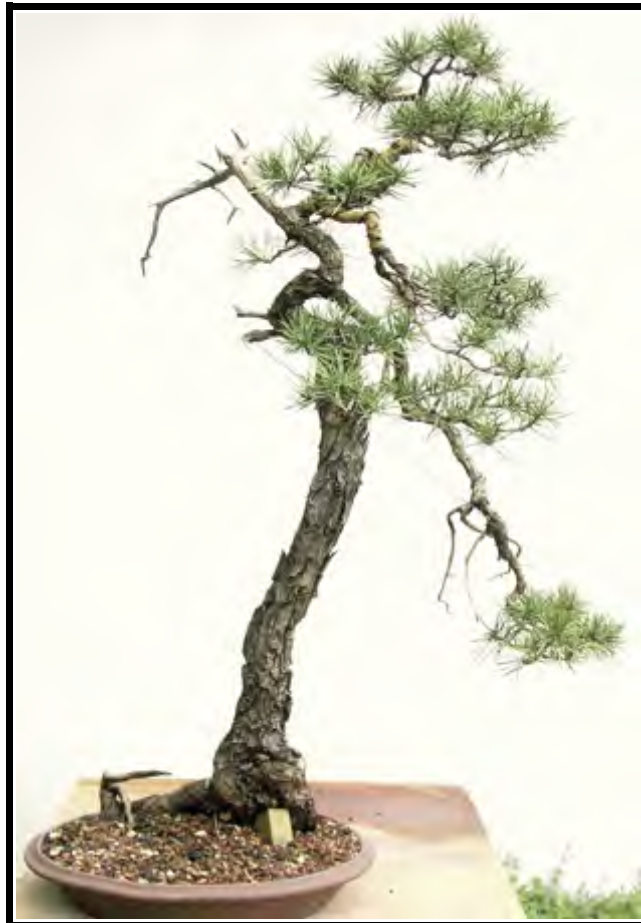




# JOURNAL



Tough Jack Pine Cookie

***September 2009***

[www.torontobonsai.org](http://www.torontobonsai.org)

## Schedule of Events

Meetings are held in the **Toronto Botanical Gardens** in the Auditorium (west side of building) unless otherwise noted.

### **Beginners Sessions 6:30 – 7:20 p.m.**

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Continuing in September, the club will be offering sessions on the fundamentals of bonsai. This will take place from 6:30 to 7:30, upstairs at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. All new members (and any members who want to refresh their knowledge) are invited to attend. Beginner's Session in Studio #2 from 6:30 to 7:20

The main focus of this session is a critique of trees owned by members new to bonsai. You can bring any kind of tree.

Look at the tree you are planning to bring in and decide which is the front; which is your first, second and third branch, and what kind of style you envision your bonsai to be. This should then enable you to talk a little bit about the tree and will also help the expert senior member, who will not only be critiquing your tree but will also give you advice for future development of the tree.

The expert senior member doing the critique in September will be John Biel. John is a strong believer in classical Japanese bonsai, has decades of experience, and is a very good teacher. The journeyman and helper will be myself, Otmar Sauer.

Furthermore, we are asking for someone to volunteer to take notes about the critique, including what you learned, and then write a short article about this session for the October TBS Journal.

## **TBS September**

**September 14: TBS Meeting 7:30 p.m.** Pine critique and workshop. 8 dwarf Scots pine available -Contact Otmar (on back cover) to sign up. Bring in a pine or other bonsai or pre-bonsai for display, critique, and discussion. Be prepared to talk about your choice of tree! Raffle: Hedge maple.

**October 5: TBS Meeting 7:30 p.m.** Eastern white cedar, *Thuja occidentalis*, critique, presentation, demo, workshop. Bring in your cedar for display, critique, discussion in a group.

**October 11, 12: TBS Fall Show 8:00 a.m.** Arrive early (8 a.m.) to help set up, and bring in your bonsai for display.

**November 9: TBS Meeting 7:30 p.m.** Firethorn, *Pyracantha angustifolia*, critique, discussion, and workshop. Presentation on growing indoor (tropical) bonsai in apartments. We have purchased trees for the workshop, if you don't have. Bring your own tropical bonsai. Contact Robert (on back cover) for details. Auction: bonsai stand.

**December 14: TBS Meeting 7:30 p.m.** Bonsai Pots presentation: selecting containers for bonsai. Slide show: bonsai trip to Taiwan. And a Christmas party too, so bring in some goodies! Raffle: bonsai pots.

## Outside World Events:

**BCI Group Tour to China** Sep. 30 – Oct. 12. Contact Joan Greenway [joan.greenway@gmail.com](mailto:joan.greenway@gmail.com) for details.

**The Joshua Roth New Talent Competition** The Toronto Bonsai Society encourages any “novice” member to enter and participate in this fun competition, conducted by the American Bonsai Society, and sponsored by Joshua Roth brand of bonsai tools. Visit the website or speak to Mike McCallion for further details and help with entering. The Toronto Bonsai Society will contribute \$200.00 towards the general costs incurred by a member who is selected to participate in this event.

<http://www.absbonsai.org/newtalent.html>

**International Bonsai Symposium at Rochester September 10 – 13.** It may now be too late to register, but here's the link to the biggest annual bonsai event in our area: <http://www.internationalbonsai.com/page/1442701>.

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**On the cover: David Johnson's Jack pine, *Pinus banksiana*. Photo by David as well.**

## **September President's Message: Importance of the Classics**

While everyone was busy enjoying the "fabulous" cool, rainy summer weather, your president and TBS executive were hard at work booking rooms and speakers as well as coming up with a program for the next two years. While it is not fully completed yet, it is well on its way. We have acquired some great material for workshops, excellent speakers and hopefully have created a program that you will truly enjoy.

One other thing that we did in the process was ask various members for their thoughts on the state of the TBS and suggestions on how to make it better. We were very pleased to receive many great and varied suggestions, but there were also some concerns. One such concern was regarding my "Art of Bonsai" presentation in June. It was suggested that I did not emphasize enough the art of classical bonsai as was practiced by the TBS since its founding.

I have always believed that it is important to understand and master the art of classical bonsai as practiced in Japan. That is, one must understand the rules and aesthetics in order to become proficient in the art.

Thinking back to my education in the arts, I could see a very clear parallel. I asked myself who were the world's great artists and how did they become so? I was led to the assertion that history has proven that most great artists, musicians and writers have always started from the bottom up and **then** changed the world with their own personal style; not vice versa.

Take for example Picasso, one of the most dynamic and influential artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If you learn about him, you quickly find that he originally studied in the academy where he learned classical art forms. There, he mastered drawing and painting and produced works in the vein of da Vinci and Michelangelo. It was only once he reached that high level of proficiency that he was able to move on to create the works that made him famous.

For an example in the bonsai world, we may take a look at Masahiko Kimura. That acclaimed bonsai artist also received a classical bonsai education. His early works reflected that training but as we all know, he moved on to create his own style and is now seen by many as an innovator in the world of bonsai. If you look at his work you will see that the underpinnings of the classics are always there.

I could provide you with many more examples of how mastering the classics supplies a necessary and sound foundation upon which to create a personal voice but I think that the point is made with the above examples.

Now, both Picasso and Kimura have detractors. Many believe that one should stick to the traditions. This is a widely held opinion in the bonsai world and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that at all. Some might say that it is too restrictive but I say that is not necessarily true. I think back to something that my brother told me about blues music. The blues is characterized by the use of very specific chord progressions. One might consider that restrictive but when one studies the blues, one finds an amazing amount of variation and even freedom in those few chords. So is it also with classical bonsai.

In conclusion, while I continue to think that it is a good idea to be aware of the current movements in bonsai, I believe that one must always be grounded in the roots (classical bonsai) to be truly successful. That is why the TBS has and will continue to teach and promote classical bonsai to its members.

**By Mike Roussel**

### **"Art of Bonsai" – Bibliography**

In my June presentation, "Art of Bonsai", I brought up many topics, many of which I suspect went by like a blur for some folks. Therefore, I thought it would be a good idea to provide you with the sources of my presentation so you can read further.

One thing about reading though; it should not be seen as a means to an end. One could read all the books and magazines in the world and still not know everything there is to know about bonsai. In fact, the best way to learn about bonsai is to be taught by a knowledgeable teacher. This is not only because doing bonsai is a physical activity best learned in person but because there **is** so much knowledge that **is** not written down.

**Web:** I drew a lot of information from the articles available on this web site. Click on "View all articles" at the bottom of the page and don't forget to check out the forum. The Art of Bonsai Project: <http://www.artofbonsai.org/>

**Books:** [Vision of My Soul](#), [Robert Steven](#) (available in the TBS library), [Bonsai Aesthetics](#), [Francois Jeker](#) (available in the TBS library)

**Magazines:** [Bonsai Focus](#) (specifically the articles written by Francois Jeker)

by Mike Roussel

## **Jack Pine: An Interview With Jerry Vlcek**

David: Jerry, Jack pine or *Pinus banksiana* is found locally in central Ontario and also in the boreal forests from Nova Scotia to Alberta and parts of the northern United States mid-west. Its dark green foliage, short needles, old flaky bark and availability make it ideal for bonsai. More bonsai artists are becoming interested in Jack pine. At the Toronto Bonsai Society's September meeting, Walter Pall from Germany said that Jack pine had good possibilities for shohin bonsai.

Jerry, you have had extensive experience growing jack pine and recently you had an article published in the Bonsai Clubs International's Bonsai, Sept.-Oct. 2000. Could you expand on some of the points you raised?

Jerry: Stunted jack pine are usually found growing on rocks, often in cracks. The soil is limited, composed of eroded stone and a black loamy duff produced from the decomposition of the tree's old needles. Under these circumstances, the soil can be very wet during the spring and fall but quite dry during the summer, forcing the roots deep along any crevice that holds water.

David: What soil mix do you recommend for bonsai jack pine?

J: Jack pines like sandy, well drained soils. For bonsai culture, use a lot of sand with peat moss and other semi-decomposed organic material in a 50:50 mix ratio.

D: What process do you use to change over collected soil to a bonsai soil?

J: I keep the original soil on the roots of collected trees and surround it with bonsai mix in the growing container or in the ground. When the tree recovers its vigour, you can do a final root pruning - without removing the original soil - and plant it into a bonsai pot by adding your bonsai soil mix around the roots. You can work bonsai soil gradually into the original soil as this old soil decomposes. This goes against recommended rules that call for removing the original soil. I have lost a great tree following those rules but lost no other trees while using the method I mentioned above. Definitely do not wash out the old soil with a hose.

D: How do you water Jack pines, keeping in mind the difficulties of watering a tree with different soil compositions and densities in the same container?

J: Water to keep the soil in a slightly moist condition. You cannot over water well draining soil.

D: What has been your experience with developing new roots?

J: For pines, you must give the tree enough time and care to grow new roots which can take several years.

D: What is the Jack pine's reaction to wiring? When do you apply and shape wire? Does the severity of the bend affect the timing? Do you use special protection? Do the branches hold their new position after one, two or three years?

J: You can wire a vigorous tree anytime within reason. Keep in mind that wiring and twisting the branches is stressful to the tree. Branches will set in one year although some scarring may occur. These scars will heal in resinous trees like pines. Thick branches require wrapping for severe bending. It is very important to remember that when doing any kind of severe work on pines in particular, the tree must be in good health and vigour.

D: What is the reaction of the tree to branch pruning? Do you leave stubs or make flush cuts?

J: I flush cut some branches or turn them into jins as the design leads me. Cuts take a long time to heal but one can mask them until that happens.

D: Does the tree bud back readily on new and old wood?

J: Budding can be increased in vigorous trees by needle pruning or the partial removal of the branch.

D: How and when do you practice needle reduction?

J: I use traditional methods such as plucking needles that grow underneath and on top of a branch, candle pinching or removal depending upon my objectives, and branch pruning. I do more branch pruning than candle pinching as pinching is hard on the tree's vigour. There is an area at the end of branches that becomes vacated after the male flower drops off in the spring. This area sometimes produces new buds, so don't prune into this area if you want more buds there.



D: How and when do you fertilize?

J: During the whole growing season which goes into late fall.

D: Are there any particular insect and disease problems?

J: Diseases are rare. Watch out for ants as they usually indicate the presence of aphids or other pests.

D: Are there any other unique characteristics of Jack pine? Is the Jack pine more like the Scots pine in terms of growth or like the Japanese black pine?

J: In terms of growth, Jack pine is not as strong as the other, bigger native pines but it is a tough cookie because it survives under the most difficult drought conditions where other pines cannot. I cannot compare it to Japanese pines because of my lack of experience with those species. The beauty of collected Jack pine lies in its wild artistry, a delight to the bonsai artist.

by David Johnson

These, and many other fine articles can be viewed on our club website, [www.torontobonsai.org](http://www.torontobonsai.org), under the 'Archives' button.



## **Book Review: Bonsai Today's Master's Series: Pines**

In keeping with the theme for this month's upcoming general meeting, I have read and reviewed one of the TBS library's new purchases. From the editors and publishers of ***Bonsai Today*** magazine, this book takes all of the great information provided in articles from past issues, and expands and improves on everything, while packaging it all together in one volume.

The book contains articles by bonsai masters like Masahiko Kimura and Kusida Matsuo, on subjects like selecting the first branch, restyling trees and starting from seed. The chapters look at everything in fair depth and detail while providing quality pictures and diagrams. The book is intended for the more skilled bonsai practitioner, but the beginner will no doubt take more than a couple great pieces of information from this book.

There are far too many interesting topics to delve into for a short review piece like this one, so you'll just have to borrow it yourself. If you're a practised bonsai artist looking for some specific help with one of your trees, or have recently become interested in bonsai, you will definitely benefit from the info packed in these pages. If you're interested, the book will be waiting for you in the library.

By Keith Oliver

***Please welcome with me our new member Matthew Brady. Let's all chip in and get him started with bonsai!***

## September Pine Workshop

Bring your own pine workshop.

OR

Workshop on dwarf Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris* 'Beuvronensis'.

Cost: \$40 (includes tree, wire, and instructor).

We only have 8 trees, so sign up as soon as you can.

Contact Otmar to sign up for the workshop (see back cover, or sign up at the membership table).

These *Pinus sylvestris* are just the perfect size for bonsai.

They are all healthy and have many branches.

SHOHIN – GAFU 5"- 8"/KOMONO up to 7.2"/MYABI 6" - 10"

Styling possibilities:     **MOYOGI.....Informal Upright**  
                                  **SHAKAN.....Slanted**  
                                  **FUKINAGASHI...Windswept**  
                                  **BUNJIN.....Literati**

Bring in a pine (or other species) to work on.

This is a great time to start refining your tree for the TBS Fall Show!

Bring in your pines to show, discuss, and get new ideas on styling.



## Editorial

OK, OK: you're not going to find Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) at your local nursery, and development has pretty much removed it from this biosphere. You would have to travel north into wild bonsai country to come across it. But you could find Mugo pines (*Pinus mugo*), and, with any luck Scots pines (*Pinus sylvestris*), easily nearby at any nursery. And this is the time of year for nursery deals- just go in and ask for a deal on pine bonsai. Well, just ask for pines. The bonsai part of the request will pique anyone working in a nursery, since very few know anything about selecting or growing bonsai.

But first go on line and look at some pictures of pine bonsai. You will want to check out the pictures of pine bonsai by our own bonsai masters on our club website, [www.torontobonsai.org](http://www.torontobonsai.org) under the 'Galleries' button. The ones created by other bonsai masters, such as **Walter Pall** and **Masahiko Kimura** are obviously worth seeing, right? Also, check some of the sites with **pine bonsai care**. Bear in mind that growing advice varies from location to location, so **do not take information about bonsai on the internet as gospel truth, just 'guidelines'!**

Next, go to any nursery. Some have more selection than others, so obviously they will have more chance of having what you are looking for. What are you looking for in the tree? Work deductively. A multi-trunk tree is rare for bonsai, so rule those out immediately. Ask yourself some questions: Does the tree have a nice trunk (thickness, lower movement, taper)? Does it have some branches you can work with, or are you going to have to grow a whole new set? That'll probably happen anyway...Lastly, is it small enough for you to take home with you on your bicycle? If not, ask the sales person if you can trim it right there. You do own a tree saw, right? If not, the nursery will be happy to sell you one! Get one of those sharp folding ones- they come in handy! Now you have some practice material, so you can learn about growing pine bonsai. This will be a "learning tree", so be prepared to learn!

Lastly, bring your pine to the September general meeting. Ask at the members' table for some help styling your pine. You will be directed to our new Workshop Coordinator, Robert Dubuc (email address and phone number on back cover). He will match you up with an experienced member to help you begin styling your pine bonsai. The club wire is free for members. Bring your own bonsai tools please!

Remember to keep records of all the details of where you got the tree, what was done and when, and the plan for the tree. I will have my camera if you would like a digital picture.

Bon Chance!

By Greg Quinn

## **Introducing Robert Dubuc- Our New Workshop Coordinator**

I was born and raised in the wilderness of Northern Ontario, where the nearest hospital was at least 10 kilometers. The evergreen trees which surround my grandfather's farm were some of the 10,000 that my family had planted. The trees were such as: white pine, pitch pine, red spruce and I am sure there are still old stands of trees which I have seeded in the woods. Trees were everywhere! It is beyond me why I left. I was determined to live in the GTA at the time and I have lived here for the past 30 years.

I have been involved in bonsai for the past 10 years. I still remember when I first got bitten by the bonsai bug. A friend of mine from Montreal called me in for a mountain hike near the banks of the Lower St. Lawrence River. He knew I liked to hike on the mountains and trails, but he did not tell me we were going on a collection of small trees, or I may not have gone! That is where I was bitten by bonsai.

Ever since then I have been involved with bonsai, learning from societies, libraries and friends, and also the people involved with bonsai societies. Since the beginning I always had a need to help out wherever I can. I acted as Program Coordinator and presently serve as Vice President for the Brant Bonsai Society in Brantford. I have completed my second year of study at Master Michele Andolfo Bonsai School north of Montreal. I also sit on the feasibility study for the TBS 2016 Conference marking 50 years as a Bonsai Society.

By Robert Dubuc

## **Bonsai Theft Warning!**

As of August 11, there have been four different incidents of bonsai theft this summer in different areas of Quebec. These unfortunate incidents are a serious concern for us all.

We need to be vigilant with your own collections.

For those interested in protecting their collection, we suggest securing the bonsai physically and/or installing infrared cameras.

Please be careful when buying trees from non-members. Check the site [www.interre.net/bonsai](http://www.interre.net/bonsai) for pictures of stolen trees to ensure that you are not acquiring stolen property.

You can send an email to [jpm@bonsaiquebec.com](mailto:jpm@bonsaiquebec.com) to report any signs of these stolen trees.

We hope that by supporting each other and being careful about acquiring new bonsai, we will discourage bonsai theft.

If you go to the URL shown in the message you will see pictures of all the stolen trees.

## **TBS Membership Renewal**

Please take a moment to fill out the Membership Renewal Form, and mail it to: **Toronto Bonsai Society, P.O. Box 155, Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 2S2**, with your payment cheque.

***Your club needs some Executive positions filled: Membership Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Show Chairperson. This editor could also use some help stuffing, addressing, stamping, and mailing this Journal, too!***

***We also need someone with a pickup truck to help moving bonsai stands, and help moving screens for the Fall show.***

## **Have You Ever Thought About Joining BCI?**

**Bonsai Clubs International (BCI)** is a non-profit educational organisation, advancing the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and building world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organisations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

Bonsai is a unique living art-form enjoyed and practiced by diverse cultures, utilising the lessons of nature to improve the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of mankind and our relationship to the environment. Joan Greenway is the Canadian/Ontario director of BCI and would be happy to provide further information. Her email address is: [joan.greenway@gmail.com](mailto:joan.greenway@gmail.com).

Both clubs and individuals are able to join the longest running bonsai organisation in the world.

The benefits of being part of **BCI** are:

- Quarterly copy of 'Bonsai and Stone Appreciation' magazine.
- **BCI** annual convention discount in varied and diverse locations.
- Discounts on a range of books and magazines.
- Access to the **BCI** web site.
- **BCI** sponsored competitions, many with prizes.
- Ambassador program including a quarterly newsletter.

Becoming a member of a larger bonsai family of enthusiasts is fun and rewarding and expands your knowledge of bonsai and stone appreciation.

Membership is only US\$40.00 per year.

For further information check out the **BCI** website [www.bonsai-bci.com/](http://www.bonsai-bci.com/), or email [bcibizness@cox.net](mailto:bcibizness@cox.net)

*by Joan Greenway*

## **Summer Backyard Workshops**





*There is an excellent slide show of pictures from the summer backyard workshops at our club website.*  
*Visit [www.torontobonsai.org](http://www.torontobonsai.org).*  
*Thanks, Webmaster Dierk!*

## **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 (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.

A small fee is charged for workshops, and a tree and wire 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 \$1 per month with a minimum charge of \$2.

## **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.

## **TBS EXECUTIVE:**

<p><b>President:</b></p> <p>Mike Roussel <a href="mailto:mike.roussel@sympatico.ca">mike.roussel@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Vice-President/Membership:</b></p> <p>Otmar Sauer <a href="mailto:otmar.sauer@sympatico.ca">otmar.sauer@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Web-Master:</b></p> <p>Dierk Neugerbauer <a href="mailto:dierkn@sympatico.ca">dierkn@sympatico.ca</a></p> <p><b>Treasurer:</b></p> <p>Jean Charing <a href="mailto:jeancharing@rogers.com">jeancharing@rogers.com</a></p> <p><b>Editor/Publisher:</b></p> <p>Greg Quinn <a href="mailto:gquinn@hotmail.com">gquinn@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Workshop Coordinator:</b></p> <p>Rob Dubuc <a href="mailto:robdubuc@bellnet.ca">robdubuc@bellnet.ca</a></p> <p><b>New Member Host:</b></p> <p>Karen Brankley <a href="mailto:kayeb29@hotmail.com">kayeb29@hotmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Librarian:</b></p> <p>Keith Oliver <a href="mailto:keitholiver1@hotmail.com">keitholiver1@hotmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Past-President:</b></p> <p>Mike McCallion <a href="mailto:mwm@apliscanada.com">mwm@apliscanada.com</a></p>	<p><b>Members At Large:</b></p> <p>Bob Cole <a href="mailto:bcole@metroland.com">bcole@metroland.com</a></p> <div data-bbox="1127 1142 1523 1780" 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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