



# the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly  
publication of the

**BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND**

## Upcoming Events

January  
2020

January 12, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 101**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center

January 28, 2020, 6pm-9pm, **BSOP Annual Meeting**, Milwaukie Center

February 2, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 102**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center

February 9, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 101**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center

February 15, 2020, 9am-4pm, **Sub-alpine fir Workshop**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center

February 25, 2020, 6pm-9pm, **BSOP Monthly Meeting**, Milwaukie Center

## No Auction At The January Meeting

### January 2020 words from the President

Welcome 2020, I hope everyone had a great 2019 Bonsai year, and for those who attended the holiday party had a great time. We had 138 members and guests attend.

This month we will NOT have a silent auction, we will still have the raffle you can donate item to if you would like to. Hospitality needs helpers and donated snacks for members to enjoy, feel free to bring in something you like to share.

We have our annual business meeting to go over club information. After this we have Scott Elser presenting for the remainder of the meeting. Read further for information about our 2020 BSOP T-shirt coming soon!

May 2020 bring you more Bonsai health, learning and fun. *Joe*

## January Program

This Month's presentation will be in preparation for the upcoming repotting season. Scott Elser will again be covering the repotting process, but this time zeroing in the many ways to anchor trees into a container.

Scott will show you about a dozen different ways of securing trees in an innovative demonstration, sans real soil and trees. When it's all over, you will be able to handle and examine all examples, top and bottom to understand the techniques involved.

Scott will also be showing you how to make several different styles of screen clips, with everyone making their own, so be sure to bring a pair of pliers and wire cutters with you. We'll supply the wire.

## 2020 BSOP Tee Shirts

The Board is in the process of finalizing plans for the official 2020 BSOP Tee Shirt. The design currently being considered is the BSOP logo tree in front of a stylized setting sun on a forest green tee, like this. Very striking.

We will finalize the details soon and get set up to start taking orders for the shirts at the January meeting. Delivery will be at the April meeting. Watch your emails for a blast announcing final details.



## Alan Taft Classes

Members may or may not be aware of a class taught by Alan Taft with assistance from Joanne Raiton on the second and fourth Mondays of September through May. The format is similar to mentorship 102 where we bring our trees to work on that we would like assistance with. Alan is very knowledgeable with a great deal of bonsai experience.

Two spots have recently opened up; we are looking for two new class members. We meet from noon to 3:00 at the Multnomah Arts Center. The cost is \$30 for each class. This covers room rental charged by the center. You can sign up for either one class per month or two. You can also be on a list of substitutes to replace class members who have to miss a session occasionally, which is not an infrequent situation.

If you would like to join us, please contact either Alan Taft (tafta24@gmail.com) or Joanne Raiton (joanneraiton@msn.com).

Thanks, and hope to see you there! *Liz Hardy*

## Super Raffle - Mirai Live Subscription

Coming up for the January/February Super Raffle is something a little different.

Our prize is a One-Year Mirai Live Standard Level Subscription Gift Certificate. The standard subscription includes unlimited HD streaming of every live stream, lesson, and feature video in the Mirai Live library. Over 230 videos featuring 360+ hours of bonsai education. 50+ different tree species worked, hundreds of major bonsai techniques explored, instruction by Ryan Neil and other renowned bonsai professionals. Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced education. Take a look at Mirai Live at <https://live.bonsaimirai.com>.

**Please Note:** The Gift Certificate only works for new accounts created on Mirai Live. When the gift certificate recipient creates their account, they will need to enter billing info and use the promo code to receive their free subscription for one year. After the initial one year subscription period the account will be charged for a continuing subscription unless it is canceled.

We will be selling the \$5 tickets at the January and February meetings at the Super Raffle Display Table in the raffle area. You need not be present to win, so be sure to fill out your contact information clearly on your entry so we can contact you when you win!

Good Luck!

*Patty Myrick*

## Check Out Some Changes to the BSOP Website...

Webmaster Karl Holmes has made some improvements to the BSOP website. Primarily these consist of reorganizing the menus, but there is one particular addition we'd like to call your attention to: SEARCH. Located in the upper right section of the home page just below the menu, SEARCH will select and rank website pages containing some level of matching terms to the term entered. Keep in mind this is a literal word search, so if one form of a word or concept doesn't work, try another.

Other changes that have been made to streamline the primary menus in order to provide better organization and in response to actual page usage. For example, related features such as Instructors, Mentorship and Videos are now listed under Bonsai Instruction rather than three separate tabs. The Mentorship sub-menu has been simplified to reduce redundancy. At this point in time Videos includes all the Mirai videos and a couple from the Rendezvous, but watch here for additional videos as they become available.

The photo galleries are now under their own tab, Galleries. Photo records of past events are now easy to find. Another tab, Events, has been sidelined for the time being due to the lack of relevancy.

There may be other topics/pages that will be moved or edited in the future, but any changes will be evaluated on the minimalist philosophy of fewer menus and shorter dropdowns to make user navigation as easy as possible. If you can't find your favorite page, try the SEARCH feature!

## Mentorship 102

We had our first Mentorship 102 meeting of the new decade on Sunday, January 5. It was a full house again, everyone eager to get going on their trees.

There are 2 new aspects to 102: meeting time and leadership.

Howard Greisler is stepping in as Mentorship leader for both 101 and 102. For 102 he plans to continue on as we have been doing; basically a whack and chat with expert members present to help those of us who are less experienced.

And, another group wants to use the Oregon Grape Room at 1 on Sundays, so the time we meet has changed from 10 – 2 to 10 – 1. We will continue to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month September to May or June.

While it is still too early to start repotting, it is **not** too early to start planning. Lee reports that he has decided which trees will be repotted, and has picked out a couple potential pots for each tree and set those pots by the intended tree. It is time to prepare and sift soil and get your top dressing ready.

As always, we do so appreciate the more experienced members who seem happy to assist and teach us. This month it was Lee, Steve Wilcox, Joanne Raiton, Howard Greisler, Ron Cas-cisa, and Roger Case. THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

May you and your trees remain healthy and happy! *Liz Hardy*

# 2019 BSOP Holiday Party



A good turnout of BSOP members and guests enjoyed raffles, dinner and an oral auction as well as decorated bonsai and holiday sweater contests.



Everyone had plenty of great food, including appetizers and desserts contributed by members and a catered dinner with ham, turkey and all the fixings.



A couple examples of decorated trees brought by members.

A variety of high quality trees, pots and other bonsai related items went to the highest bidders. Winning bidders got some great deals.





Kusamono by Young Choe  
Galanthus nivalis (Snowdrop)

Painting by Ron Yasenchak

**January Haiku**

Wind lets snowflakes play  
Tonight temperature will drop  
Winter here to stay

***Ron Yasenchak***



# Scott's BRANCH TIPS

*BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY*

## Preventing Shoulder Injury

I admit that the title of this article might sound a bit like it belongs more in *Golf Digest* than it does in the *Tree Line*, but bear with me a bit. What we seek is not for ourselves, but rather for our trees. This article is all about how to wire our trees and protect our precious branches from being savagely ripped from their sockets. Learning how to wire well may seem like a daunting task, but it really rests squarely on a few simple principles that are then applied with careful consideration.

That said, this article is not about the basics, though you will see them peeking through at times. My attempt here is to convey a very simple concept that took me hundreds of hours and too many damaged or detached branches to learn. That principle, is that I must at all costs protect the shoulder of every branch I intend to bend. I need to support the branch in such a way that it can't possibly get damaged in the styling process.

Low and behold, when I do that, the branch is very secure and can be bent into any reasonably desired position and it stays there. No wobbling or bouncing back up. It is very gratifying to wire and style a branch and have it resolutely stay in the exact position intended, and stay there until it is time to remove the wire.

The following is a bit of a photo essay as I wire up a spruce branch that I snipped from a garden tree. This is not an actual bonsai branch, but is of a very appropriate species and scale. Also, I must note that it is styled as an alpine branch similar to most elongating species in that it is very narrow instead of broad like many pines, etc... That is a matter of personal taste. I also did not wire every little branchlet. The point here is the fundamentals and that wire would be applied the same way whether it was a spruce, pine, or maple.

Figure 1. The Spruce branch before any work has been performed. Lots of possibilities here.



Figure 2. The branch after cleaning off the old needles and pruning to alternating branchlets. This is standard procedure. I stop pulling needles when they don't come off easily, so you will see different amounts on different branches.



Figure 3. The primary structural wire with a few bends already in place. Always style as you go, before applying any more wire. This allows you to determine the best course for the next wire. Note that I stop with copper wire on a conifer about the time the diameter of the wire equals that of the branch.

Because I know that I am going to be applying wire to the rest of the branches, I confidently know that I will have a smaller gauge to more delicately wire out to the tip. The purpose of this structural wire is not only to bend the main branch, but also to create a strong spine that supports the secondary wiring.





Figure 4. Now that I have the primary wire in place, I begin to apply secondary wire starting from the tip and working in. Since all of the branches are of a similar size, this works great. If some were larger than others, I would start with the largest first.

Here you can see that I am pairing a side branch together with the tip, using at least two turns of the primary wire to support and lock in the secondary wire. Note that I leave the wire long to aid in styling, then trim it when I am done. It really helps to have the longer length to help guide the wire around all those needles.



Figure 5. This is a close up of the previous photo showing how the secondary wire is applied parallel to the primary wire. Always. Notice how the secondary wire crosses over the top of the branch fork and makes first contact with the secondary branch on the outside of the fork, closest to the trunk. The wire is also going outside of both branches without crossing over the primary branch.

No matter how much you bend the secondary branch, the wire stops you from going too far. Since we want acute angles, it is not so much of a problem here, but there are many situations where the desired direction is in direct conflict with the main branch, so the secondary branch must be well supported.



Figure 6. Now we start pairing other branches together. We apply the wire starting on the secondary branch closest to the trunk. I like to start with a few wraps of wire on the branch that already has wire – the primary branch in this case, so that it is properly anchored before moving out onto the more vulnerable secondary branch. Once the wire is secured, I move out onto the first branch, closest to the trunk.

Our junction is very similar to the first branch we wired. I follow my rules and parallel my wire along the primary wire and move out to the second branch in the pair. However, as we reach the second branch, we see the gap between the wire and the main branch, giving us a clue that this branch is unsupported with the present configuration.



Figure 7. If we continue to wire the branch and start to bend, this is what can happen. Total disaster. This is especially a problem when you are using a heavier gauge wire (note that this branch is a little smaller than the first one in the pair) than is required for that branch. Yikes! I have done this way too often.



Figure 8. Here is the alternative and my preferred situation. I cross over the main branch. Gasp! I know that breaks the main tenets of clean, aesthetic wiring. But I am more concerned about my branch at this point. Also, I will only do this with secondary or tertiary wiring. Never, never with primary, structural wire.

The gauge that crosses over is always one or more gauges smaller than the primary. But as you can see, the branch is now fully supported, meaning that I can move it into just about any position desired and it will not break off.



Figure 9. Here we see the third pairing of secondary branches. In this case, I actually started by crossing my secondary wire in order to support the branch. As I finished onto the second branch of the pair, I was able to land on the shoulder of the branch in a perfectly supporting manner. That makes this configuration just the opposite of the first instance.

Actually, that second pair of branches would have been better supported by crossing the first turn of wire also. But this shows you the variety of ways that the technique can be applied and in what situations.



Figure 10. Here is the finished branch, wired and styled.

I hope that all of these made sense to you. If they don't, take another look and read carefully. It will give you a lot more confidence in your wiring and thus, your styling of trees. There is a very simple rule that can be applied here.

Always enter the shoulder of a branch from the trunk side of branch.

This automatically puts you on the outside of the branch, supporting it, but you may have to cross a wire to accomplish this. Happy wiring!

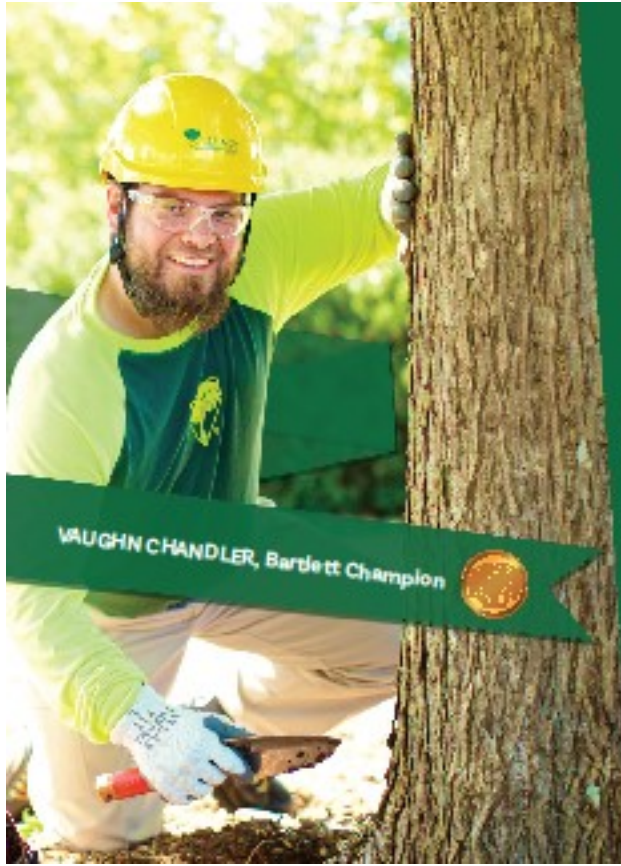
*Scott*



## BSOP Library Policies

BSOP maintains a large lending library of over 1,250 items that are available to all members. The library subscribes to the Bonsai magazines including Bonsai Focus, Bonsai & Stone Appreciation (BCI), International Bonsai and the Journal of the American Bonsai Society.

- Materials may be checked out at regular Tuesday night meetings to be returned at the next regular Tuesday night meeting.
- Materials may be renewed by the borrower for one additional month.
- All overdue materials must be returned before checking out new ones.
- Lost items must be replaced by the borrower or a fine paid equivalent to replacement cost.



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The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

**The Milwaukie Center**

**5440 SE Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie OR 97222**

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road

Visitors are always welcome!

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Contact information is on the BSOP website [www.portlandbonsai.org](http://www.portlandbonsai.org) under Resources/Member Services/Membership Directory