



Since January, 1964

JOURNAL



October 2010

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

Meetings are held at the **Toronto Botanical Gardens, at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto**, in the lower **auditorium** on the 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).

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

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

December: Indoor bonsai, presented by **Greg Quinn**.

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

October 4: TBS meeting: critique of club trees. Bring in your bonsai for helpful advice, and to get ready for the fall show. Slide presentation by **Reiner Goebel**. **Live auction** of donated trees, hosted by **Arthur Skolnik** - bring your wallet/chequebook. **Workshop:** bring your own tree.

October 10, 11: TBS Fall Show: Arrive at 8 a.m. Sunday morning to help set up, and bring in your bonsai for display. Have your sales items at the desk before 9 a.m., with the sales form filled out! **The Social** will be at 7 p.m. Sunday night, with spectacular food and drinks! On **Monday, arrive at 5 p.m.** to pick up your trees and help break down.

November 8: TBS meeting: critique of club tropical trees. Use a sealed plastic bag to insulate and protect your tropical bonsai from cold weather! **Workshop: olive trees.** **Cost: \$45.** Contact Cheryl or Linda to register.

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

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



Walnut bonsai stand, 10.5"x14.5"

TBS meetings for 2011, in short:

January - suiseki - stone appreciation, with **Arthur Skolnik** and **Jeff Shortt**.

February - shhh! **silent auction**.

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

April - white spruce tree forest demo, with **Norman Haddrick**.

May - shohin dwarf elm workshop - *Ulmus x hollandica 'Jacqueline Hillier'*.

June - Blaauwii juniper & bring your own tree workshop. **Bill Valavanis workshop.**

Outside the club:

International Stone Appreciation Symposium: Sept. 30 - Oct. 3, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This is the **local event** for everyone interested in viewing stones! It would also be a good introduction to what Arthur Skolnik is going to say when he presents on the same in January. See the web site for information and to register in advance: <http://www.stoneshow2010.com/>

On the cover: Mike McCallion's birch bonsai, *Betula 'Crimson Frost'*, at the TBS Spring Show, 2010. Photo by Reiner Goebel.

President's message: patience grasshopper

by Mike Roussel

Once again reflecting on what it takes to create quality bonsai, as I often do, I return to what qualities the bonsai artist must possess at the core. No, this time I am not talking about artistic and horticultural skills; I am talking about something deeper, something that we all have in us but by our very nature, we resist: patience. As the saying goes: "patience is a virtue", and I think we can all agree on that, however, the psychology field has proven that deferred gratification is not in our nature. Given the choice, most people choose the option that grants more immediate results. So, in order to be patient we have to move beyond our very nature and become something more. This is great therapy for you "A" types out there! Well, whether you like it or not, in the bonsai world, patience is a must and even our own mortality may not see its end. Put simply, it takes a long time to create a quality bonsai and that may be longer than the time we have left on this earth! However, for those who exercise patience and dedication, and take pleasure in the process, the rewards in bonsai are many.

What a contrast bonsai is to our busy, fast-paced modern age, whose greatest desire is instant gratification! The "I want it now" mentality is everywhere today and the activities that satisfy that need are very successful, while others suffer. It is no wonder why bonsai has decreased in popularity over the years. As my bonsai-retailer friend Kim said to me once: "Many people want a bonsai but few want to grow a bonsai". People may find patience with their spouses and children, but with plants? Just see how many of your neighbours are willing to plant a slow-growing heritage tree like a white oak in their yard. They want a tree now and can't wait, but take a walk through old Toronto and see what grants the greater reward: a magnificent old oak or a mundane Norway maple?

Patience in bonsai is not limited to the young. One comment I often hear from older people who come to bonsai later in life is that they are afraid that they don't have enough time to do bonsai. Sure we all wish we came across the art in our teens but my rebuke is that the pleasure is in the process, not just the "final" product. Bonsai are never finished anyway, so we are always waiting for the next opportunity to react to how our trees have grown and put into action the next step in our development plan.

One thing that has always concerned me is how we thwart the doctrine of patience in our workshops. Why is it that, at the end of a workshop, people expect to have a "bonsai"? Why do we expect our instructors to magically make a "bonsai" out of the material presented them in a few short hours? Don't we realize that this often results in the death of the tree and discouragement on the behalf of the participant? We, who have been doing bonsai for a while, all know better than that. It takes time and a game plan and that is what we should be teaching first and foremost. Pushing that plan too quickly often results in serious setbacks.

Okay, okay, if you are one of those people who just cannot wait (and most of us are), the fastest way to reach satisfaction is to purchase a bonsai. Even though I prefer to start from scratch by collecting, purchasing nursery material or propagating (the ultimate in patience) I do personally recommend purchasing a "finished" tree. Doing so gets your foot in the door, so to speak. You then have a tree to exhibit immediately as well as something substantial to maintain and learn from. However, trust me, the best learning and satisfaction comes from your own creations.

So:

- Go and plant some seeds and watch them grow!
- Put that tree in the ground for a few years!
- Grow out that sacrifice branch to thicken the trunk!
- Let the branches grow out this year!
- Only carve part of the tree!
- Only cut off part of that root!
- Don't style that collected tree this year!
- Don't collect that tree this year. Prepare it!
- Wait to report until next year!
- Observe that tree before you cut off that branch. Take a picture. Draw a picture.
- Etc!

Whether you are new to bonsai or an old hand, just remember: **patience grasshopper!** Good things come to those who stop, think and wait before acting. Patience does not mean procrastination or inaction; it is waiting for the "right time" to act. Cultivating patience will not only make you a better bonsai artist; it will make you a better person!

Errata: In the **September, 2010 TBS Journal**, the date of Sean Smith's workshop, which was listed as Saturday, October 12, should have been **Sunday, December 12**. The elm trees featured in the May, 2011 workshop were listed as "Jackie Heller" when they should have been "Jacqueline Hillier". The backyard picture of the from Barbara Pope's article, '**A summer of bonsai**', captioned as Mike Roussel's, was actually John Biel's. The picture from Dierk Neugebauer's opening screen picture in his article, 'The TBS web site, and how it works', was partially truncated in the publishing process. We at the TBS Journal regret these errors, and have correct copies of this issue available, upon request.

Live Auction at the TBS

by Greg Quinn

Next TBS meeting (October 4), there is going to be a live auction of donated trees, led by none other than **Arthur Skolnik**. The donor, Nancy Copeland, is donating the trees on behalf of her deceased partner, Lawrence Stern, who, though not a TBS member, was bonsai enthusiast nonetheless. It is her wish that the trees can continue their lives in the hands of capable people.

This is a good opportunity for newer members to pick up some bargain trees to work on, and start building their collections. Some are cuttings trays. **These are not finished or world-class trees**, and although there are a few that could become good shohin or small bonsai, most of them are a work in progress.

As most of us know, it takes years to build a substantial bonsai collection of 15 - 20 trees. The time frame is usually 5 - 15 years, depending on the growing conditions and species.

The proceeds of the auction will be used The full set can be seen on our club web site: <http://www.torontobonsai.org/>



Volunteers are needed at our next TBS show, including people to greet and sell tickets at the door, people to work in the sales area, and to cater the evening social on Sunday night. Please contact Mike or Otmar to offer your time.

Bonsai tools for the new bonsai enthusiast

by Robert Dubuc

Selecting your first bonsai tool is very difficult, as there are a wide variety of tools to choose from. Added to this, there are a wide variety of trees you will be working with, and a variety of techniques you will be practicing at the beginning of your bonsai training.

So, how do you select your first bonsai tool?

What do you need this tool to accomplish?

When selecting a tool it is best to ask yourself what you will be doing with it. You will have many tools to choose from, so if you are unsure about how useful it will be, ask for advice from your bonsai friends, fellow club members, bonsai seniors and mentors. There are also many bonsai books, journals, catalogs, and websites that can be great resources.

The amount you spend on tools depends on the quality that you will be comfortable working with. To an extent, the more you spend, the more quality you get. Consider both your budget and the usefulness of the tool when deciding how much to spend.

Below I have written a short description of the three most commonly used tools in bonsai: the concave cutter, wire cutter and either a pair of jin, or wire style bonsai pliers. It is worthwhile having a good quality pair of each.

Concave cutter: a cutting tool specifically designed to cut branches and tree trunks. The action from the cutters leaves a small indentation in the wood, allowing the tree to heal with less visible scars.

Wire cutter: special cutters, designed to cut training wire cleanly without damaging the bark of the tree trunk or branch.

Style pliers: used to crush branches, strip bark and wood, creating the bonsai deadwood techniques jin and shari. They are also used to hold and tighten wire. Pliers are a very versatile tool in bonsai practice.

The TBS web site and how it works, part 2

by Dierk Neugebauer

Every few months, or whenever major changes have happened on the web site, I link people to the site and have them scan it with one of their robots. This then gives us updated information in our search capabilities. The last time the site was updated by the robots, was in late August this year. Because this service is provided for us free of charge, we have agreed to accept 4 links to sponsored listings that relate to our particular search.

Here is how it works:

In the blank white text space under the heading "Search for" you may enter one or more words. The default is that you are searching "This Site". When you click on the search button, the information gathered by the internet robots is sorted and appears in the main window of your screen. Again, the first 4 items listed are from "Our Sponsor"; the rest are from the web site.

Try it; I think you'll find it useful; it even searches our pdf TBS Journal files! I entered the word "MABS", which appears in the pdf version of our June 2010 Journal, and came up with these results:

This SiteThe Web [TBS.2010.05.pdf]

Emphasis added by TBS Journal editor. From MABS 2010 Joshua Roth new talent competition Hi all, I went to Kerkonten, N.Y. (to MABS), and I came back! It was the greatest learning experience ever! <http://torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2010.05.pdf> - 349KB - Fri, 07 May 2010 19:49:56 GMT

[TBS.2010.04.pdf]

Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies (MABS) Spring Festival: April 16, Kerhonkson, N.Y. See the MABS web site (<http://midatlanticbonsai.freesevers.com/>) for details. Marco at the RBG: May 30, Burlington, <http://torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2010.04.pdf> - 245KB - Tue, 06 Apr 2010 23:55:14 GMT

[TBS.2010.03.pdf]

April 16, Kerhonkson, N.Y. See the MABS web site (<http://midatlanticbonsai.freesevers.com/>) for details. U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition June 12, 13, 9 5, Monroe county hospital, Rochester, N.Y. <http://torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2010.03.pdf> - 282KB - Tue, 06 Apr 2010 23:55:07 GMT

[TBS.2010.02.pdf]

April 16, Kerhonkson, N.Y. See the MABS web site (<http://midatlanticbonsai.freesevers.com/>) for details. U.S. national bonsai exhibition June 12, 13, 9 5, Monroe county hospital, Rochester, N.Y. <http://torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2010.02.pdf> - 282KB - Mon, 08 Feb 2010 01:09:15 GMT

[TBS.2010.01.pdf]

Kerhonkson, N.Y. See the MABS web site 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 <http://torontobonsai.org/Archives/PDF/TBS.2010.01.pdf> - 190KB - Sat, 23 Jan 2010 21:35:58 GMT

Since there were no sponsored links for this word, none were listed at the top of the listings.

Back to the left "Menu" portion of the TBS opening screen.

At the present time the "WHAT'S NEW" icon is blank - normally it would list recent, significant changes to the web site, not to the club!

The "PROGRAM" icon lists current monthly program decisions made by your executive.

"BONSAI COUNTRY" is a series of still images of northern Ontario, of interest to bonsai collecting enthusiasts.

"ABOUT" gives potential new members information about our club.

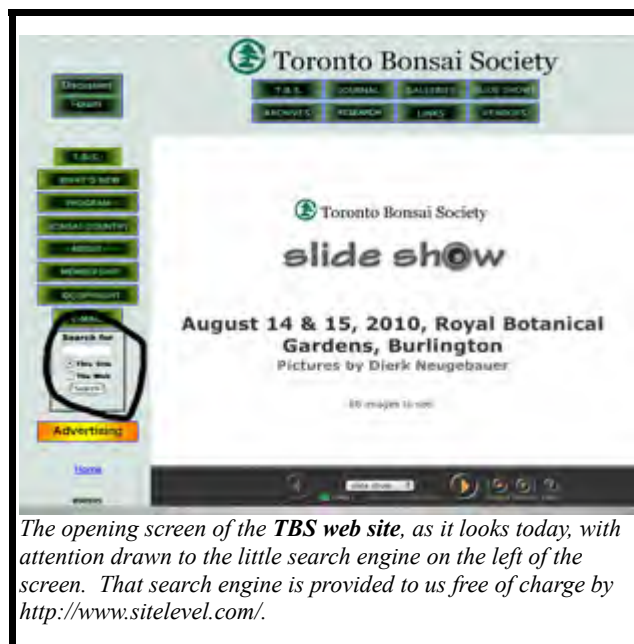
"MEMBERSHIP" provides information on that topic, as well as a mail-in form you could use.

"COPYRIGHT" tells visitors that they can't use things from the site without prior written consent.

"E-MAIL" makes it easy for you to contact me.

"ADVERTISING" draws attention to the fact that there might be a special ad listed for this month. Our normal policy is that if you pay for an ad in our written Journal, you automatically get it posted on the web in this space as well, free of charge, for one month. By the way, a full page paper ad is \$50; a half page is \$35, and a quarter page is \$25. What a deal!

That's it for today; next month we may look at the second item in the "top of the screen" Table of Contents, namely your "JOURNAL".



Selling items at the TBS show

by Grace Wicht

All items for sale must be at the show by 9 a.m. on Sunday morning. Items will not be accepted after that, or at the social on Sunday night. Items will also be accepted on Monday morning before 9 am. **5% of all sales will go to the TBS.**

Items must be checked in with one of the sales people before they are placed on the tables.

Code all your items on attached tags. **Please check first with Gim, Bob, or me as to the code you will be using, so that you don't use the same code as anyone else.** If your name is John Jones, you would put JJ #1 and the price. If you have room on the tag, you could identify the item. On the sales sheet you would also use the code JJ #1, and some information on the item; that is, type of tree, age, years in training, as well as the sale price. If you are willing to give a discount, note it on the sales sheet. Please price and code each item that you are selling. **Do not bring in a group of items, all costing \$1.00, and give them one code number.** Price each item individually. The price of items should be in even dollars, rounded off to the nearest dollar - no 25 or 50 cents.

If you are having a problem pricing an item, please speak to one of the sales people.

At the end of the show, all items not sold must be picked up and checked out with one of the sales people. We are not responsible for items not picked up.

Anything bonsai related, such as trees, pots, stands, tools, fertilizer, and so on, will be accepted for sale. No huge items, such as large garden shrubs in nursery containers, will be accepted - we don't have room!

Proceeds from the sale may not be ready at the end of the show. Please be patient: they will be given out at the next meeting.



TORONTO BONSAI SOCIETY
Bonsai
SHOW & SALE
*an exhibit of some of
Canada's finest bonsai trees
with demonstrations and sales*

TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN
Lawrence Ave. East at Leslie Street
Free Parking
Sunday, October 10, Noon to 5pm
Monday, October 11, 10am to 5pm
admission \$5, students/seniors \$4
children under 12 free

Letter to the editor: club workshops need improvement

from John Hoffman

Please consider making changes to future workshops in order that all who participate, both those instructing and those taking part, may have a worthwhile experience. At the last TBS workshop, I had the horrendous job of telling the person I was working with that his tree was useless for bonsai, and that he should ask for his money back. I felt awful having to tell him that he had wasted his money, and I do not feel it is right for either instructor or student to be put in this position.

I would like to suggest a couple of improvements. Firstly, get better material. Workshop participants do not need interesting trees like black pines and tridents. What they need are trees they can work on. You cannot charge someone \$40 for something that is not ready for use. However, if the club cannot provide enough suitable material for future workshops, my second suggestion is the following. If there is a pine workshop in November, then have the trees for the workshop available at October's meeting so would be participants can see what they are going to be using. In this way they can make an informed decision as to whether or not to take part. You might also consider selling trees to participants as they sign up. This would inevitably mean that good trees would get purchased and poor ones remain. Yes, this might mean the club loses money on trees but it would be fairer to participants than the current way in which those who come last get the leftovers.

Workshops are a vital part of the life of this club. They help get the beginner hooked, move the intermediate forward, and provide a venue for the advanced to share their knowledge. The problem is we need better trees!

Editorial: bonsai best for beginners, part 1

by Greg Quinn

Okay, pretend you're a bonsai beginner with our club. You're lost - what do you do? You need to get started with a tree - but where are you going to get a tree? When you get up the courage to ask someone, they tell you that you must be careful to choose good material: good roots, a trunk with taper and good movement, nice alternating branches (first, second, back), with proper spacing, that decrease in diameter going up the tree, and some resiliency to pruning. Yikes! Now you're scared!

But you go out anyway and choose what you think would probably be good material, and bring it into the club for some help styling it into a pre-bonsai. That's when everything goes wrong.

You are told by the instructor that the material is not good, undermining your confidence in choosing good specimens. The instructor outlines again for you what is considered decent material, and tells you that you can keep this one to practice on, but it will never be a world class bonsai. You are filled with doom.

Really, **the bonsai beginners** are the last people who should be choosing material for bonsai. They really don't know what to look for. You could say that they could learn from their mistakes, but not all people benefit from constantly making mistakes and learning from their errors. In the case of bonsai, it might take a lifetime.

So, if it's not the beginners who choose material, then who? The **senior members** have gone out, collected and purchased material, or guided people at the nursery or collection site, in the past. They have more than completed their contract. Is there anyone left? The logical candidates for this job are the **intermediate members**, who've been around the club for several or more years. They are already on the lookout for good material - why not pick up something for the club in the mean time?

I'm not suggesting we send them out, en masse, to scour southern Ontario for excellent bonsai material. But, in their travels, they could pick out material here and there, mark it for workshops, sell it to the club for a reasonable price, keep it until it is used, which would be within the year. This happens automatically at some other clubs.

While the club asks them to collect for it and offer the material, they could also ask them to guide the beginners in the styling of these same trees. You would never collect or purchase anything that you couldn't yourself make into bonsai. This would also solve the problem of graduating intermediate members into instructor positions, and free up the senior members to concentrate on helping the intermediates produce world-class bonsai.

So the critiquing process actually extends beyond the bonsai to the bonsai makers, who are themselves judged by the quality of the bonsai they produce. Creating several bonsai is part of the qualification required.

The best bonsai for beginners are the pre-bonsai trees selected by qualified bonsai instructors!

The next publishing deadline is October 29, 2010.

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/>

Buffalo Bonsai Society: http://www.buffalobonsaisociety.com/monthly_meetings.html

Bonsai Society of Upstate New York: <http://www.bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org/billboard.htm>

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 on the 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. These meetings are preceded at 6:30 by Beginner Sessions, held upstairs.

A small fee is charged for workshops, and a tree, wire and instructor 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.

Tools & supplies

Tools and supplies are sold by the club at most meetings. It is a good idea to contact the executive member in advance of the meeting for specific tools and supplies.

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@aplifcanada.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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