



Founded January, 1964

JOURNAL



November 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).

November: Critique of trees, by newer members with John Biel. Please bring in your trees for the critique!

December: Indoor bonsai, presented by Greg Quinn.

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

November 8: TBS meeting: critique of indoor bonsai. Bring in your indoor bonsai for this open critique. Be prepared to answer questions about your tree. Use a sealed plastic bag to insulate and protect your tropical bonsai from cold weather when you bring it in! **Workshop: dwarf olive trees. Cost: \$45.** Contact Cheryl or Linda to register.

December 13: TBS meeting: Sean Smith presentation. Sunday, Dec. 12: workshop - build your own bonsai stand from a kit. Cost: \$125 to participate, \$10 to observe. Contact Cheryl or Linda to register. **TBS Christmas party - please bring in decorated trees, cookies, cakes, candies, and treats!**

January 10: TBS meeting: Suiseki & stone appreciation, with Arthur Skolnik and Jeff Shortt.

February 14: TBS meeting: silent auction. Bring in your donations and help support the club.

March 14: TBS meeting: propagating your own bonsai trees & how to keep collected trees alive.

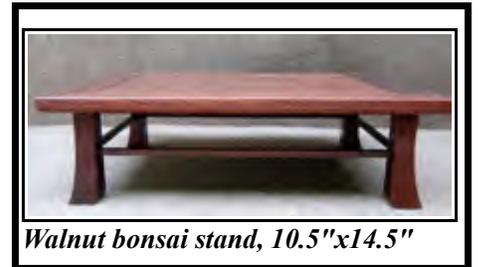
April 11: TBS meeting: white spruce forest demo, with Norman Haddrick.

May 9: TBS meeting: shohin dwarf elm workshop: *Ulmus x hollandica 'Jacqueline Hillier'*. Sign up with Cheryl and Linda.

May 22, 23: TBS spring show.

June 13: TBS meeting: Blaauwii juniper & bring your own tree workshop.

July, August: backyard garden workshops.



Walnut bonsai stand, 10.5"x14.5"

Outside the club:

June 16-19, 2011. Bonsai in the Bluegrass: ABS/BCI Symposium 2011, in Louisville, Kentucky. Register before Nov. 25 for a chance to win a free basic registration: <http://www.bonsaiinthebluegrass.com/>

Bob Patterson's cascade style grewia (*Grewia occidentalis* L. 'Lavender Star Flower'), grown from a cutting approximately 7 yrs old. Photo by Bob as well.

Who says you can't grow excellent indoor bonsai in Toronto?

Bonsai eyes and skill also grow, by doing it yourself!

by Mike Roussel

Without a doubt, the most satisfying bonsai in my collection are the ones I created myself. I either sought them out in nature and wrestled them from the earth, or I carefully selected them out from hundreds of other trees at a nursery or I created entirely new life through propagation. I worked on their roots, wired and pruned them, in some cases carved them and selected a finishing pot. It brings me great pleasure to be able to say that I was the originator, the reason for the tree's existence as a bonsai. Those trees contain a part of me and they are art, whether anybody agrees with me or not.

Sure, I enjoy working on the trees that I have bought, but they never quite feel like mine. It is like I am a caretaker who is simply maintaining another person's creation. Of course I could always radically restyle the tree and obliterate the other person's design in a quest to make it mine; but why purchase a finished tree then? It seems like a waste to do so unless the tree truly warrants a full restyling.

Now, most of the trees in my collection weren't created in complete isolation. I definitely benefited from the many diverse opinions and suggestions from club members and others in formal and informal critiques and workshops. However, the trees that continue to excite me are those that I am making the final decisions on, and am doing the actual work. It is in the doing the work and achieving an end that the greatest sense of accomplishment is realized. And as you work more and more on your trees, your critical faculty also grows.

The rewards of producing your own bonsai extend beyond your own feeling of pride and accomplishment to the next owners, and all who participate, both actively and passively, receiving that same disposition and more inside your created tree. After such busy activities as selecting, pruning, wiring, and caring for your tree, part of you is frozen in a living object! Therefore, it is actually you yourself that is being perpetuated. And if you truly want to enjoy bonsai and derive this satisfaction from your hobby, you need to get your feet wet and start making decisions for yourself. Making that leap is not easy but it is absolutely necessary.

One long time criticism of our club's workshops is that the beginners sit down with an instructor and for the most part the instructor styles the tree for them. While watching and listening to an instructor as he or she works on a tree has its merits for sure, but the beginners do not really learn how to do things themselves. They do not come away from the experience having created something that they can take full ownership of, nor do they feel confident that they could do the work themselves the next time. Since they have not done the work, they do not end up putting enough of themselves into the tree. Surely there must be a better way, and thankfully there is!

First, we need to start with trees that are not overly challenging and are for the most part similar to each other. Then we need an instructor at the front of the room who goes through the process of creating a bonsai, step by step and a couple helpers who can circulate around the group providing input where necessary, not "assistance". You know, this sounds a lot like what is planned for the November olive workshop! Please bring your tools, creativity and courage to the workshop and be prepared to learn through doing!

For those not taking or helping out with the workshop, please bring in your tropical trees for a simultaneous critique. If you don't have tropicals, please bring your constructive criticism.

Introduction to bonsai: Mike Roussel's RHGHS presentation

Speaker: Mike Roussel Article: Jenny Rogers, Photos: Gary Burke (reprinted from the RHGHS newsletter with permission)

If you were not particularly interested in bonsai before hearing this speaker you might have changed your mind after enjoying an extremely well presented subject. Mike Roussel is the president of the **Toronto Bonsai Society**. Mike has been practicing this art for fifteen years. Mike's presentation began with a brief overview of the history of bonsai. He then showed photos of full grown mature trees with a photo of the same species in Bonsai form. He completed his program with a step-by-step demonstration of the creation process. He also brought along a few bonsai from his personal collection.



History

Chinese people were styling bonsai 2000 years ago. This art form was then exported to Japan 800 years ago.

What is Bonsai?

Bonsai is a tree in a pot, it is not a dwarf tree. Bonsai is the process of styling a tree. Do not insult the tree too much. Age of bonsai can be anything from 3 years to 1,000 years old. Some types of trees used are maple, juniper, forsythia, larch and wisteria. There is no height limit. Leaves must be in proportion (to the size of the tree). You can collect your plants from the wild. Create from nursery stock from garden centres. Grow from seed or use cuttings.

Care

Use sharp sandy soil or gravel (minimum of organic material). Daily watering is a must as the roots are so shallow. The most important thing to remember is to keep the plant healthy. In the winter you can partially bury your plant in the ground.



Creating

Aim for ideal proportions using the rule of thirds. Consider size and scale.

Tools

A turntable, wire and large selection of secateurs and snippers.

Display

Traditionally bonsai are displayed in a formal environment.

Bonsai is considered to be 90% artistic and 10% horticultural. This could be witnessed as we watched Mike transform a bulky shapeless juniper into a starter bonsai. Mike chose this juniper as he could see a good shape in the main stem. He looks for movement in the trunk. He was firm and precise during the cutting

process. His vice-president, (**Otmar Sauer**) offered help and advice, and during the shaping procedure warned Mike not to get his wires crossed! Evidently the wires must bend in only one direction. The wires stay on for a year.

Mary Sadeghi was overjoyed when she won the draw for this tree. Next year she will remove 30% of the root ball and other thick roots to leave small roots to take up the moisture. She will also need to repot this beginner bonsai in a shallow container.

October beginner session review: over-wintering bonsai, with Grace

by **Darren Mahussier**

As a one year member of the **TBS** (last October, 2009), Grace Wicht's October beginner session **Over-Wintering Bonsai** presentation was quite informative.

Why was Grace giving another seminar this October? How much more is there to learn?

Well, bonsai is like another hobby, model airplanes. Weeks, months, or even years, are spent searching for a kit, and building a plane to scale. Then, on it's maiden flight, everything's perfect, until the engine quits, and it crashes and burns. So, even with Grace's 20 + years of experience over-wintering bonsai, there still have been a few fiery crashes...

One year, a gorgeous apple tree survived a particularly harsh winter in the ground, or so she thought...Grace asked her hubby Rudi to dig it up and bring it over. To his surprise, the trunk and branches are in his hands and the pot is left in the ground.....voles have eaten it to a spear point.

How about the beautiful cold frame dug 4 feet into the ground, with each bonsai lovingly placed in a perfect spot for their cozy winter's nap? The great spring reveal finds every last bonsai chewed off at soil level...mice!

Whether you wrap bonsai in nylons and bury them, store them in a cold frame, basement cellar or cold room off the garage, let's hope for a safe arrival every spring!

But don't be shocked by a few fiery crashes!

Thanks Grace. Great talk. Enjoyed your presentation and the group's discussion!

Please give a warm TBS welcome to our new members:

Mike & Dellia Lapolla, John Velaitis. Jason MacIsaac, Gurjeet Butalia, James Pirie, Sandra Sakura, Steve Senior.

Please introduce yourselves to our members, and ask for any help you need!

Feather weight stone design

by Robert Dubuc



The major changes made to this rock were done at the **September, 2010, Brant Bonsai Society** meeting. The cavity of the rock was dug in 2008 and it held a spruce tree until the early months of 2010.

I had several ideas about what direction to take when styling the piece, but in the end I decided to create a second flat surface on the rock. This idea pleased Bruce, a fellow member, who was happy to take the top of the rock that had been cut off with a handsaw.



I now had a rock with a flat top and bottom. I decided to put the narrow end of the rock on the bottom, therefore, creating a reverse tapered effect. As you can see on the photo, the rock sits on a slab with three floating ice islands. The elements are placed to create the illusion that the rock is in a turning direction.



On Sunday October 10th, I went to the **Toronto Bonsai Society Fall Show** and met with some of the members and decided to purchase two trees.

I left the **TBG** inspired and upon my return home, I began work on the rock by adding different mosses.



As you can see from the photo, the rear end of the rock is quite busy. I may have to take some of the moss off. The ice islands concept came from the iceberg that is now adrift and heading for Nova Scotia from the Arctic. My plans are to plant very small leaf outdoor growing trees, such as a cotoneaster and Kingsville boxwood. The last slide displays the dug out area that I will use as a form of a pot for the plants. It is approximately one inch in depth.

For more information on the structure please contact me (email address on back page).

General Care of Tropical Bonsai Trees in the Winter

by Dierk Neugebauer (from the TBS web site)

"I don't do tropical bonsai!" "Are tropicals really bonsai trees?" "I have no time for them in the winter." "I just can't look after them." "They're too much trouble."

Sounds like tropical trees are quite a handful! Just ask.

Many bonsai aficionados are glad when winter is upon them because their trees have been packed away for the season, and they can get on with life. Others rejoice because there finally is some time to focus on the tropical trees that have often had to look after themselves throughout the summer, since their temperate trees required all of their available time. And then there are those apartment and condo dwellers who can't properly look after our native trees, but love bonsai. Their choice is the tropical bonsai tree.

I intend this article to provide some general guidelines for those members who are interested in having tropical bonsai trees, ... that thrive in their northern environment.

1. Tropical bonsai trees are really not much different from "regular" ones; they just can't be left outside to freeze. This is probably the most important aspect required for their care and well being. Since the trees are natives of a warm climate, we, in the north, must provide them with a suitable one when winter is upon us. This seems rather obvious for their well being.

However, do not be tempted to warm that tree indoors by placing it on a radiator, fridge, or television for that extra warmth. The excess heat given off by such sources make it almost impossible for you to keep up with the roots' water requirements, and will likely lead to death by drought or heat.

2. All trees require significant amounts of light in order to grow outside, even in the shade. Move those same trees indoors where it's warm, and you soon discover by their spindly branches that warmth by itself is not enough, and that the second critical factor for good health is ample light. Now just exactly what does that mean?

A window facing east or south are really excellent for maximum, natural indoor light, but proximity to the glass when it gets really cold outside can also lead to problems. Prove this to yourself by placing a thermometer next to the glass and then into the center of the room that's kept comfortably warm for the bonsaist and family.

A sun room is great; so is a greenhouse. Most of us must make do with artificial lights and think of them as a poor substitute. But they really aren't, "poor" that is. Depending on what you install, it can become quite costly. The least expensive ones to use are what's called "cool white" fluorescent lights. They come in affordable sets of 2 bulbs in a unit that has its own reflector built in so that the light is directed downwards to the top of the plants. Two of these units (in other words, 4 bulbs in all) in a space 4' by 2' (that's about 1 1/2 meters by 3/4's of a meter) is quite adequate for keeping several trees healthy as long as their tops are within about 2" or 5 cm of the lights. The further they are away from the light, the more you grow them in darkness, even though it does not seem the case to your eye.

A great resource book which can still occasionally be found used is called **Gardening Indoors Under Lights**, by Frederick and Jacqueline Kranz. I noticed that it can be had for under \$5 these days from some of our internet book sellers - an excellent investment!

3. Because tropical trees come from climates that are near the equator, we know that they like a lot of humidity - that's true. But it is not the case that these trees need to live inside a home that's rich in humidity. Actually, if your abode is so moist that water drops collect on windows and walls, you have created an unfriendly plant environment and one that encourages the growth of mold and mildew.

When my trees come into the house from a summer spent in the great outdoors, I have not found that that they wilt from lack of humidity; if there is a problem like this, it is usually that I have neglected to provide an extra bit of water until they get acclimatized to their new surroundings. Initially when trees come inside I water them about twice a week, and then over the course of a month or so gradually reduce that amount to once a week. With less light and a shorter growing day, plants require less water than they do in the long, hot days of summer. But because their indoor home is significantly drier than the outside air they are accustomed to, a little extra water at the beginning helps them to overcome "transfer shock".

Some people believe that daily/hourly spraying with water helps the plants over the winter; I don't. Some people feel that moisture trays (a tray filled with small stones and water on which the bonsai tree then sits) are useful; I have found the tray makes no difference. Trees will adjust to the new environment, even though some may be inclined to shed some leaves at the beginning if the changeover from the outside is too startling. That is why trees should be prepared in early September in our climate to move indoors. You do this by gradually moving them into the shade (keep low indoor light levels in mind) and also reducing the amount of water they receive.

I hope you can see that keeping the indoor environment for your trees both simple and sensible is the preferred way of keeping them healthy.

4. Your trees need more than light and water reduction therapy to thrive indoors; they need some strong medicine to control want-to-be pests that are looking for a warm place to spend the winter as well.

Prepare your trees for their indoor stay by giving them a healthy dose of disinfectant. Pesticides applied the day of or before their move indoors are excellent, as is the old fashioned dunking in soap.

The latter is accomplished by mixing a solution of water and actual soap (not detergent) (perhaps 1 part soap to a hundred parts of water) in a large pail or tub, and then dunking the whole plant, pot, soil and vegetation in the solution for about 5 minutes. Remove the plant from the solution and rinse off the leaves with clean water. Leave the soap solution in the soil since it seems to have some positive effect on soil pests and insect eggs. Prevention here is the most important part to keeping your trees healthy indoors.

The most difficult part of this process is acquiring the necessary soap. It's just not available in supermarkets any more, and you will probably have to search the internet for a source at some "eco-friendly" supplier of cleaning materials.

If you do notice pests on your plants once indoors, deal with them promptly. If there are few and you are not squeamish, squish them between your fingers, or soak that tree in soap solution, or place the tree in a large clear plastic bag and spray it in the bag with your favourite pesticide. Leave the tree in the bag for a couple of days, but do not place the sealed bag into the sun since that may boil your tree.

5. The last item that comes to mind for happy tropicals is that they do require food in the form of fertilizer. do not fertilize your trees with lawn fertilizer while they are inside - the ammonia may kill them. Instead, use slow release fertilizer pellets, or fish emulsion, or the instant dissolving ones that come in pretty colours and by different brand names. Your local garden/home center will have a selection. It is likely that your trees will require no fertilizer of any sort until the days get longer (mid January), unless you totally control their light artificially; in that case feed them, but in a restrained fashion - perhaps half as much as you would feed them throughout the summer.

Editorial

by Greg Quinn

Thanks to **Grace Wicht** for leading the discussion on over-wintering bonsai here in Toronto during the **Beginner session**. The degree of audience involvement, types of questions asked, and the advice supplied, showed the worth and importance of these classes. She mentioned many techniques, but emphasized one very important activity: watering. Your bonsai need a good soaking before dormancy, and even several drinks during the winter. Another thing she mentioned was the various activities of varmints in your backyard and outdoor places. You must take steps to deter them from their purpose of consuming your bonsai! Voles beware!

Once again on the watering note: if you're concerned about the leaves or needles drying out on your evergreen bonsai over the winter, there is a product called **Wiltpruf**, which applied to the foliage before frost, and is good for preventing foliar desiccation. And get them out of the sun and the wind! You need not be concerned about feeding them during the dormant season: do you eat when you are asleep?

Thanks very much to **Reiner Goebel** for setting the bar higher during his presentation on the development of pine bonsai. He need not have kept apologizing for not knowing the dates of his pictures, and the intervals between his slides on the development of his pine bonsai - he actually took the pictures, which were pretty good ones, and kept them for presentation - not many of us can say that!

He thoroughly demonstrated the progress of his pine bonsai over approximately 20 years, showing that although you need some knowledge, experience, and ability picking up good pine bonsai material, you shouldn't wait too long to get one! Another point he made was the importance of photographing your trees, both before, during, and after styling. This comes in handy when you need to present!

Thanks to **Nancy Copeland** for donating the trees of her partner, **Lawrence Stern**. And double thanks to **Arthur Skolnik** for a very animated auctioning session, and putting down hecklers, during the second portion of the meeting. No doubt some of these trees will show up in some of our future shows (as, no doubt, will the hecklers!)

Be sure to take dated pictures before you work on them, while you work on them, and any time you work on them. In addition, I printed up some copies of the '**Bonsai Record Sheet**', provided by Norman Haddrick, which are now in the hands of **Karen Brankley**, our host for new members, at the membership table.

And finally, thanks to **Darren Mahussier**, who stepped in to help me make the coffee at the meeting. It was very refreshing to see a new member step in when needed. Yes- I needed help with coffee!

Indoor bonsai

The most important thing to acknowledge is that, in spite of being tender species (i.e. tropical), and therefore needing radically different growing conditions, indoor bonsai follow all the same styling rules of bonsai. Those guidelines are that the tree will have good nebari, or rootage; good trunk movement; good trunk taper; decent branching (although we will see that this can be corrected); and finally, proportioned and appropriate potting and height.

Sorries

Sorry that the October TBS Journal listed a critique of club trees during the meeting. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Corrections

The Sean Smith bonsai stand workshop costs \$125, not \$130, as previously mentioned.

The next TBS Journal publishing deadline is November 26, 2010.

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 for sure 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@aplixcanada.com</p>	<p>Librarian: Keith Oliver keitholiver1@hotmail.com</p> <p>Members at large: Bob Cole bcole@metroland.com</p> <div data-bbox="1084 1203 1461 1843" 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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