



JOURNAL



February 2010

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

Meetings are held in the **Toronto Botanical Gardens, at 777 Lawrence Avenue East**, in the **Auditorium** (west side of building) unless otherwise noted.

Beginner's session: 6:30 – 7:20 p.m. No beginners session for February!

The **Beginner's Session** starts at 6:30 pm and is in Studio #2 upstairs. All beginners should read Bob Wilcox's excellent introductory articles, '**Information for Beginners**', and, '**Frequently Asked Questions**', on the **TBS web site**.

March: Acquiring trees. April: Transplanting. May: Styling, wiring. June: Leaf pruning.

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

February 8: TBS meeting: Silent auction. In the Floral Hall. Bring in your bonsai-related items to donate to the club. This is the one big fund raiser for the year so please be generous. Make sure you bring lots of cash or preferably your cheque book so you can bid on items. This is a great opportunity to get stuff at a bargain! Light refreshments will be provided! Forms will be available at the beginning of the meeting. **There will be no Beginners Session for the February meeting!**

March 7: Workshop: Make your own bonsai stand, with Sean Smith. He will be walking participants through the process of assembling two beautiful shohin stands during the session. **Toronto Botanical Gardens**, time and cost to be announced. Contact Linda and Cheryl (on back cover) to register.

March 8: TBS meeting: Stands, suiseki and formal display. Bring in your stands and stones to show and discuss. **Sean Smith**, master carver and renowned bonsai stand and suiseki daiza maker will present to the club on suiseki styles, display (daiza, suiban, doban), preparation, rocks suitable for suiseki, collecting, bonsai and suiseki.

April, May: Collecting trips, nursery crawls in Ontario and Quebec. Contact Greg Quinn (on back cover) about locations, car pooling.

April 12: TBS meeting: Larch (*Larix*). Bring in your larch to show, discuss and work on. All session transplanting workshop. **Workshop: Japanese larch (*Larix Kaempferi*) Cost: \$40** (includes tree, wire, pot, soil and instructor). Bring your own tools. **Workshop: Bring your own larch** (or other species) to transplant. The club will be selling soil components and starter pots will also be available for purchase. **Workshop: Transplanting club trees.** The club has trees for future workshops that need transplanting. Help out the club and get some practice at the same time! Contact Cheryl and Linda to sign up for the workshops.

May 10: TBS meeting: Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*). Bring in your Japanese maples to show, discuss and work on. **Reiner Goebel** will be styling a Japanese maple for the raffle. **Workshop: Cork-bark Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Arakawa).** Cost: \$50 (includes tree, wire and instructor). Contact Cheryl and Linda to sign up for the workshop. Bring your own tools. **Workshop: Bring your own tree workshop.** Bring in a maple (or other species) to work on. **Prepare your trees for the spring show!**

May 23, 24: TBS show. Bring in your bonsai, shitakusa, suiseki, and scrolls for display! Volunteers needed- contact Mike McCallion.

June 14: TBS Meeting: Martin Schmalenberg.

June, July, August: Backyard workshops. Contact Greg Quinn for locations, or to offer your yard.

On the cover: Keith Oliver's Blaauwi juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Blaauwi'). This bonsai has a fairly long history and several TBS members have had their hands on it (see next page for details). Photographed by Reiner Goebel.

Who is Herr Blaauw, whose juniper, for almost 40 years, has had such an impact on our club?

Outside world events:

The Joshua Roth new talent competition: The Toronto Bonsai Society encourages any new 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 **New Talent section** at the **ABS web site**, or speak to Mike McCallion (info. on back cover) for further details. The Toronto Bonsai Society will contribute \$200.00 towards the general costs incurred by the member who is selected to participate in this event.

Mid-Atlantic bonsai societies spring festival: April 16, Kerhonkson, N.Y. See the **MABS web site** (<http://midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com/>) for details.

U.S. national bonsai exhibition June 12, 13, 9 – 5, Monroe county hospital, Rochester, N.Y. See the **National Bonsai Exhibition** section at the **International Bonsai web site** (<http://www.internationalbonsai.com/>) for details.

BCI group tour of China: Sept.29 - Oct.12, 2010. The programs are specially designed for bonsai and suiseki lovers to explore the beautiful collections from Guangzhou, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Xijing, Beijing, Tianjin. Please visit the BCI website (<http://www.bci2010chinatour.com/>) for details.

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 web 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.

ABS stolen bonsai To check for stolen bonsai in the USA, check the **Stolen Bonsai Registry** at the ABS web site.

Triple trunk Blaauwi juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Blaauwi')

I purchased this beautiful specimen from **Grace** and **Rudi Wicht** (who acquired the tree in 1990) at the Toronto Bonsai Society October 2009 Fall show. The tree has been in training since 1988, and was originally styled by **Herman Sjouerman**, former member of both the **Toronto** and **Matsuyama bonsai societies**.

It was chosen by Japan Airlines in 1999 as one of the top 100 bonsai outside of Japan.

In 2000 the tree was pruned, wired, and restyled during many hours of work by **John Biel**. The tree was repotted into its current pot in 2001. The pot is rectangular from Japan and is of great quality. The tree itself is a triple trunk style, and about 22 inches tall. I have done very little in terms of styling, other than some minor pinching, and given it basic care. Currently, it is buried in the ground for the winter.

Come spring season, I will repot the tree, and possibly begin some pruning and wiring in order to get it back into shape, seeing as how it has been a few years since its last trim. I hope to engage the help of John later this year in developing both the tree and my skills, if he is willing to take on the task.

I owe a great deal of thanks to Grace and Rudi for providing the background information, as well as some great photos from over the years.

By Keith Oliver



*October 2009, at the TBS Fall Show,
photo by Reiner Goebel*

Editor's note: Blaauwi juniper makes a great beginner bonsai! Please see the article, '**Blaauwi Juniper**', by John Biel, at the TBS web site: <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Archives/styling/blauwii.htm>

February president's message: the February bonsai blues

Yes I'm feeling blue
Deep within my soul
Because my trees are asleep
And I have nothing to do

I dream of that day
When the snow is all gone
And the trees start to bud
How these days do weigh

Let winter zip by
For I need to get back
To the hobby I love
My beloved bonsai

Well, nobody ever said I was a poet

Its funny how, in the fall, I am so glad to put my trees away for the winter as I feel I need a break but by February, I start to get stir crazy, wanting to get back to my trees. Winter here in the "north land" is just too long for me, I guess. Maybe I should be living further south where the winters aren't so cold. Maybe I just need a diversion!

So, what does the bonsai artist do to pass the time in the winter? Here are some ideas I have come up with:

Indoor bonsai: This is one of the best ways to ward off the blues. If you can't stand not having something to work on, purchase an indoor tree. If you don't have adequate light, purchase a light stand.

Research: This is a great time of year to purchase and read books and magazines. Learn about new techniques that can be applied in the spring. Pick up a book on horticulture and learn more about botany. Make use of the club library or start surfing. Consider sharing what you learn by writing an article for the **Toronto Bonsai Society Journal**, which you receive monthly, and is loaded on our club web site.

Seeds: This is not a time consuming activity but it can be quite enjoyable. Many types of trees are impossible to purchase in the Toronto area so growing from seed is the best option. If you get some seeds right away you can start stratifying them now. It may be too late for some species so make sure you check the amount of time they need in the fridge before you purchase them.

Photography: There are lots of opportunities to work with photos at this time of year. First, get out in nature and take shots of the deciduous trees while they are naked (see my **November 2009 President's Message**). Observe how a tree's form is influenced by its environment and genealogy. Second, pull out the photos of your trees and observe them with a critical eye. How have they improved or deteriorated? What do you need to do to improve them? One thing I like to do is print them and draw the desired outline and the shape of the ideal pot. If you are good with computers, you may be able to do this with **Adobe Photoshop**. Look at photos of great trees – the **Kokufu** books are a great place to start. I have been going through a number of them, paying particular attention to the harmony between tree and pot, trying to understand why some combinations harmonize well while others look awkward.

Collecting: No, you can't collect at this time of year, especially with the lack of snow this year, but you can get out and look for places to collect in the spring. The farmers are not busy at this time of year so this is a great opportunity to track them down and ask if you can collect on their property. You might just drive around the city looking for old, overgrown shrubs in people's front yards. It never hurts to ask if they are willing to part with them! Also, find nurseries in your area and plan to do a nursery crawl.

Wiring: Get over your fear of wiring and practice, practice, practice. It is said that it takes 10,000 hours to master an activity so the sooner and more you do it, the better you will get at it. Your trees will thank you next year!

Preparation: If you store your pots inside, now is the time to clean them up and add screens to the bottom of them. If you have a place where you can make a mess, like a garage, start screening that bonsai soil (see **'Soil For Bonsai'**, by Brent Walston on our TBS web site). Transplanting season comes fast and furious and you will be happy that you got this job done in advance.

Planning: One thing that I am busy with this year is planning a backyard renovation. After buying a new house last year I have big plans for a **Japanese Garden**, complete with pedestals and benches. I am consulting the new book: **Your Guide to Creating Stands and Benches**, by George Buehler, and have purchased Home and Garden design software. This is going to be fun!

Sculpture: Why not try to make a pot out of cement fondue? If you have wood working equipment, try your hand at creating a stand.

Thinking: What is your goal for the upcoming bonsai season? Are you going to increase your collection? Are you going to take more workshops? Are you going to finally get serious about your trees and prepare them to be put in this year's shows? So, wipe those blues away and get busy!

by Mike Rousel

Cement fondue pot workshop

The workshop was a resounding success! Twelve participants got their hands dirty with the expert help of Bob Wilcox, Greg Quinn and Dick Morton. A special thank you to Dick for having us back again to his work shop!

But, where were our newer members? Please read the following very basic explanation of the workshop, then tell us if you would like to take part in another.

First we were given hardware cloth which is a steel wire mesh (like window screening) with holes of 1/8" or 1/4". We took this home and had a week to examine our options and start to form our pot. The mesh was cut to size and formed by bending and bunching around a bonsai pot or even a kitchen bowl as a starting point. A rock-like shape was created leaving one or more areas for planting.

Part two took place at the workshop where Bob explained how to fine tune our creations, and materials were assembled and readied for our use by Greg, Jorge Pereira, and Barbara Pope. We inserted corks to keep drainage holes open, and fixed the wire form to a piece of plastic covered plywood with a staple gun. This provided stability for the form both while we were working and while it was drying.

Then came the fun part!! Seeing

your landscape look more like land! We mixed the cement dry using one part sand, one part silica, and one part cement, adding water a bit at a time until the mixture stuck together enough to spread thickly on the wire with putty tools without falling through the mesh. We spritzed with water occasionally so that the cement would dry slowly to maintain its strength. When the project was completed, damp rags and plastic were laid over it to keep it moist during the drying period over the next two days.

At least four hours later, when you were home and the project was dry enough to hold its form, it was removed from the board by prying it up, and a wetter cement slurry was brushed into the underside to cover exposed wire and smooth the interior, lessening the likelihood of damage from freezing.

It should be said that before using cement planters they must be leached by soaking them in water



Mike Roussel, a big believer in drainage, arranges his corks, having drunk the wine!

changed daily for approximately two weeks. If they aren't being used for months, leaving them outdoors in wet weather will have a similar effect. We would, however, like to see some in use this year!

Experimenting and expanding this process provides a unique way to create and express an image previously seen only in your imagination. The pot or tray size is custom made for your planting. The colour can be artistically applied. The texture is altered using brushes, palette knives, or ordinary stones pressed into the damp creation for effect.

We 'cajole and encourage' our trees over time to express their inner spirit but with these pots we can control the outcome with almost immediate gratification! By researching different rock formations we can compose our display 'from the ground up' and learn more about the landscapes from which dwarfed trees are formed.

Certainly a worthwhile endeavor don't you think?

By Karen Brankley

Editor's note: There are other photos of the workshop on our club web site, (www.torontobonsai.org), as well as other articles dealing with the construction of cement fondue containers:

'Cement Fondue', by David Young, from December, 2005:
<http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2005/dec.2005/concrete.fondue.pots.htm>

'Cement Fondue Demo', by David Young, from January, 2006:
<http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/jan.2006/concrete.fondue.demo.htm>

'The Cement Fondue Workshop', by Jeff Shortt, from April, 2006:
<http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/apr.2006/ciment.workshop.htm>



Clockwise, from left: Jorge Pereira, Otmar Sauer, Keith Oliver, David Young, Bob Wilcox, Barb Pope, Jean Charing, Jeff Shortt.



Bob Patterson methodically works the fondue!

Tips from the potting shed: on the subject of moss, patina and all that stuff

The recent workshop and its creative upsurge of rock building has inspired one to bring to mind the tricks and techniques of aging these forms with a patina that would make them seem yet more real. Indeed, having gone to considerable trouble to create forms that are an ideal example of the real thing, now the bonsai artist has to patina these forms to soften and make them blend into the natural world. You don't want them to look like a newly minted penny!

To prepare a concoction to paint on to the rock or the edge of your landscape tray, firstly— get some moss, the type called Silver Moss (*Bryum argenteum*) would seem to do well, and, as its name suggests, has in spring a silvery quality. You can find this between paving stones or in a parking lot. This is allowed to dry and then put through a 1/8" screen or sieve. You could also use some of the green lichen found on the north side of trees. Into this is also added some fish emulsion fertilizer and a little milk, to help it stick on the rocks.

All this is mixed together (you could use a blender to do the job) and then painted onto the rock. When left out in the spring in a shaded, warm and humid place, it does not take long to give a soft and gracious patina to the rock and to act as a nursery for the cultivation of moss and lichen.

At this point it might be well to remember that a rolling stone gathers no moss!

by Nubbin*

*nubbin—an imperfect ear of corn

Editor's Note: Nubbin, a.k.a. David Young, has written other articles in the 'From the potting shed' series, from April to June, 2007, in the **Journal Section** on our TBS web site: '**Tips from the potting shed – number 1**':

<http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2007/apr.2007/D.Y.Tips.htm>



David Young's cement fondue rock. Look familiar?

David Johnson's talk on bonsai care

At last month's beginner's session, David talked to us about growing media and fertilizers. When I walked in the door, a few minutes late despite the 1.5 hours of slogging through traffic, I heard him say that, since our bonsai spend their lives in small containers, they are totally dependent on us for the provision of all the nutrients they require for growth and survival. What a responsibility! Fortunately, he then went on to tell us how we could fulfil this obligation.

On the table in front of him he had a vast array of samples of different soil components which he passed around, and sieves, and bottles of different kinds of fertilizers. As usual, I was befuddled by the great number of soil components that can be used to grow bonsai. But I did pick up some pointers.

- I liked the idea of a "parfait" of different sized particles: large ones on the bottom for drainage, a mixture of medium sized particles (rice grain size) above that, and a small layer of fine particles on top, all covered with a thin topping of shredded sphagnum moss.
- David uses large snow saucer sleds to collect the different sized particles after sifting – a neat idea.
- In order to keep these layers distinct, I will have to learn how to use my chopstick gingerly so that I don't mix the bottom two layers together.
- The fine layer on top and the sphagnum moss should be applied after the soil has settled around the roots so that the layers are preserved.
- This parfait will allow for good filtration of water and air through the soil as well as retention of moisture and nutrients.
- **Shohin** bonsai, which I find very appealing, need a slightly finer soil to preserve moist conditions.
- Organic components are not necessary in the bonsai soil. Akadama is the gold star component which not only holds water and nutrients well, but also has the advantage in our climate of breaking apart and protecting the roots during our freezing winter months.
- David gave us a handout of the recipe for **Boon's Mix** which he recommends using. And he suggested we view a Boon jack pine video from the library to learn more.

There was also a lot more good stuff on watering and fertilizers.

Thanks David.

By Barbara Pope

Thank yous:

Thank you David Johnson for leading The Beginner's Session in January on bonsai soil, components, fertilizers.

Thank you Aaron Khalid, Bob Wilcox and Mike McCallion for giving 'Before and After' bonsai presentations at the January general meeting, and Mike again for giving his presentation on wiring bonsai, and leading the wiring workshop that followed.

Thank you Dick Morton for volunteering his shop, Bob Wilcox for leading the cement fondue workshop, and David Young for raising the bar on styling rocks on January 16.

Thank you Reiner Goebel for the book he has donated of his pictures of past TBS shows, now in our library.

Thank you Ken Brown, a member from 2006, for donating pots & materials for our Silent Auction.

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 \$2 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 Neugebauer 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 data-bbox="1068 1171 1446 1814" 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:</p><p>www.torontobonsai.org</p><p>Toronto Bonsai Society P.O. Box 155 Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2S2</p></div>
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