



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly
publication of the

BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Upcoming Events

April
2021

Virtual BSOP Meeting:

April 27, 7pm - 9pm, Andrew Robson presents Deciduous Growth Management

May 8, 10-11:30am, Mentor presents: Fertilizer, Pests and Diseases

May 25, 7pm - 9pm, Michael Hagedorn on his book, **Bonsai Heresy**

National Meeting:

September 11-12, 2021, US National Bonsai Exhibition. Rochester, NY 14445

President's Report

Greetings BSOP,

I hope everyone is having or had a great repotting season. Here at RAKUYO we've already repotted a couple hundred deciduous bonsai, and a few hundred young bonsai starters. While repotting season has been overwhelmingly busy for me, it's one of my favorite times of year for bonsai. Repotting is a very intimate experience, and the methods and soils we implement can really set up a bonsai for success during the growing season. I hope you all have enjoyed our numerous programs on repotting via Zoom, and encourage everyone to take advantage of our virtual meetings and presentations. We have several more exciting programs lined up for this spring going into summer, so catch a meeting if you can.

Looking at spring, keep an eye on the temperatures and check the weather forecasts daily. While we are mostly out of the risk for freezing and frost, this is the time of year when bonsai are most vulnerable to the cold. Protect any plants leafing out from frosts, and protect all repotted bonsai from a spring freeze. We're getting more sun than rain this spring, which heightens our chances for frosts.

Also looking at Spring, consider pinching techniques for plants that you are trying to refine and slow down (single-flush deciduous and pines, spruce, fir, redwood, etc.), and wait to fertilize these plants until the new growth hardens off. For multi-flush deciduous and pines (trident maples, styrax, elms, wisteria, black pine, etc.), fertilize them now and frequently, as defoliation and decandling can only happen on vigorous plants. Any bonsai that are in development and not refinement can be fertilized now as well, and continue throughout the entire growing season. If the weather is staying dry, consider liquid fertilizers like Alaska Fish Fertilizer or Grow Big from Fox Farm, as these are low-number fertilizers good for bonsai-quality growth.

Finally, keep an eye out for fungus this spring, as this is their busy season. If you've had any trouble with fungus in the past, consider treating preventatively. Make sure you always diagnose what specific fungus you're treating and use a product that actually targets that. ALWAYS read the labels carefully on the fungicides.

As vaccinations are well underway in Oregon and the rest of the nation, our board of directors are discussing how we might safely start to meet again this Summer and Autumn. Please stay tuned for more information about future in-person meetings as we develop a plan to get together in a way that is safe and follows the guidance of state and local healthcare officials. We'll likely start with some outdoor events this summer, and work up to some indoor meetings this Autumn. Please consider getting vaccinated if you can, as this will help keep us all safe as we can begin meeting in person again. I know I miss seeing everyone in the club, and look forward to getting together again soon.

Have a safe and happy spring!

Andrew Robson, President

Programming Report

Wow, these days are sure getting longer but I am not sure if I am catching up on my to do list. Fortunately, the cadence of BSOP events carries on and we can travel the globe from our computers.

I have heard effusive feedback about our April 10 presentation by Marija Hadjic. She detailed her 20-ish year career in bonsai, her proclivity for native deciduous yamadori, the unique environs of Croatia, and her techniques for developing fantastic ramification. Even some of our members known to produce amazingly ramified trees contacted me after the event to remark about Marija's successes — it is no wonder she has won big awards in Europe!

The recording of this event is available on our website in the members only section. Please know our default plan going forward will be to record every event, as possible, and to make the recordings available to members, as possible. As much as I want information to be free, the good standing of BSOP with our bonsai professionals and practitioners requires your adherence to keeping these recordings private.

Rounding out this month of deciduous programming will be Andrew Robson on April 27, specifically to focus on growth management. This seasonal topic will help you stay on top of the busy action we are seeing on these maples, elm, hornbeam, and all your other favorite deciduous trees.

He will continue his 20-year demo on the trident maple he has been building out from a nicely tapered trunk. Come ready to learn about progressing the branch development while maintaining critical opportunities for ramification. Have you had successes or failures here? Bring your stories and curiosities to trade notes!

Advanced techniques like grafting and layering will certainly be on the table, as this is their season and it takes growth to make them each happen.

Happy spring to you. See you on the internet!

Reid Parham, VP, Programs

Mentorship

The times they are a-changing. We hope. The mentorship programs should resume in the foreseeable future, depending on the race between the vaccine and the viral variants. Mentorship 101 programs have always been an organized group of educational sessions designed for bonsai beginners, each of the monthly sessions building on knowledge provided in the prior sessions, beginning each January. I am optimistic that these should resume as scheduled January 2022,

Announcements regarding the signup process should be provided in the fall, likely in October, depending on the recommendations of the health authorities and on the reopening of the Milwaukee Center. Mentorship 102, in theory, could resume sooner, as its structure is based on helping folks with whatever bonsai trees and questions are brought in that session, rather than on a rigid curriculum.

Of course, specific policies to maximize health safety issues will be determined prior to the reinstatement of both programs. These policies will address such issues as mask, vaccination and safe distancing requirements.

In the meantime, certainly continue to enhance your bonsai knowledge and skills by working on your trees and taking advantage of the various and valuable virtual training opportunities provided by your Bonsai Society of Portland, the Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association, Bonsai Mirai, Crataegus Bonsai, and other organizations.

Howard Greisler,

BSOP MEMBER BENEFITS

From the BSOP Policy and Guidelines; Personal one-time ads for such things as home sales may be presented to the Membership Chair for distribution via email on a space/time available basis. Please allow a minimum of 14 days notice.

Contact Patrice Morrow/ Membership Chair, at tm4170399@aol.com with your message that is prepared and ready to be sent, along with your desired date of distribution. This will be sent to all members of BSOP, except for those that have opted out of club emails.

Realistically, I often can process these in a more timely manner than the 2 weeks mentioned above, but please plan ahead as much as is feasible. Approval of content and timing are at the discretion of the Membership Chair. This is a service that is intended for bonsai related messaging.

Advertising in the monthly newsletter can also be arranged for members. Please contact me for details.

Weather Report Bamboo canes clacking East wind howling from the Gorge Temple bells ringing wild
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The What & Why of Akadama Soil in Bonsai Culture

The name of this special soil from Japan, akadama, translates to “red balls.” This clay soil is unusual in its pelletized structure. These ball shaped particles allow for a very free exchange of ionic charges, air exchange, water absorption/evaporation and nutrient fixing.

When I first joined BSOP twenty-five years ago, the standard mix was rotted fir bark, lava cinder and pumice put through a screen. Currently, the favorite is “Boon Mix”. It contains, 1 part lava rock, 1 part pumice, 1 part Akadama, ½ cup of horticultural charcoal (per 5 gallon mix), ½ cup of decompose granite (per 5 gallon mix). For deciduous, use small size mix (1/16”-1/4”) and add 1 extra part of Akadama. All ingredients must be bone dry, screened and sized.

Volcanic materials like cinder and pumice contribute little in the way of nutrients, providing mainly good drainage and air exchange. Akadama has great nutrient retention and promotes fine root development. It also has a more pleasing appearance than the stark white of pumice.

Through research, I have found a local provider of Oregon akadama. I can pass on his price of \$25 for a five gallon bucket. He sieves it to four grades. The largest is appropriate for large trees and best drainage. The medium is suitable for most trees as a primary component of your soil mix. The fine grade is suitable for shohin and top dressing. Additionally, there is a super fine grade useful in creating a muck soil when required for special projects.

*To truly appreciate the beauty of the leaves and branches
Look to the roots from whence the myriad of blossoms flow - Bruce Lee*

Mark Vossbrink 503 998-4150

Boxwood Available For Bonsai

Anyone interested in digging up a healthy 4' boxwood in NE Portland, please email Patrice Morrow at tm4170399@aol.com for contact details.



Boxwoods in training, hardy, forgiving and transplantable.

"We are very fortunate to have accomplished and awarded bonsai artists who are long term members of the Bonsai Society of Portland. Scott Elser is one of them. If you haven't had a chance, take some time to read some of his "Scott's Branch Tips" that are available on the BSOP website. It's a wealth of information artfully conveyed with humility and humor. We're taking this opportunity to re-run some of our favorites! Please enjoy this article from April, 2014, entitled Mid Life Crisis. By the way, Scott tells me that he used this technique with his first National Show Winner!"

Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Mid-Life Crisis

I started working with bonsai in my late twenties. That's a pretty young start compared to most folks. I got hooked bonsai by my grandfather, but that was almost 25 years ago! I poured over his John Naka books on every visit. I even collected my first two trees with him just south of the Grand Canyon, on the fourth of July during a summer visit. Yes, my very first trees were collected, not nursery stock. I used mostly books as my guide in those early years. That meant that I hacked away on trees until not much foliage remained, weakening the trees. Most survived, though. I worked hard to develop them and like many of you, I now have trees with quite a bit of nice, even foliage. Too nice in fact. They have what Bob Laws likes to call lots of "Fuzz".

Now that the trees have reached some level of stability and are nicely filled out, they are a rather plump and overly ramified group. This is the mid-life crisis for many of our bonsai. Time to go on a diet. Maybe your trees have become too thick and full, and the trunk line is obscured or the movement or interest is all gone. Time to get out the saw and pruners and lose a few branches. Your trees will thank you. A friend told me of some experiences in his class with Ryan Neil. This person brought in a few trees to get worked on. When it came time, Ryan grabbed some concave cutters and asked, "Do you mind if I cut off this branch?" Gulp. "OK". Wow! Now that's a bonsai!

What Ryan had introduced back into the tree was movement, direction, and flow. Now the tree was interesting and what made it that way was space. The space between different branches, between branches and the pot. And different sized and shaped spaces. There was variety and not merely a fuzz ball. The proverb, **Less is More**, comes to mind. As trees develop, we often have fewer branches coming off the trunk, but those branches are much more highly developed and carry a larger foliage mass, keeping the tree healthy and strong.

Is your tree boring you a bit? Take a look and see if the lower branches on either side are the same height. If so, think about using wire to raise or lower one or both branches, or eliminate one completely and you will automatically introduce movement into the design. Less static, more dynamic. Maybe you can introduce a large space somewhere in the middle of the tree. If you can get out a ruler and measure the distance between each branch to get it the same, chances are it is a really dull design. Dynamic balance takes more skill and patience, but is much more rewarding in the end.

Happy pruning. *Scott Elser*

Trees For Sale

Evergreens include native and Itoigawa junipers, black and lodgepole pines, mountain hemlock and spruces, moderately priced, variety of sizes from hold in your hand to all one person wants to carry. Also maples, elms and accent plants. Plums, maples and elms are leafing out and pine candles are lengthening.

Call 503 704 3891 to see the trees.

Editor

Jin demo tree



April Haiku

Springtime is now here
Gaze upon your forest floor
Bracken ferns appear

Ron Yasenchak

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A photograph of Vaughn Chandler, a Bartlett Champion, wearing a yellow hard hat, safety glasses, and a high-visibility green shirt. He is smiling and leaning against a tree trunk. A green banner across the bottom of the photo reads "VAUGHN CHANDLER, Bartlett Champion" with a gold seal icon.

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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

Services/Members Only/Membership Directory