



JOURNAL



July 2010

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

Meetings are held in the **Toronto Botanical Gardens, at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto**, in the **Auditorium** (west side of building) unless otherwise noted.

Beginner sessions: 6:30 – 7:20 p.m.

The **beginner session** is in **Studio #2** upstairs. All beginners should read Bob Wilcox's introductory articles, [Information for Beginners](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#), on the [TBS web site \(www.torontobonsai.org\)](http://www.torontobonsai.org).

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

September 13: **TBS meeting: September work on pine bonsai, with John Biel.**

Bring in your pine bonsai for advice, and to work on - especially the people who participated in the September, 2009 Scots pine workshop! **Workshop: intermediate level Japanese black pine.** There are eight trees available. The cost of the workshop will be \$40. They are nice trees, most with excellent nebari and movement in the trunk. They are not hardy and need special winter protection! What are they, and what do they look like? Click [here](#). Contact Cheryl/Linda (back cover) to register.



October 11: TBS meeting. TBD.

November 8: TBS meeting. TBD.

Backyard workshops and garden parties:

July: Wednesday, July 7, 7 pm: Mike Roussel (mike.roussel@sympatico.ca)

Wednesday, July 14, 7 pm: John Biel (john.biel@sympatico.ca)

Wednesday, July 21, 7pm: Kem Shaw (kemshaw@rogers.com)

Wednesday, July 28, 7pm: Dierk Neugebauer (dierkn@sympatico.ca)

Please let the hosts know by email that you are coming. If you need the hosts' phone numbers, please contact Otmar Sauer (phone number listed on back cover).

If you have taken some pictures at any of these gatherings, please forward them to myself, Greg Quinn, or our web-master, Dierk Neugebauer (email addresses listed on back cover).

On the cover: Mike McCallion's shohin bonsai, Itoigawa (Shimpaku) Juniper, (*Juniperus chinensis* var. *Shimpaku 'Itoigawa'*) from Hollow Creek Nursery in Rochester. This bonsai will be raffled at the RBG regional exhibition next month.

TBS announcements

TBS spring show

Another successful show went by, thanks to many helping hands! Thanks to everyone who came out; special thanks to Bob Patterson, Grace Wicht, and Gim Retsinas, for manning the vendor's area; Aaron Khalid, Paul Chong, and Mike McCallion for sticking their necks out during the critique; Otmar Sauer for the bar; Karen Brankley and Les Mandeville for putting out all the delicious snacks, and Reiner Goebel and John Biel for photographing our bonsai.

To see the photos, go to Reiner's photo site:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/reigoe/TBSShowMay2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCIIY74Gt74PaxwE#slideshow/5474694296979514898>

Outside the club:

Bonsai at the Royal Botanical Gardens: August 14, 15. The first ever **regional bonsai exhibition**, featuring trees from across the GTA, is happening at the **Royal Botanical Gardens** in Burlington. Visit the exhibit listing on the RBG Bonsai Society web site, (<http://www.bonsaisocietyatrbg.com/wp/archives/424>), or contact Mike McCallion (on back cover) for details.

Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit: August 20 - 22. Check the web site: <http://www.midwestbonsai.org/augustshow.html>

Misseto Sherway Bonsai Show: August 28, 29, Sherway Gardens. Annual bonsai show of the Misseto Bonsai Club at Sherway Gardens, Highway 427 & the QEW. Check the club web site for updates: <http://www.missetobonsai.org/>

International Bonsai Symposium: Sept. 10 - 12, Airport Holiday Inn, Rochester, New York. The focus this year is on collected trees. Register at Bill Valavanis's web site: <http://www.internationalbonsai.com/page/1442701>

Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) group tour of China: Sept. 30 - Oct.12. The programs are specially designed for bonsai and suiseki lovers to explore the beautiful collections from Guangzhou, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Xijing, Beijing, Tianjin. Visit the BCI website (<http://www.bci2010chinatour.com/>) for details.

Bonsai theft warning: There have been four different incidents of bonsai theft recently in different areas of Quebec. Please be careful when buying trees from non-members. Check the web site 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 to report any signs of these stolen trees.

ABS stolen bonsai: To check for stolen bonsai in the USA, check the **Stolen Bonsai Registry** at the ABS web site: <http://www.absbonsai.org/SBR/registry.html>

The 2nd US National Bonsai Exhibition was a huge success.

Alejandro Medina Ibarra, from Montreal, Canada produced an excellent video covering the highlights of the exhibition. It's on YouTube and below is a link. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDHALrvp2CI>)

I hope you all enjoy watching the video as much as my friends and I had in producing it.

Enjoy!

Bill

What's it going to take

... for you to make it to the next level of bonsai ability?

by Mike Roussel

While there are likely many gradations of bonsai ability, it is simplest to define three levels: beginner, intermediate and senior/expert.

A beginner is simply that – someone who is just starting out. One may have a few trees, maybe even a few pots and other supplies. The beginner makes tons of horticultural mistakes, including killing/maiming a lot of trees usually due to a lack of knowledge and experience. The beginner often is in the process of learning the “rules” of bonsai, and has great difficulty knowing when and how to apply them. The beginner thirsts for trees and longs for the day when one of theirs can be exhibited (that is unless they purchase one in a show-able state).

Being an intermediate is living in that gray area – bonsai purgatory. This person has reached a certain level of proficiency in the horticulture and art of bonsai but still has not mastered it. Trees will not be killed or maimed as often, except when trying to apply more advanced techniques. The “rules” are hopefully now well understood, and there may be a growing desire to break them, but when applied, varying degrees of success are achieved. The intermediate has show-able trees, maybe even ones that the person started from scratch. The intermediate remains unsure of him or her self. They may not feel they are ready to mentor beginners. Challenging material can leave the intermediate stumped.

The last grouping is the senior member, who may also be a bonsai expert, or bonsai master. I use the senior word loosely because a person at the top of the game of bonsai is not necessarily old. They have just reached the point where their skills are complete. They have honed them to the point that they can teach others on most if not all techniques. They have a developed “eye” and vision. They routinely show their trees which exhibit perfect adherence and/or magnificent transcendence from the rules. The expert oftentimes can make challenging material into something worthwhile.

So, if you are a beginner, aspiring to become an intermediate, or an intermediate yearning to graduate to the senior, and finally expert level, what is it going to take?

In recent years, much evidence has been put forth to say that natural ability has nothing to do with it. All it takes is practice.

In his book: [Outliers: The Story of Success](#), [Malcolm Gladwell](#) introduces the “10,000-Hour Rule”, claiming that the key to success in any field is, to a large extent, a matter of practicing a specific task for a total of around 10,000 hours or 10 years.

But some say that practice is not enough. In a **2006 Fortune Magazine** article titled “What it takes to be great”, writer [Geoffrey Colvin](#) wrote the following:

“... So greatness isn't handed to anyone; it requires a lot of hard work. Yet that isn't enough, since many people work hard for decades without approaching greatness or even getting significantly better. What's missing?

The best people in any field are those who devote the most hours to what the researchers call “deliberate practice.” It's activity that's explicitly intended to improve performance, that reaches for objectives just beyond one's level of competence, provides feedback on results and involves high levels of repetition.

For example: Simply hitting a bucket of balls is not deliberate practice, which is why most golfers don't get better. Hitting an eight-iron 300 times with a goal of leaving the ball within 20 feet of the pin 80 percent of the time, continually observing results and making appropriate adjustments, and doing that for hours every day - that's deliberate practice ...”

Clearly deliberate practice is the road to success, but how does the theory break down for us?

Bonsai experts are measured by the quality of his/her trees

Honed skills? Vision? Well let us see your trees. No great trees eh? Hmmmmm...

Need good trees to work on

Anybody within a certain means can buy some clubs and practice but without good trees to learn from and you will never achieve greatness.

Time

Yes, you need to put in the hours, but condensing it will only go so far (i.e. practicing 24/7), bonsai take time, seasons, years. One has to be able to review the results of one's efforts and that simply takes time (duration).

Opportunity: good teachers (books don't do it alone)

One needs a good teacher because books don't cut it. An apprenticeship in Japan or elsewhere? Taking advantage of club workshops, finding a mentor – make sure they know their stuff or you will be unlearning and relearning.

Exposure to trees

Did you read my May message? Enough said.

Vision?

People can learn the horticulture, and learn the bonsai rules, but do they have "IT"? Well, that is up for debate. Simply put, some are greater than others, but everyone can reach great proficiency!

What about desire?

Of course, all of this comes down to desire. Are you an armchair enthusiast, an engaged hobbyist or are you driven to greatness? Are you going to put in what it takes to move up a level?

Only you, and you alone can decide what level you want to reach for and drive yourself to attain.



The poster features a background image of a large bonsai tree with yellow and green foliage. The text is arranged as follows:

- Bonsai** (written in a large, black, cursive font)
- at the Royal Botanical Gardens** (in a black, sans-serif font)
- August 14/15**
Burlington, Ontario (in a black, sans-serif font)
- 1st Open Exhibition of Bonsai in Canada** (in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font)
- www.BonsaiSocietyatRBG.com (in a black, sans-serif font)
- Presented by** (in a black, sans-serif font)
-  **Royal Botanical Gardens** (in a black, sans-serif font)
-  (in a green, stylized font)
- Hosted by** (in a black, sans-serif font)
- Bonsai Society at the RBG** (in a black, sans-serif font)

Three inset images of bonsai trees are shown on the right side:

- A tree with yellow autumn foliage in a white pot.
- A tree with green foliage in a wooden pot.
- A tree with green foliage in a white pot, with a white cloth draped over its base.

An invitation...to visit, to display, and to help!

by Mike McCallion

The **Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG)** is proud to present the first bonsai exhibition of its kind to be held in Canada. Top bonsai from many area clubs and private collections, including special exhibits from other parts of Canada, will be on display in the new Camilla and Peter Dalglish atrium at the **RBG** in Burlington, Ontario on **August 14 and 15, 2010**.

This exhibition will showcase **over 70 world class unique and unusual bonsai**, and trees with historical significance which trace the development of bonsai in our area over the last five decades. Members of many bonsai clubs in southern Ontario will be on hand to introduce you to this remarkable art form and discuss bonsai activities in your area. Many of the trees in our exhibit are several hundred years old!

To visit...

The **Royal Botanical Gardens** is located at **680 Plains Rd. West, Burlington, Ontario**, only one hour drive from Toronto or Niagara Falls. Directions can be found at www.rbg.ca. The exhibition is free with your admission to the gardens. More information can be found on the website: www.BonsaiRBG.com or email us at info@BonsaiRBG.com.

While you are here be sure to bring your family and friends to enjoy 2700 acres of nature trails, formal gardens, and beautiful parks as part of your **RBG** experience!

To display...

This is a show about all of our bonsai – it is an opportunity for the best bonsai in our region to be brought together and show cased for the public and the bonsai community. There are three categories of trees being considered for selection and inclusion in the exhibition:

- 1. Great trees** - top quality trees which could hold a place in any world class exhibition or photo competition. If you have been to a large exhibition, then you know the quality we are looking for. If you haven't, but have an exquisite, finished bonsai, in a proper bonsai pot and ready for the world to see, then submit a photo and it will be considered.
- 2. Historical trees** – do you have, or know of, trees which were created by an important historical bonsai figure from our area? These trees may now be a little past their glory, but are still an important part of bonsai as it has developed in southern Ontario and central Canada. These trees will certainly be showable, but might not be in as great a shape as they once have been.
- 3. Unique or rare trees** – The public, and the bonsai community, love variety. Do you have a rare species for our area, or an unusual planting? An olive bonsai would be quite rare in our area, and there are very good groups, forests and rock plantings – maybe something of yours will encourage someone from the public to get involved in this art form. All of these trees must be show ready, tidy, and well presented.

To submit your bonsai...

Send photos, and perhaps a bit of a description (especially in the case of the historical trees) – to info@bonsaisocietyatrbg.com. The photos don't need to be print quality, but should give a clear picture of the tree and its current state of presentation.

To help...

Please consider contributing some time to this exhibition. There will be a great need for many hands during the weekend, to help with moving trees in and out, to watch the trees and assist the public, and to help encourage as many people as possible to appreciate and enjoy this art form. If you are interested in volunteering during the weekend, please send an email to info@bonsaisocietyatrbg.com.

TBS TOOL S & WIRE

I will be placing an order for tools and wire in the early part of August. If anybody needs to order items, please contact me by email at: robduc@bellnet.ca before July 31, 2010.

Robert Dubuc

TBS TOOLBIN 2010

Marty, O Marty!

by Otmar Sauer

Looking back at the critique by Martin Schmalenberg at the June meeting I have to say that for many members it was certainly the best presentation of the year. Every single person in the room that night felt electrified about improving the look of their trees. Not only did Marty show that he profoundly knows bonsai and makes the impression of being a very good

teacher, he also showed that he has a deep understanding of the aesthetics and the essentials which make an individual tree excellent. For some of our humble Toronto members he was a bit too ascetic in his ideas about styling, but undoubtedly he gave us a lot of food for thought and opened our perception.

Everything he recommended for our trees was within reason. When he asked about a tree, he always wanted to know why we had grown it that way, and why we had let some superfluous branches grow. And he challenged us to just cut it off right now, to alleviate our anxiety and years of wishy-washy self-doubt. O, that we were brave enough to decide



First branch removal recommended for jack pine!



Crown thinning needed on juniper!

right then and there! Those that did deserve some kind of bonsai medal!

Some of his comments and remarks:

- When pruning, take out the heavy stuff.
- Reduce the tree, make it compact.
- Go for what is important in the tree, the essence of the tree.
- The most important concept is **composition**, this includes coherence, proportion and totality.
- All parts have to agree with each other.
- The design of a tree has to have grace, elegance, be evocative and display **drama**.
- A tree either moves left to right or right to left.
- This movement has to **dance**, and since dance in its essence is a series of steps, these steps in the design of the tree have to be visible.
- To Marty, **bonsai is about the brush strokes of oriental calligraphy**.
- A bonsai needs to have depth of field.
- Taper, taper, taper!
- For elegance in a literati you need taper.
- Jins, sharis, and dead wood generally should be compliments to the tree.



Marty, commenting on this magnificent trident maple bonsai, has Dierk's ear!



Crown broadening suggested for azalea!

And some horticultural opinions:

- Pinch cedars every week.
- Repot trident maples every year; they do really well in akadama, large grade. Since Marty lives in New Jersey, which has a longer growing season than Toronto, I have hesitations about repotting trident maples every year.
- Concerning leaf cutting on tridents maples: cut five leaves randomly every other day throughout the growing season.

He stayed to talk afterward, and thanked everyone for listening.

Editor's note: A more circumspect and respectful guest we've not had - thanks for your impeccable conduct, your advice, and for driving 10 hours to retrieve your passport so that you could make it to Toronto, Marty!

Revisiting the beginner session of the past year

by Otmar Sauer

The newly revived beginner session got off to a good start last September. This would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of dedicated members. I would like to take the opportunity to thank here the members who made these contributions:

John Biel, for his insightful critiques; **Norman Haddrick**, for his history of bonsai and introduction to bonsai styles; **David Johnson**, with his practical approach to fertilizer and soil; **Dierk Neugebauer**, for his advice on collecting trees; **Bob Wilcox**, with his reflection on larches; and **Mike McCallion** for his styling demo.

At our last session in June, suggestions were made for the beginner session in the coming year, 2010 - 2011. They included requests for sessions dealing with companion and accent plants; mosses; cedars; pines; tropical trees, like ficus; collected trees, like apples; and tree diseases.

If any club member is interested to see a certain topic addressed which is suitable for the beginner session then please let me, Otmar Sauer, know by email (listed on back cover).

If you are interested in participating in the beginner series as a presenter then please let me know as well. We need to pass on our experiences, knowledge, trials and tribulations, and convictions to the newer members! Only then we will be able to grow, become better and carry on the tradition of excellence which we have been fostering for almost 50 years.

The beginner session is an outstanding forum to do that!

Picture stones

photos by Arthur Skolnik



From your editor:

I just want to thank everyone who made a contribution to the TBS Journal this past bonsai year. **Mike Roussel**, our current president, was a constant source of written bonsai material; and the entire TBS executive all produced articles: **Keith Oliver, Jean Charing Otmar Sauer, Robert Dubuc, Barbara Pope, Mike McCallion, Karen Brankley, Linda Chevrier and Cheryl Johnson**.

From the beginner section, submissions were made by **Vicky Bondy** and **Jenine Ling**. Jenine was especially prolific!

The intermediate level bonsai growers were represented by **Aaron Khalid, Les Mandeville, Duane Harrison, and myself**.

In the expert division, we heard from **David Johnson, Arthur Skolnik, John Biel, Bob Wilcox, Norman Haddrick, Bob Patterson, Grace Wicht, and David Young and Jerry Vicek** (article from the TBS web site), who all submitted photos alongside their written work. Norman also contributed pictorially, with the drawings that grace our cover, from time to time. In terms of email volume, his contribution is immeasurable!

And we heard from people outside Toronto, in the article by **Joan Greenway**, 'Survivors of the Storm!' **Steve Moore** sent the article, 'Why go to a bonsai convention?' Thanks to **Bill Valavanis, Yuji Yoshimura's** article, 'Evaluating Bonsai', was put in before our critique. And **Pauline Muth**, president of the ABS, also sent us a thank you letter for supporting the Joshua Roth New Talent Competition, where our own **Robert Dubuc** represented all of Canada!

Und danke, **Jens Rathchke**, für Ihre Beiträge! (Trauriges Deutschland verlor das Fußballspiel!)

Of course, all this reading and writing is gone to waste, if we don't **intend** to apply it to bonsai!

Volunteers are still needed to work on the TBS executive, and the TBS Journal still needs a printer/publisher. Also, we need people to host our booth at the RBG regional exhibition!
Enjoy all the benefits of being on the "inside" of the club!
Contact Mike Roussel or Otmar Sauer (email addresses listed on back cover).

Links to other 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/>

Ottawa Bonsai Society: <http://www.ottawabonsai.org/>

Kitchener-Waterloo Bonsai Society: <http://www.kwbonsai.com/Welcome.html>

Bonsai Gros-bec: <http://www.bonsaigrosbec.com/>

Societe de penjing et bonsai de Montreal: <http://www.bonsaimontreal.com/>

Buffalo Bonsai Society: http://www.buffalobonsaisociety.com/monthly_meetings.html

Bonsai Society of Upstate New York: <http://www.bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org/billboard.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 (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 \$2 per month with a minimum charge of \$2. **Please return all materials 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.

TBS executive:

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