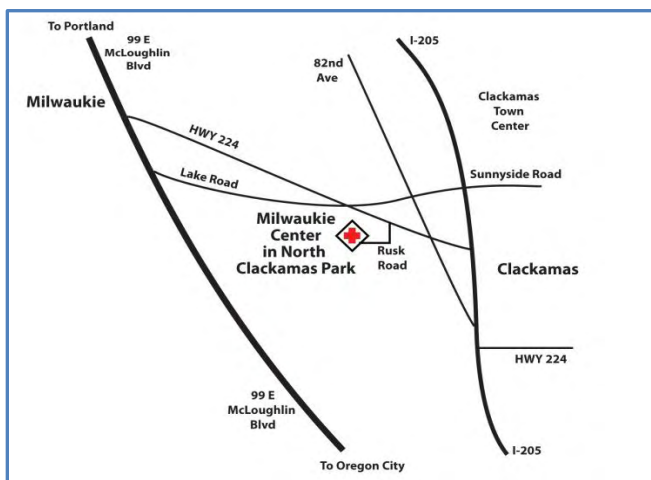
Our April meeting will give everyone the opportunity to see the benefits of the location first hand. It is 6 miles from downtown Portland. With the regional distribution of our membership, this is still a very centralized location.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING LOCATION:
The Milwaukie Center
5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr., Milwaukie

Benefits include a large ground floor expandable space with storage, multiple rooms for classes, great lighting, great acoustics and easy load in/out with carts. Ample parking and no competing events make it especially attractive. The committee considered multiple locations, avoiding churches or organizations with potential concurrent meetings.

Plan to attend the meeting on April 22nd for an excellent program by Greg Brenden and Scott Elser on Native Plants and to vote on the decisions for relocation.

Chas Martin, President



Japanese Garden Annual Show – May 17-18th

Our annual Spring Show at the Japanese Gardens is May 17th and 18th. I have been out touring a few gardens and taking a look at the fabulous trees that the club is developing. We have possibly the largest tree/trees that we have every shown making an appearance this year - and no, they're not mine! And we have other previously unshown bonsai making their debut, so I hope that you have a chance to come out and share in the fruits of your efforts. 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.

Also, **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. Our finger food and dessert potluck starts at 6:30, with the critique itself starting at 7:30.

Vote for various awards on the bonsai. Here is the lineup: Best Conifer, Best Deciduous, Best Shohin, Best Accent Plant. Plus one new one. The newly created **Masa Furukawa Award** for the best saikei. More info below. Look for tickets at this month's meeting.

There will also be lots of opportunity for volunteers. This is our big show of the year, so 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. Pat Foldi will have the sign up sheets at the meeting. In addition, Lee Cheadle will be conducting the mentorship class on Sunday on the back deck, so be sure to sign up for the limited spots.

Scott Elser

Masa Furukawa Award

The Bonsai Society of Portland is pleased to announce the creation of the Masa Furukawa Saikei Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize and honor the outstanding and dedicated contribution of Masa Furukawa to the BSOP and bonsai in the United States for over thirty years. Mr. Furukawa was trained in Saikei by the originator of the art, Toshio Kawamoto, in Japan. Masa helped establish and popularize this form of bonsai throughout the U.S. as well as teaching all aspects of bonsai in the Portland area. This award is to be given to the most outstanding Saikei at the annual Spring Show of the Bonsai Society of Portland, determined by popular vote of club members. The award will consist of a physical award (trophy) as well as a cash prize in the amount of \$100.

Qualifications: Saikei is the art of combining living trees, soil, rocks, water and related vegetation to evoke a natural living landscape that is pleasing and balanced and will entice the observer to enter that landscape. Four essential components are primary tree(s), rocks, secondary plants (grasses, moss, etc.) and water (usually represented as sand or fine pebbles). All compositions submitted for consideration must contain at least two plants (Other than moss) and at least one stone. All Saikei must be in good health. Judgments as to the qualifications of an individual composition are to be made by the show director.

Library Availability for April 22nd

The library will not be open at the April 22nd meeting. We will take returns, but the books and magazines will not be available for check-out. Book due dates remain in effect unless renewed.

All About the Natives

Just the other day my wife was joking about how many bonsai I had (a final count is vague: Do styled trees in mica or nursery cans count?), and her question sent me counting the next time I was in my bonsai garden. But soon I got distracted noticing the percentage that are West Coast natives. Turns out that most of my trees are “locals.” And many of these are my favorite trees.

We don't often think about the fact that, for the most part, Japan's bonsai are primarily their own wild natives, and not named horticultural varieties—at least as far as the top-notch conifers are concerned. Ezo spruce, Itoigawa and Kishu Shimpaku junipers, black pine, red pine, white pine, towering Cryptomeria, and Japanese yew all come to mind as species one might encounter hiking along the Japanese coastline (spruce, black pine, red pine) or mountains (white pine, Cryptomeria, juniper). In Oregon it's not so different: We have coastal pines (Shore pine), mountain pines (Lodgepole, Ponderosa, and white pines such as Limber, White, and White Bark), coastal and mountain spruces (Sitka and Engelmann, respectively) and towering conifers (Douglas-fir and Redwood). Both Japan and Oregon also have native hemlocks. Japan's junipers don't live in as arid of climates as ours do, but we both have them.

And if you were to look for broad-leaf species you'd find other parallels between Japanese and Oregon natives: Vine maple/Japanese maple, various Rhododendron species, and other species, particularly grasses, orchids, and other accent/kusamono species.

Part of developing the American bonsai style, as well as the Pacific Northwest bonsai style, is to work with native forms—those most readily available to us, that evoke our own majestic landscapes—coastal mountains and shores, alpine environments, desert mountains, and canyons.



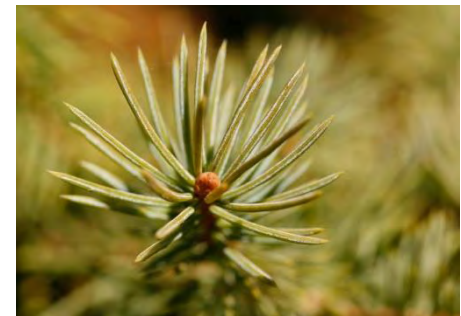
So April's meeting at the Milwaukie Center (note the new location!) represents an event whose time as truly come: A show of Native Northwest Conifers. Scott Elser and Greg Brenden—two of our members whose native conifers have won national acclaim—have put together an ambitious if not Herculean effort. They're assembling a collection of approximately 25 different species in

developed, refined state to show what is possible with species readily available to any of us.

On a personal note, I'm excited about trying out the new meeting space. Thanks Greg Brenden for tracking it down. Although bonsai is a sacred pursuit for many of us, a church sanctuary is best used for other purposes than repotting. Ahem.

Great job, Scott and Greg. See you all there.

Al Polito, VP of Programs



Oregon Shohin Kai

Thank you to Alan Taft for the informative program on conifers at the April meeting of the Oregon Shohin Kai. Alan talked about all aspects of conifers, including pine, spruce, larch, chamaecyparis and many other types of trees. He demonstrated what can be done with junipers, showing trees new to captivity as well as some really fine, well trained specimens. As always with Alan, a great deal of information was provided along with good examples. Very entertaining!

The next meeting of the Oregon Shohin Kai will be Saturday, May 3, 10am to 2pm. The program will feature Scott Elser demonstrating the fine art of bonsai display from the perspective of Shohin, which are bonsai smaller than 10" tall. This is a fun, interactive program where member test different scenarios and learn which ones work and which do not, and most important – why they work or don't. One part of the program is to put together trial displays for the Spring Show next month. But more than that, we will be looking at ways of sharing and viewing our trees year round – at home, at the office, or on public display.

Bring lots of trees to the May OSK meeting. They don't have to be perfect, just not raw material. Trees in bonsai pots will work best for this exercise, but bring anything think you might like to show. Scott will tell us how to improve our compositions and get the trees ready for exhibition. If you have any stands or slabs that fit Shohin, bring those. Think about what kind of accent plants might work with your trees, and bring them. If you have Shohin-sized stones or statuary, bring those, too. Now is the time to experiment, and in the end we'll be able to put together displays worthy of everyone's attention.

Location to be determined. Watch for an email in April. Contact Jan janhettick@comcast.net.

NOTICE: The raffle at the April meeting will benefit OSK, so bring that practice tree you've grown bored with, or that tool you have duplicates of, or that book you've already read twice, or....

Pacific Rim Work Party – NEW DATE – Saturday June 14

Each year a group of BSOP members goes to the Pacific Rim Bonsai Exhibit to help prepare the grounds for the summer. It is even more important this year, since they became an independent non-profit organization. Now, instead of 3 acres of grounds to take care of they have 8 acres. Our primary responsibility has always been the entry path and grounds; pulling weeds, trimming landscape plants and the like. Bring our favorite gardening tools, such as loppers, pruning shears, buckets, gloves, knee pads, rain gear and/or sun screen. And bring a lunch, because there is nowhere close to buy one.

We try to arrive by 10:00 AM, and work 3 or 4 hours with a break for lunch. When we're done with the grounds, we meet in the main tent for a critique by Dave DeGroot. Each worker may 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.

To car pool, 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 by 10:00 AM. For information, call Jan, 503-504-7760, or email janhettick@comcast.net. Or sign up at the April 22nd meeting.

Jan Hettick, OSK

Portland Rose Society Fertilizer Available at April 22 Meeting.

This is a specially blended organic fertilizer rated 5-4-4 with mycorrhiza works well for bonsai and ornamental yard plants. Pelletized fertilizer in 20 pound bags is \$16 per bag. To pick up a bag at 6: before the BSOP meeting, pre-order from Bill Hettick at bhettickco@comcast.net or 503-936-5629.

Mid-Life Crisis

I started working with bonsai in my late twenties. That's a pretty young start compared to most folks. I got hooked on bonsai by my grandfather, but that was almost 25 years ago! I poured over his John Naka books on every visit. I even collected my first two trees with him just south of the Grand Canyon of the fourth of July during a summer visit. Yes, my very first trees were collected, not nursery stock.

I used mostly books as my guide in those early years. That meant that I hacked away on trees until not much foliage remained, weakening the trees. Most survived though. I worked hard to develop them and like many of you, I now have those trees with quite a bit of nice, even foliage. Too nicely in fact. They have what Bob Laws likes to call lots of "Fuzz". Now that the trees have reached some level of stability and are nicely filled out, they are rather a plump and overly ramified group. So this is the mid-life crisis for many of our bonsai.

Time to go on a diet. Maybe your trees have become too thick and full, and the trunk line is obscured or the movement or interest is all gone. Time to get out the saw and pruners and loose a few branches. Your trees will thank you. A friend told me of some experiences with his class with Ryan Neil. This person brought in a few trees to get worked on. When it came time, Ryan grabbed some concave cutters and asked, "Do you mind if I cut off this branch?" Gulp. "OK". Wow! Now that's a bonsai!

What Ryan had introduced back into the tree was movement, direction, and flow. Now the tree was interesting and what made it that way was space. The space between different branches, between branches and the pot. And different sized and shaped spaces. There was variety and not merely a fuzz ball.

The proverb, Less is More comes to mind. As trees develop, we often have fewer branches off the trunk, but those branches are much more highly developed and carry a large foliage mass, keeping the tree healthy and strong. Is your tree boring you a bit? Take a look and see if the lower branches on either side are the same height. If so, think about using wire to raise or lower one or both branches, or eliminate one completely and you will automatically introduce movement into the design.

Less static, more dynamic. Maybe you introduce a large space somewhere in the middle of the tree. If you can get out a ruler and measure the distance between each branch to get it the same, chances are it is a really dull design. Dynamic balance takes more skill and patience, but is much more rewarding in the end.

Happy pruning.

Scott Elser



ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:

Portland Nursery Demo – June 21st

We will be doing a demo at Portland Nursery on June 21. Hours are 10-3. Bring display trees for the exhibition portion of the show. Work on your trees during the day. If you would like to teach a class during the day, contact Chas (chas@innovativeeye.com). Your reward will be a Portland nursery gift card. This is an exceptional outreach opportunity and a chance to engage potential new members.

Mentorship meeting for April

Date: Sunday, April 13 - **Time:** 2:00pm to 5:00pm - **Location:** St. Mark's Lutheran Church 5415 SE Powell Blvd.: Call Lee if you have questions 503-312-4921

Subject: Wiring/Styling; the one thing that most bonsai enthusiasts want the most information on is styling. We will do a 30 minute review of basic wiring techniques and then start into assisting the attendees with styling their trees.

I will bring several handouts on wiring. Please bring your tools and wire and of course your trees.

Special thanks to Alan Taft who allowed us to have our March meeting in his garden and for allowing us to clean up and repot the future convention shimpaku junipers. Also, special thanks to Steve Wilcox for bringing Apex Bonsai with him and for assisting us too. Thanks to Ron Cascisa, who was once again present to help the mentee's. Last but not least, thanks to Joanne Raiton for her help as well and for her bringing raffle prizes for all; AGAIN!

Hope to see you at St. Mark's.

Lee Cheatle, Mentorship Chair

Nominating Committee

The current BSOP Board will be retiring in January 2015. We are beginning to work on a slate of officers to fill Board positions for the term 2015-2016. To serve on the Nominating Committee, please contact Jan Hettick, janhettick@comcast.net, 503-504-7760.

Important: As a volunteer organization, we all have a responsibility to make the club work. Please consider how your skills can contribute to the 5-member Board or a committee post. The officers and committee chairs are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the club, and are critical to its success. These are all rewarding jobs. They also put you a position for making new friends and learning the art of bonsai. More detail will be available in the May newsletter. Give it some thought!

Jan Hettick, Nomination Committee Chair

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Welcome to the Village



BONSAI SOCIETY
of **PORTLAND**

P. O. Box 21271
Keizer, OR 97307

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 Dr., Milwaukie, OR

Visitors are always welcome!

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