



JOURNAL



September 2010

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

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

Beginner sessions: 6:30 – 7:20 p.m.

The **beginner session** is in **Studio #2** upstairs. All beginners should read Bob Wilcox's introductory articles, [Information for Beginners](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#), on the [TBS web site \(www.torontobonsai.org\)](http://www.torontobonsai.org).

September: Azaleas, presented by **Bob Patterson**.

October: Critique of trees, by newer members with **John Biel**.

November: Over-wintering bonsai, presented by **Grace Wicht**.

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

September 13: **TBS meeting: September work on pine bonsai, with John Biel.**

Bring in your pine bonsai for advice, and to work on - especially the people who participated in the September, 2009 Scots pine workshop! **Workshop: intermediate level Japanese black pine.** There are eight trees available. The cost of the workshop will be \$40. They are nice trees, most with excellent nebari and movement in the trunk. They are not hardy and need special winter protection! Contact Cheryl or Linda to register.



Workshop Japanese black pine.

October 4: TBS meeting: critique of trees. Bring in your bonsai for helpful advice, and to get ready for the fall show. **Workshop:** bring your own tree.

October 10, 11: TBS Fall Show: Arrive early to help set up, and bring in your bonsai for display. Have your sales items at the desk before 9 am, with the vending form filled out! **The Social** will be at 7 p.m. Sunday night, with spectacular food and drinks! On Monday arrive at five to help break down.

November 8: TBS meeting: workshop on tropical olive trees. Contact Cheryl or Linda to register.

December 13: **TBS meeting: Sean Smith bonsai stand presentation.**

Workshop: Sunday, December 12, build your own bonsai stand (10.5"x14.5") from a kit.
Cost: \$130 to participate, \$10 to observe. Contact Cheryl or Linda to register.



TBS meetings for 2011, in short:

January - suiseki - stone appreciation, with Arthur Skolnik.

February - shhh! silent auction.

March - propagating your own bonsai trees & how to keep collected trees alive.

April - spruce tree forest demo.

May - shohin elm workshop - Jacqueline Hillier.

June - Blaauwii juniper workshop & bring your own tree.

On the cover: David Johnson's Jack pine, (*Pinus banksiana*), as it appeared in the RBG Show last month. Photo by Reiner Goebel. For some of the history of this bonsai see the September, 2009, copy of the TBS Journal (<http://www.torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2009.09.pdf>).

Outside the club:

International Bonsai Symposium: Sept. 10 - 12, Airport Holiday Inn, Rochester, New York. The focus this year is on native collected trees. Register at Bill Valavanis's web site:

<http://www.internationalbonsai.com/files/1708315/uploaded/NORTH%20AMERICAN%20BONSAI%20SYMPOSIUM.pdf>

Ottawa Bonsai Exposition: Sept. 11, 12. See newsletter for details:

<http://www.ottawabonsai.org/NewsLetter/OttBonsaiJournalAug10.pdf>

Montreal Bonsai Exposition Annuelle: Sept. 17, 18, 19. See web site for details: <http://www.bonsaimontreal.com/>

Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) group tour of China: **Sept. 30 - Oct. 12**. The programs are specially designed for bonsai and suiseki lovers to explore the beautiful collections from Guangzhou, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Xijing, Beijing, Tianjin. Visit the BCI website (<http://www.bci2010chinatour.com/>) for details.

Bonsai theft warning: There have been four different incidents of bonsai theft 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.

The RBG Bonsai Exhibition Reviews:

Hamilton Spectator RBG Show review and Mike Roussel interviewed:

<http://www.thespec.com/news/local/article/249224--bonsai-bonanza-in-bloom-at-rbg>

RBG Show portraits (thanks, Reiner):

<http://picasaweb.google.com/reigo/BonsaiAtTheRBG?authkey=Gv1sRgCLyrspbe8MPW3QE#>

Aaron Khalid's video record of the RBG bonsai exhibition: <http://www.bonsaisocietyatrbg.com/wp/archives/477>



It's membership renewal time! Please go to our TBS web site (www.torontobonsai.org), click on the MEMBERSHIP button, print out a form, fill it out and either bring it with your cheque to the September meeting, or mail into the address on the form.

President's message: a new season for growth

by Mike Roussel

Welcome to a new season of fun with the **Toronto Bonsai Society!**

What a great season we had last year! My first year as president was blessed with great participation from the membership who embraced the vision to **Grow to the Challenge** and ran with it. Thanks to the hard working executive, we were able to successfully deliver a interesting and diverse program. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves thoroughly.

Some of the highlights of last year were definitely:

- Bill Valavanis' visit in December
- The soil workshop in April
- Martin Schmalenberg's visit in June
- A full calendar of garden visits in the summer
- Strong participation in the **Bonsai at the Royal Botanical Gardens: 1st Open Exhibition of Bonsai in Canada.**

This year promises to be another stellar year. So, what do we have in store for you?

Here's the plan:

September – pines revisited. It seems that every September we do pines and the reason is that there are very specific tasks that the pine owner must perform in September to prepare for the coming year. Last year, we were a little short on time so John Biel has once again agreed to take us through the process. We are looking forward to revisiting the dwarf Scots pines that were styled in last September's workshop as well as conducting a workshop on the classic Japanese pine bonsai: Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*). If you haven't signed up for this intermediate level workshop you better hurry! Bring in any or all of your pines to show, discuss and work on if you are not taking the workshop.

October – more pines and critique. Our October meeting is early this year (Oct. 4), so there is more time to work on pines at that time. **Reiner Goebel** is not able to attend our September meeting so he will take some time to do walk us through the multi-year process of developing pine bonsai.

Critiques are one of the best ways to learn bonsai design, so in preparation for the upcoming **TBS Fall Show (Oct. 10,11)**, we will be having a critique of members' trees. Bring in your tree to get others' opinions. Many times we get so close to our creations that we don't see things clearly. This is an opportunity to open your eyes and see new possibilities! Make sure to bring in your critic's hat too and be prepared to offer constructive criticism to your fellow club members.

November – olives. November is always a tough month to do bonsai as this is the time of year when our outdoor trees are put to sleep. We could have another evening of slide shows (boring !!!!!) or we could work on indoor trees. Since we do not have much (if any) representation of olives in the club it is time to step up! I owned a dwarf olive for years and found the species to be extremely easy to grow in a sunny window or under lights. The tough leaves and drought tolerance of this species makes it ideal for the beginner. The type we are going to be working on have diminutive leaves and beautiful, smooth grey bark. Sign up today for this great opportunity for a taste of the Mediterranean. As with all our workshops, feel free to bring in your own tropical bonsai to work on.

December – Sean Smith. This year I am happy to announce that Sean Smith, a master woodworker, will be visiting us to conduct weekend workshops in which the participants will create their own bonsai stand. To my knowledge we have never had a workshop of this type in the club so sign up right away! If you don't get a chance to sign up there are observer spots at a nominal price. Have you ever wondered how the show chairman decides what tree is placed where? Well, Sean is not only a whiz with wood but he is extremely knowledgeable about formal display. Here is an opportunity to learn about the art of display. This will be a great learning opportunity for all!

January -- suiseki. If November is a hard to time to come up with a program, January is the toughest. Traditionally, we have had slide shows, but I hear a lot of complaints about this being boring and sleepy, so this year let's spice things up with a revisit to the art of viewing stones!

February – silent auction. Some things never change! February has been our silent auction for years and well, why give up a good thing. This is our one big fund raiser each year which we rely upon to help fund club activities. In the past, you have all been very generous in donating items and bringing fat wallets. Please plan now to do so again! This year, let's fill the tables to the bursting point!

March – collecting and pre-bonsai. Is there any doubt that the best trees in the club are collected? There is nothing like those ancient cedars, larches, pines. They speak of years of struggle to survive in harsh environments and display a character no man can create. However, as many of you know, finding a suitable tree to collect is a difficult task but equally so is the after care and years of work it takes to create a quality bonsai. So, let's prepare for the collecting season by learning more about how to collect a tree from the wild and ensure its survival.

Whether you collect your tree from nature, nursery or start it from scratch there are things that must be done to prepare/improve the tree before final styling. Oftentimes this requires growth acceleration techniques. The second half of this meeting will be a discussion on what we do in the pre-bonsai stages.

April – spruce forest demo. Who doesn't like forests? Other than flowering bonsai, they are the types of bonsai that are most loved by the public. True bonsai aficionados may scoff at this but even they have to submit that well-designed forests are beautiful and evocative. The forest to be created in this meeting will one to remember. It will contain no less than 9 trees and will be placed in a hand-made pot made in last year's cement fondue workshop and donated to the cause. The resulting one of a kind creation will be raffled off at the end of the meeting so make sure you attend.

May – elms. If there is one variety of tree that is under-represented in the club it is definitely the elm, and that is a shame! The elm has many characteristics to recommend itself: small leaves, quick growth, suitable for most (if not all) styles and easy to grow. Elms' almost worldwide distribution ensures that there are many different species and cultivars to choose from. This will be the topic of the may meeting with a special workshop. The club has come into the possession of a rare and beautiful variety of elm: **Jacqueline Hillier** (*Ulmus x hollandica 'Jacqueline Hillier'*) that are suitable for shohin bonsai. This is a workshop not to miss! Bring in your own elm bonsai to show on the side table as well.

June – juniper. Workshops, workshops, workshops! One of the first thing that people ask me for to be added to the program is to provide opportunities to work on trees. June, like many other months this season will be dedicated to workshops. We will have a short lecture on how to maintain junipers and then will jump right into a Blaauwii juniper and general workshop. Bring in your Junipers to show to the membership.

June will also be the time to select a new executive so please consider joining the team! **Let us know by January, 2011.**

Other events:

The TBS has more than just meetings to offer. Here are some other upcoming events:

TBS Fall Show – Oct 10-11.

TBS Spring Show – May 29-30. Yes, we will have a spring show this year and it will not be on the May 24 weekend. I will tell you why in the September meeting.

Workshops with Bill Valavanis - June 4-5. Bill can't visit us for one of our meetings this year but he is available to do workshops on this weekend. This is a unique opportunity to learn from one of the best. More to come on this.

Nursery Crawls and Collecting Trips - TBD. Yes, we plan to have a fall and spring nursery crawl and we are looking for a new collecting location. Come to the March meeting to learn how to handle your new trees.

Cement Fondue Workshop – TBD. Back for another year will be a workshop where you can create your own pots. More to come on this.

A summer of bonsai

by **Barbara Pope**

This summer I attended my first **TBS summer backyard workshop/garden visits** – and they were great fun! The weather was wonderful and the events were enjoyable on many levels.

In writing this article I have asked myself, and others, what the objectives of the workshops are. For myself, I thought that there were three major objectives:

- Observing the collections of experienced members of the club and learning about how their bonsai are styled, displayed, and maintained.
- Getting advice on my trees from experienced members of the club – after all, it is a workshop!
- Getting to know other members of the club better and learning more about bonsai from the more experienced members.



Mike McCallion's display bench.

Perhaps because I had these preconceived notions of what a workshop should be, I attended them purposefully and was not disappointed. I observed



Reiner, Rudi, John, and Bob, at Kem's.

some beautiful collections at all the visits and learned that John Biel, for example, displayed his trees specifically for the occasion, using the principles of triangular spacing of the individually displayed trees and eye-catching arrangements of the bonsai on the benches. Seeing the trees in their normal habitat, and having the opportunity to ask questions, helped to concretize the horticultural and styling concepts learned during the year.



Big tree, little tree, at John Biel's.

I also received very valuable advice on my own trees from Mike McCallion., Bob Wilcox, John Biel, and Reiner Goebel. I was particularly pleased to have Reiner's help with the cork bark maple from this spring's workshop as somehow I had not managed to interact with Reiner in the regular meetings. Thank you all for your help with my fledgling trees!



Kem's display bench.

In this informal setting, I talked to a lot of people about a variety of topics and got to know some members of the club much better. Some of the discussions provided very interesting food for thought, ranging from bonsai principles to a very animated discussion at Kem's about selecting nursery material. That conversation, followed by tips from Paul and John, got me really inspired about selecting my own starting material.



Carlos, Robert, and Linda, at Mike McCallion's.

I have to say that the Saturday workshop at Mike McCallion's was my favourite. This workshop met all my objectives. Since it was held in the afternoon, it was longer and everyone came with a tree to work on. Consequently, I had time to admire Mike's beautiful collection, interact with others working on their trees, get advice and work on my tree, and get to know people better.

In general, I was surprised to see how few members actually turned up at the workshops, and in particular, how few of the newer members attended these events. There was a very loyal group of senior members, and only a few of the newer members, who regularly attended all the workshops. Also, aside from Mike's workshop, very few members brought trees to work on. What a missed opportunity to interact and learn from the experts in the club who, as I have discovered, are very pleased to share their experience with beginners like me! Thank you to all the hosts for your hard work setting up for the workshops and for inviting us to your homes.



Jorge, Kem, and Andrea, at John Biel's.

P.S. The icing on the cake was the **Bonsai Exhibition at the RBG (Royal Botanical Gardens)**. It was a fantastic event – a unique opportunity to see many of the best bonsai from the region, to learn about the history of the different clubs, and to meet and interact with members of the 7 bonsai clubs represented at the event. Thank you Mike and your supporters at the **RBG** bonsai club for all the hard work. It was a memorable weekend.

Plucking pine needles

by Martha Gerthe

Early September is the right time of year to pluck pine needles. We remove older needles to give the interior and lower branches of the tree more sunlight and air. This keeps the tree healthy and helps to trigger back budding. It can also be used to subdue parts of a tree that are more vigorous than the rest, balancing the appearance of the tree.

How much to thin is dictated by the health of the tree and by the strength of the lower branches and the interior shoots. The first thing to do is to remove most of the old needles from previous years' growth. These may be turning brown and are usually easy to remove. To remove them, pull gently in the direction of growth, that is towards the tip the branch. If you want a bud for a branch in a particular spot, it may help to leave that one set of needles intact. If a branch is particularly weak, leave some of the old green needles to provide more nourishment to the branch.

Next we want to consider balancing the growth of the tree. Most trees tend to be apically dominant, meaning that the top branches grow faster and are bushier. For example, if the lowest branches are strong and have an average of 15-20 needle pairs per shoot, the upper branches may have 30 or even 40 needle pairs on a shoot. More needles lead to the development of larger, longer candles and longer inter-nodes. Fewer needles give smaller candles and shorter inter-nodes. We want to encourage shorter inter-nodes so that branching is increased. This will give us better ramification and an older looking tree.

You may want to leave the all the new needle pairs on the shoots of the lower branches or reduce them slightly. Then you will need to thin to reduce the number of needle pairs on the mid-level shoots to less than that number. Further, the number of needle pairs on the upper shoots will need to be reduced to even less than the mid-level shoots. This will help to counteract the natural apical dominance of the tree and make all the branches grow more evenly. Interior and exterior shoots also need to be balanced so that the tree will not become bare on the inside. You will need to reduce the number of needles on the exterior shoots to less than those on the interior shoots on each level, if possible. If some interior shoots have very few needles, you may not want to reduce the outside shoots to have even fewer needles. Just balance things the best you can.

After the needle plucking is done, we will want to consider the styling of the tree. Some pruning may be needed to improve the overall shape of the tree. Branch-lets that cross, go in the wrong direction, or issue excessively from one spot will need to be trimmed. Then the tree should be carefully wired.

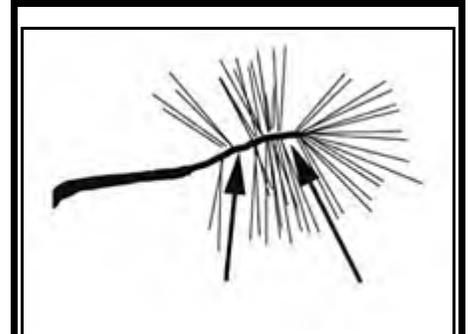
Below are two pictures of a mugo pine branch at the middle level of the tree. The first picture was before plucking, and the second picture is after plucking. After last year's needles have been plucked, this year's needles have been partially plucked to balance the tree. Look for differences in colour and length between these and older needles.



Before plucking



After plucking



Drawing of needle spacing: to tell which needles have grown in previous years, look for a small bare space between the sets of needles.

Volunteers are still needed to work on the TBS executive, and the TBS Journal still needs a printer/publisher.

Contact Mike Roussel or Otmar Sauer (email addresses listed on back cover).

The TBS web site and how it works

by Dierk Neugebauer

It should not come as a surprise to me to learn that some members of the public have trouble understanding the finer workings of our web site, but it does. So, I am undertaking the occasional article for the TBS Journal in which I will explain some of the site's features.

Naturally, if you have difficulties with the site or if you discover that something is not working as it should, please send me an email that explains in as much detail as possible the problem you are facing. Only then will it be cleared up in a short time - the "E-MAIL" icon at bottom left makes this easy.

The top quarter of the screen will be found on every page of the site, and indicates the overall "Table of Contents" for the site. You click on one of the graphic buttons, such as the one for "JOURNAL", for example, and you will be taken to the **Journal** section of the site, where you can peruse **TBS Journals** from the last few years; and, clicking "PDF Journals", you can look at the actual copies of each monthly **TBS Journal**.

The left quarter of the screen, below the "Discussion Forum" icon, gives you a number of options that relate to this particular section of the "Table Of Contents". When we first go to the site, we are automatically put into the "TBS" section - that's what is illustrated above. Most likely you would want to click on the "Program" icon to find out what is planned for the next few meetings.

The remaining section of the screen presents you with the specifics that relate to a choice you have made, so by clicking on "PROGRAM", you will find that listing appearing here. However, I often use this section of the screen as a kind of "start up screen" and will place an item of importance or interest here. So, in the picture above, you will notice that you can view a slide show of the recent **RBG Bonsai Exhibition**. By clicking on the right facing arrow in the grey area at the bottom of the screen you will be shown the next image in the slide show. You can also go back to where you came from with the left facing arrow, or resize an image. Last but not least, the little white window in the centre at the bottom, that says "slide show" allows you to instantly select any one of the images in the whole sequence. This slide show is also listed in the "SLIDE SHOWS" section of the site.

And last, but not least, when you want to get back to the opening section you click on the "TBS" icon at the top and will be taken back to the beginning. The only thing which will be different is that this time, your "PROGRAM" listing will appear instead of the slide show.

The slide show code is created by alan levine (alan.levine@domail.maricopa.edu), Maricopa community colleges, and is in the public domain for free distribution.

Links to other clubs:

Bonsai Society at the RBG: <http://www.BonsaiSocietyatRBG.com>

Matsuyama Bonsai Society: <http://www.informdurham.com/record/OSH1103>

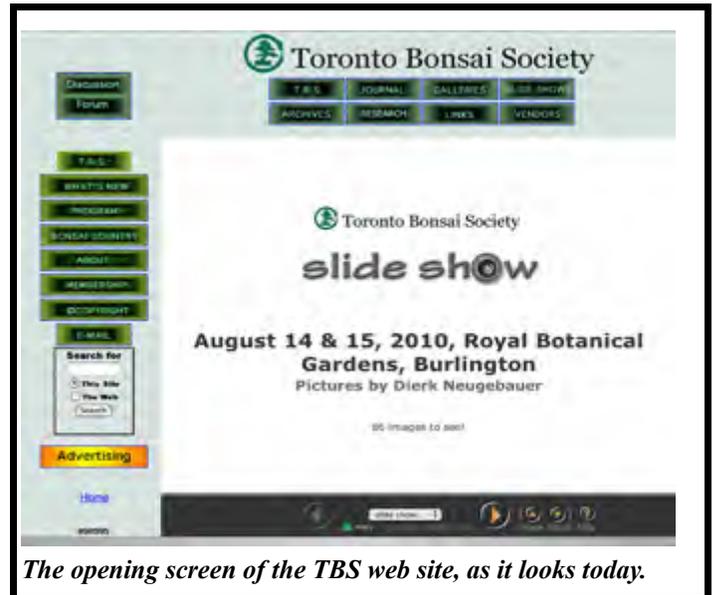
Misseto Bonsai Club: <http://www.missetobonsai.org/>

Ottawa Bonsai Society: <http://www.ottawabonsai.org/>

Kitchener-Waterloo Bonsai Society: <http://www.kwbonsai.com/Welcome.html>

Bonsai Gros-bec: <http://www.bonsaigrosbec.com/>

Societe de penjing et bonsai de Montreal: <http://www.bonsaimontreal.com/>



The opening screen of the TBS web site, as it looks today.

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. **Please return all materials the next month, and before summer.**

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>Tools & Supplies: 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@aplixcanada.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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