



JOURNAL



November 2009

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of Events

Meetings are held in the **Toronto Botanical Gardens** in the Auditorium (west side of building) unless otherwise noted.

Beginners Session: 6:30 – 7:20 p.m.

The Beginner's Session starts at 6:30 pm and is in Studio #2 upstairs. This month's topic is the history of bonsai. The presenter is Norman Haddrick. Norman is one of the longest standing members of the club and has a wealth of knowledge about bonsai. He is also an accomplished artist and his drawings of bonsai have been featured in the **TBS Journal** many times.

November 9: TBS Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Firethorn Bonsai. Presentation: Growing Trees in Apartments, by Greg Quinn. **Firethorn and bring your own workshop.** Bring in your own Firethorn or indoor bonsai for discussion and critique. Contact **Otmar Sauer** (on back cover) to register for Firethorn workshop. Cost \$75.

December 14: TBS Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Bonsai pots. Guest Speaker Bill Valavanis. Bonsai Pots presentation: selecting containers for bonsai. Slide show: **Bonsai Trip to Taiwan.** And a Christmas party too, so bring in some goodies! Raffle item: **bonsai pots.**

January 11: TBS Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Bonsai Stands. Choosing the right stand for your bonsai. Slide show: **Members' trees, Before & After. Wiring workshop,** using Christmas branches.

February 8: TBS Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Silent Auction. Please bring in your donations to support the club.

Outside World :

BCI Group Tour to China: Sep.- Oct., 2010. Contact Joan Greenway for details: joan.greenway@gmail.com

The Joshua Roth New Talent Competition The Toronto Bonsai Society encourages any "novice" member to enter and participate in this fun competition, conducted by the American Bonsai Society, and sponsored by Joshua Roth brand of bonsai tools. Visit the website or speak to Mike McCallion for further details and help with entering. The Toronto Bonsai Society will contribute \$200.00 towards the general costs incurred by a member who is selected to participate in this event.
<http://www.absbonsai.org/newtalent.html>

ABS Questionnaire 09 The American Bonsai Society wants to hear from Bonsai people all over North America. Would you please complete the following survey <http://www.absbonsai.org/questionnaire09.html> online. The ABS will draw one of the surveys and award a bonsai pot to the lucky person (just a little incentive). Thanks a bunch!! Pauline Muth, President, ABS

Bonsai Theft Warning There have been four different incidents of bonsai theft this summer in different areas of Quebec. Please be careful when buying trees from non-members. Check the site www.interre.net/bonsai for pictures of stolen trees to ensure that you are not acquiring stolen property. You can send an email to jpm@bonsaiquebec.com to report any signs of these stolen trees.

On the cover: Bob Patterson's **Bougainvillea**, in full flower. Says Bob, "*This bouger spends the winter in a greenhouse and the summer outside in full sun. It has been in training for about five years.*"

President's message: What do your bonsai look like naked?

Fall is upon us and we are enjoying this magical time of year when our deciduous bonsai don their end-of-season cloak of colour. I always look forward to this time of year as I am a great lover of those species that have excellent fall colour like maples, hornbeam, or ginkgo. It is as if my back yard catches fire, but all too quickly (2 to 3 weeks), the show is over. All the leaves suddenly drop and I am left with skeletons, just in time for Halloween; and I can tell you that some of my deciduous trees are quite scary at this time of year! There is no hiding their faults when they are naked. The wire and pruning scars, reverse taper in the branches, proportion issues, and the lack of ramification becomes fully noticeable. All the tricks I used to hide those faults with foliage are wasted at this time of year.

Yet, the allure of bonsai without leaves is truly enchanting! Without leaves, my Japanese maples look bigger and in many ways, more realistic. The illusion of a huge tree in nature seems more convincing. Besides, who ever saw a maple with leaves the size of a car (proportionally speaking of course)?

Maybe that is why the world's most important bonsai show, the **Kokofu Ten**, is held in Japan in the middle of the winter. Not only do the trees look better at that time, but there is no way to disguise their faults, providing for a fair judging. All the deciduous trees appear true, as they would appear at that time of year.

In conversation with some of the members during the last show, I asked what they thought of the idea of having a spring show in April, along the same vein. Some thought it was a great idea but others wondered if the club had trees of a caliber suitable for such a show. Others thought it was a great **challenge** for the membership. Well, rest assured that the executive voted down such a show, but the challenge remains! As **Marco Invernizzi**, mentioned in a critique a couple of years ago, some grow their trees for the summer silhouette and some grow them for structure so they look good in winter. I would submit that if you aim for the latter you will gain the former automatically.

So, if you accept this challenge, this time of year is a good time to photograph your deciduous trees in fall colour and then again immediately afterward, without leaves. Try to observe how the "naked" appearance is a direct result of how it looks with leaves. For example, see how branches reach for sun and, losing out in this quest, die back. The direction that they grow is a result of the quest for light, which all plants share. In order for your trees to look convincing, the trunk and branches must reflect this natural phenomenon.

So, by now, some of you might see where I am leading you – **homework!** I would like **everyone** in this club to take some time this season and review how their trees look naked and compare that to how trees in nature look. Now, I am not asking you to resort to plain mimicry, as it is very difficult (and undesirable in a way) to make your trees look exactly like trees growing in nature, but if your trees have the same characteristics as those in nature, the illusion will be more convincing.

When searching for trees for inspiration, don't pick young trees in your local subdivision; seek large, old trees. In Toronto, some good places to go are **High Park**, **Mount Pleasant Cemetery** and **Queen's Park**. Further afield, find **Peter's Woods Provincial Park** in Northumberland County, near Centreton, Ontario, one of the only remaining old growth forests in Southern Ontario.

All of this effort will help you to improve your deciduous trees so they look beautiful and convincing naked and the next time someone proposes a "winter" show, you will be ready and willing!!!!

by **Mike Roussel**

Letter To The TBS

Dear TBS,

Thank you for allowing me to talk about Bonsai Clubs International at your first TBS meeting of the season.

Bonsai Clubs International was very pleased to accept 6 memberships. These six new TBS members will be kept informed about shows, workshops, conventions, and contests by receiving the quarterly, high quality, glossy magazine.

Seven more memberships from TBS are needed to receive the \$150 Bonsai Instructor book so if you wish to join please put my name, Joan Greenway on the application. Here is a link to their web site: <http://www.bonsai-bci.com/meminfo1.html>

BCI wishes you a successful season!

Regards,

Joan Greenway
Director, BCI Canada

November Workshop: Firethorn (*Pyracantha angustifolia*)

The workshop subject for the November TBS meeting is **Firethorn**, with six plants available. These Firethorns are excellent small trees with great buttress roots, one inch+ wide trunks, and exciting branch movement. They would make a great addition to anyone's bonsai collection! Firethorn is a beautiful tree species with its smooth silvery bark, abundant flowers and small, showy fruit.

The pre-bonsai we are offering is *Pyracantha angustifolia*, a sub-tropical species originally from southeast Asia and has small thin leaves, which makes them a great subject for **indoor bonsai**. The workshop **costs \$75** and includes assistance from an instructor and wire. Contact Otmar Sauer to register. **Please bring in your tools**. Everyone is welcome to bring in their own Firethorn bonsai, sub-tropical bonsai, or any bonsai they wish to show & tell, ask advice on, and/or work on.



Robert Dubuc
Work Shop Coordinator

Some highlights of the beginner session – October 2009

At the second Beginner's Session, John Biel first talked briefly about over-wintering of bonsai trees. He stressed the fact that trees that are hardy in our temperature zone require a lengthy period of rest for good health and even survival. He also pointed out that it's important to know when to remove trees from winter care and that this depends upon the method used. For example, trees that are over-wintered indoors (in a cold room or garage) may have to be moved as early as February if they start to break dormancy at that time. Trees stored outside (with pots buried in the garden or placed in a window well) can generally be kept in their resting place until April or even May. When the trees are kept outdoors it is important to saturate the root ball in fall with water to provide moisture for the roots in spring. Bonsai trees kept indoors should be watered occasionally, when needed. But in both cases, it's a good idea to cover the soil with light fluffy snow to keep the roots frozen and to insulate from sun and wind.

The bulk of the time was spent critiquing members' trees and, once again, John provided much general and specific information about a wide variety of individual trees and species. For example, in looking at a lovely ginkgo, he mentioned that ginkgo bonsai are rare in the club and that this one was unusual in that it had left/right branching. He said that ginkgos are generally styled as solid masses grown from stumps or as candle flames (straight trunks with branches arranged like a candle flame with the yellow fall colour accentuating the flame image). He also talked about a small maple, a willow leaf ficus, an atypical collected windswept apple, and an unusual juniper which, although very attractive, probably was not the best material for a bonsai.

John ended the session by having the audience critique one of his pine trees. There were interesting discussions about limiting the visibility of a root and changing the planting angle to create a proper informal upright style. However, to me, the most interesting aspect of this discussion was that the tree had undergone several natural disasters and was in the process of being re-styled. The rejuvenation process was taking place over a 4 year period and has created a totally different look.

By Barbara Pope

Please welcome with me our new members:

Phillip Collins, Stewart Donnell, Rick Menge, Peter and Diane Ronan, Rajkumar Sarangarajalu, Arthur Ginsburg, Urmila and Ruchiva Mehta, Louis Raffaghello, and Joseph Minkowitz.

Apartment bonsai

The plants used for indoor, or apartment, bonsai are tropical and subtropical. They must be kept indoors during the fall, winter, and most of spring, given our temperate climate. They're used to warm temperatures, without much variation year round. Most of these bonsai are small, shohin size or less, given the limited space inside. Your family or cohabitants will thank you for growing smaller trees!

Here's a plant list of some of the indoor bonsai in our club: Myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), Grewia (*Grewia occidentalis*), *Ficus nerifolia*, *Ficus benjamina*, Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*), *Serissa foetida*, Paper flower (*Bougainvillea glabra*), Fukien Tea (*Carmona microphylla*), and Orange Jasmine (*Murraya paniculata*). Some of these trees are not evergreen, and will go fully dormant for a period, losing their leaves, as our deciduous bonsai do outside. But they will grow back, so don't panic!

Next to choosing the correct material, bright light is the most important factor in the survivability of tropical trees. So, knowing that we have very little natural light in fall and winter, you should supplement with artificial light, cool white fluorescent tubes being the cheapest option. Turn the plants regularly for even growth, or use the light as a styling method, with the branches reaching out for it. Do not over crowd them, or diseases and pests will surely follow! A timer set to 16 hours of cool white light is a very good idea, as readers will know who read Jean Charing's review of Jack Wikle's indoor growing presentation, '**Review: Rochester Symposium 2009 - Jack Wikle - Growing Shohin Bonsai Under Lights**'. in the **October TBS Journal**.

See Jack's web page at: <http://www.fukubonsai.com/2b2a2a.html>.

Watering and fertilizing must be done as well. In the winter, with low temperatures and light levels, trees do not need much of either. Each species has different requirements. If you're growing at room temperature (21 degrees C.), and have provided a free-draining soil mixture, you will need to water more often, making sure the soil does not dry out completely between waterings. Feel the soil and notice a lighter colour to determine when it's time to water. It is better to soak, and let go for a period, than to water lightly. Keep a jug of water handy near the growing area, so that you will have chlorine-free room temperature water ready at any time. Always water thoroughly before you feed, using a fine rose nozzle to prevent erosion. Change the type of fertilizer you use each time, using a low nitrogen formula at half strength. A white propagation tray underneath the trees will catch the excess water and provide humidity for the leaves. It's better to use white trays because they reflect the light, where black trays do not. Since black are the only ones usually available, you could white wash them with paint, but remember to use the waterproof type. The water in the tray also provides the humidity as your forced air heating moves across it, picking up moisture along the way. To keep the plants above the water in the tray, use white egg crate, which is a lighting material available at hardware stores. You will need to cut it to fit into the rectangular trays. It costs about \$10 for a 2 x 4 piece, and looks like a white grid.

Finally, since the plants are growing, you will need to pinch and prune. It's also a good idea to keep a pot with propagation soil in it if you would like to grow more of that species, using cuttings with rooting powder. All the styles of bonsai apply to indoor bonsai, but only some styles work well for some species. Since we do not live in a tropical zone, you can either travel to these places, or research the natural form of these trees, using the internet, public library, or our own TBS library. Style each tree according to what that tree itself calls out for, using your creative mind to imagine what it could look like years from now.

Our senior members are the best resource, with hundreds of years experience between them! Bring your indoor bonsai to our meeting, using a sealed plastic tent as protection against the wind and cold, and speak to the Otmar or Karen at the members' table about getting some advice about any of these factors.

Be prepared for frank, useful, and genuine advice!

By Greg Quinn

Help Wanted!

Someone to create or find a friendly, functional, '**Bonsai Blog**' for our web site.

Ideally the blog would be free for the club, would allow members ready and easy access without a cumbersome registration process, and would allow us to oversee and, if necessary, control what is published.

Please contact **Dierk**, our club **Web Master**, via email at dierkn@sympatico.ca.

Bonsai Clubs International convention in New Orleans

Why was New Orleans chosen to be the site of this year's BCI (Bonsai Clubs International) conference? After the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina the directors of BCI felt that they might, in some small way help to promote the recovery. The storm certainly destroyed a lot of bonsai collections and so the name "**Survivors of the Storm**" was the theme of this year's June Convention.

The New Orleans Botanical Garden was the site of the convention and considering that this area was at least three feet under water during Katrina, restoration by volunteers has been a marvel. The show's bonsai display was outside, informal, and lacking the usual Asian back drops. Beautifully framed in front of windows, on raw wooden tables the bonsai drew crowds of people who walked around the shaded deck overlooking the garden blooms.

"**Survivors of the Storm**" was aptly named as we met people from the New Orleans Bonsai Club who had lost their whole collections. Robert Kempinski, the BCI Vice President, relates a storm incident in his blog:

http://blogs.knowledgeofbonsai.org/rob_kempinski/2009/06/24/bci-2009-survivors-of-the-storm/

"The story is incredible and touching. There was one survivor, a Buttonwood (*Platanus occidentalis*) by Jim Osborne, (yes, there is another one!) Prior to the storm's arrival Jim put all his trees inside his house. Then he evacuated as ordered by the local government. Jim couldn't return for many days, and he hated to think how his trees would have been slowly dying inside his house. When he did return home- his house was damaged extensively. In one spot, a tree smashed through his roof of his laundry room and opened the roof to the elements. There water and sun were able to reach his buttonwood and it survived the ordeal (unlike his other trees in different rooms)."

The Buttonwood Story was just one of the many stories I heard at convention meetings and workshops, but we had to quickly get down to business. The first day in the "Big Easy" (New Orleans) was spent in a director's meeting at the International Hotel with bonsai directors from Florida, New York, Colorado, Taiwan, Indonesia, Germany, Italy, Australia, China, and one other Canadian from Alberta. Adding to this intriguing mix of people were several spouses who acted as crucial translators. The laptop computers that were pulled out of bags and placed in front of almost each individual added to the United Nations feeling. We were ready for an efficient meeting that was conducted first in English, then summarized almost instantaneously in other languages, and finally put into action plans. It was unique and encouraging to see what can be done to support bonsai. I could only imagine the amount of work that had gone before as the results from previous meetings were being realized. One such result was the beautifully bound and colourful **International Bonsai Instructor's Book** which was to be given as a surprise gift from the BCI Chairman, Mr. I. C. Su, to all the directors at the banquet that night.

Before the banquet, my attendance at workshops was limited, but Russell Goodchild, a Matsuyama member who attended, was very impressed by the level of presenters. Australian presenters, Lindsay and Glenis Bebb, who worked on collected Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), were seasoned bonsai artists who gave wise advice: "It is natural for boxwood to meet with three central branches, so that is where you decide to keep all three branches or follow one line". Other presenters included Peter Chan, Tedy Boy, Bill Valavanis, and Chiara Padriani.

Attendance at the convention was very high, and I spent some of my time guiding newcomers to the show. This experience in New Orleans made me realize our bonsai are very much related to our local environment and needs. For instance, people were mystified when I started to talk about putting my trees "to bed", and the problems of my glasses "steaming up" when I come in from outside. Bonsai grow outside all year round in New Orleans, whereas a major activity for us is protecting our trees from freezing during the winter -so we often bury our bonsai in our gardens, in their pots; and, in a Canadian winter, eye glasses steam up when you go inside, since the humidity is much greater there than outside.

Members from all parts of the world, from Australia to Venezuela, and on all continents, shared the 'differences' in their way of bonsai. BCI, however, exists to promote the common and shared love and skills of the art of bonsai and is committed to the ongoing bonsai education of its members.

It was an exciting privilege to serve at my first BCI convention as a director.

**By Joan Greenway
Matsuyama Bonsai Society**

From Budi at BCI:

On October 16, 17, **Budi Sulisty**o (Indonesian Director of Bonsai Clubs International) went to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to attend the exhibition and also the launching of BCI. Mr Su (Chairman of BCI) was there to give awards and inaugurated the opening of BCI in Malaysia. It was said that around 30 new members joined BCI, either in the Chinese or English version.

There were around 150 bonsai and 200 suiseki in the exhibition. The most prominent species in Malaysia is *Wrightia religiosa*. A big one with a lot of flowers with sweet fragrance won the BCI President award. An other local species that develops well in Malaysia is *Baekia frutescens*. One of them won the minister award.

November editorial & TBS events review

October Meeting

Thanks to Arthur Skolnik for standing toe-to-toe with the **TBS** for more than an hour, talking about and critiquing our Eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). It was very enjoyable, informative, and we felt challenged to improve our cedars afterward. To learn more about cedar bonsai, visit Reiner Goebel's web site: <http://www.rgbonsai.com/thuja.htm>.

Fall Show

Why do we have the **TBS Show**? So we can see the quality of the other members' trees and thereby improve our own. Did you enjoy the fellowship of the club? Were you inspired by other people's trees? To what length would you go to improve your bonsai? Would you be willing to take radical steps to improve them, including starting all over again?

Other than the missing table cloth, the show was a complete success. As always, everyone pulled together to set up and man the show and we gained a few new members. Mike McCallion did a great job arranging the trees! Thanks, Mike!

The Social

Thanks to Les Mandeville for catering to our appetites and Reiner Goebel for catering to our appreciation of **bonsai photography** at the Social. Les received a flowering **Mandevilla** vine for his effort, and Reiner we got beer! To see his pics go here: <http://picasaweb.google.com/reigoe/TBSShowOct09?authkey=Gv1sRgCPuQ-PqkmMDegQE#>

The Critique

The critique was a hit! Those who weren't able to participate missed out on a good one!

The Magazines

Thanks to Norman Haddrick for his donation of complete sets of "**International Bonsai Magazine**" to date, and "**Bonsai Today**", including the transition to the European publication. These will be bound in yearly series, for educational use of the general membership. Talk to Keith Oliver, our club Librarian, about availability.

Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition, supported by ABS at the Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies 2010 Spring Festival

The **New Talent Bonsai Competition** that was featured, for the first time, at the **2002 American Bonsai Society Symposium** in Milwaukee, has become an annual event. The Joshua Roth Company of Albany, Oregon now sponsors the competition.

The 2010 competition will take place at the "**Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies 2010 Spring Festival**", which will be held at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa, **Kerhonkson**, New York on April 16, 2010. The competition is aimed at discovering and promoting new talent in the art of bonsai and is the first of its kind to be held in North America. The concept of the competition is very simple. Phase one, judging of previous work, is used to select the contestants for the second phase. In the second phase, each participant will be given eight hours to create the very best bonsai they can produce from specially selected material.

After the entrants have completed their work, four of the Festival headliners will judge the bonsai that have been created. All full registrants at the Festival will also have the opportunity to vote for their choice. The winner will be announced Saturday night at the banquet.

The Grand Prize for the Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition is an exclusive course of study with an approved bonsai teacher and hotel accommodations if the teacher is not in the winner's home town. The winning artist will also be profiled in the **Journal of the American Bonsai Society** under the title of "**Best New Bonsai Talent of 2010**."

If you have someone in your club that has the talent and the drive to become one of North America's top new bonsai talents, please encourage him or her to enter the competition. Your club could be the "home club" of the best new bonsai talent of North America in 2010. If you feel very strongly that your club member has the talent to win the competition, your club may even wish to sponsor his or her participation.

We are very excited about this competition, and hope that it is exciting to you as well. We look forward to seeing the work of your club members in the competition.

Information and registration forms are posted on the ABS web site at: www.absbonsai.org.

If you have any questions please contact me directly: **Harold Johnson, Competition Coordinator, Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition**, haroldjrntbc@yahoo.com.

REGULAR TBS MEETINGS

Meetings take place on the second Monday of every month, except July and August, at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, located at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, at Leslie Street, in the auditorium (west side of the building) at 7:00 p.m. The general meetings frequently include: **DEMONSTRATIONS** of bonsai techniques, **CRITIQUES** of bonsai trees, and **WORKSHOPS**, in which each participant styles a tree with the help of an experienced member.

A small fee is charged for workshops, and a tree and wire are provided. To participate in workshops, it is necessary to register in advance of the meeting so that materials can be provided.

Members are encouraged to bring in bonsai to show and work on during the meetings. Wire is provided at no charge. Non-members may attend a meeting at no charge to see if the club is of interest to them.

Library Hours and Policy

The library is open to members at the beginning of our regular meetings. Members may borrow books free of charge for one month. Late returns cost \$1 per month with a minimum charge of \$2.

Membership Desk

The membership desk will be open at all meetings. The opening time may be extended for the first fall meeting to assist with renewals. You may also register for workshops there.

TBS EXECUTIVE:

<p>President: Mike Roussel mike.roussel@sympatico.ca</p> <p>Vice-President: Otmar Sauer otmar.sauer@sympatico.ca</p> <p>Web-Master: Dierk Neugerbauer dierkn@sympatico.ca</p> <p>Treasurer: Jean Charing jeancharing@rogers.com</p> <p>Editor/Publisher: Greg Quinn gquinn@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Workshop Coordinator: Rob Dubuc robubuc@bellnet.ca</p> <p>Membership Secretary: Linda Chevrier, Cheryl Johnson cjohnson24@sympatico.ca</p> <p>New Member Host: Karen Brankley kayeb29@hotmail.com</p> <p>Recording Secretary: Barbara Pope barbaralpope@rogers.com</p> <p>Past-President: Mike McCallion mwm@apliscanada.com</p>	<p>Librarian: Keith Oliver keitholiver1@hotmail.com</p> <p>Members At Large: Bob Cole bcole@metroland.com</p> <div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 10px;"><p><i>The JOURNAL was founded in January, 1964, is published monthly, except July & August, and exists to further the study, practice, promulgation, and fellowship of bonsai.</i></p><p>Visit the Toronto Bonsai Society's website at: www.torontobonsai.org</p><p>Toronto Bonsai Society P.O. Box 155 Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2S2</p></div>
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