



the **TREE LINE**

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

February 2013

Upcoming Events

6:30-8:30 **Penjing Discussion Group** Mt. Tabor Middle School, Room 213, 5899 SE 58th Ave. Portland

Feb 16 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

Thursday Feb 28 7-9pm **BSOP Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

Mar 2 10-2pm **OSK Elite Care Center**, 12353 SW Grant Ave, Tigard

April 18-20 **2013 Intl Bonsai Convention** Yangzhou, China

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 28, 7 p.m.

(Note: Do **not** come on Tuesday February 26 (which would be our usual day).

Featuring Ryan Neil and Scott Elser

Raffle to benefit BSOP Mentorship Program

Have a tree for the "inspiration area?" Contact Al (politomail@gmail.com)

Behold the harbingers of spring!

It's February and although we got off to a chilly start, trees are beginning to wake up, signifying the beginning of potting season. As I write this on 2/5, I'm noticing movement in my quince, ume, and hazelnut bonsai—interesting that these are all fruiting species. When the root tips are showing white, you're clear to start potting. But after you pot, make sure you protect your freshly potted trees from freezing or very dry, windy weather, and even overly wet weather. So keep an eye on the weather report.

Speaking of potting, the main recommendation coming from the experts is to use pumice and add something to hold a little more moisture, such as fir bark or diatomaceous earth like the Burnetts sell at our meetings. For conifers, pure pumice works well although you need to mind your watering and fertilize a bit more because pumice doesn't hold on to fertilizer that well. All this because akadama is no longer commercially available in the U.S.

Didn't get enough pots at the Pot Swap?

Special thanks to all who participated in last week's "club business" meeting and Pot Luck/

Pot Swap. It was a hit and I bet more members will bring pots next time we have the Pot Swap. Need more pots for your trees? We have some terrific sources at hand: Apex Bonsai in Aloha, Daybreak Gardens in Battle Ground, WA (they usually have a table at our meeting), Telperion Farms in Mehama (near Salem), and Wee Tree Farms in Philomath, all of which have ads in this newsletter. Portland Nursery also carries a small selection of pots they get from Wee Tree (which has a huge selection of pots). All of these businesses also provide bonsai stock for you to get started with. Support our local bonsai businesses!

February meeting features Ryan Neil and Scott Elser

This month we're privileged to have Ryan Neil of International Bonsai Mirai (www.bonsaimirai.com) and BSOP's very own Scott Elser, a critically acclaimed U.S. bonsai amateur, to do a multi-part demonstration. They're both going to do initial styling on some native material and revisit it with us after the growing season in October, then hopefully again twice next year. This is a rare opportunity to watch the progression of bonsai as part of a demo. Ryan will doubtless have something to say about the Artisan's Cup, which is shaping up to be one of the most noteworthy bonsai shows in the West. See you on the 28th!

Looking ahead to March

Jim Barrett of Arcadia, CA (near Pasadena), acquired his first bonsai in 1954 and began teaching about six years later. He also studied with Khan Komai and John Naka. Now, 57 years after he got his first trees, he will be our guest artist demonstrator for March. Suffice it to say Jim is one of the most experienced teachers in the United States. He will be our guest artist/teacher, conducting a deciduous bonsai demonstration for our March 26 meeting, and we will be very fortunate to welcome him

New "inspiration area" premiering at February meeting

I think it's safe to say that we all love to look at nice bonsai. If there's a nice tree around, all eyes gravitate toward it. So starting in February we will have a table set up (including table cloth) specifically to show off your nice trees. Criteria are that the tree is healthy, at least somewhat developed (not rough stock), in an appropriate bonsai or mica bonsai pot, and demonstrates what are generally considered to be good design principles, either classic, *avante-garde* or in-between. Depending on the size and nature of the trees, there will probably be 2-5 trees on the table. Viewing stones, accent plants and kusamono are welcome too. If you have a stand or slab for your tree, please bring it. I invite Oregon Shohin Kai, Penjing Discussion Group and the Mentorship Program to "sponsor" the table with their work from time to time. Otherwise, if you're a BSOP member who is interested in letting club members enjoy your tree(s), email me with a photo of your tree and I will let you know a few days before the meeting if it's OK to display. I may get more requests than I can fit in, or I may need to select certain trees and not others in order to make a nice, harmonious display. Send email submissions to polito-mail@gmail.com with the subject line "Bonsai inspiration." Note, the inspiration area is a "hands-off" zone. You may not groom, weed, or touch a tree without the owner's consent.

Ciao for now, *Al Polito*

Bonsai Fertilizer For a good quality, easy-to-use fertilizer for your bonsai, consider this: Several BSOP members report good results with Portland Rose Society 5-4-4 organic fertilizer with mycorrhizae. Fertilizer sales start next month, and thanks to Bill Hettick, will be available to BSOP members at the March, April and May meetings. The pelletized fertilizer comes in 20 lb bags at \$16 per bag. Please pre-order, so Bill knows how much to bring to each meeting. Contact Bill at bhettickco@comcast.net, or 503-936-5629.

Spring Show at the Japanese Garden

Our annual Spring Show is coming a bit earlier this year - a whole month, in fact. This year's exhibit at the Japanese Gardens will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 20th and 21st. This means that we may have a different mix of trees to show at that time of year, especially the flowering varieties. We'll get to enjoy some of those Wisteria that just seem to have troubles holding on till May, and then there will be some trees like beeches that might not have leafed out yet. This should provide some real opportunities to get new trees in to the spotlight.

Some of you have trees that were especially prepared for our convention show, so they should be in tip top shape for this one. I hope that you have been working on the rest of your trees this past year and getting them ready to show. And now is a great time to get them into just the right pot for exhibition. Send me a note along with some pictures if you would like to show a tree or two - bonsaielser@gmail.com, or call me at 503-803-5343.

I am happy to announce that Mike Hagedorn will once again be our guest master at our Saturday night Critique. I hope that you can make it. As usual, we will be needing volunteers to help staff the show with set-up and take-down, as well as tree sitters, tour docents, and demonstration artists. Watch for sign-ups to come soon. The hours will be expanded this year with the exhibit open from 9 am to 6pm both days. I hope that you can all partake in this great event.

Scott Elser

Library Highlights

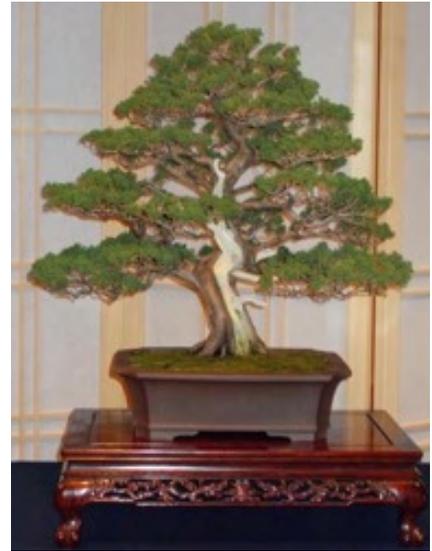
Recently, the BSOP library received some missing back issues. They are now available for checkout and include all of 2012 for International Bonsai and The Journal of the American Bonsai Society. Check out some of the highlights:

- Beginners in bonsai should look at The Journal of the American Bonsai Society Bonsai 2012 Vol 46 No. 2. It contains the best explanation of how cuts heal in trees that I have come across to date: "Tips and Techniques: Wound Healing" by Julian Adams.
- Many thanks to Lew Buller for his wonderfully clear and comprehensive article on how to use raffia in The Journal of the American Bonsai Society 2012 Vol. 46/1.
- In The Journal of the American Bonsai Society 2012 Vol. 46/4 there is a very interesting article by Ryan Neil describing how he started work on his Bonsai Mirai garden.
- Don't miss the fascinating article about the adventure of Greg Brenden's wonderful Southwestern white pine that is featured in International Bonsai 2012 No.4. It is a sign of the times that a bonsai from the Portland area has made the cover of an internationally-recognized bonsai journal. Kudos to Greg, and many thanks to him for putting Portland bonsai on the world stage yet again.

Karen VunKannon

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 Barbara Devitt (bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com or 503-764-8242) 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!



Here are some photos from the Japanese Garden birthday party. They include trees from Bob Laws exhibit and members who participated in the day's activities.

Japanese Garden's Birthday Party

As the Japanese Garden turns 50 we were invited to join them in their celebration. Thursday, February 6th Bob Laws put together a wonderful Bonsai Exhibit. Greg Brenden wowed the audience with helpful information about using native plants for bonsai. We prepared an ongoing Power Point presentation on the development of one of Anne Spencer's larch. One of the biggest hits with those visiting the garden was the all day demonstration of what we actually do with our little trees this time of year. People were fascinated and filled with questions. Thank you to everyone for the fabulous support and a really fun day.

The Japanese Garden was absolutely wonderful with their support and enthusiasm. We are all looking forward to our return visit in April with our Spring Exhibit.

Eileen Knox

Japanese Garden Liaison

2013 Pacific Rim Work Party

Almost every spring since 2004 a group of BSOP members has been going to the Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection in Federal Way, WA, for a work party. This year we're scheduled to go on **Saturday, April 27**. There will be a sign-up sheet at the February 28 meeting, or send me an email (there are a limited number of spaces).

The purpose of the visit is to help get the grounds ready 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. Please bring your own favorite gardening tools, such as loppers, pruning shears, buckets, gloves, knee pads, rain gear and/or sun screen. Also please bring your 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 person 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! For some reason, at the end of the work day the cars often turn north for a quick stop at Bonsai Northwest.

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.

Jan

Make a Note of It!

The **BSOP February program** will be on the last day of the month on a Thursday not the usual Tuesday. See page 1 for details. This first installment in a series will give a deeper perspective of bonsai development over time not possible in a single presentation.

February Mentorship News

Well it looks like another hard Oregon Winter has passed. We are currently experiencing those wonderful false spring days of February, and if the Ground Hog is right, real spring is just around the corner. And for those of us who are Bonsai devotees, that means it is time to get our hands dirty and our shoulders sore because it is repotting and root pruning time. If you spent your winter planning for this season, considering what each of your plants needs, what new pot will go with what plant, and planning a strategic assault so that each and every tree will receive just the right care it needs for the new season, take a bow. If you did not reach this level of commitment, well misery loves company, so welcome to the group.

While our weather has not been dry enough that there should be any serious concerns about trees being too dry at this point, you still need to be checking on them. The warm days into the mid and upper 40's will begin to wake the trees up and bud swelling can be pretty rapid. The cool nights should keep things from getting too far ahead, but caution says to check your trees each day. If you have your trees heeled in bark dust, remember that the bark dust will attract and hold the heat of the day, so make sure that any shelter cover you have over the trees leaves room for good ventilation. Also, now is a good time to consider applying an insecticide / fungicide spray to your trees just in case you have any winter holdover from last season. And of course, if you are into the repotting / root pruning program already, make sure after you work on the trees, you provide protection from any cold weather or late hard frost.

Our February Mentorship program will be about repotting and root pruning. It will be on Saturday, February 16, 2013 at St. Phillip Neri Church from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. This is a Whack and Chat, hands on class, so bring a tree if you need some help or have questions about what direction you want to go in this season. Our March Program will be on Insects, Pests and Diseases, just in time for the warmer weather that brings out the critters that like to feed on that lush new growth. I look forward to seeing you there.

Keith Wingfield

Oregon Shohin Kai

Highlights of the February meeting are reported by Karen VunKannon: "Greg Brenden's demonstration of repotting techniques at the February meeting of Oregon Shohin Kai was an exquisite display of care and precision. He handled his tree with gentle respect, and took the time to patiently get the smallest details of the procedure correct. It's no wonder his trees thrive year after year. In his teaching he stressed patience and attention to detail. His artist's eye guided the less experienced in the choice of pot. He demonstrated how to analyze the pot itself to find the best front and match it with the best front of the tree. He gave a reason for every decision he made about the tree, even when selecting precisely which root to prune and how much. Greg showed the same patience and precision in preparing the pot screen, mounding the soil, and positioning the tree so that the base made good contact with the new soil. At every step, Greg was the consummate artist, and it was a real privilege to learn from him." Thanks for the report, Karen.

We also enjoyed visits from Apex Bonsai and Jan Rentenaar at the February OSK meeting. Apex brought imported pots, soil, wire and some tools, while Jan Rentenaar brought some of her unique hand made pots. Thank you, Steve and Jan, for your participation!

The next meeting will be **Saturday, March 2, 2013**, between 10 am and 2 pm. **Dennis Vojtilla** will guide the program, providing information about trident maples, Japanese maples, and other assorted varieties of maples. Dennis will discuss growing, pinching, pruning, styling, transplanting, and propagating (including air layering). As usual, he'll bring along lots of examples to illustrate. The second half of the program will be hands-on work on your maples (or whatever deciduous trees you bring). Please feel free to bring any other kinds of trees that need your attention, along with your repotting tools and supplies.

We will meet again at the Tigard Elite Care facility, with its large, well lit barn. Location details may be found on the OSK page of the BSOP website, www.portlandbonsai.org or watch for an email blast the week before the meeting. Feel free to email or call if you have questions: Jan Hettick, janhettick@comcast.net, 503-504-7760 *Jan*

The Hook To Hang Our Hat On: Part I

If you like wearing hats, like me, you'll know that just about anything can be a hat support. Anything, really: A chair, a hook, a doorknob. A rack in the oven. Hats, if you're a hat person, are everything. You live for hats. You don't live for the hook.

Oddly enough, we can get everything backwards when it comes to things that have forms, like bonsai. We mistake the hook for the hat. We think making forms is the end-all of the adventure, and remain preoccupied with what's on the surface.

I had a yoga teacher in Arizona who, when he saw a sunset, would break into a spontaneous asana, like a triangle pose or a tree pose. He just did it without thinking. It was the feeling he had when he saw the sunset. That guy had it right—the feeling creates the form. But he was not a beginner. Most of us, like me, do yoga in dimmed rooms and wonder if our pose is really as good as we can make it. And we do it some more until we pull a muscle... so involved we are with the form. The hook.

Yoga is outwardly similar to bonsai, making forms with bodies rather than trees. But yoga teachers are clear that yoga is not simply about making the most perfect poses with our bodies. For that is an unending search for the kind of perfection it denies. We work with the imperfections of our bodies to gain some grace and acceptance of them, and to acknowledge that our lifestyle and approach to living is mirrored in our bodies. There's the hat.

And doesn't that sound a bit like bonsai? If you see an old pine at the top of a mountain after a long hike, is it likely to be in a perfect pose? It's as tired as we are. Are we not more willing, after that arduous hike and wondering about the knees that were once young, to forgive this tree its own transgressions on perfection, and on our expectations?



We engage with bonsai, but if open to the experience of bonsai, we engage with ourselves. The hook is the tree... the hat is within us.

The inimitable Hogwarts Sorting Hat...

We tend to employ many hooks to occupy ourselves, don't we? I have a few. Yoga is one. Argentine tango another. In tango I enjoy the vulnerable collaboration, and the inability in close embrace in hiding from your partner what kind of day you just had.

Bonsai is my biggest hook, though, and I hang my best hats there: A care-taking responsibility, a tuning fork for the seasons, a philosophic metaphor for life, a collaborative slow-motion tango, and a calming, low-impact way to stay out of worse trouble.

- How deeply do we enter into the forms that we engage with? How richly woven are our hats?
- How aware are we of what bonsai does inside us, what gates open when we see one, or create one?

Sometimes while teaching a class I recite a part of a poem that reflects the feeling I have looking at a particular tree. Perhaps your link to bonsai, your hat, is more than joy at seeing a pleasing form, and perhaps it's a very different hat from mine, but whatever it is I urge you to explore that.

I have yet to hang a hat on a bonsai, a real hat I mean. I hang all kinds of other metaphorical hats on them. Because that is what I think bonsai are. They are hooks to hang our hats on.

August 13, 2011 by crataegus

Pacific Northwest Bonsai Convention 2013

We have the convention information up on our website here www.inlandbonsai.com, and we have set it up so that people can register on line, so no need to print and mail registration forms. There is still a version of the registration form that can be printed and mailed for those who prefer to do that.

As you know we have an exciting lineup of guest artists, including Robert Steven, Ryan Neil, Michael Hagedorn and David DeGroot.

Our workshops feature excellent material, and a couple of them are already filled after the early registrations at last fall's convention. People who want to take a workshop should register soon while space is still available.

Also this year we are planning a world class exhibit, and as an incentive for registrants to submit their best trees to the exhibit we are offering cash awards in various categories. The awards so far include:

First Runner Up:

300 from Inland Empire Bonsai Society
Gift Certificate from Telperion Farms

Second Runner Up:

\$200 from Inland Empire Bonsai Society
Gift Certificate from Telperion Farms

Wee Tree Farm Best Deciduous Tree in Show Award:

\$200 from Wee Tree Farms

Telperion Farms Best Pine in Show Award:

\$200 from Telperion Farms

Other Awards:

Sculpture from Legendary Art

More awards are being added, so check the website for updates.

Roger Snipes, Convention Chair



The **Noelanders Trophy** international exhibition and contest was held on January 19-20, 2013. Here are some trees from the 2013 exhibition.

First prize, Luis Baliño (picea)



Second prize
(Deciduous): Udo Fisher
(acer palmatum)

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.

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Third prize (Shohin): Nanci Ball



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

St. Phillip Neri Parish

2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland OR

Northeast corner of SE Division and 16th Avenue

Visitors are always welcome!

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