



Founded January 1964

JOURNAL



March 2017

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

Meetings are held at the **TBG** ([Toronto Botanical Garden](#)), located at **777 Lawrence Avenue East** (at Leslie St.), Toronto, in the studio rooms upstairs. The first meeting is free for non-members.

Bonsai 101: 7:00 – 7:30 Floral hall this week

Bonsai 101 is held in Studio #2 upstairs at the TBG. Beginners should read '[INTRODUCTION TO BONSAI](#)' (click on link), posted on the [TBS web site](#) prior to attending. This class was created for beginners to bonsai.

Mar 13: John Biel will answer your beginner bonsai questions.

General meetings: 7:45 – 10:00 Floral hall this week

Mar 13: bonsai soil mixes, fertilizers; Trident maple pruning demo

Gim Retsinas will give a talk on bonsai soil components & mixes, followed by **David Johnson**, who will talk about bonsai fertilizers.

After the break, there will be a pruning demo. on Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*).

Pumice sale: \$25 per 20 lb. bucket – plenty for all! Please pay by cash or cheque.

Apr 10: collected trees

Angelo Dumitru will give a slide show presentation on tree collecting.

May 08: TBA

June 12: TBA

Spring show: Saturday, May 27 – Sunday, May 28

TBG Floral hall 8 am: bring in your bonsai, bonsai stands, shitakusa, suiseki, and scrolls for display. Volunteers are needed for set up, take down. Open to public 11 am - 5 pm.

Social/Critique: Saturday evening. **Bjorn Bjorholm**, international bonsai expert, will lead the discussion.

Sales area: also in the Floral hall. Trees, bonsai soil, tools, wire, books, and other materials are available for purchase. If you are selling items, you must volunteer to help, and fill out the [sales forms](#) (click on link).

Outside our club:

April 28-30: 8th World Bonsai Convention (WBC)

The convention will be held in Omiya, Saitama City (north of Tokyo), Japan.

Visit the [WBFF website](#) for more details.

Nov 3–11: 14th Asia-Pacific Bonsai & Suiseki Convention and Exhibition

Held in Changhua, Taiwan. See the [BCI website](#) for details.

**On the cover: Azalea (*Rhododendron indica* 'Satsuki') bonsai, from the 2016 fall show.
Photo by Mike Pochwat.**

Presidents message

by Carlos Bras

I hope everyone had an enjoyable time at our annual silent auction last month because I know I did! There was some heated bidding on some items, and I am sure that some people were bidding me up on purpose.

The silent auction was a great success with the club raising over \$1200.00! I would like to thank all those who donated items to the auction, and thank our members for helping to set up, and opening up their wallets in support of the club. I would also like to thank our corporate sponsors as well; **Kim's Nature, Lee Valley Tools, Valley View Nursery, and Green Thumbs Garden Supply.**

March is a frustrating time for me, as I cannot wait until the weather warms up so that I can get to my trees. I now have a better appreciation of why people have indoor bonsai: it keeps them busy and satisfies their bonsai addiction while their temperate trees take a much-needed rest.

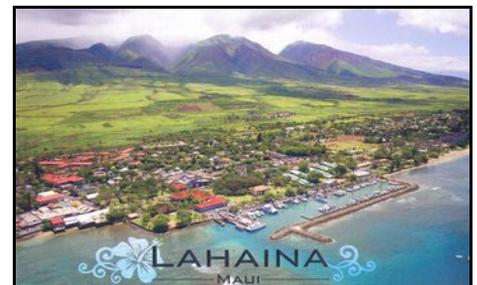
But not all bonsai artists keep indoor trees for a fix over the winter months; it's a true love of the different tree varieties that come from tropical climates. And there are also many who live in condos and apartments, whose only option is to have indoor varieties. This by no means lessens the quality of their bonsai. Our shows have been graced with **Brazilian Rain trees** (*Pithecellobium tortum*), **Dwarf Jade tree** (*Portulacaria afra*), **Paper flower tree** (*Bougainvillea glabra*), **Ficus trees** (*Ficus retusa*, & c.), **olive trees** (*Olea europaea* & c.), and so on - all very good quality bonsai. Of course tropical and sub-tropical trees need special care inside the typical Toronto home, and in some cases require different bonsai styling and techniques as well. One look at Kem's article on Hawaii trees in this issue will show that tropical trees have a very distinct growth habit.

As the dawning of spring approaches this also a good time to get organized for the awakening of your temperate trees by preparing bonsai soil mixes for transplanting, taking stock of your training wire, sorting and cleaning your pots, and deciding which trees are needing a repot. This is also a good time to clean and sharpen your tools, and if you're short any of item remember to talk to **Gim Retsinas** (email on back cover), our bonsai supply guy!

Hawaiian trees & bonsai

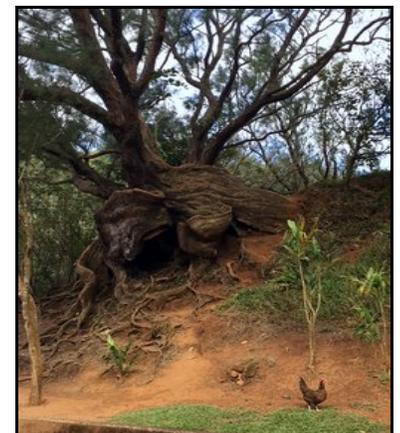
by Kem Shaw

I recently visited Hawaii, and I was blown away by the many beautiful, large, and mature trees.



There were some large banyan trees in Maui, especially the very large **Indian banyan tree** (*Ficus benghalensis*, at left) growing in the old town square in **Lahaina**. It was planted in 1873, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Protestant mission in Lahaina, and covers over half an acre. Note the aerial roots.

Some hillsides and other rocky terrain had an assortment of trees that looked similar to root-over-rock style bonsai (**seki-joju**), and gnarly exposed roots (**neagari**), combined with deadwood on the trunks (**shari**).





We also visited the **Ke'anae Arboretum** on the island and saw some **Painted Gum trees** (*Eucalyptus deglupta*) below, and other large trees with massive root-flare (*nebari*).



My favourite tree species in Hawaii was the **Monkey pod tree** (*Samanea saman*), which is related to the **Rain tree**. They were everywhere, and reminded me very much of my own boxwood bonsai (only a thousand times bigger).



The **Hitachi tree**, a large umbrella-shaped monkey pod tree in the **Moanalua Gardens**, Honolulu, is a beautiful specimen, at over 130 years old. It is 80 feet high and 130 feet wide.

I would like to have gone collecting in Hawaii, but the Hawaiian trees are very large, and I would have needed a backhoe and tractor trailer...



Boon Bonsai Soil Mix

by **Gim Retsinas** (reprinted from **The Journal**, October, 2005)

The Toronto Bonsai Society had the great pleasure of having bonsai artist Boon Manakitivipart as a guest speaker and also to conduct a workshop. I was one of the lucky people involved in the workshop and can say that I learned a great deal from Boon, including details of his bonsai soil mix.

One of the most secretive as well as complex questions to be asked in bonsai is "what is your soil mixture"? Try asking this question to several members. I guarantee that you will receive several different answers. Which answer is correct? Some will tell you that it is what you want it to be or what works best for you trees. There are soil mixtures that are completely organic and some that are semi-organic. There are even those that are totally inorganic.

After Boon left Toronto, I began to think if I had asked all of my questions. Although I was at the demonstration, I could not hear all the answers that Boon gave to various questions. I therefore e-mailed Boon. In my e-mail I wrote that I was part of his workshop but did not get all the information I needed - especially that concerning his soil mixture; so I asked the big question. "What is the soil mixture that you use for your trees?"

Boon responded to my email quite quickly. Below is his soil mix.

Soil Mix for BIB and Bonsai Boon:

- 1 part lava rock**
- 1 part pumice**
- 1 part Akadama**
- 1 cup of horticultural charcoal (per 5 gallon mix)**
- 1 cup of decomposed granite (per 5 gallon mix)**

All ingredients must be bone dry, screened and sized. The dust is discarded. For deciduous trees, use small size mix (1/16" - 1/4") and add 1 extra part of Akadama. The use of pumice for bottom layer drainage (5/16") is recommended. For conifers from the desert and high mountains use medium size mix (3/8" - 5/16"). For lower elevation conifers and water loving conifers, use small size mix (1/16" - 1/4").

Note: Proper repotting technique needs to be applied; otherwise this mix is not recommended. For best results, organic fertilizer is recommended at the correct times and season. A thin layer of coarsely screened New Zealand sphagnum moss should be placed on top of the new soil. The moss will keep the soil in place during watering. The thickness of the moss layer should vary according to climate and watering habits.

This soil mix has been used successfully throughout North America.

This is Joe Manzo

by **Sylvia LeRoy**

Joe Manzo had agreed to go with his wife to Humber nursery to pick up a few plants and trees for their yard. As it happened, a small show by the members of the Toronto Bonsai Association had been scheduled there that weekend. Joe was struck with wonder when he saw the miniature trees at the show.

Joe had admired trees for a long time, fascinated by trees in nature, and when he realized there was an association where he could learn about bonsai, he joined right on the spot. He has been an active member ever since...and has been a Member at Large on the Toronto Bonsai Association for several years. Joe definitely prefers to work quietly behind the scenes.

Throughout Joe's bonsai career he bought A LOT of nursery stock, and asked A LOT of questions of the senior members of the club at that time....George and Giesela Reichart, Reiner Goebel, Arthur Skolnik, John Biel, Norman Haddrick, and Paul Chong. David Rowe came to meetings with him, and they discussed bonsai along the way. David and Paul Chong were a huge resource for Joe.



This is Joe Manzo (cont.)

In Joe's opinion, nursery stock provides enough time for a bonsai artist to work with the material and create something interesting over time. Time gives the artist a chance to develop a realistic plan for a tree. The most difficult task in bonsai is to learn how to read the growth of the tree and to determine what style would suit that particular tree. Working with landscape material, from 'scratch', Joe maintains is his preferred way. Technical aspects of horticulture, such as bonsai soil mixtures and suitability, fertilizing types, and schedules for styling and fertilizer application, are hard for a beginner to learn for any particular species, and understanding these aspects of growing bonsai can mean the difference between success and failure.

Joe has some favourite tree species, those he has maintained as a bonsai artist. These include Mugo and Austrian pines, junipers, azaleas, pomegranates, and Trident and Japanese maples. Joe has been able to propagate azaleas, maples and pomegranates. The spring show often features one of Joe's azaleas, front and center, but often by the fall show, the squirrels have visited Joe's pomegranates and devoured the red plump fruit that they produce over summer. Because he has a love for the tender species that need protection from the cold during our winter season, Joe is involved with his bonsai trees 12 months of the year

Joe loves of azaleas. He purchased an azalea from Oregon some time ago and has propagated many from that single plant.

In 1990, Joe purchased the tree in the photo as a 5' pine from the garden center nursery, because he liked the curve in the trunk. He planted the tree in the ground and cut the top off. Joe worked with it in the ground for 7-8 years pruning the branches until he had pushed new growth from the trunk. Then he created a new apex while working to style the tree when it was still in the ground. Only 2 branches of the original tree remain: one side branch, and the new leader created in the beginning. Joe believes that much patience is needed before a tree is ready to be placed in a bonsai pot. It must grow strong and healthy in the garden to thicken the trunk and branches.

During the 2016 fall show, Joe purchased a set of bonsai magazines. This proves how important Joe considers reading about bonsai. Special care must be taken when you read books and articles or view YouTube videos. Bonsai cultivation is climate specific; be careful to note the climate for which the article was written. Joe recommends you take advantage of the vast TBS library. That alone is worth the membership. Read everything that you can about bonsai.

Joe has a wealth of knowledge and experience about some bonsai species. He is an approachable person willing to talk and share his knowledge....just ask Joe.

Announcements

Silent auction

Another successful silent auction ~ thanks to all who donated, participated, purchased! Thanks also to our sponsors: [Kim's Nature](#), [Lee Valley Tools](#), [Valleyview Gardens](#), and [Green Thumbs Garden Supply](#). Visit them to show support for us.

Bjorn Bjorholm workshops

Read up on Bjorn - visit his [website](#), or take a bonsai tour with him in the January, 2016 [Gafu-ten](#) bonsai exhibit. Bjorn is arriving in Toronto on Friday, May 26. He will hold workshops on Saturday, May 27 and Sunday, May 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.. with 10 participants each, at **a cost of \$80 for members**, and \$100 for non-members. To register, contact **Kem Shaw** by email (see back cover), letting him know which day you prefer. If there are more participants than spots, we will hold a lucky draw. If your name is chosen, you must provide a \$40 deposit to reserve your spot.

TBS elections

Our club elections are upcoming in June. In keeping with process, we will be organizing a nomination committee for candidates.

What bonsai can teach you about love, precarity, and perseverance

Chris Oke had a familiar bonsai problem, and our own Carlos Bras saved him and his relationship. Read his article ['What my bonsai taught me about love, precarity and perseverance'](#) on **CBCs Sunday Edition**.

Journal

Please welcome Zeb Tate to **The Journal**! Please feel free to contact him (on back cover) with any club info., etc.

Announcements (cont.)

Coffee & refreshments volunteers

We need volunteers to help with coffee preparation at meetings. If we had a few volunteers we could take turns and share the job, making it lighter work for everyone involved. Some people have been doing it for a long time, which sometimes interferes with their ability to participate in meetings. If several people volunteer now, we can enjoy coffee and refreshments at each meeting: some to prepare, some to clean up, etc. We all enjoy our coffee and tea, so help out! Please contact **Sylvia Le Roy** (on back cover) if you are willing to help.

Atomic bonsai

The 392 year-old [Japanese white pine bonsai](#), in training for approx. 388 years, survived the bombing of Hiroshima.

Miniature gardening

Struggling to find an attractive display area for your shohin bonsai? Try creating a [miniature garden](#).

Tools?

You need bonsai tools; we sell bonsai tools, among other paraphernalia. Contact **Gim Retsinas** (see back cover) to order.

Workshops

Workshops are held during our monthly Monday night meetings, on weekends, and in backyards on Saturdays during the summer. To register, contact Kem Shaw by email (on back cover) or see the membership table at our monthly meetings.

Forms

The membership form, introduction to bonsai, bonsai record form, and the sales sheet form are located under 'Documents' (at the top right of the screen) on the **TBS website**: <http://torontobonsai.org/documents/>

Nick Lenz bonsai

Looking for inspiration? Check out the bonsai art of Nick Lenz: <http://www.artofbonsai.org/galleries/lenz.php>.

Bonsai Penjing Canada

[Bonsai Penjing Canada](#) is a page on Facebook that promotes Canadian bonsai clubs. This month they have displayed some interesting bonsai container alternatives, made by [Erik Křižovenský](#).

Membership renewal

Your TBS membership comes due in September at the beginning of the club calendar year. If you plan to participate in any club activities, such as our twice-yearly shows, you must renew your membership. Please send an email to **Sylvia Le Roy** (on back cover) and she will confirm your membership. You are welcome to use e-transfer or you can mail a cheque to the address included in the online [membership form](#).

Publishing deadline

The publishing deadline for the April Journal is March 30. Please forward all photos, articles, notifications and materials to gquinn@hotmail.com or zebtate@gmail.com before then.

Links to local bonsai 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/>

Kitchener-Waterloo bonsai society: <http://www.kwbonsai.com>

Buffalo bonsai society: <http://www.buffalobonsaisociety.com/>

Ottawa bonsai society: <http://www.ottawabonsai.org>

Societe de bonsai et de penjing de Montreal: <http://bonsaimontreal.com/#&panel1-5>

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

Landscape Ontario: <https://landscapeontario.com/bonsai>

Regular TBS meetings

Meetings take place on the second Monday of every month, except in July and August, at the TBG (Toronto Botanical Gardens), located at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, at Leslie Street, in the studio rooms upstairs at 7:45 pm. 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 7:00 p.m. by the Bonsai 101 beginner sessions.

A small fee is charged for workshops; a tree, wire and an instructor are provided. It is necessary to register in advance of the meetings to participate in workshops, 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 during the next meeting, and before the summer break.

Tools & supplies

Tools and supplies are sold by the club at most meetings. It is a good idea to contact the 'Tools & Supplies' executive member (see below) in advance of the meetings for specific tools and supplies.

TBS executive

President

Carlos Bras
carlos@offthebench.ca

Vice-President

- any volunteers?

Treasurer

John Hoffman
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Recording Secretary

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Membership Secretary

Sylvia Le Roy
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New Member secretary

Kem Shaw
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Bonsai 101 coordinator

Karen Brankley
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Tools & Supplies

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Librarian

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Members at large

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The
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The Journal was founded in January 1964, is published monthly, and exists to further the study, practice, promulgation, and fellowship of bonsai.

Visit the Toronto Bonsai Society's web site, at:
www.torontobonsai.org

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