



# the TREE LINE

the official monthly publication of the BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Summer 2013

## Upcoming Events

July 27 Noon - 6 **Bonsai Village Guided Tour** Meet at St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave Details on page 3. See the best of the NW.

July 2-28 Dennis Vojtilla trees at Pacific Rim Bonsai Federal Way, WA

July 30-Sept 1 Robert Laws trees at Pacific Rim Bonsai Federal Way, WA

August 17 Noon **BSOP Summer Picnic daybreak gardens** 25321 NE 72nd Avenue, Battle Ground, WA

Sept 21 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

Sept 24 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

## Living Our Mission

In my last piece, I explained how downsizing my living space forced me to downsize my bonsai collection. I use the term collection loosely. Mine is an assortment I have propagated, collected, bought, inherited, won or otherwise come to own. Most are in early stages of development with no monetary value. But for the recipients, they were valued gifts. More importantly, they represent a starting point – a critical step past the intimidating threshold into the art of bonsai.

Giving trees to friends along with a little instruction is very enjoyable. Visiting these friends (and seeing the trees doing very well) has provided an added layer of enjoyment. My friends have begun to observe daily changes. They ask questions about their observations. They also ask what to do next.

As I share advice, I suggest they attend one of our meetings to learn more and to see the more advanced bonsai our club members have created.

Our group's mission is to promote the art of bonsai – to expand understanding and appreciation of our art form through education. We do this as a group through exhibits, workshops and demonstrations. I challenge you to take our mission personally. Promote the art of bonsai by sharing your surplus trees with friends, neighbors and relatives.

Please don't take this challenge lightly. This is the core of what we do as a group. It is also what we should do as individuals. Most of us have more trees than we need. Downsizing gives you more time to focus on your best bonsai. The other trees become tools for fulfilling our mission.

Of the dozen people who now care for my former trees, half have shown interest in attending one of our meetings. Mentoring new members into our group through the gift of a tree and advice is a great strategy to bring new faces and ideas into our organization.

If we nurture BSOP's roots through personal outreach, the group will continue to grow and spread its branches. Find a few trees among your collection. Offer them to someone who has shown appreciation or admiration for bonsai. Share some basic information about care. I have offered to help repot and prune if my friends can keep their trees alive until spring. Small steps build confidence. They also create appreciation and understanding. That's how we fulfill our mission – one tree, one step at a time, one new member at a time. Live the mission!

*Chas Martin*

## **BSOP hardly dormant for the summer**

Hopefully by now you are enjoying the fruits (figuratively, if not literally) of your spring and early summer bonsai-tending. (For me, "literally" came about a month ago when I harvested and ate Bing cherries off my bonsai of that cultivar. Yes, they were good!) As we head full-bore into the dog-days of summer, it seems the only thing that is really speeding up is the watering schedule.

Other than watering, there's not too much to do but a little nipping and tucking. If you work with willow, as I've started to do, now's a great time to do nearly anything with them as they grow like crazy in the sun and are super-easy to propagate. Pomegranates, olives, and bougainvillea also are good for major work during the hot months, as they are seriously stimulated to grow by the heat. Barring that, this is a good time to scout out trees and accent plants to collect in spring or fall under the guise of "let's go hiking" suggested to your partner or friends.

If you like picnics, there's the Wee Tree picnic July 13 and our own picnic at Daybreak Gardens August 17.

And this: The Portland Bonsai Village is planning a tour for JULY 27, and it looks like the destinations will include Ryan Neil's International Bonsai Mirai and Randy Knight's Oregon Bonsai. What this means is the finest collection of native Ponderosa and Limber pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, Douglas-fir, and Engelmann Spruce in existence, as well as the nursery that supplies these gems to Bonsai Mirai. For those who have yet to see Bonsai Mirai, trust me: It is astonishing—bonsai Nirvana. Exact scheduling, pricing and details are yet to be announced but email [politomail@gmail.com](mailto:politomail@gmail.com) if you are interested and you will be sent details. There may be another destination or two added; details to come.

Remember to mind your watering, and "let's go hiking."

*Al*

**PS: Got redwoods?** September's meeting will feature Bob Shimon of Mendocino Coast Bonsai.

**And now what you've all been waiting for...**



## Portland Bonsai Village tour coming this month!

The Portland Bonsai Village is planning a tour for **JULY 27**, and it looks like the destinations will include Ryan Neil's International Bonsai Mirai and Randy Knight's Oregon Bonsai. Here's what you get to see:

The finest collection of native Ponderosa and Limber pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, Douglas-fir, and Engelmann Spruce in existence (and that's just the native conifers—BM has other specimens too). For those who have yet to see Bonsai Mirai, trust me: It is astonishing—truly bonsai Nirvana.

The nursery that supplies these world-class trees to Bonsai Mirai. Besides a hefty selection of collected conifers from the Rockies, Randy has a large growing field packed with great maples and other species groomed specifically for bonsai.

### Details

**Date and time:** Saturday, July 27, 12 p.m. – approximately 6 p.m.

**Transportation:** Chartered van(s). The pickup point/drop-off point will be the parking lot at St. Phillip Neri, where BSOP meetings are held.

**Cost:** \$50 per person (bring your friend or partner if you wish)

**Food/Drinks:** Not provided on this tour, although you are encouraged to bring a bag lunch and some snacks and drinks.

**Perks:** Everyone will receive a Portland Bonsai Village Passport on this trip. And ample opportunity to do bonsai shopping or gawking at Bonsai Mirai and Oregon Bonsai.

**Your tour guide:** Greg Brenden

**To reserve your seat:** Full payment must be made by July 20th, by check, made out to the Portland Bonsai Village, and sent to:

Portland Bonsai Village

P.O. Box 22972

Milwaukie, OR 97269

### Help Wanted

HELP! My vacation waterer is moving. If you are willing to water my trees, which takes about an hour, please let me know. I will do watering for you, give you material, training, or pay in return for the service. I live in SW Portland near Gabriel park. Call Alan Taft at home 503-245-1927 or work 503-681-5142.

*Alan Taft*

## Library Highlights

BSOP's library recently received two interesting books. The first is Chinese Bonsai: The Art of Penjing, by Ilona Lesniewicz and Li Zhimin. The second is Bonsai from native Trees and Shrubs, by Werner Busch.

Chinese Bonsai is filled with information on the history of development of bonsai in China. Of equal interest is the detailed information on various bonsai schools/styles.

Werner Busch's text has detailed information on more than thirty native American species. Of special interest is the very complete information on various pests and diseases. While the photographs do not reveal superb styling, author Busch has a deep horticultural knowledge of trees which is very valuable to those of us who want to raise healthy trees and time our use of techniques correctly.

Among the recent donations to the library is a very lovely book by Peter Adams called Bonsai Landscapes. In this volume Adams not only shows how to design and build a landscape, but illustrates many different kinds. He shows how to design a landscape differently depending on the species chosen for display. For example, a trident maple landscape looks so very different from one made with Kingsville box or Seiju elm. He demonstrates how to work rocks into the design and how to do a landscape with a vertical emphasis as well as with the traditional horizontal tray. He shows how to design with accent plants, how to make your own rock slabs, and how to care for the landscape after it is built. He also discusses how to refine and redesign an existing planting. Instructions are given for shaping each species of tree. There is even a "tree care directory" in the back of the book that gives helpful instructions for each of the 15 species included in the book. The photos are lovely, the instructions complete and clear, and the scope of the book is comprehensive. What at a gem!

*Karen VunCannon*

## Oregon Shohin Kai

**The next meeting of OSK will be the first Saturday in September, the 7<sup>th</sup>**, with a presentation on olives by Greg Brenden. Greg says September is a good month to work on olive bonsai--summer growth is hardening off and we can do some pruning and wiring. He will be bringing in examples of two species he has been working with, *Olea oleaster* and *olea europa*. Both are used extensively as bonsai the world over.

Greg has four trees that were collected in California in February and will single one out for its first styling at the September OSK meeting. Work will include branch selection, pruning and sealing large cuts and wiring. If you don't have an olive yet maybe you can find one over summer, or there will be plenty of material from Greg's demo that you can use to strike as cuttings.

Greg says olives are very easy to root from cuttings, so bring along a baggie to keep them fresh until you get home. Look for more information in August, or contact Jan Hettick at [janhettick@comcast.net](mailto:janhettick@comcast.net) or 503-504-7760.

*Jan*



# BSOP Picnic

(Best Summer Outdoor Picnic)

## Final Details

### WHERE AND WHEN:

Saturday, August 17, noon to as long as you want to stay.

Dave and Donna Burnett's

*daybreak gardens*

25321 NE 72 Avenue

Battle Ground, WA

Phone (360) 687-5641

See MAP again for directions, and note:

If using I-205 Exit 32, do not go east toward the city of Battle Ground, but take Padden Parkway west to Andresen Road, then go north about 8.5 miles.

Watch for orange cones at our driveway entrance on the east side of 72nd Avenue.

As soon as you know you will be coming, please call above phone number SO WE WILL HAVE A COUNT OF ATTENDEES AHEAD OF TIME, including kids.

### WHAT TO BRING:

Shoes to wear for a gentle hike

Chair for resting after hiking and for use while eating

Your own dishes and utensils

Your own beverage (we will have wonderful well water available)

A container of food to share potluck style (details following)

Kids/grandkids – there are acres to roam

A plant to auction for a little extra cash, if you wish

### ACTIVITIES WE ARE PLANNING:

(This is not an 'eat and run' picnic)

Trail walking

Lunch

Two games for adults, with prizes

Auction in Annex (classroom, tractor home), starring Lee Cheadle or substitute

Kids' fun

Cart rides (weight and/or age limit), paper art work, basketball, trail running, etc., depending on ages and number of kids

**FOOD DETAILS:** We all decided on the alphabet system – first letter of last name will bring a certain food group.

S – Z main dish (crockpot/casserole dishes, baked beans, chili, tuna or meat dishes ...)

A – G misc (eggs, organic veggies with dip, fresh local fruit, bread, chips, crackers ...)

L – R salads (fruit salad, summer greens, Mediterranean, carrot, potato, gelatin ...)

H – K dessert (homemade goodies ...)

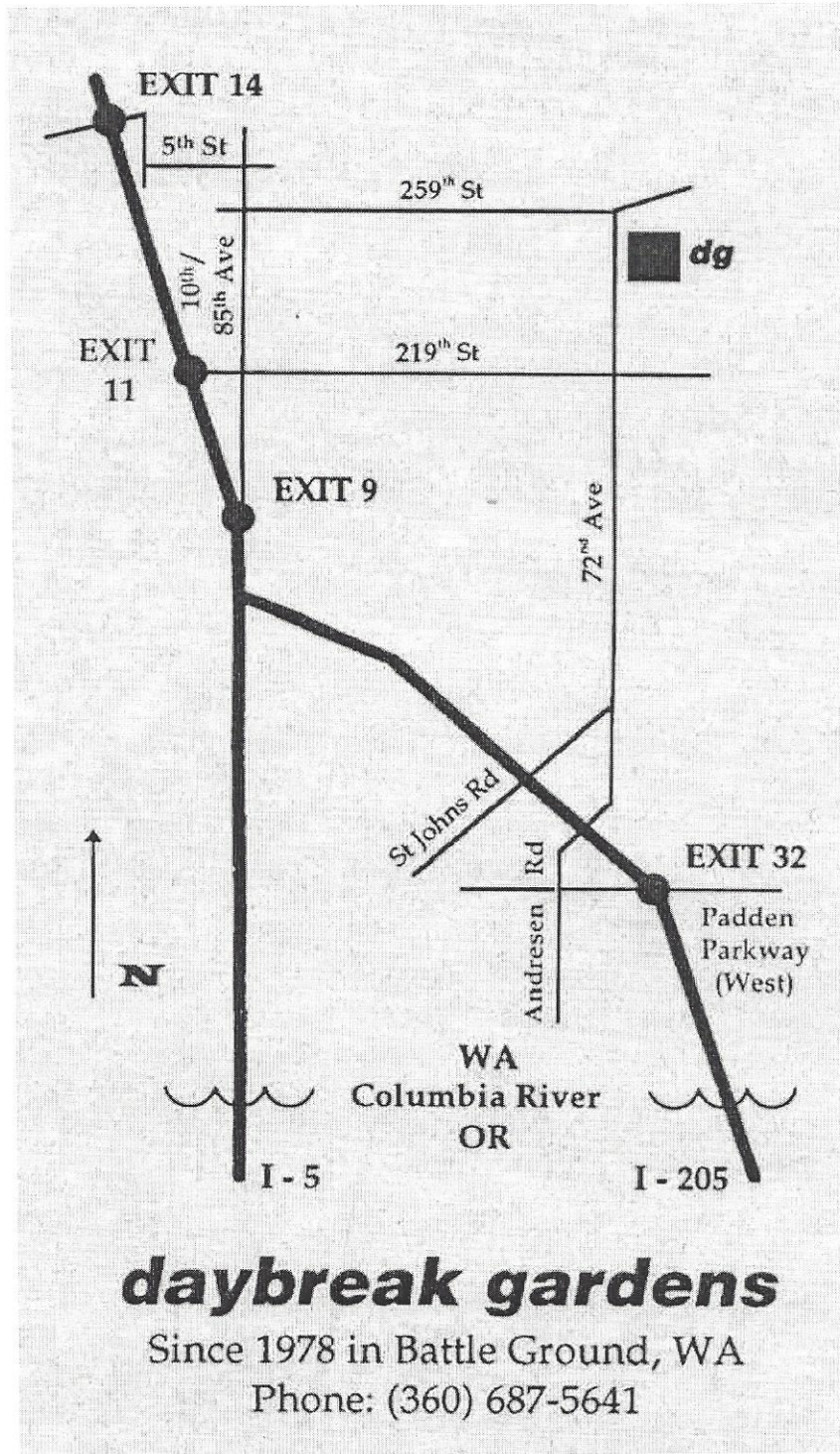
We have freezers, refrigerators, ovens, plug-ins for crock pots, etc.

Note: Please do not plan to leave leftover food with Burnetts. Thanks.

Any questions, call us (360) 687-5641.

Map follows.

# Map to *daybreak gardens* for Summer Picnic





## July Mentorship News

Whew! Rose festival must be over. The rain is gone, the sun is out in force and twice a day watering is the demand of the season. What a difference a few days can make. While these kinds of temperatures (mid 90's or higher) can be difficult on people and pets, it is equally hard on our trees. With the help of my neighbor, I have just finished erecting my seasonal shade house over my tree stands, and my trees have thanked me already. No more wilted leaves and stems, and the temperature is several degrees cooler under the shade than immediately outside of it.

Most of us tend to forget that our location here in the wonderful Willamette Valley is just a few minutes to the North of the 45 Parallel which runs through Salem. Consequently, starting on the date of the Summer Solstice (June 21st) the sun is pretty much directly over head at noon each day. Our usual weather pattern would have us under the influence of a coastal jet stream which would be pushing high level clouds and light breezes over and through the Valley. Not so right now, no breezes and no clouds equal high heat, humidity and extremely bright sunshine.

The heat and the bright sunshine can cause real stress for our trees, and like you and your pets, the trees can benefit from some shade during the brightest and hottest part of the day. Shade is your friend and your tree's friend. The heat and brightness of the sun can burn the delicate foliage of your deciduous trees, and even with Pines and Junipers, the bright sunshine and heat can damage the needles and cause color changes. This is the result of increased exposure to ultra violet light. This part of the light spectrum promotes yellow-green coloring in the leaves and needle of our plants and less of the desirable blue-green color. The correct amount of shade to provide for your trees would be similar to the relief you feel when you walk out of the bright sun and into the shade or shadow of a building or tree. Your body physically feels the difference. So remember, shade is your friend and the friend of your trees. Shade can be created by positioning your trees in the shadow of your house or garage, under a large tree in your yard, by putting up some shade cloth around your plants on the south and west exposure, by erecting a lawn canopy over your trees, or moving your trees into the shadow of a fence or other structure.

Since twice a day watering is in demand at present, remember during your morning watering to mist all of your trees. This will help increase the humidity around our trees, lowers the air temperature, and allow moisture to be directly absorbed by the leaves and needles of the tree. Your trees will thank you for this gentle shower at the start of their day.

Also, a word of **CAUTION** during this heat spell we are under. Do not do any foliage feeding during this time while temperatures are above 85 degrees. This can result in damage to the cells of the leaves and die back on the tree.

Our Mentorship program is in recess for the summer, but we will commence programming again in September with our "Build your Own Turntable" class. So until next month, happy summer days to all of you, and don't play too much in the water while you are supposed to be caring for your trees.

Best Regards,

*Keith Wingfield*



## In Our Own Backyard....Dennis Vojtilla

Japan is home not only to great bonsai artists, but also to the worlds' premier collection of masterpiece trees, which are rightly revered as national treasures. America is now home to superb bonsai artists, but does not yet have an inventory of ancient trees that have been developed and cared for here through multiple generations. Our national treasures are still in development. When I first walked into Dennis Vojtilla's garden, I was face to face with a significant part of the American bonsai legacy. I use the term "legacy" deliberately; Dennis's deciduous collection will undoubtedly become a national treasure. These are great American bonsai. Their aesthetic springs from an American view of the natural world, rooted in the deciduous forests of western Pennsylvania and deeply influenced by the oak trees of California.

It is so easy to forget when contemplating a Vojtilla tree that it is not a real tree sitting in a real meadow. The observer forgets for a few moments that trees don't grow that small and live in trays. These bonsai just look so real that they bring the observer down to the scale of the tree. One doesn't stand there wondering how he got the tree to be so small and live; one just thinks about the tree as a real tree and forgets the size. The illusion is perfect.

Although many local bonsai practitioners refer to Dennis as "the wizard," his own recounting of his development includes thousands of trees and thousands of hours of patient, persistent curiosity, experimentation and practice. He wanted to work with deciduous trees, and he felt from the beginning that they should not be styled like Japanese conifers. Dennis developed his naturalistic style by observing real trees. He had no horticultural or artistic training, but he had the passion and persistence to learn, mostly on his own, through practice. He learned from Dennis Makashima's study group in the San Francisco Bay area. Makashima validated Vojtilla's style preference and taught him several key principles: how to create a more artistic shape through the choice of front, how to think about possibilities, and how to articulate reasons to justify his decisions.

By hosting visiting bonsai artists, Dennis was able to meet experts in the field. One of David De Groot's visits changed Dennis's life in bonsai. During a show critique, De Groot kept mentioning the artist's conception and decisions. Being considered an artist in those early years was more kind than true, Dennis says. Over time, however, he recognized that bonsai was not just a hobby for him; it was his art, and living trees were his medium – and he wanted to create art-quality bonsai. After that, Dennis focused less on experimentation and began to concentrate on improving his best trees. In the years since, his goal has always been to make his best trees better, and he's been successful at that. Seven of Dennis's trees have been in the U.S. National Exhibition. He will have eight to ten trees on exhibit at the Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection in Federal Way, Washington, during the month of July.

Vojtilla's aesthetic concept is based on a mature, healthy tree spreading its broad crown in a meadow or park. Early in his career, one of his friends looked at a tree of his and asked, "But where is the triangle?" Dennis doesn't see triangles in deciduous trees; he sees a "cloud-shaped bell." The bell-crown of the tree flares at the bottom. The top is as gently irregular as a cloud. Deciduous crowns in many species have multiple leaders, contributing to the breadth of the crown. Dennis uses other mental models, depending on the species, for example the "crooked broom" or the "sparse broom." He gives Dave De Groot credit for helping free him from styling deciduous branches too rigidly.

Dave worked with Dennis on his beloved red leaf plum to refine trunk and branch angles



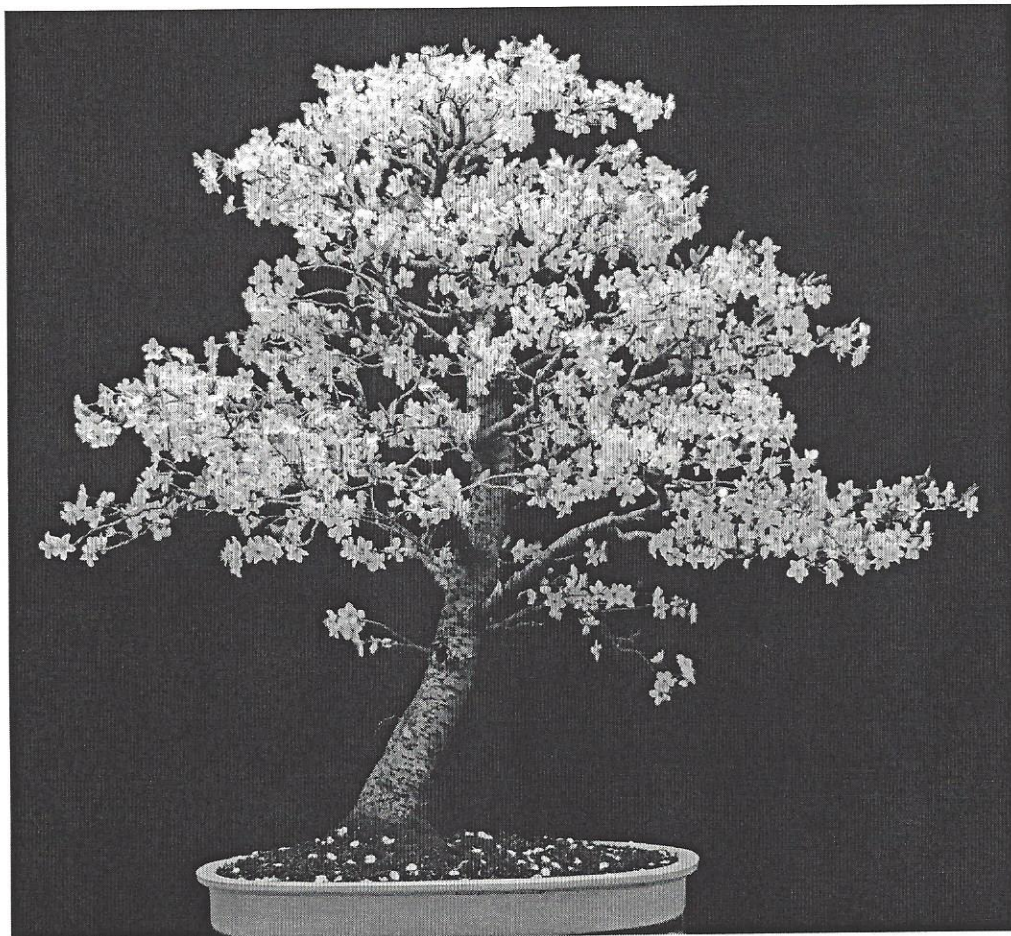
upward and outward, after the branches were previously styled horizontally. The plum was nursery stock that another bonsai expert advised Dennis to throw away. De Groot and Dennis saw the awkward tree's future in a naturalistic style. It was recently in the national exhibition.

Since bonsai is a complex and long-term process, I usually ask interview subjects which step gives them the most enjoyment. Dennis's reply startled me at first since it did not involve any kind of technique. But his reply was the moment when I caught a glimpse of bonsai through his eyes. He said he loves to sit with his trees in the dead of winter when there are no leaves in the way. He loves the dense, fine ramification of a well-twigged tree. When he sees this level of refinement and maturity in his trees, he feels the satisfaction of success.

Dennis hates straight and loves curves. In some of his best trees, he has built in every bend and twist in every branch and twig. One cherished example is his Washington hawthorn, whose new shoots normally grow straight. He kept cutting back the straight branches, encouraging back-budding until he got growth with short nodes that he could train. He guides the tree's development rather than controls it.

Another of Vojtilla's satisfactions comes from seeing his trees develop textured old bark. He has had to wait patiently for twenty years to see this, because many of his trees were developed by him from very young stock. It is Dennis's hope that his trees will pass to someone in the next generation who will find ways to improve on his beginnings.

*Karen Vuhkannon*



Red leaf  
plum





Dennis at work



Well twigged Wash-  
ington hawthorne



## Pacific Northwest Bonsai Convention 2013

We have the convention information up on our website here [www.inlandbonsai.com](http://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

## Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection

### **HIDDEN GEMS — Bonsai from the Vojtilla Collection**

Dennis Vojtilla has been growing bonsai for more than 35 years. Inspired by the great hardwood forests and parks of western Pennsylvania, he favors broadleaf trees with wide, twiggy crowns, particularly those that flower and fruit. His latest endeavor is creating high-quality pinot noir bonsai from vines in his vineyard.

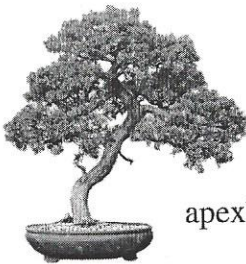
### **HIDDEN GEMS — Bonsai from the Laws Collection**

Doctor Robert Laws is a retired dentist whose professional focus on detail and perfection has transferred with wonderful results to his large collection of beautiful bonsai. His 30 years of experience benefit his trees and the bonsai community at large, where he is very active.

# Apex Bonsai Supply

Custom Soils • Akadama  
Japanese, Korean & Chinese Pots  
Tools • Copper & Aluminum Wire  
— Lessons available —  
*Family Run, Locally Owned*

分  
盆  
栽  
枝



Steve & Deb Wilcox

(503) 848-2638

(503) 720-9028 cell

[apexbonsaisupply@verizon.net](mailto:apexbonsaisupply@verizon.net)



Accent plant from Crataegus

## 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.

## 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](mailto: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!

Portland Rose Society 5-4-4 **fertilizer** with *mycorrhizae* is available by contacting Bill Hettick at [bhettickco@comcast.net](mailto:bhettickco@comcast.net) or phone at 503-936-5629.



## Bonsai Supplies from Wee Tree Farm

Not only do we have a large selection of pottery, trees, tools, etc., but Garland Nursery has 5 acres of plants to browse through. Please come see us, I promise it is worth the drive!

*Our Retail location located at:*

### Garland Nursery

*HWY 20 half way between Albany and Corvallis*

Hours: M-F 9-6, Sat 9-5, Sun 10-5  
541 753 6601



Please call Diane with any questions at 800 638 1098

### PRE-BONSAI PLANTS · BONSAI TOOLS

High-fired Pots • Mica & Plastic Training Pots

Wire • Classes • Organic Fertilizers

New: Mazama Pumice (1/16-3/8")

New: Diatomite Rock from Nevada, USA

Superior Black Compost • Red Cinder Rock (1/4-5/16")

Est. 1978



25321 NE 72nd Avenue  
Battle Ground, WA 98604

Phone (360) 687-5641

**Dave & Donna Burnett**

Need supplies?

Call ahead for delivery at BSOP meetings.



Home of El Dorado Bonsai NW

Dedicated to growing trees specifically for bonsai, combining the best of traditional Japanese techniques with the proven technology of the Oregon nursery industry.

Over 50 of the most popular species plus some unique and rare offerings.

Black pine, white pine, mugo, Scots pine, & Japanese larch

Maples, elms, crabapples, quince & hornbeam

### Satsuki Azalea

Through our partnership with El Dorado Bonsai we are able to offer one of the finest selections of satsuki azaleas whips and specimens in the USA.

### Soils

Master Nakayama's personal brand of Kanuma and Akadama.

\$24.00 for the 12 quart bag.

### Wire

Aluminum wire \$25 per kilo.

Ask about copper wire.

### Pots

Full line of mica pots

Low priced pots from Korean kilns

Hand made pots from American potters

### Tools

Yoshiaki, Nakayama, Masakuni

-and-

Hard to find items such as camellia oil, HB 101

Ask about bonsai society member discounts.

To contact us, please call or email

Chris & Lisa Kirk • (503) 859-3697 • tfarms@wvi.com



Keizer, OR 97307

P.O. Box 21271

**BONSAI SOCIETY**  
*of* **PORTLAND**

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**

President: Chas Martin 503 459-1009 Chas.Martin@InnovativEye.com

Past President: Eileen Knox 503 466-2964 eileenknox@frontier.com

VP-Programs: Al Polito politomail@gmail.com

VP-Membership: Margie Kinoshita youngkinoshita@msn.com

Treasurer: Robert Wofford 503 304-0996 wofford9694@comcast.net

Secretary: Karen VunKannon kvunkannon@gmail.com

**Committee Heads**

Librarian: Barbara Devitt 503 764-8242 bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com

Mentorship: Keith Wingfield 503 538-6118 keithwingfield@aol.com

Shohin Kai: Jan Hettick 503 540-7760 janhettick@comcast.net

Newsletter: Peter Pelofske 503 704-3891 pelofskepj@juno.com

Webmaster: Chas Martin 503 459-1009

Chas.Martin@innovativeeye.com

Club Email: Arlene Sigourney 503 667-0148 asigourney@aol.com

Heritage Group: Bob Laws 360 574-0166 rklaws@comcast.net