



Founded January, 1964

# JOURNAL



December 2010

[www.torontobonsai.org](http://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 sessions** are held in **Studio #2** upstairs. All beginners should take a look at the new **TBS Journal** section, **beginners corner**, on page 7, and visit the **Beginners Corner** section on the **TBS web site**.

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

**January:** **Bonsai design**, presented by **Mike Roussel**.

## General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

**December 12, 1- 5pm: TBS workshop: build your own bonsai stand from a kit**, led by **Sean Smith**. Cost: \$125 to participate, \$10 to observe. Contact **Cheryl** or **Linda** to register.

**December 13: TBS meeting: bonsai display**, with **Sean Smith**.  
TBS Christmas party - please bring in decorated trees, cookies, cakes, candies...



**Walnut bonsai stand, 10.5"x14.5".**

**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**, presented by **Norman Haddrick**.

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

**May 22, 23: TBS spring show**. Bring in your bonsai, accent plants, viewing stones, for display.

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

## Outside the club:

**December 14, 2010. Matsuyama Bonsai Society's annual Christmas party and auction**. Faith Place, 44 William St. W., Oshawa, 7 pm. Past members, their spouses, parents and significant others are invited to this meeting.

## TBS show pictures, online:

At the **TBS web site**, ([www.torontobonsai.org](http://www.torontobonsai.org)), click on **GALLERIES**, and scroll down on the left hand menu to **TBS SHOWS**.

To view **Reiner Goebel's** TBS show galleries, click these links: [Oct 2009](#), [May 2010](#)

**On the cover: Forest bonsai, (*Juniperus chinensis 'Foemina'*) 'Goshin'** ("protector of the spirit"), by **John Naka**. Photo by **Mike Roussel**.

# Old friends

by Mike Roussel

A few years ago I was fortunate to spend an extended period of time traveling around Italy. It is difficult for me to accurately express what a magical journey that was. It was a dream come true to see all the art and architecture that I had studied in University. I can say that I didn't waste a second, visiting churches, ruins, museums and art galleries from dawn to dusk. I remember my feet swelling up and developing sores as my frantic pace took me from attraction to attraction and from town to town. I was a "power tourist" with an insatiable appetite!

During the trip I had many emotional moments as I encountered some of the best artwork humanity has ever produced. Italy is so rich in art and culture that it seemed that every corner I turned left me confronting another work I knew from my studies. Oftentimes I could recite the who, what, where, when, why and how of each work. I knew them so well. It was as if they were old friends, waiting to greet me, finally in person. I remember being delighted and sometimes disappointed when I saw the real thing. Sometimes I was dwarfed by a work, which I had expected to be human-sized; other times, the work was much smaller than I expected. One thing that always was impressive was seeing the work in its true colours and of course there was the opportunity to get up close and examine how it was made. Then there were the sculptures and architecture that I had only ever seen from the front, in two dimensions. I remember time melting away as I filled my mind and soul.



*The U.S. National Arboretum entrance.*

I haven't had an experience like that for a long time, but just recently it happened again, and this time the "old friends" were bonsai! In early November, business took me to Washington D.C. I decided to take an extra day to see the sights which included **The National Gallery of Art**, as well as the **National Monuments**; but the main attraction was to be the **U.S. National Bonsai and Penjing Museum**, at the **U.S. National Arboretum**

(<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/bonsai.html>, <http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/index.html>). I was extremely excited at finally getting a chance to visit this world class bonsai collection. I had always wanted to see it, having heard of it from other members, reading about it in **Timeless Trees: the U.S. National Bonsai Collection**, by Peter and Mary Holmes Bloomer ([http://www.stonelantern.com/Timeless\\_Trees\\_p/b1time-o.htm](http://www.stonelantern.com/Timeless_Trees_p/b1time-o.htm)) and various articles in **International Bonsai** and **Bonsai Today** magazines as well as many articles on various web sites. I phoned ahead and talked to the curator of the museum: **Jack Sustic** (<http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/staff.html>), who agreed to show me around.



*Guy Guidry's bald cypress.*

It was a crisp, beautiful sunny late fall morning when I arrived at the arboretum. In typical fashion, I was early, so I enjoyed exploring the grounds while I waited for the museum to open. The fall colours were close to their peak there, a far cry from the leafless landscape I left in **Toronto** days ago. I was jealous of all the types of plants that they can grow outside in that area. At home, I have to take extraordinary means to even keep those varieties alive.



*Entrance to the U.S. National Bonsai collection.*

Approaching the front gate, I paused to view the beautifully shaped garden trees and the tall cryptomeria. I walked past the "welcome pine" as I strolled through the gate and into the main courtyard. The tree on display in front of the sign was **Guy Guidry's** bald cypress. I phoned Jack and he walked from the studio to greet me. I told Jack how happy I was to meet him and to be able to see this tree in person. I expressed how I was surprised that it was almost hollow and he had changed the front. With a sigh, he spun the tree around and pointed out how the tree had lost some major branches over the winter. We discussed it and agreed that the tree looks older now but needs to fill in a bit more to settle back into shape. Jack then took me on a tour of the museum.

We began by entering the **International Pavilion**, where the suiseki were displayed. What a great collection they have! Only in books have I seen such marvelous **viewing stones**. I knew many of them, but had no idea of the size. Some were huge, while others were very small. Being on a special tour has its privileges, as Jack showed me the back room where they store the stones when they are not on display. A "**distant mountain**" stone caught my eye. Jack said that it was his favourite too.



*Trident maple donated by Prince Takamatsu.*

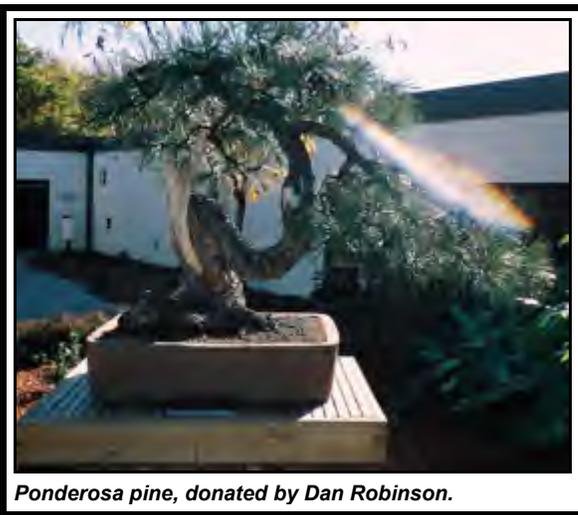
Next, we proceeded to the special exhibits wing to see the “Autumn arts of Nature” formal display. Turning the corner, I saw one of the trees that I had wanted to see: the trident maple donated by Prince Takamatsu. I have always enjoyed the sweeping arch in this tree. It is unique and very elegant. I loved the beautiful flowing curves in the branches and once again was struck by the size of the tree. The tree was backwards from what I remember of it in [Timeless trees: the U.S. National Bonsai Collection](#), a book by Peter and Mary Holmes Bloomer. But maybe it has two fronts.

Jack and I agreed that the best fall display was the multi-trunk ginkgo donated by Kiku Shinkai. It was quite the looker, cloaked in lemon yellow. Jack explained that the



*Multi-trunk ginkgo, donated by Kiku Shinkai.*

summer in Washington was a real scorcher and many of the trees were not showing their best color this year. Some of the leaves really got fried in the sun.



*Ponderosa pine, donated by Dan Robinson.*

Carrying on, we entered the Chinese pavilion, which Jack said was the weakest part of the collection; but he was hoping that a few recent trips to China would result in some donations. I always love looking at the work of Wu Yee Sun and they have some nice trees donated by him. Also interesting are the trees donated by Stanley Chinn. Jack particularly likes the root over rock (brick actually) trident maple that Stanley donated. I thought it was very creative but wondered what the inscription on the rock said. Jack said it reads “trident maple”.

It was at this point that I asked Jack about what means he took to winter the trees there in Washington and he told me that they put the tender trees in the Chinese pavilion where they are on display all year. Many of the others can stay outside. They have plexiglass sheets that they have cut to fit the roof. One of the problems he has, though, is that on those sunny winter days, the room gets kind of warm. I told him about the extreme measures that we in **Toronto** have to employ.

Leaving that pavilion we reentered the courtyard where I was

drawn to the huge ponderosa pine donated by Dan Robinson. I remember reading an article in **Bonsai Today** that showed how the pot was made specifically for the tree. It is truly enormous and rugged. In writing this article, I found an interesting article on how this tree is transplanted ([http://www.bonsainbf.org/site/whats\\_new\\_archive4.html](http://www.bonsainbf.org/site/whats_new_archive4.html))



*Jack Sustic and Mike Roussel with the Hiroshima Survivor, donated by Masaru Yamaki.*

Carrying on with the tour, we stopped in the center of the courtyard where a group of people joined up with us. Jack introduced himself and me and we carried on to the Japanese pavilion. At the entrance was the **Hiroshima Survivor**, a Japanese white pine, donated by Masaru Yamaki (<http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/japanese2.html>). I had seen this tree many, many times in photos but was quite unprepared to be confronted by a bonsai that has been cultivated for 385 years! Talk about standing the test of time: six generations and one atomic bomb! It looks like a mushroom cloud itself, but so calming and dignified. One can definitely get the sense of scale too, with the table slightly buckled under the weight of the tree.



*Zelkova, donated by Yoshibumi Itoigawa.*

This part of the museum was just full of old friends – almost every one of them I knew. Some of my favourites were the zelkova donated by **Yoshibumi Itoigawa**, the white pine donated by **Daizo Iwasaki**, and of course the red pine donated by the **Japanese Imperial Household**. I was thoroughly enjoying the collection while Jack explained the art of bonsai to the group. He did stop to point out the huge grin on my face: I was loving it!!



*John Naka's 'Goshin'.*

The last main exhibit was the North American pavilion featuring one of the few bonsai (in North America for sure) that everyone knows by name: **Goshin** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goshin>), donated by **John Naka**. I loved looking at Naka's trees as I remember them best from his **Bonsai Techniques** books, some of the first bonsai books I read. The other tree that struck me was Naka's Montezuma cypress.

One other tree that I really enjoyed was the bald cypress donated by Vaughn L. Banting featuring an original North American bonsai style: flat top. It also reminds me of American elms I have seen in fields.

I felt very proud when Jack pointed out to the group the white cedar donated by the **Toronto Bonsai Society**. They were impressed that they had the president there to tell them about how and where trees like this were collected in the "great white north".



*Montezuma cypress, by John Naka.*

When the tour concluded Jack encouraged me to continue looking around and when I was done, to go to the studio where he and his assistant would be working. So, I did just that .... for at least another hour.

Once I had my fill (as if that was possible) I dropped by to talk with the guys and observe them as they worked. Jack was working on a black pine that was a little stressed. He was plucking needles in preparation for wiring while his assistant was pruning a spruce. It was fun to look around and enjoy their company. I asked Jack about the one tree I wanted to see but hadn't in the display area. He took me to the back greenhouse and there it was, my old friend: John Naka's pomegranate.

What a treat! I had always admired this tree with its dramatic taper and twisted trunk. It is nearly hollow now but looked very healthy.

My trip to the museum was complete!! I felt very satisfied and inspired having seen so many of the famous bonsai masterpieces that up till then I only knew in books. To be able to see them in person with my own eyes was just fantastic.



*Flat top bald cypress, by Vaughn Banting.*



*White cedar, donated by the TBS.*

If you ever get a chance to go to Washington D.C., you must go and see the museum and make sure you leave time to explore the rest of the arboretum. It is first class!



*John Naka's pomegranate.*



*Jack Sustic's studio.*

**Merry Christmas everyone and Happy New Year!**

# Bonsai stands at the show

by Dierk Neugebauer

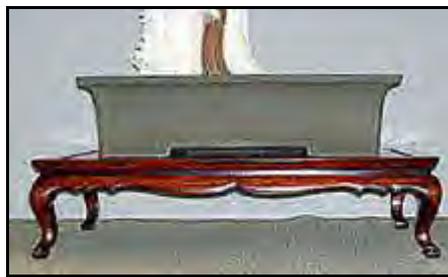
Twice a year the **Toronto Bonsai Society** puts on a marvelous show of its trees for its members and the public at large. Those of you who missed this autumn's extravaganza have the opportunity in this issue to admire some of the trees ...and stands that were on display.

I always wonder where all of the magnificent stands come from, since one never seems to see them on sale. Perhaps it is time for a bonsai stand workshop?

The pictures below that I took at the show represent the "simpler" stands that our members used with their trees. You might well ask why I took pictures of these but not of the others? Well, simply, ...I'm hoping to encourage more members to get involved in a little woodworking with their friends and create a unique stand or two of their own for their trees. I don't think you want to copy "exactly" what you see pictured below, but I do hope that you will receive some inspiration and take the chance.



*The outward curving legs and decorative groove in the edge of the stand's top are relatively simple to recreate. An oriental motif is also suggested by the horizontal grooves in the bracing below the top of the stand.*



*A very elegant "European-looking" stand - the multitude of curves in its legs and top-support make this a challenge for the novice woodworker.*



*A taller stand for a more massive tree. The focus on the horizontal lines adds stability to the stand. The delicate vertical supports between the top and its supporting rails add strength while at the same time lightening the look of the whole stand. Its outward-pointed feet again add that oriental touch.*



*This stand is very much a shorter and lighter version of the previous one. Its shorter legs and absence of vertical supports make this ideal for a smaller tree. Again the feet point slightly outwards.*



*The slight upward offset in the supporting brace lightens the overall look of the stand.*



*Simple, yet elegant and effective.*



*I don't know why, but the inward curving legs add a definite Chinese touch to this stand*



*Again a very simple stand to reproduce, yet notice the inward pointing legs, short though they are.*

Well, it may not be rocket science when we look at the stands some of our members used, yet it may be more of a challenge than we are up for, ...when it comes to making our own stands.

Yet why? Talk about it with your friends and fellow club members, and see what can be arranged.

**Hi everyone,**

I recently spoke with **Sean Smith**, and we're all set for **Sunday, Dec.12th**, for the workshop. It will be at the **Toronto Botanical Gardens** from **1 - 5 p.m.**, upstairs in **Studio 3**. There is nothing special you need to bring; however if any of you have woodworking clamps with about a 6 inch opening, bring them along. **Do not go out and buy any!** A brick or 2 will work just as well.

There are still a few spots open, so if you know of anyone still interested but thinks it's too late, have them contact me (back cover). **The cost is \$125 to participate, \$10 to observe.**

See you on Sunday...**Cheryl**

# Editorial: learning from critiquers

by Greg Quinn

We had two bonsai critiquing sessions last month at the **TBS meeting**: one for the **beginner session**, led by **John Biel**, and the other during the general meeting, led by **Bob Wilcox**.

Why two sessions on the same topic? While one might think this was redundant, since they were using some of the same trees (Bob Fisher's bougainvillea), the result was that one session was geared for the bonsai beginner, and the other for intermediate and advanced members. John dealt with big, basic issues, such as what makes a bonsai a bonsai, and how do you create branch ramification. Using newly purchased pre-bonsai to contrast with older, and more developed bonsai-in-training, and mature bonsai, he demonstrated the issues of style, root and trunk development, branch selection, proportion, potting, and so on, that beginners must address when trying to create bonsai for the first time.

Bob, on the other hand, addressed in depth issues of branching, use of space, and techniques to cover up defects in mature bonsai using the two trees he concentrated on in the general meeting. Not to say that the beginners did not benefit from the highly detailed analysis, but there was



*Bob Wilcox, addressing a first branch query.*

Although it's fun to grow trees for bonsai, and play around with them, giving them your own shape, ultimately, they have to go on display. While there's no exact right or wrong way, since they are presented to create an intended effect, it's generally agreed that there are some presentation guidelines for bonsai. That's what Sean is going to talk about, including the arrangement inside tokonoma (Japanese display area.)

And we also have our annual **Christmas party**, so please bring your best **cookies, candies, cakes**, and of course your appetite!

**Merry Christmas and happy new year!**



*Bob Fisher, with his bougainvillea bonsai.*

definitely a lot there for advanced members. The more I listened to their talks, the more I began to realize the benefit of hearing different perspectives on the same subjects... **Thanks John and Bob!**

And thanks to everyone who made the effort to bring their trees in, including **Bob Fisher, Kem Shaw, and Mike McCallion**, who hauled in a number of quite large bonsai twice in one month. Our apologies to all those who brought trees and did not have them critiqued - we owe you one!

In the **December TBS meeting**, **Sean Smith**, of **Custom Oriental Woodcraft**, in Marysville, Pennsylvania, will be talking to us about bonsai display. He makes display tables (bonsai stands), carves daiza (viewing stone stands), constructs tokonoma, and even makes bonsai pots as well. Here's his web site: <http://bonsai-suseki.com/artist.html>. As a student of many, he should suit our crowd!



*Mike McCallion, with his trident maple bonsai.*

**The next TBS Journal publishing deadline is December 29, 2010**

# Beginner corner

by Greg Quinn

All beginners of the **TBS** 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)). The **site** also has information for you, with the bonsai care by month series - just click on the **ARCHIVES** button, and scroll down to the **MONTHLY** section on the left hand menu:

**December:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Archives/care.by.month/dec.care.htm>

Additionally, general reading throughout our extensive library is recommended - just talk to **Keith Oliver**, our club librarian, for a reading list. There's a lot to know!

Here are some links to **TBS Journal articles**, dealing with **beginner topics**:

**Winterizing bonsai:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/dec.2006/wintering.htm>

**Shopping for bonsai from nursery stock:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2008/apr.2008/nursery.htm>

**Potting nursery stock:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/apr.2006/potting.boxwood.demo.htm>

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

**Bonsai from bonsai nursery:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/nov.2006/nursery.gim.r.htm>

**Collecting wild trees:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2007/may.2007/collecting.htm>

**Starting bonsai from seeds:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2007/feb.2007/bonsai.seed.htm>

**Making bonsai soil:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2007/mar.2007/bonsai.soil.htm>

**Caring for tools:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2007/apr.2007/bonsai.tools.htm>

**Choosing the right bonsai pot:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Archives/general/right.pot.htm>

**Designing bonsai using software:** <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Journal/Journal.2006/mar.2006/virtual.design.htm>

Alongside the **TBS**, which supplies materials such as wire, tools, soils, we also have a list of vendors, who have some or all of these things: <http://www.torontobonsai.org/Vendors/index.htm>



**Kim's Nature**, located on the northeast corner of Major Mackenzie Dr. and Highway 48 (Markham Road) in Markham, Ontario, is your one stop shop for bonsai, and bonsai related items.

**Bonsai** (both indoor and outdoor), bonsai pots, suiseki, bonsai soil, tools, wire, and other horticultural supplies are all available.

See web site for details: <http://www.kimsnature.ca/bonsai.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 the **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><b>President:</b> Mike Roussel <a href="mailto:mike.roussel@sympatico.ca">mike.roussel@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Vice-president:</b> Otmar Sauer <a href="mailto:otmar.sauer@sympatico.ca">otmar.sauer@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Web-master:</b> Dierk Neugebauer <a href="mailto:dierkn@sympatico.ca">dierkn@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Treasurer:</b> Jean Charing <a href="mailto:jeancharing@rogers.com">jeancharing@rogers.com</a></p> <p><b>Editor/publisher:</b> Greg Quinn <a href="mailto:gquinn@hotmail.com">gquinn@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Tools &amp; supplies:</b> Rob Dubuc <a href="mailto:robubuc@bellnet.ca">robubuc@bellnet.ca</a></p> <p><b>Membership secretary:</b> Linda Chevrier, Cheryl Johnson <a href="mailto:cjohnson24@sympatico.ca">cjohnson24@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>New member host:</b> Karen Brankley <a href="mailto:kayeb29@hotmail.com">kayeb29@hotmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Recording secretary:</b> Barbara Pope <a href="mailto:barbaralpope@rogers.com">barbaralpope@rogers.com</a></p> <p><b>Past-president:</b> Mike McCallion <a href="mailto:mwm@aplixcanada.com">mwm@aplixcanada.com</a></p>	<p><b>Librarian:</b> Keith Oliver <a href="mailto:keitholiver1@hotmail.com">keitholiver1@hotmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Members at large:</b> Bob Cole <a href="mailto:bcole@metroland.com">bcole@metroland.com</a></p> <div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 10px;"><p><i>The JOURNAL was founded in January, 1964, is published monthly, except July &amp; August, and exists to further the study, practice, promulgation, and fellowship of bonsai.</i></p><p>Visit the Toronto Bonsai Society's website at:  <a href="http://www.torontobonsai.org">www.torontobonsai.org</a></p><p>Toronto Bonsai Society P.O. Box 155 Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2S2</p></div>
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