



the **TREE LINE**

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

Upcoming Events

April 14, Saturday, **Pacific Rim Work Party**
Call Jan for info (503) 504-7760

April 21 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting**
St Phillip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland

April 24 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**
St Phillip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland

May 5 10-12pm **OSK Meeting**
Elite Care Center, 12353 SW Grant Avenue, Tigard

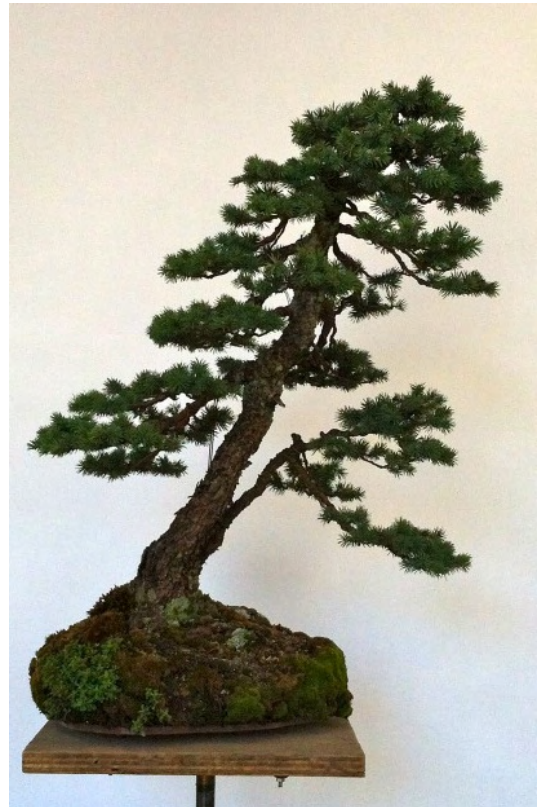
May 8, 7pm **Penjing Discussion Group**
Location To be announced

May 10 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**
St Phillip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland

May 11 10am **Daiza Making Workshop**
Elite Care Center, 12353 SW Grant Avenue, Tigard

May 19,20 **Annual Bonsai Show**
Japanese Garden, Portland

September 14,15,16, 2012 **PNBCA Convention**
Hosted by BSOP at Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA



Engelmann spruce on nylon board.
At Crataegus.com

Oh for the love of Spring!

It's sunny and warm as I write this for you just now...our 'March' into spring was more like a soggy slog, punctuated by a couple of rounds of wet snow thrown in for fun. I've got a love/hate relationship with spring. I just love the awakening of our trees and flowers yet hate that everything decides to go all at once. It would be some trick if we could graft an on/off switch to our trees wouldn't it? Since we can't, I'd like to share a few things that can help during these harried days of spring. This may seem very basic, but one thing I find helps is if I watch my watering carefully and don't go into full-on summer mode right away. And by that I mean going through and watering daily without looking to see if the soil is drying out between waterings. Some trees move faster than others, so keep an eye on those. Watch the buds to see what they're doing and let the late budders dry out just a bit more.

You might find moving your trees to a different spot (sunnier, shadier) can help you control how fast they move in the spring. With spring also comes decision time about what needs re-potting and what might just have to wait another year. I've learned it's possible to let some of my deciduous trees bud out and it's still safe to re-pot them; just be careful with the aftercare and keep semi-shaded until it shows signs of strong growth. And if you just can't get to them all as planned (who doesn't have this problem?) write it down as a reminder for next year what you weren't able to do and how you can correct it in the next growing season. I hope this is helpful to those who are feeling a bit whelmed over by this demanding season...did I mention taxes?

On to our April program! Michael Hagedorn will join us for an interactive evening about bonsai display. Bring your 'thinking caps' and prepare to learn what to do once you have that little gem of a tree to the level of refinement needed for showing it off. One of the tasks of Michael's apprenticeship under Shinji Suzuki in Japan was to set up a bonsai display for Suzuki's client's and the general public visiting the museum. This duty was rotated between all the apprentices so it wasn't every day but quite regular. What an awesome 'extra' benefit from an apprenticeship; one never knows what to expect from the stories of those lucky few who can make it to Japan for study. And how lucky we are that there is a growing number of them choosing to settle in the Portland area and share their knowledge with us. So steal away and join us for a valuable learning experience. It's just in time, by the way, as our annual show at the Japanese Garden will follow in May. I hope you are considering that special tree to share with the public. Be sure to get in touch with Scott Elser by e-mail with what you have in mind so he can better plan the exhibit. Our spring show is on a par with the best bonsai exhibits in the U.S., thanks to Scott and his exposure to Boon Manakatipart's shows in Oakland, CA. And the many members of the club who donate their stands and bring their own expertise to help with the set-up. Speaking of which, we can always use help with the show so if you've never had experience showing there's no better way to start. Contact Scott about this too. Mark your calendar for May 19th and 20th. Tickets for the critique event will be on sale for \$10 at our upcoming meeting. I don't want to forget to mention Oregon Shohin Kai's shohin exhibit during our April meeting. It will be set up toward the back of the meeting hall for you to enjoy during the evening.

And a last word about the May meeting/program which will feature Sean Smith; the date is Thursday, May 10th and will replace our regular meeting date of the fourth Tuesday. Same time, same place just a different date. Sean will present an excellent program on bonsai and suiseki and their relationship together. There will be a workshop the following day, May 11th about making Daiza, the sometimes ornate little wood stands that sit underneath viewing stones. Please see Jan Hettick if you haven't already about availability for participation. I think that covers it! If not, I'm sure the rest of our contributors to this newsletter will fill in the gaps. I'll see you at the meeting, if not sooner!

Greg

In Our Own Backyard Barbara Devitt, BSOP Librarian

The very little Asian man sat on a very low stool in his booth. Beside him was an ancient tree with weathered bark and gnarly roots—about six inches high. The twelve year old girl stood transfixed in front of the tree for a very long time, oblivious to the excitement of the crowds and the riot of colors surrounding her. Barbara had forgotten that she was visiting one of the world's largest flower and garden shows in New York City with her aunt and her mother. She was only aware of feeling perfectly tranquil before that perfect miniature tree.

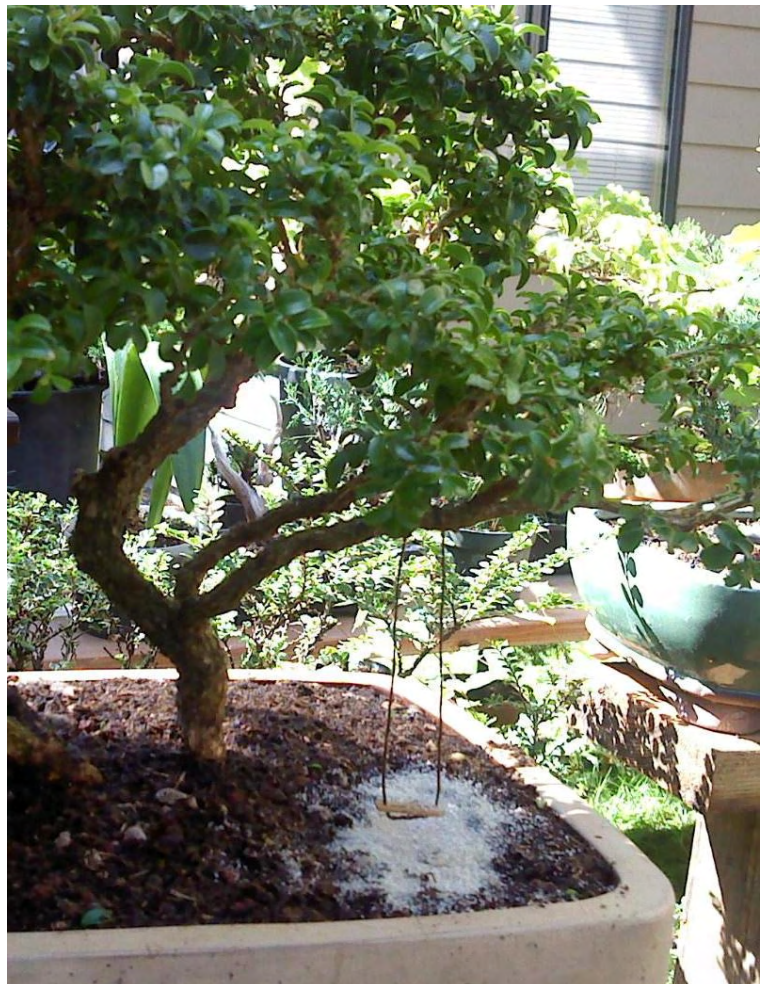
Many years later, Barbara can still see that little tree in her mind's eye. It was her Alice in Wonderland moment, the moment when she found magic in being very small.

She grew up in a family of enthusiastic gardeners. A native of New York state, her interests in science and art led her to complete a college degree combining science, art, and mathematics. Later on, the adult Barbara juggled the demands of raising a family, being employed, remodeling the house with her husband, landscaping the backyard, practicing photography, and earning a trade school certificate in cabinetry. After her kids were grown, she earned professional certification in both kitchen and bath design. In spite of such a busy life, she still found time to attend the annual Lilac Festival in Rochester, New York. William Valavanis displayed his bonsai there each year, and Barbara decided to study bonsai. Lacking a local teacher, she tried to learn from magazines. It wasn't until she moved to Portland about 16 years ago that she found opportunities through BSOP for hands-on instruction.

It was a chance meeting with David Kidd that led Barbara to BSOP. He came to the Home Depot where she worked, and she helped him find some shelving for his bonsai greenhouse. They began to chat about bonsai; soon after, Barbara was a member of BSOP. The club became the social outlet she needed after moving across country on her own. Eventually she became an assistant to the BSOP librarian, and later took over as head librarian, a job she really loves. She had enjoyed being a library volunteer in high school, in college, and as a young mother, so becoming the club librarian was a natural fit.

Barbara's out-going and warm personality suits the post of librarian very well. It's a good position in which to meet and help new members. She cherishes the fun she has with the members of BSOP, describing them as a considerate and intelligent group of people. After trying to learn bonsai on her own for years, she is thrilled to have real practitioners available for input.

It's difficult to narrow Barbara down to one favorite tree or species: she likes the ones that bloom, the evergreens, and the ones that remind her of a trip she made or someone she knew. Mostly she says she likes the "predictable" trees—the ones that respond to love and watering and don't die! Conversely, she has no trouble at all identifying the tree or species she dislikes: "the prickly species."



Barbara loves spending a long time looking at bonsai trees, whether at exhibits or in nurseries. It isn't just that they are gorgeous trees: looking at a real tree is so much more instructive than looking at pictures in a magazine. She likes to examine real specimens in detail to try to "steal the knowledge" that made them so beautiful. Her goal is to develop her own trees to be exhibit worthy.

At home, her favorite bonsai activity is to stroll through her garden area each day with her cats and a pair of scissors, trimming a little here and there to keep the trees neat and tidy. For her it is sometimes a form of play, sometimes a meditation. Another favorite bonsai activity is photographing her trees.

Her **least** favorite but most memorable bonsai activity has to be the time she went to a tree sale when it was wet, muddy, and cold, and then the neighbor's goat got loose. Every time she bent over to inspect a tree, that goat butted her from behind! When it wasn't doing that, it was trying to jump on her. Finally, in desperation, she managed to shut it in an empty building. No butts about it, that was a weird bonsai shopping trip!

Where does she think bonsai is headed in the future? Bonsai culture appears to be growing in popularity, which Barbara attributes to its Asian style. As a kitchen and bath designer, she sees the growing popularity of Asian design for the home also. She observes that, as life gets more and more hectic, human beings need the simplicity and tranquility that Asian design incorporates. For Barbara it seems to come back to that magical moment of serenity when she stood in contemplation before the perfect miniature tree.

Karen VunKannon

Library Highlights

The highlight of the periodical collection this month is an article by Doug Hawley called "**Methods to Thicken Your Trunks.**" This is the clearest explanation of how to grow bonsai faster that I have come across in all of our journals. It is really helpful to a beginner like myself. You can start using the techniques in it this very month. Be sure to check it out in **The Journal of the American Bonsai Society, 2000 Vol. 34 No. 2, Summer.**

In the near future, our library periodical collection will contain journals that are new to us, including Bonsai Solo and Bonsai from Great Britain. There will also be a number of back issues of ABS Journal and Bonsai Today that we had been missing. All of these items are the result of the generous donation by Larry Rosburg of Anne Spencer's magazine collection. These magazines are currently being indexed and inventoried and will be appearing in the updated Periodical Index within the next few weeks. As I work on indexing them, I am finding some wonderful photos and articles. Check them out!

If you need to reserve a library item or ask for a search of the library on a particular topic, take advantage of the online request form. You will find it on the Library Index page of the website, where this a link on the words "USE THIS FORM." Using the web page for reserve requests would be very helpful this month while I am stuck at home with a broken ankle: Barbara Devitt, our intrepid librarian, is all on her own at the library table for now. Knowing how busy that library table gets at meetings, it would be helpful to her if you could make your reserve requests using the online form. If anyone is interested in working in the Library before the meetings begin, contact Barbara Devitt at 503-754-8242 or Karen VunKannon at 360-597 4010.

Karen VunKannon

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Recycle Wire

Please bring your used copper wire to the monthly meetings. Roger Case will have a five gallon plastic 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 a little income for BSOP.



A yamadori yew from the North of England originally styled by Hans van Meer in 2003 and now in a Chinese round pot to allow root development. From *The Bonsai Blog of Hans Van Meer*.

Oregon Shohin Kai

The April meeting of the Oregon Shohin Kai featured Dennis Vojtilla, who showed us how to make little trees out of big ones. He demonstrated air layering, grafting, and striking cuttings. Those who were still there at 1pm got a bonus when we ended the meeting and at the invitation of Dennis took a field trip to his vineyard. We had the opportunity to see the vineyard, parts of his bonsai collection, and the process of taking cuttings from the vineyard. We also were able to acquire some of those grape cuttings. Thank you, Dennis! The next meeting of OSK will be on May 5th. Scott Elser will lecture on how to make big trunks on our little trees and how to improve nebari (roots). Watch your email for location details. **Robert**

FERTILIZER AVAILABLE 4/24

20 pound bags of Rose Society fertilizer will be available at the meeting on April 24th, 6:30 PM. The fertilizer is organic 5-4-4 with mycorrhizal fungi. Price is \$16 per bag, payable by cash or check to the Portland Rose Society (PRS). If you would like a bag or two, please order in advance if possible. Call Bill Hettick, 503-936-5629, or email at bhettickco@comcast.net.

Jan

BSOP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

NEWS FOR APRIL

My apologies to everyone for missing the March Newsletter. Family concerns kept me on the East coast for an extended period of time from late February through mid-March.

We held our March Mentorship program at St. Phillip Neri Church on March 17th as scheduled. This was our repotting, and root pruning program. I want to thank Lee Cheatle, Steve Wilcox, Ron Cascisa, Kirk Westphal and Rocky Lawton for showing up to help mentor those who came in for assistance. We had about 15 people bring in plants for help with repotting, transplanting and root pruning as well as some pot selection and development suggestion. Due to the number of mentors available, this meant that everyone got lots of one-on-one assistance.

Our April meeting will be on Saturday, April 14th at St. Phillip Neri Church from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.. This is a bring your own tree session. Our topic this session will be on **Design, Shaping, Styling and Wiring**. Lee Cheatle will lead a discussion and demonstration on wiring procedures and techniques and students will get help in each area in regard to their individual trees. So whether you are just starting out with a new tree, you have one that has been neglected for a while or has just gotten out of hand, or you looking to improve a current tree to the next level, or are maybe just unsure of what to do or what could be done with a particular tree, now is the opportunity to get some help.

ALERT: Our May meeting date has been changed. Our May meeting will be on fertilizer and is our big **POO POO BALLS** program. We were originally scheduled to have this mentorship program on Saturday May 19th. As that was in conflict with our Spring Show at the Japanese Gardens, the program has been move up one week. **WE WILL HAVE THE MAY MENTORSHIP MEETING ON SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2012 FROM 2:00 P.M. UNTIL 5:00 P.M. AT THE HOME OF SCOTT TICE. SCOTT'S ADDRESS IS 3236 JOHNSON CREEK BLVD, PORTLAND, OREGON.** Start gathering your vinyl gloves, cardboard plant flats or other flat containers (like disposable aluminum cookie trays) to carry home your POO POO Balls, and maybe a face mask. This stuff is pretty loud (smelly) and Scott will have it cooking for a week or so before Saturday. So it can get pretty ripe. But oh how the trees love it!

THIS PROGRAM REQUIRES THAT THOSE WHO WISH TO ATTEND SEND AN RSVP SO THAT WE CAN BE SURE TO HAVE ENOUGH MATERIALS PREPARED. RSVP TO KEITH WINGFIELD AT 503-538-6118 OR BY EMAIL AT KEITHWINGFIELD@AOL.COM. THERE IS A SMALL CHARGE BASED ON THE NUMBER OF POO POO BALLS YOU WISH TO MAKE .

Our wet spring (rainiest March in history) means that most of us are probably behind in getting our trees out of their winter storage areas and our initial spring pruning and grooming underway. With as much rain as we have been experiencing and continue to experience, here is a little trick that I found that helps my trees get a little better start. Place a block of wood on one end of the pot to raise it up a little bit. With the heavy rains, this helps promote a little bit better drainage and provides a little more air circulation under and around the pot and the leaves.

Until next month, keep on Whacking. Remember, there is a beautiful Bonsai hidden inside of every tree. It just needs your help to be discovered.

Keith

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To contact us, please call or email
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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!

Board of Directors

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