



Founded January, 1964

JOURNAL



May 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 Studio #2 upstairs

Bonsai 101 is held in Studio #2 upstairs at the TBG, before the general meeting. 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.

May 08: John Biel will answer your beginner spring preparation bonsai questions

General meetings: 7:45 – 10:00 Studio rooms upstairs

May 08: bring your own tree workshop – club wire available
pinus workshop - 5 trees available. \$35 charge. Contact Kem Shaw (back cover)

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

TBG Floral hall 9 am: bring in your bonsai, bonsai stands, shitakusa, suiseki, and scrolls for display. Volunteers are needed for set up, take down. **Open to public 12 - 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:

May 6, 11am: The Ontario Rock Garden Society is holds its annual sale at the TBG
For details, visit <http://www.onrockgarden.com/>

On the cover: Aaron Khalid's eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) bonsai, from the **TBS 2016 fall show**.

Photo by Mike Pochwat.

Presidents message

by Carlos Bras

During the recent collecting trip, we had a small but enthusiastic group of bonsai hunters, and excellent weather . Experienced club members helped the newbies, and I want to thank Kevin Yates for organizing the trip and making it possible.

The month of May will be a busy month, with the coming meeting on May 8, and our annual spring show and sale on the weekend of the 27 & 28 in the Floral hall.

During our next meeting, we will be preparing our trees for the show, and there will be a pines workshop – contact Kem Shaw (on back cover) to register. Please bring a tree for display, and club wire will be available.

Please come out at 9 am on Saturday, May 27 to help set-up the show and volunteer in the sales area. If you are participating in the Bjorn workshop, please come extra early. I can't express how important it is to come and help set up the show. If you've never helped out before, or if you are new to the club, this an opportunity to socialize and be part of a great experience, even if you don't show a tree.

There will be a social on Saturday May 27th at 6:30 in the Floral hall at the TBG, where our guest of honour, Bjorn Bjorholm, will critique our show and the trees in it. Drinks and snacks will be served.

June 12th will our last meeting before our summer break, but we will have our usual member garden socials and workshops. If you would like to host one of these events, please contact Carlos.

Thank you to Angelo, for his informative presentation on collecting trees in the wilds of Ontario. Even the seasoned bonsai experts learned something. And finally, I would like to apologize to Mike Roussel for forgetting to mention the insightful pruning demo on Karen's trident maple during the March meeting. The club is lucky to have members like Mike who are always happy to pass along their expertise.

Angelo's presentation on collecting trees

by Zeb Tate

Due to the society's upcoming collection trip, Angelo started off his talk with some tips on collection of trees for bonsai. His overview of how to select and extract trees in the wild was accompanied by diagrams and pictures of the entire process. He also offered several pointers on recuperating trees, e.g., new shoots should not be removed until the main trunk shoots have time to develop. This part of the talk ended with Angelo assuring the upcoming collectors that hawthorne and apple trees, which were the main variety available on the collection trip, are quite forgiving to the extraction process.

The second part of Angelo's talk, 'Trees of the Canadian Shield', drew upon his extensive experience travelling throughout the area surveying and collecting interesting specimens. He provided some guidance for those looking to do some similar sight-seeing (the interesting stuff is usually between the water and the treeline), then showcased a "best of" gallery of trees he's encountered over the last several years.

One of the most interesting pictures was of a tree that had grown between the cracks in a rock, resulting in a deep two-dimensional root system. After showing the ability of trees to survive (if not thrive) in limestone, granite, and heavily-grazed pastures, he reiterated some characteristics of good material--thick trunks and foliage close to the trunk. The talk ended with snapshots of the trees that are typically along the southern edge of the Canadian Shield and a beaver's attempt at pruning an ash tree.

Collecting trip

by Hans Tripodi

I'm a relative newcomer to bonsai, so when I heard about the tree collecting trip I was excited to participate but at the same time apprehensive. What tools would I need? How would I find a tree that's suitable for bonsai? What do I do with it once I dig it up and get it home? Well thank goodness for Kem Shaw, as he provided tremendous guidance and answered all my questions.

I was told one needs loppers, a saw, bags, rope, burlap a shovel and so on. I didn't have a small shovel so out to Lee Valley I went, in search of the perfect shovel. Lo and behold there it was. I fell in love with this baby at first sight — something called the "root slayer".

I thought that with this thing I could dig up anything - but not so fast. It didn't slay the roots as easily as I had anticipated. I desperately needed help, and Carlos was readily available. He explained that you need to dig a trench around the tree so you can get under the root ball. Well after about 1/2 hour we were finally able to dig it up.



I was very excited, as this was my first hawthorn **yamadori** (wild tree from the mountains). Well, not exactly a true yamadori, since we weren't hiking up on a cliff in the mountains of northern Japan; we were in a beautiful open field on a gorgeous sunny day.

Now for more trees. I was told that the most important things to look for was nice **nebari** (surface roots), a trunk with good taper, good branch structure, with the first branch around 1/3 up from the base of the trunk, and above all a tree that looks healthy. Well, not so easy...nature doesn't necessarily follow our bonsai rules.

None of the trees looked like what was described to me, or like the ones I saw in **YouTube** videos and bonsai books. It took hours to find what I thought were suitable trees, tagging them with green ribbons as I went along. By this time, I was sunburnt, thirsty and hungry so we headed to the car for a quick lunch.

After lunch we went back out to collect the trees I had tagged. But where were they? This was quite a large property and I couldn't find half the trees I had tagged. Next year, I will have to use larger ribbon strips. By this time I was so exhausted that I was ready to

dig up anything. So, with the help of Kem, I dug up what I could find: 1 pine; 2 apples. I wrapped up the root balls securely and went back to the car with my prized cargo.

When I got them home it was getting late, and I was so exhausted that I didn't have time to repot them in good bonsai soil. So they went into regular garden soil in the shade. After about a week I cleaned them up and repotted them into proper bonsai soil.



I really hope they survive. I can't explain it, and I'm not sure if other members feel this way, but having chosen and collected my own trees out in nature, I feel that I have gained a spiritual connection with them. Now I feel a responsibility to keep them healthy and to nurture them into beautiful bonsai.

Overall, I would like to say that this was a most thoroughly enjoyable trip. I would definitely do it again. Everyone was so nice and helpful, and I would like to thank Kem for his invaluable help with a novice like me, both Kem and Carlos for helping me dig up my trees, and a special thanks to Kevin Yates for organizing the trip and for lending me what looked like Saran Wrap in a roll to secure the root bases. Much better than rope.

I encourage new members to participate in future outings. It is a rewarding experience and I learned so much.

(Editor's note: free trees too!)

No Pine, No Gain

by Jeff Shortt (reprinted from *The Journal*, October 2006, on the original *TBS website*)

Many people consider the pine as the ultimate bonsai subject, and with good reason. It is a challenging, long term project, and can be unforgiving to the novice or the impatient. But the results for the persistent artist can be a glorious bonsai. It can be equally effective in small and large sizes, and every aspect of the tree's features can be a strength in its overall look. In short, everyone should have at least a couple of pines in their collection.

So, why not? I don't have a large collection, I need some good trees, and a pine would be a more than worthy challenge. Recently, I purchased an Eastern White Pine from a club member, who had been disappointed by someone's comment that it would not be a successful bonsai. True, it has all its foliage growing way out at the ends of spindly branches, and its three trunks grow incongruently. But I feel there is something to be gained from this little guy, and I'm willing to invest the time. Its base is strong, with pretty good roots, nice textural bark, and the needles are a soft, silvery blue-green. Like Charley Brown's Christmas tree, maybe all it needs is a little love.



And some technique. Thank you, David Rowe.

We had the enjoyment of a visit by David last Spring, in which he delivered an excellent lesson on grafting. He also assured us that his method worked on almost every species of pine. Well, my tree will certainly put that to the test, because I intend to have my entire tree condensed, from its present stature of 55 cm by 115 cm, to a shohin bonsai about 25 by 30!

And the means by which I am doing it is by severely in-arch grafting the required foliage to the very bottom of the tree.



The great thing about pines is the extreme flexibility of the smaller branches.

This enabled me to bend them back more than double, to not only approach the base, but also redirect the angle to a desired location and position on the trunk.

In order to stabilize the branch for the correct angle of graft, I turned the branches backward with 5 mm wire.



From there, by applying garden ties and grafting tape (the Veterinarian's tape David prescribed), I have grafted about six or eight small appendages onto the base of the trunk.

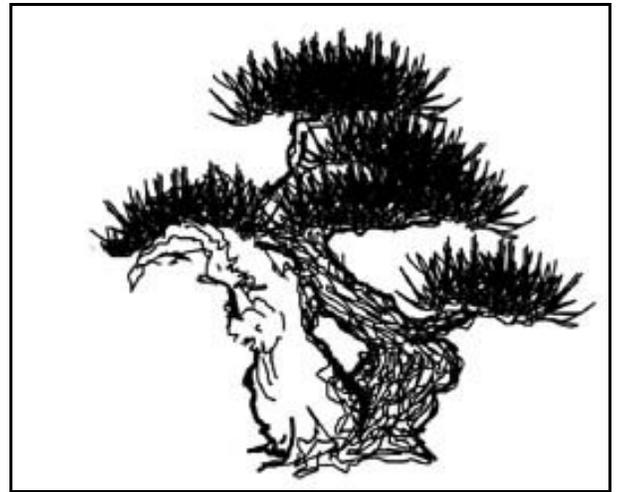


I took great care to observe David's rule about angling the graft to maximize contact of the cambium, as well as in consideration of the design.

The foliage is delicate and full, as the tree is a five needle variety. The needles are rather long for a tree of my intended dimensions, but the next step will be to reduce their length as much as possible. I shouldn't need much anyway, as the purpose of reducing the tree is to bring attention to the trunk, which is quite massive near the base.



It will take several years to realize the final product. I feel, however, that the qualities of this tree, plus some good, patient effort, will produce a fine little bonsai. It will be my gain, for sure.

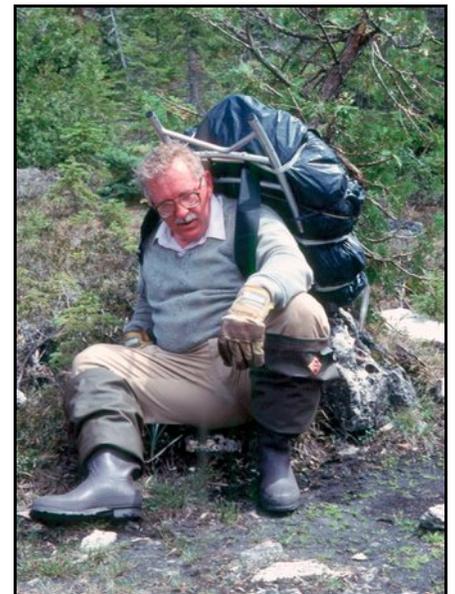


About Reiner Goebel

by Sylvia LeRoy

Reiner Goebel joined the **TBS** (Toronto Bonsai Society) in 1981. A general interest in gardening led him to reading many gardening books, one of which included a chapter on bonsai. The pictures of small trees in a minimum of soil fascinated him, and he decided to give it a try. In those days, books on bonsai were rare. A visit to the bookstore at the TBG (Toronto Botanical Garden) turned up a copy of John Naka's **Bonsai**, in those days not yet known as **Bonsai I**. That visit also led to information about the **TBS** and its spring show, due to be held just a few weeks later. What an eye opener that was! Not only all kinds of tiny trees in what, to a gardener, seemed like totally insufficient amounts of soil, but also a vendor who sold material specifically intended for bonsai: Japanese maples, junipers and pines. By the end of that growing season, Reiner had about five or six trees that he hoped would eventually look like what he had seen.

During that first season, and for many seasons thereafter, he attended every workshop that came his way to learn from experienced local members, as well as from the teachers the TBS brought in regularly. The workshops were invaluable in the process of learning about the horticultural and artistic aspects of bonsai and very necessary to answer any questions left unanswered by books.



In 1983, Norman Haddrick introduced Reiner to collecting trees from the wild, and his passion took a whole new turn. Incredible! These trees had survived extreme conditions over decades, centuries, and attained shapes that defied description. To him, working with such material became a higher form of bonsai, and over time most of his bonsai consisted of collected material.

Fairly early on, Reiner was recruited to serve on the TBS executive, which further deepened his appreciation of the hobby. On the executive, he served as a member at large, editor of **The Journal** for four years, and treasurer for practically forever.

Around 1990, the TBS membership voted in favour of applying to **BCI** (Bonsai Clubs International) to hold one of its conventions. Reiner was conscripted to act as chairman of the convention committee and (what else?) treasurer. The application was successful, and the TBS was awarded the convention for 1997. To facilitate smooth communication, Reiner decided to join the BCI board of directors, where he served as recording secretary. He later also served as director and treasurer of the **ABS** (American Bonsai Society).

The 1997 International Bonsai Convention, organized by TBS members, was a great success. It featured ten demonstrators: six from abroad and four recruited from within the TBS membership. The workshop and demo material consisted of collected material only. It attracted attendees not only from Canada, but also the U.S., Europe and New Zealand - over 300 in all. John Naka and his wife were invited to attend as guests of honour.

In time, Reiner was asked to lecture on bonsai himself, often together with John Biel, both at the TBS and in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, England and the U.S. His favourite demonstrations included slide presentations with photographs he took while working on his trees, showing their development over many years, something that is difficult to convey in a one-hour demonstration. Deciduous trees, especially Japanese maples and American larch, were Reiner's favoured species, but his collection also included numerous pines, junipers, cedars and other odds and ends.



When pursuing this hobby, Reiner recommends the following, in no particular order:

- Make full use of the TBS with its library, workshops, demonstrations and members' locally specific knowledge.
 - Don't be afraid to prune. Nothing will ever be a bonsai without pruning.
 - Examine established bonsai, noting what 'makes it work' or not. Here, the Kokufu-ten albums of first class Japanese trees are of immeasurable value.
 - Be aware that a bonsai consists of a tree and a pot and that each is an inseparable element of the whole.
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- Photograph your trees individually at least three times a year. In Reiner's opinion, there is no better way to show that you are on the right track in what you are doing. By October, most people will have forgotten what a tree looked like in April unless they photographed it.
 - Don't forget to water. You won't have a bonsai without pruning, but without watering, you won't even have a plant.
 - Be prepared for raw material to take several years to mature into a bonsai. So, be patient and apply proven techniques consistently.
 - In choosing an appropriate number of trees to grow for bonsai, keep in mind that during the growing season they will require a lot of attention: daily watering, regular fertilizing, timely pruning, wiring and eventual unwiring, repotting at regular intervals and getting them ready for winter in November and for spring in March.

TBS collecting trip

by Kem Shaw

Hans Tripodi collected this potentially elegant triple trunk apple tree.



Kem got this 5.5" diameter apple tree. Top left apex and top left branch will also be removed soon.



Announcements

Bjorn Bjorholm workshops

The Bjorn workshops (May 27, 28) are now full, but you can get on the waiting list by contacting **Kem Shaw** by email (see back cover). If you have already signed up, you must pay in full, or you will lose your spot.

Summer backyard garden socials, workshops

Contact Carlos (back cover) if you would like to host.

TBS website search function connected to original website

Use the TBS website for inspiration! Angelo has made an upgrade to the existing TBS website, connecting the search function to the original TBS website (in the top right corner). So now you can search for articles, journals, etc. from times of old... Angelo has also loaded the recent bonsai fertilizer and bonsai soil mix presentations onto the website as well, for your reference.

TBS elections - June

Will no one challenge Gim Retsinas for the position of club president? Our elections are upcoming in June, and there is still time to enter your name for candidacy. In June we will need of a new vice-president, librarian, tool & supplies person, and treasurer.

Arthur Skolnik's trees & pots sale

On **May 6 & 7, 10am – 3pm, at 57 Ingleside Drive, North York (near Keele & Wilson)**, there will be a sale of Arthur Skolnik's trees and pots at his former home.

Announcements (cont.)

Collecting trip

A big thank you to Kevin Yates for arranging the recent club collecting trip, all who showed up to hunt for potensai, and those who helped! Apple trees, hawthorns, and other species were collected, and already showing promise.

Coffee & refreshments volunteers

We need volunteers to help with coffee preparation at meetings. Please contact **Sylvia Le Roy** (on back cover).

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 and other supplies. 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, bonsai record form, release of liability form, and 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 there are various photos from recent shows featured.

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 June Journal is May 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: <https://www.facebook.com/kwbonsaisociety/>

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>

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

Jim Retsinas
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Treasurer

John Hoffman
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Recording Secretary

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Membership Secretary

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New Member secretary

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Bonsai 101 coordinator

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Librarian

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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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