



# Vancouver Island Bonsai Club

## Wednesday April 7, 2004 . . .

We will be working on trees for the Mall Show, potting lodgepole and schefflera trees.

***Our Next Two Meetings:***

*Wednesday, April 7, 7:30 pm*

*Wednesday, May 5, 7:30 pm*

*Garth Homer Society Auditorium  
813 Darwin Avenue, Victoria*

## Show and Tell... "Bring in your favorite March tree"

**Field Day...** 04 April, from 1:00 to 5:00 (13:00 to 17:00) at George's farm. Members are encouraged to bring in a tree or two for design consultation, if desired, as well as wiring and potting assistance. It's also a social event with refreshments both in liquid and in cookie form. Some of the activities planned are 'muck' making and re-potting the small boxwoods for the convention workshop.

Convention workshop trees will be on display.

George will arrange for sunny, warm weather!

George has a number of smooth leaf elm's ready to be dug-up which Club Members could have for \$10.00 each. Members will be there to help you to dig it out, and please do not forget to bring a container.

**MALL SHOW 2004 - 29 APRIL TO 2 MAY 2004** This is the last meeting before the Mall Show. If you have not signed up to volunteer your time, this is the last meeting to do so. Steven Cook, the Mall Show Coordinator, will have sign-up sheets.

For those who are planning to exhibit trees, please ensure they are free of bugs and debris. Spray the pot with Pam to give it that "extra" shine. Cooking oil does also a good job, but Pam is lower in cholesterol. If you need advice on how to prepare your tree for exhibition, please feel free to bring them to the Club Meeting or to the Field Day.

For those planning to sell trees and bonsai related material, please obtain and complete a "Stock Control Sheet".

**First Field Trip of 2004.** - Salt Spring Island. Mark your calendars for Saturday May 15th.

The plan is that we will catch the 9:30 am ferry from Crofton to Vesuvius and visit Thimble Farms and The Plant Farm. We will have lunch in Ganges and have some time to visit the market there before departing for Fulford Harbour to catch the 4 pm ferry to Sidney.

A sign up sheet will be available at the next meeting. If you are unable to sign up at the May meeting, but would like to come on the field trip, please call Aileen at 385-4448.

<p>The club address is:  <b>The Vancouver Island Bonsai Club</b>                  P.O. Box 8674                  Victoria, B.C. V8W 3S2  <a href="http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca">http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Bob Taylor</b> (President)      <b>Tom Burley</b> (Treasurer)  <b>Jim Morrison</b> (Library)  <b>Luis Martin</b> (Newsletter)</p>
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## 2004 Pacific Northwest Bonsai Convention XV

**"Talk to the Trees"**  
September 17 - 19, 2004  
Laurel Point Inn  
Victoria, BC



The registration form for this convention is available from the club website and from the Club Board members and there will be registration forms, for our Club members, at the March meeting.

The workshops are being filled very fast. If you are planning to register, particularly if you wish to take one of the workshops, please decide very soon.

All the information regarding the Convention, is on the Club web site ([www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca](http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca)). If you are planning to participate and you do not have internet connection, we strongly suggest that you find a friend, neighbor or relative with internet access and visit the site. You will be able to see photos of the artists, their background as well as the workshop trees, and you will be able to print the Registration form from the site.

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### **SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT - The "Root / Shoot Ratio" - by Andy Walsh**

"All vascular plants (basically, ones with water transport systems) have a special problem. Their roots are separated from their shoots by their stems. The problem is that there must be a balance between the number of roots and the number of shoots. In a nutshell, a plant/tree can't have 1 root if it has 100 leaves, or 1 leaf if it has 100 roots. They need to be balanced for the plant to be successful.

This relationship is known (in the academic world) as the "Root:Shoot ratio". Plants/trees need to maintain a certain ratio. If the tree becomes unbalanced, energy and growth will be directed toward the area that is out of balance to bring it back in. (Makes sense doesn't it?).

So in the bonsai world, and in my experience, it makes sense to perform operations on the roots and shoots separately. If I defoliate, I do not root prune. And if I root prune, I leave the shoots alone. By doing so, the tree responds to either situation by trying to re-balance the part that is now out of balance. When the roots are pruned away, the shoots channel energy down towards them to stimulate re-growth. If the leaves/shoots are stripped away, the roots channel energy up towards them to stimulate re-growth. If both have been removed, neither can help the other. They must spend time repairing themselves. So, in general, it is best to leave one side alone.

However, the growing climate as well as general bonsai care can mask this relationship somewhat. There are very vigorous growers out there (Willow comes to mind) that will tolerate just about any sort of abuse and keep on ticking. Many of these types of trees are used for bonsai (I wonder why...). Throw in that most bonsai are kept in excellent health plus kept in optimum growing conditions and, sure, they will come back as if there is no problem with combining these bonsai techniques. But for weaker species, most collected material and even most nursery stock, one should wary and careful."

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**For those who are “connected”:**

We have just received notice from Felix Loflaughlin, president of World Bonsai Friendship Federation, that the newsletter for "the north" - read Canada - has been put onto the website.

This is being done, as you may know, to celebrate the quadrennial World Bonsai Convention 2005 scheduled for Washington DC in late May of 2005. The editor by appointment was David Rowe and he has done a super job of covering the diverse climates that makes up our country.

If you are interested in looking this up, you will find it at the following site:  
[www.bonsia-wbff.org/nabf/newsletter6/main.htm](http://www.bonsia-wbff.org/nabf/newsletter6/main.htm)



\* 659-8812

5450 PAT BAY HWY, VICTORIA, B.C. V8Y 1T1

**Thank you Elk Lake..** Many thanks to John from Elk Lake Garden Centre for supplying the black pots for the Convention workshop trees.

**Still Wanted...** A field trip coordinator to make the necessary arrangements to organize a trip to collect Hawthorns from a vacant lot. This is an “urban” collecting expedition, there are no mountains to climb, maybe just a curb or two. If you think you meet all the qualifications for the job, please contact the Board at the April meeting.

**The Bonsai Directory...**

The following local business are known to supply bonsai plants and/or other necessary materials. Frequently you will enjoy a discount if you identify yourself as a member of the Vancouver Island Bonsai Club:

Peninsula Flower Nursery, 8512 West Saanich Rd.,  
Proprietors: Fred and Jane Starke

A large selection of bonsai, pre-bonsai shrubs, as well as trees and conifers suitable for landscaping and oriental style gardens.

Better Gnomes and Gardens, 3200 Quadra St.,  
Proprietor: Laurie McKay

The very best selection of bonsai pots in Victoria.- Mostly good quality Chinese pots; some in larger dimensions.

Marigold Nursery Ltd. 7874 Lochside Drive

Large nursery with garden and landscape stock and some “good finds”.

Peninsula Landscape Supplies, 2070 Keating Cross Rd. One trip will get you the components to make bonsai soil. From small bag size to truck load: lava



I will  
treat your  
**Real Estate**  
like I treat  
my bonsai,  
...  
*with care and  
attention!*

Kent MacLeod  
Newport Realty  
385-2033  
100% Referral Business



## FERTILIZERS

This is the time of the year to start looking at fertilization

Fertilizer is frequently referred to as plant food. This is a poor concept. The real food for plants is carbon dioxide and water. These two bulk materials with the addition of sunlight are converted to sugars and carbohydrates that do the actual feeding of the plant. Fertilizer is much more analogous to vitamins. The nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and minor elements contained in fertilizer are necessary for cell division and enzyme processes that allow photosynthesis and growth to proceed. The amount of these elements that a plant uses in manufacturing growth is really quite small, only a few percent of dry tissue weight.

Nitrogen, N, is responsible (partly) for the green color of the leaves and the elongation and amount of the new growth. It affects leaf size and internode length. Nitrogen is needed for cell division and the manufacture of proteins.

Phosphorus, P, is also necessary for cell division and is a necessary element in DNA, RNA and fatty substances. It makes plant leaves dark green. It is associated with good root growth, and flowering.

Potassium, K, activates some cell enzymes and is associated with healthy cell activity. A deficiency can lead to a chlorosis of the leaf margin.

In nature plants take up fertilizer in minute amounts contained in the soil and water. These elements are recycled by the decay process. Phosphorus and Potassium are mineral elements and are also released by some kinds of rock. Nitrogen is a gas in the air and can be 'fixed' or converted in a usable soluble form by the action of some microorganisms. Nitrogen can also be fixed by the action of lightning and washed to earth dissolved in rainwater.

The primary method of fertilizer absorption by plants is through the roots. Water in soil creates a soil solution containing N,P, K and the other necessary elements by dissolving them from the soil. The plant roots absorb this solution by osmosis, moving the less concentrated soil solution across their membrane to the more concentrated solution in the cells. By this process water and fertilizer can be pumped to great distances through the plant. In the case of Coast Redwoods, the water is pumped to 300 feet high.

Plants can also take in fertilizer through their foliage. However this is a much over rated method of fertilizing plants. The primary absorption process is through the roots. Foliar feeding can be beneficial for a limited number of nutrient deficiencies such as calcium.

When we fertilize plants we supply them with an artificial soil solution. We manufacture this solution by either dissolving fertilizer salts in water or spreading solid fertilizer on the soil and watering it in. In any case the nutrients end up in the soil solution and are absorbed by the roots.

Why do we have to fertilize at all if nature doesn't? The answer to this lies in the soils we use for container gardening, which is a totally unnatural practice. Plants in the earth can tolerate soils that are very much finer grained (heavier) than those in containers. This is because the mechanics of drainage and aeration are different for containers than in the earth. Heavy soils are much better at retaining fertilizer, thus much smaller amounts are needed. Plants grown in containers require soils that are very much more porous than those found in the earth to ensure proper drainage and aeration. These 'light' soils are very lean and poor at retaining nutrients. There is also the limiting factor of the soil volume in a container.

In this totally artificial environment of container growing it is necessary to provide a regular addition of fertilizer to the soil solution in order to maintain the health and growth of the plant.