



# the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly publication of the **BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND** | June 2012

## Upcoming Events

June 16 12-3 pm **Mentorship Meeting**

Wee Tree Farm, 23642 Pearson Place, Philomath  
Contact (503) 538-6118

June 23 10-4pm **Portland Nursery Bonsai Exhibit**

9000 SE Division, Portland 97266 503 788-9000

June 26 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**

St Phillip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland

July 14 **Multi-club potluck** Wee Tree Farm

August 11 12-3pm, Sat., **BSOP Summer Picnic**

Creston Park, Site A, SE 44th Ave & Powell Blvd

September 14,15,16, 2012 **PNBCA Convention**

Hosted by BSOP at Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA



Spring Show juniper and accent plant

## One Person's Trash...

...is another person's treasure. I've got you wondering, "Where's he going with this?" Our June program will be dedicated to a club-wide swap meet. I'll set out as many round tables as is feasible for you to fill up with all the things you can live without; things that may have another use for someone else for a reasonable price that helps both parties out. This is a good opportunity to bring in things to give away if you're so inclined. The bonsai police have the night off, so if it isn't totally bonsai related, we'll probably let you hang out your shingle ;-) We will have the raffle table up, so bring in items for that, too. Jan Hettick asked me to mention she will be on hand during the business part of the meeting to discuss the upcoming convention issues. She is also contributing a short article to this newsletter, so I'll leave it at that.

What a day for weather--you'd never know it was June 8. It's fifty two degrees as I write this and today we've had rain, sun breaks, hail, lightning, more rain. It's hard to believe I'll be complaining about the heat in less than a month! We normally take July and August off but an opportunity has come up I just couldn't pass on. Ryan Neil approached me with an idea for a program in July featuring the bonsai potter, Ron Lang. Ryan commissioned Ron to make him several custom pots and he will be delivering them to him in July. This would be the 24th of July at the church from seven to nine in the evening just like we usually do. Ron is also open to do a workshop the following day, July 25th. Ron is also bringing along some of his excellent hand-made bonsai pots for sale. When you consider a bonsai is about the relationship of a tree and a container, we tend to think about the pot as the lesser part of the equation.

Ron has several power point presentations available to point us in the right direction of matching our tree with its proper container. If you're going to be around this summer, make this exception to our normal meeting mode a part of your Portland 'staycation'!!

There won't be a July newsletter but I'll keep you posted about the extra meeting and the workshop the following day. In fact, I'll have a clipboard available for sign up at our upcoming meeting. Things aren't finalized just yet as Ryan is in Rochester at the National Bonsai Exhibit and as he was one of the drivers, he probably won't be back for a while. I'm wishing all the local members luck with their entries at the National! I'll be arriving at the church around 5:30 to set up, so come early to get yourself a good spot--it's first come, first served. See you there!

*Greg*

## **BSOP MENTORSHIP NEWS FOR JUNE**

We seem to have shot right through the spring season and are now looking at our trees infill leaves and grow vigorously with watering and fertilizing being our major chores. There are always pruning and styling concerns and of course the ever present question of "what was it I was intending to do with this tree?" But that is why we enjoy this hobby, always something to do or think about as we complete our daily visit with each tree.

Our May program on fertilizing and making POO POO Balls was not well attended with only 3 people attending besides the instructors. We made lots of POO POO Balls with the materials we had prepared in advance and so we will be selling them (once they have finished curing) at BSOP meetings and functions in the future. So if you are interested, contact Scott Tice or Keith Wingfield by phone or email or in person at one of our meetings to place an order.

Our June 16th (from 12:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.) Mentorship program will be a field trip to Wee Tree Farms where Diane Lund will be our host. This was the preference of those who responded about a location to visit. Besides her retail outlet at Garland Nursery (just a few minutes from Wee Tree Farms) Diane can offer plants, tools, soils, pots, wire, apparel and much more at her main operation. We will be discussing plant selection (nursery pot material as well as field grown and pre-bonsai materials), pots selection, plant care and next season preparations. Everyone, interested party, new member, old hands, semi-retired old hands and "I do not need anymore trees" members are welcome. Diane will be providing cold drinks, so you are welcome to bring a light lunch and make an afternoon of it.

**Directions to Diane's Wee Tree operation is as follows: the address is 23642 Pearson Place, Philomath, Oregon 97370. Phone number is 1-800-638-1098 and email is [diane@weetree.com](mailto:diane@weetree.com) . Take highway 99W through Corvallis. South of Corvallis, turn right onto HWY 20 and go through Philomath. Approximately 4 miles east of Philomath, turn right on Kings Valley HWY 223. Stay on Kings Valley Hwy. to Priest Road (just after you cross Mary's River). Turn Left on Priest Road and then turn left onto Pearson Place. Pearson Place forks, so stay to your right. Diane's facility is on your left. (Map Quest can provide you with specific mileage markers).**

If you are interested in attending please contact by phone (503-538-6118) or email ([keithwingfield@aol.com](mailto:keithwingfield@aol.com)) so I can get a rough head count. If there is interest in car pooling, I can also make some recommendations for locations to meet at.

As this will be our last Mentorship Program meeting before our summer break, if you have any request for fall topics or ideas you would like us to consider, please let me know. Over the summer break, I will be meeting with several members who have volunteered to assist with the Mentorship Program this year to review the program, the topics and offerings, materials for distribution and the structure to see if there are improvements we can make or changes we need to consider to make improvements to the program or how we present the program on behalf of BSOP. If you have any suggestions please let me hear from you.

*Keith*

## Imidacloprid - the bonsai wonder cure

Over the last several weeks I have talked to several folks about problems that they are having with scale and aphids on their bonsai. I was quite surprised that there was an issue, so I thought that I would share my experiences with you.

Over the last several years I have started using a chemical called Imidacloprid on all of my bonsai. This chemical is a systemic insecticide and has eliminated all forms of scale, aphids and adelgids on my bonsai. It looks like it will also work on borers, though I cannot attest to that. The systemic is absorbed by the trees tissues all the way up into the trunk and out to the leaves. Once the bug bites the leaf, the chemical attacks it's nervous system and it dies.

My first encounter was with a Linden tree in my back yard that would get aphids and drip sap all over my bonsai. I mixed a batch and poured it around the trunk. In a couple of weeks, all signs of aphids and their tell tale honeydew were gone. I used to have a problem with woolly aphids on my beeches. They were gone in several weeks and have been gone for years since using this treatment.

The year after I started using it, I acquired a new plum tree which had not been treated and it was sitting on the bench next to a plum of the same variety that I already owned and had been previously treated. The new plum was crawling with aphids and the old one, right next to it, did not have a single bugger on it. Those three instances were enough to sell me.

Commercially, the name of the product is Merit, by Bayer, and has been used by arborists for quite awhile. I have been using the product called Bayer Advanced Garden for several years, which was available at Home Depot, Fred Meyers, and local nurseries. This product contained only Imidacloprid, but I can no longer find it. A new version, called Bayer Advanced Tree & Shrub is available, called a dual action formula which also includes Clothianidin, and now addresses spider mites also - another scourge in our area.

If you search online, you can find other brands of the same chemical, but a trip to the local store is just easier. There are also Rose versions, and others, but they only indicate a three month effectiveness. The trick is the application. It comes in a quart bottle and the directions say there is enough to treat a two foot diameter tree, not your average bonsai. You are supposed to mix it up with water and pour it around the base. So my method is to mix half the quart container into a five-gallon bucket of water. Then I use a watering can to water it into my trees. That simple watering in gives twelve month protection. It looks like the new package actually includes a dosage for container plants - I would follow those if offered. Here's to a bug free summer!

*Scott Elser*

# CONVENTION HELP NEEDED!

I don't quite know how this happened, but we have only three months left before the PNBCA 2012 convention. The June 26<sup>th</sup> BSOP meeting is the last regularly scheduled meeting of the Society before the convention, and it's time to nail down some of the details. The most critical detail at the moment is getting commitments from the **VOLUNTEERS** who will actually be running the convention September 14, 15 and 16. Remember, please, that this is a club sanctioned activity, and we can't do it without participation from the entire membership. That means YOU! (Especially you new members – this is a fantastic opportunity to learn and meet other bonsai enthusiasts. No experience required!)

Jobs that need to be filled cover a large range of duties, including assisting headliners at their demos, assisting artists at their workshops, transporting trees to the convention and from storage to the workshop rooms, tree sitting, fund raising... the list goes on. Deb Wilcox is Volunteer Coordinator, and will be at the June meeting with her sign-up sheets. Please seek her out and let her know when you would be available. If there is a particular job you'd like to help with, let Deb know. Otherwise, just SIGN UP and she'll put you where we need you. If you can't attend the June meeting, contact Deb by email at [DJBWilcox@frontier.com](mailto:DJBWilcox@frontier.com).

Let me also take this moment to remind you that members who sign up for full convention registration BEFORE JULY 1 will receive 20 free raffle tickets (a \$20 value), so if you haven't signed up, consider doing so before July 1<sup>st</sup>. Full registration includes all meals, demos, evening and Sunday morning events, exhibits and marketplace, as described on the website. There are several workshops by our headliners and cameo artists for very reasonable fees, as well as bonsai exhibit critiques by each headliner. Also, don't miss out on the \$99 per night rooms at the Vancouver Hilton, of which there are a limited number. Registration form and hotel information are available on the convention website at [www.portlandbonsai.org/2012](http://www.portlandbonsai.org/2012).

The Board has generously offered us a block of time at the June meeting to deal with convention issues. We will be available to answer questions about the convention in general and about the various jobs that need to be filled by our members. If you have any questions or comments in the mean time, feel free to contact me at 503-504-7760 or by email at [janhetick@comcast.net](mailto:janhetick@comcast.net).

*Jan*



Spring Show Saikei mixed planting

Editors note: The last time we did this convention, I was a new member. As Jan says, I did have a wonderful time, learned so much and met great bonsai people. I also felt good that I had supported my club when that help was needed.

# <http://www.portlandbonsai.org/>

This is a list of articles and links available through our web site.

## Entries by Title

Click on an entry title below to view the full text.

[Airlayering](#)

[BONSAI SOILS](#)

[BONSAI TOOLS - CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOLS](#)

[Boon Soil Basics and Recipe](#)

[CREATING A BONSAI - THE PROCESS OUTLINE](#)

[CRITERIA FOR SPECIES USED AS BONSAI: GOOD BONSAI POTENTIAL](#)

[Fertilizer Balls](#)

[Getting Ready for Winter: November and December](#)

[Guidelines for Bonsai Exhibitors and Volunteers and Treesitters](#)

[Guidelines for Selecting trees for Bonsai](#)

[Guidelines for Selecting trees for Bonsai](#)

[Japanese Garden Bonsai Exhibit Documents](#)

[KEEPING GOOD RECORDS](#)

[POT SELECTION](#)

[Preparing Trees for Display](#)

[Rootpruning and Repotting](#)

[SELECTING PLANT MATERIAL - SEEING THE POTENTIAL - WHAT TO LOOK FOR](#)

[THE SCOOP ON SOILS - Part 1](#)

[THE SCOOP ON SOILS - Part 2](#)

[The Now Famous "Are You Ready?" Article](#)

[Understanding Bonsai](#)

[WHAT IS BONSAI - Longer version](#)

[Wiring 101 Basic Techniques](#)

[Wiring 102 Intermediate Techniques](#)

[Wiring 103 Advanced Techniques](#)

[Wiring Bonsai](#)

[YAMADORI: Trees collected from the wild](#)

***Chaz***

## In Our Own Backyard

If there is a truly American style of bonsai, it has to include the qualities that Robert Wofford's garden displays. American bonsai is backyard bonsai, squeezed in among the demands of work and family. For Robert, bonsai is a home-centered activity. He is a private person and enjoys his private time with his trees, children, and wife when he comes home each day. As soon as he arrives, he waters, swings the kids, and spends 30 minutes on his trees to de-stress from his work day. He says, "Even if I only have a half an hour in the back yard, it's my time." Robert claims to have no favorite species, although he admits to a fondness for shimpaku junipers.

He likes to keep a mixture of conifer and deciduous trees because they have different demands and require different techniques.

It's plain that Robert enjoys challenges: he is a bit of an entrepreneur, a self-starter, and a people person. He got sidetracked from finishing college by his success in retail, rising quickly to managerial positions. Retail management formed the major part of his career, beginning with Carl's Jr. and Wal-Mart, then Reebok, and finally Corning-Revere (World Kitchen). In 2006, he took advantage of a break between jobs to become educated in accounting, and then combined his accounting and managerial skills to become a manager for an accounting firm. He has also worked for the Oregon Department of Revenue and now has his own business doing payroll, bookkeeping, accounting, and taxes. He says that his career taught him patience in managing people, which paid off when he took up bonsai. Robert says he has more patience with plants than with people now.

Robert is outgoing, confident, and forward-looking. His personal code includes the concept that, "if something doesn't meet your expectations, you have to be willing to work to change it." He applies that code to his professional career, the development of his trees, and to the organizational roles he plays in local bonsai clubs. Robert is Vice-President of the Willamette Valley Bonsai Society, and is treasurer for both the BSOP and the PNBCA Convention.

Bonsai is a time-intensive hobby, so how does he find time for it? Robert has used his management skills to accommodate a heavy work schedule, a busy family with preschool-age children, a love of bonsai, and the family dog. First, he has a very supportive wife, and then he eliminated all the grass from around his house, so that he doesn't have to waste time mowing it! He figures that the time saved from mowing can be used for family time or caring for his bonsai. The bonsai garden is in the same courtyard area as the children's play space and the dog's exercise area, so he made a terrace atop a half-high retaining wall to hold the bonsai benches above the level of the children's heads. Then he got a very short dog.

Of course, both the kids and the trees are beautiful and lovingly tended.

As a child, no one in Robert's family circle was interested in plants. Still, it wasn't too much of a surprise to learn that the young man with an enterprising spirit and a good head for numbers got interested in gardening by earning money mowing lawns. But from gardening to bonsai is still quite a leap. Bonsai seems to appeal to the self-made man in Robert's personality: both his career and his trees demand a willingness to take risks, the assumption of total personal responsibility for success or failure, and also a sense of total autonomy, the freedom to create.

Robert lived in Nevada when he first became interested in bonsai fourteen years ago. There he studied with Cheryl Manning. In 2000, he moved to Idaho with just 3 trees. When he arrived in Oregon in 2001, he had only one tree. Since then he has gradually become more and more involved with bonsai, building his collection, and redesigning his yard to accommodate both family and his trees. Bonsai has taken over his interest so much that the family boat sits unused now. He says that if he had it all to do over again, he would have become more involved in bonsai sooner. In the future, Robert would like to acquire more bonsai education, do some collecting from the wilderness, and have a smaller collection so that he can work more intensively with each tree. Time is, as always, the issue.

Anne Spencer became his mentor after his move to Oregon. If he had a choice of studying with any bonsai master in the world, he would want to have Anne Spencer back. He says he felt a real connection with her and liked her teaching style and willingness to experiment.



“She pointed you in a direction, but did not walk you through it.” She emphasized what you could do, but made you think and decide. He would also like to study with Ryan Neil at some point in the future. Neil radiates enthusiasm for bonsai. Robert felt Ryan would be very demanding, but also very positive.

The most enjoyable part of the bonsai art for Robert is tree selection. Choosing wisely brings him closer to having a great tree. He has to know what to look for and what he can and cannot do with the material. Visualizing the future of a tree is still a challenge, which is why he enjoys the critiques at the Spring Show, the convention, and workshops. These are really helpful in learning to see how a tree will grow.

Although he had considered moving his family to the eastern seaboard for career-related opportunities, he is now committed to remaining in Oregon. What changed his mind? It was the caliber of bonsai practitioners in this area. Robert believes that Portland is fast becoming a major center for bonsai in the U.S. It's exciting to live and study in the vital bonsai community of this region. He accepts that Japan will always be a major world center for bonsai, but feels the U.S. is fast becoming more competitive. Robert feels the key to continuing U.S. advancement is the development of our native species. He is delighted that Americans who have studied in Japan are relocating to Oregon, and he hopes their presence will draw more people like them to the area.

*Karen VunKannon*



**Robert and a Shimpaku**



Robert's benches

## Library Highlights

“What's in a name?” asked Shakespeare. I've asked myself the same question recently. While indexing our magazine articles, I found that the titles often failed to give a clue to the article's contents. As for the title of a book, sometimes it's more poetic than it is indicative of the contents. This was the case with a book I brought home from our library last month, **The Spirit of Bonsai Design: Combine the Power of Zen and Nature**, by Chye Tan. I only picked it up because I saw the word “Zen” in the title, and Michael Hagedorn's recent discussion of *shin*, *gyo*, and *so* had intrigued me to explore the cultural basis of bonsai a little deeper.

So what did I discover when I read through it? Only the book of basics that I had needed when I first started exploring the art of bonsai. This book is a must-read for anyone starting out on the bonsai path. No where in the title was there any indication that it would turn out to be a beautifully organized and illustrated guide to the fundamentals. The techniques and concepts are presented in a lucid, concise writing style that makes them easy to understand. The illustrations clearly show the technique being described. Each technique is set within a proper order that makes it simple for the beginner to grasp the step-by-step development of a tree into a bonsai. That feature alone makes this a must-have textbook. When I first started reading about techniques a few years ago, I picked up ideas on a lot of topics, but had no idea when to implement each one in the lifespan of the tree. If only I had had this book at the outset, bonsai would have been much more accessible!

Chye Tan's book also includes a very nice section explaining design fundamentals and the styles of bonsai, and relating them to trees found in nature. The beauty of this book is the way it provides a contextual framework for all the ideas that are included in the art of bonsai. This is a book that answers the question “Why?” Beginners should start here, and then go on to explore books on design, techniques, and various species.

*Karen VanKannon*





Prize winning cotoneaster and other Shohin

Japanese Garden  
Spring Show pictures  
randomly photographed



Japanese larch



Japanese Black Pine





Maple



Satsuki Azalea



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Spring Show pine

Below: Spruce and more Shohin

## Oregon Shohin Kai

Oregon Shohin Kai will not meet in July or August, but will reconvene in September at Elite Care in Tigard

*Karen VanKannon*

## 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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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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