



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly
publication of the

BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Upcoming Events

February
2020

- February 15, 2020, 9am-4pm, **Sub-alpine fir Workshop**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center
February 25, 2020, 6pm-9pm, **BSOP Monthly Meeting**, Milwaukie Center
February 29, 2020, 9am-4pm, **Yamadori Workshop**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center
March 1, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 102**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center
March 8, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 101**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center
March 24, 2020, 6pm-9pm, **BSOP Monthly Meeting**, Milwaukie Center
April 5, 2020, 10am-1pm, **Mentorship 102**, Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center
May 9, 2020, **World Bonsai Day**



Winter hazel
(Corylopsis)
By Andrew Robson

Programming Report

I heard a lot of positive feedback on Scott Elser's January repotting lecture from new and experienced members alike. Scott set a high bar for BSOP instruction methods with his simplified mockups of pots and trees plus a thorough handout. I hope this has you prepared, confident, and eager for your 2020 repotting.

Reflecting on other things I've heard, it's clear I need to apologize for failing to satisfy some requests from the BSOP members. Primarily, I've heard people wanting to feel aware of what's happening and when it's happening so they feel like their busy schedules are respected. I can empathize with that! I can also commit to providing some context for why certain programs have been picked and how they fit into a full lineup to satisfy the broad interests of BSOP.

Please continue to reach out to me in person and through email (reid.parham@gmail.com) with feedback about specific presenters, topics, or other details you have to pass along. I want to facilitate your best bonsai experiences!

In 2020, the BSOP Board is attempting to be a little more bold with our programming compared to 2019. We will be spending more to bring in presenters from out of the area and we will attempt to cover a few special interests. Please know our commitment is unwavering to making the monthly meeting presentations accessible to everybody in BSOP.

Presenters confirmed for 2020 include:

- Scott Elser — repotting
- Andrew Robson — deciduous development
- Will Baddeley — wood carving
- Ryan Neil — seasonal work
- Todd Schlafer — native North American conifers

Lime Allen and I have been talking with men and women throughout the US and Europe to round out all nine of our annual meetings. The specific presenters, order, and subjects may change. We are still considering how to satisfy interests in particular subjects like shohin, tropical trees, and more. It's so hard to fit everything into the monthly programs, so stay tuned for special workshops and events.

In June 2019 the Board distributed a member survey to obtain feedback on past events and to determine how to best meet the needs of our members in the future. Those responses have contributed to our programming lineup and how each of our major committees is run. Stay tuned for additional ways to shape the future of BSOP!

Reid Parham, VP, Programming

Bonsai potting mix storage containers

Home improvement stores have a variety of sizes from five gallons and up for storing your soil mix in a sealable container.

Library Online Help

The library has on line help for members. To find information about a particular topic, check out the magazine and book listings in the **Members Only** section of the club's web pages (portlandbonsai.org). Click on "**Services**" and then "**Resources**" on the dropdown menu. You can find specific magazine articles and books that we have in our library.

Use it to make a list of what you want to check out before you come to the meeting and then you will be able to find them so much faster before the meeting starts. You can also access these resources on your smart phone at meetings, so you won't have to dig through the shelves.

As always, our librarian, Barbara Devitt is on hand in the library section (on the stage) to help you locate items and to suggest helpful materials. The library is open before the meetings.

Barbara Devitt, Librarian

Karen Vuukannon, Assistant Librarian

Super Raffle

Mirai Live Subscription

February's Super Raffle 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>.

The Gift Certificate can be used by new or existing Mirai Live subscribers.

We will be selling the \$5 tickets at the Super Raffle Display Table in the raffle area. The winning ticket will be pulled at the end of the program break on February 25.

Good Luck! *Patty Myrick*

Mentorship 102

The monthly Mentorship 102 meeting took place, as usual, on the first Sunday of the month, February 2. BSOP is very fortunate to have such a program to foster both instruction and camaraderie. In fact, bonsai clubs from around the country have contacted us to discuss how they too might initiate similar programs. The session this month included 16 attendees, 4 experienced instructors and a wide range of tree species, coniferous, deciduous and tropical.

Thank you to the instructors who again participated this month - Howard Greisler, Lee Cheatele, Steve Wilcox and Roger Case.

Hope to see you at the next session on March 1. All BSOP members should feel welcome, regardless of experience level from very beginners through folks with decades of bonsai practice. All will likely benefit!

Looking forward to early spring and the start of repotting season!

Howard Greisler

2020 BSOP TEE SHIRTS!

The Official 2020 BSOP Tee Shirt is now available for purchase! Another fantastic design by Scott Elser, this shirt will be on sale from now until the March 24 meeting, at which time orders will be closed. Delivery will be made at the April 28 meeting.

The shirts are Gildan 100% cotton, forest green with a design featuring the club logo tree in front of a stylized sunset in yellow-orange and a deeper orange. The back is plain. Men's sizes only, from small to 3XL. Priced at \$20 each.



Three ways to order:

- 1) You can order through the BSOP website. Go to Services/ Members Only. You'll need to log in. If you've forgotten your password, let me know. I can reassign.
- 2) You can purchase at the club meeting in January, February and March. See Jan or Patty.
- 3) You can send a note with your name and size, along with a check for \$20 payable to BSOP, c/o Jan Hettick, 6707 SW Pine Street, Portland, OR 97223.

Orders and payments must be received no later than March 24, 2020. Email or call me with your questions.

Jan Hettick janhettick@comcast.net 503-504-7760

Bonsai Classes at the Gresham Japanese Garden

Learn and explore Japanese culture and bonsai from a Japanese teacher. Check out the once a month classes online at greshamjapanesegarden.com They are held at Tsuru Island, the Gresham Japanese Garden.

On February 20, the topic and project will be Shohin flowering quince. Mark Vossbrink will be releasing a new cultivar 'tangerine'. This quince has extra miniature flowers and abundant fruit.

On March 19, there will be a presentation on the September 19, 2019 Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) Conference that was held in China. See more at bonsai-bci.com/

IMPORTANT AUCTION INFORMATION

Any BSOP member may sell at our Tuesday night auction.

Items for sale must arrive after 5:30 and BEFORE 6:30pm.

Bring item(s) to Auction Table and complete auction tag.

- Print legibly and press hard (to reach 4th page)
- Seller ID is your member ID (on back of your badge)
- Mark percentage to BSOP (20%, 50%, 100%)
- Add brief description of item
- Add minimum bid if appropriate (No minimum under \$10 please)
- Leave auction tag with sale item

If you bring something to sell,

- At end of evening, verify that it has sold
- If not, take it with you
- Items left after meeting become 100% donation to BSOP

Anyone may buy.

- Members use member ID number (back of ID badge)
- Guests get temporary number from Auction Manager

If you bid on something, verify if you won, then,

- Allow 30 minutes for bid posting after auction close
- Bring pink copy of auction tags to cashier with payment
- Goldenrod STAYS WITH ITEM AT ALL TIMES, acts as buyer's copy

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.

Bring-Your-Own-Tree YAMADORI WORKSHOP

Presented by bonsai artists Steve Wilcox & Lee Cheatle

This is a Bring-Your-Own-Tree workshop dedicated to yamadori* preferably, but domestic trees will be accepted.

The workshop is available for purchase on the BSOP website. Click on “Services” then “Members Only” then the workshop icon.

- Fee: \$70
- Time: Saturday, February 29, 2020, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.
- Location: Milwaukie Center Oregon Grape Room, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Rd, Milwaukie, OR
- Bring your own tools and wire. We will have club wire available if needed.
- Bring a lunch and beverages.

Questions will be gleefully responded to!

Steve Wilcox 503-720-9028 Lee Cheatle 503-312-4921

*Trees collected from the wild

Repotting Workshops

with *Scott Elser*

Location

All workshops will take place at my home in Lake Oswego, just 5 minutes off of I-5 and Hwy 217. That's just about 15 minutes from downtown Portland.

Material

This is a bring your own trees. You should be able to complete several trees at this workshop.

Tools and supplies

Bring your own tools, wire, soil, pots and supplies.

Lunch

Be sure to bring a sack lunch and any drinks that you need for the duration of the workshop.

Sign Up

Sign up by emailing Scott at Bonsaielser@gmail.com or at the February BSOP meeting. Checks or Cash only, or check by mail.



Deciduous Repotting \$90

Saturday, February 22, 9am-4pm

This class will focus in on repotting your deciduous trees exclusively. We'll cover how to reduce root ball thickness and create a fabulous nebari. We'll also cover appropriate pot selection, species needs, soils, and anchoring methods for deciduous bonsai. Limited to 6 students.

Conifer Repotting \$90

Saturday, February 29th, 9am-4pm

This workshop concentrates on species like pines and elongating bonsai, but junipers are also welcome. We address the challenges of nursery stock and collected specimens alike.

Conifer Repotting \$90

Saturday, March 14th, 9am-4pm

This is the same conifer workshop as above, but will be a little better timing for Junipers, though all conifers are welcome.

MENTORSHIP 101 NEWSLETTER

What a great turn out for our first of six classes in our 2020 Mentorship 101 series. We were able to seat eight people from our waiting list. Seven mentors were present: Howard Greisler, Lee Cheadle, Steve Wilcox, Roger Case, Joanne Raiton, Brandon McMullin and Vicki Chamberlain. A total of 33 people attended. Quite a crowd!

Our next class, February 9th, will once again be held in the Oregon Grape Room at the Milwaukee Community Center from 10:00 to 1:00. This class we will be working with a Mugo Pine and concentrating on our wiring skills and cleaning a tree skills to set up our tree for a successful start on its way to becoming a bonsai.

Though the class is full, we want to invite members to sign up on the waiting list in the Sign Up Genius published on the BSOP website at Services/Members Only. In addition to filling any absences from the waiting list, each month we will send everyone on the list copies of the class documents which might include species information, skills to work on, articles of interest and miscellaneous topics.

As always, we welcome people on the waiting list and member drop-ins to attend our classes on a silent observer basis. Our classes are for BSOP members in good standing, so be sure to respond to Jan's notice to renew. Also, if you are a registered student and find that you will not be able to attend, please let us know as soon as you can.

For our more experienced members, we would like to invite you to become part of our mentor team. Following the lecture and demonstration part of the class given by the leaders, as a volunteer, you would be assigned a group of students to guide. We will be teaching potting, wiring, pruning and styling skills. We can send you an outline of what you can expect at the classes. You may not know everything, but our leaders can help you. It is a rewarding job and one where you too can learn.

Exciting News About Outside Classes

It has always been difficult for people starting out in bonsai to find beginning classes, but we now have a great resource independent of the Mentorship Program to announce. Three of our fellow BSOP members are offering to teach beginning bonsai classes.

Because Lee and Steve are just setting up their classes, times and places are still to be determined. Alan has a class in process that meets the second and fourth Monday of each month. Reach out. Here is their contact information.

Steve Wilcox, 503-720-9028, slwilcox1@frontier.com, Specializing in Beginner and Intermediate Bonsai Education

Lee Cheadle, 503-312-4921, leecheadle@msn.com, Passionate Bonsai Instruction, Beginner and Intermediate Level Artists

Alan Taft, tafta24@gmail.com, beginner and intermediate classes.



Another view of January's Snowdrop . . . out from under the snow!
Kusamono by Young Choe

February Haiku

Moonlight mist falls cold
Tomorrow comes in silence
Relax peace unfolds

Ron Yasenchak

Painting by Ron
Yasenchak



Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Wooden Boxes

Last spring, I decided that I needed some shallow containers for deciduous trees that I was growing and the easiest way to get those was to make wooden boxes. These would provide me with several different sizes of containers to transition out of deeper terra cotta pots while continuing to facilitate the best development possible (not necessarily the fastest). The results were fabulous and I want to share with you how I went about it. My attempt here is to give you an idea of my techniques, materials, tools and my thought process that went into these so that you can formulate and build your own. First of all, the purpose of these boxes was to grow trees larger while developing a flat, finely divided root system. Wooden boxes work great for this as they are inexpensive, easy to customize, and allow the roots to breathe very well. I built approximately ten in one Saturday morning, with all of the variations that you see.



Bounty of Boxes – 10x13 boxes with screen bottoms

The first chore was to rip some long strips of 6-foot cedar fence boards on the table saw for the sides and ends. My big tip here is to buy your boards at least a week ahead of the work. Bring them into the garage and stand them up, spacing them apart so that they can dry out. I am not sure if they are wet from weather, or their own sap, but the wet wood really slows you



Angled Sides (Side View) – Sides of box showing the canted side and end piece extending down to act as a foot. Stapled screen is also visible.

down, make very rough cuts, and dulls your saw blade. A little drying goes a long way to making this an easy process. I cut the sides 2" wide and the end 2.5".

The next step was cutting these boards down to pot lengths. I started small, with my final outside dimensions coming in at 10x13 inches. That gave me an inside size of about 8.5x11.5, roughly a sheet of paper. This was the main size that I was after, so I made about 6 of them. The ends were very easy, as I just straight cut them on the saw (table saw or chop saw will do) The sides were a little different story. I had seen many photos of wooden boxes from Japan and noted that they had a canted side, which I really like. I made mine about 10 degrees. That's about all that you need for a nice presentation. This is where the old saying of measure twice, cut once comes in handy. Those angles can really fool you, but these don't have to be too precise.

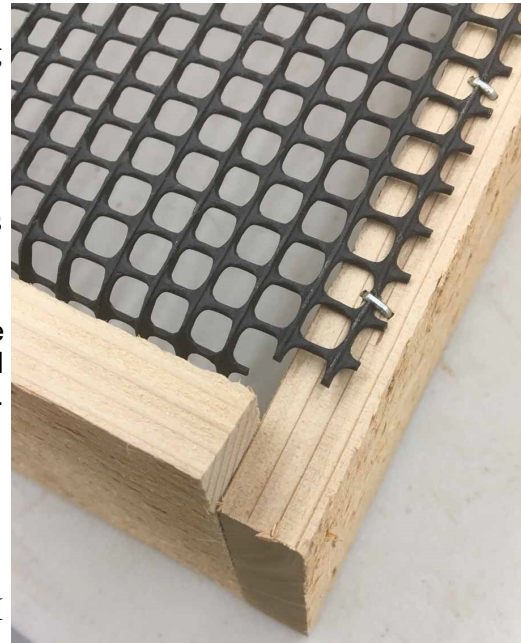
Once you have your sides and ends cut, all that remains is assembly. There is no doubt in my mind that the one tool that really made this whole project possible is a pneumatic stapler. I used narrow crown staples, meaning that they are only about a 1/8" wide. You are going to need a length of at least 1", but use more than 1.5" and you may poke out sideways. Although safety with saws comes without saying, staplers can be a bit tricky and shanks can shoot out the sides if not angled properly, or they hit another staple, so make sure your hands are well clear of anywhere a staple can reach. Then it's a snap. Bing, bing, bing, one side, bing, bing, bing, the other. These only need to hold for about two years, but should last about five.



Finished box (Top View) – without the later added strut. Note the screen stapled to the inside on the ends.

All of the above may seem fairly straight forward, but here is where the fun begins. I started experimenting with different bottoms. I had some really large drainage screen that I never use, so I thought it would be nice to use it up here. In the photos you can see how I notched out the corners of the screen so that I could staple it to the bottom of the sides, but tuck it up into the ends. This helped maintain the all-important air space below the box.

Corner Construction (Bottom Corner) – The side and end are joined, with screen stapled to the bottom of the sides.



Easy peasy, that is, until I went to pot something. Turns out that although I had lots of air space, the bottom was very floppy and there was no place to anchor any wire to tie down the tree. Disaster. So, I improvised and cut a narrow strut to go across the center under the mesh, making sure the pot didn't rock on it. Phew! But I still had to carefully thread tie-down wire through the mesh and across the strut for a minimum of support. Luckily, all the trees that I was planting had well established root systems. Crisis averted. Before I discovered this little problem, I had made some larger models, using regular size mesh. But for these I used evenly spaced wooden struts across the bottom. A big improvement but it used a lot of mesh that was not needed.

My last versions used a full wooden bottom. I cut the boards to length AFTER I have assembled the main box, so that I could get the dimensions correct. If you take a look at the photos, you will see that I used two different scenarios for mounting the bottoms. The easiest to perform is flipping the box over and stapling the boards to the bottom of the side rails, overlapping them to the outside edge. The problem here is that my end pieces that double as feet did not take this into account, so bottom sits maybe just 1/16 of an inch off of the bench. Not ideal. On the next model, I cut the boards to fit the inside of the box, then had to elevate or hold them as I stapled them into place.

Three Styles (3 Boxes) – One box with a screen and strut bottom. One with the bottom boards stapled below the sides, and one with the bottom stapled into the side, raising it higher.

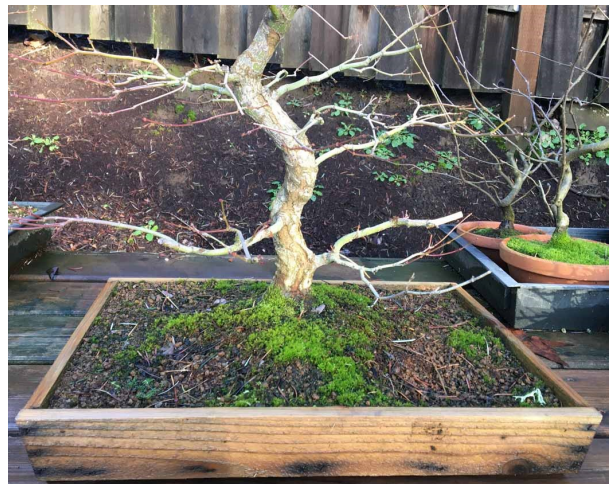


At these small sizes, strength is not really a factor, but this construction would hold the bottom in longer, and stronger, whereas the first method makes a more rigid box overall. But again, not really the issue here.

As I worked my way up in sizes, I noticed that I was getting really close to the size of an Andersen flat. My problem with Anderson flats is that unmodified, they will rot out your benches fairly fast, and they are not stable enough to keep the roots from moving. It's not their fault as this isn't what they were designed for. So, taking a cue from the previous work, I cut four strips and stapled them to the bottom from the inside, curing both caveats. Stability and aeration are now mine.



Anderson Flat (Anderson flat) – Anderson Flat with four cleats stapled to the bottom.



One year later (Maple in box) – This Japanese maple is happily growing in its new home.

Most of you will not have the power tools that I used to create these boxes. However, if you are interested in making some of these, I suggest that you work out the sizes and number that you need, and then approach a bonsai buddy or two and share resources. You can spend a Saturday morning making boxes and swapping bonsai war stories and everyone comes out ahead. Four hands and two heads really do make things go together easier.

Scott Elser



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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 under Resources/Member Services/Membership Directory