



Vancouver Island Bonsai Club

Wednesday, March 2, 2005 . . .

Show and Tell... Root over rock.

Hands-on / demos - It was not confirmed at the time of this printing, but we might have repotting of trees and root over rock demos.

David's Maple Forest Workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, 19 March at 1:00 PM at Highcroft Farm, . The cost of the workshop is \$55.00 plus the cost of the pot. There will be a sign-up sheet at the meeting.

Farm Field Day - Has been scheduled for 10 April at Highcroft Farm. For those who have not attended before, this is an informal social event where members' can bring their trees to pot, prune, and wire; where more experienced members are always available for consultation. If you do not want to do any of the above, the coffee and the donuts are worth the trip. It is also open for buy-sell-trade bonsai related stuff. We might even have a machine to slice rocks!

Field Trips - Two of them on the works...

1. A trip to the Mainland to visit Japan Bonsai and a couple of other bonsai nurseries.
2. Tentative for mid June a one overnight (or maybe two nights) trip "up island" to Port Alice, home of Peter Wilson (collected trees, see picture at right), and Port Hardy, home of Hal Seybold (viewing stones)

Dungeness Bonsai Society— 29th Annual Show, May 20 & 21, 10:00 to 5:00 at St. Luke's Church, 525 North 5th Avenue, Sequim, WA. Their show usually coincides with ours, and this time as they also had to change dates, it is the weekend before ours. If there is enough interest we would organize a day trip to visit them.

Membership Renewal - If you have not done it, please don't forget to do it! It is now pass due...

Our Next Two Meetings:

Wednesday, March 2, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 6, 7:30 pm

*Garth Homer Society Auditorium
813 Darwin Avenue, Victoria*



The club address is:
The Vancouver Island Bonsai Club
 P.O. Box 8674
 Victoria, B.C. V8W 3S2
<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca>

Bob Taylor	(President)	Tom Burley	(Treasurer)
Jim Morrison	(Library)		
Luis Martin	(Newsletter)		



CLIMBING HYDRANGEA - *Hydrangea petiolaris* - A number of years ago Jane Nelson of Seattle discovered that the climbing hydrangea was capable of becoming an unusual bonsai with peeling bark "which needs no wiring, has a lovely winter profile and small green summer leaves". This species is quite common at garden centres in Victoria, priced at less than \$15 for a sturdy plant. In writing about this for the ABS Journal she has given us a few tips:

1. In the early training stages, pinch to obtain suitable curvature* of the main trunk removing all the unwanted side buds. While the tree will live happily in the nursery pot, a year or two growing freely in the garden will fatten the tree more quickly.
2. As hydrangea dislike being bare rooted, when potting, take care not to disturb the roots any more than necessary.
3. Pruning and pinching is an ongoing activity during the growing season as the vine is fast growing . Smaller leaves are developed by cutting off the larger leaves, never completely leaf stripped, however. As smaller leaves grow in size , the new larger ones are removed. The remaining leaves of half to one inch size are in good proportion to a trunk that may, initially be of only 1¼" in diameter in size. The trunk appears larger because of its rough, peeling bark.
4. Winter care is no problem. The pot can be placed on the ground after it has lost its leaves and mulched with small bark, leaves or dampened peat moss. No dormant spray is necessary.
5. Potting soil can be of the usual bonsai mix with good drainage and the usual fertilizers may be useful. Formulation 10-10-10 may stimulate the production of uninteresting white flowers that can be removed.

*Wiring this tree is often not really necessary but careful wiring will not do damage and may be used to give some movement to an otherwise straight trunk or branches..

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 rock, coarse sand and bark mulch.



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Here is an interesting article on the “fast tracking” of a bonsai juniper from nursery pot to exhibit in 2 years!:

CREEPING JUNIPER by Michel Hagedorn, taken from Bonsai Today

Creeping Juniper is native throughout much of Canada and more infrequently in the northern United States. It snakes along the ground when growing in the wild and is well suited to the cascade form of bonsai. The variety 'Blue Rug' has smoky blue foliage and is native to the coast. of New England.

This Blue Rug Juniper was bought from a general nursery in a five gallon container in June 2001. Two years after purchasing the raw nursery tree it was shown in a bonsai exhibition. Its rapid development is largely due to a specific technique for handling the roots, which sets up the branches and foliage to a foreshortened refinement timetable. This article describes the root technique in detail.

Before working on the roots of this juniper, I made a few styling decisions. The semi-cascade is a powerful bonsai style, generally necessitating a strong, thick trunk. Trees with skinny trunks do not look convincing in this style, being unable to visually support the weight of cantilevered foliage masses. Because the trunk of this tree was only 3", it was destined to be a small semi-cascade. It was roughly styled by pruning immediately after purchasing in June 2001. The top of the tree was a maze of branches with long, trailing shoots. After deciding on the front of the tree and the main branches, many of these long branches were pruned back. In pruning juniper branches it is wise to leave them as long as possible for jins (dead branches stripped of bark and cambium), as they simulate how junipers grow naturally.

As it Turned out, I eventually shortened the jins as they were moving too strongly to the left and competed with the flow of the tree, which was going to the right. Instead, by stripping areas of cambium and bark on the trunk and creating shari (deadwood areas of the trunk) I was able to make the trunk line and flow of the tree more dynamic. Like jin, the presence of shari is a common characteristic of old junipers in the wild. The wood of junipers is hard and full of resin, which makes jin .and shari very durable and lasting design options for juniper bonsai. It is important, however, to regularly apply a solution of lime sulfur, generally twice a year, to prevent bacteria from getting a foothold.

After there early design decisions, the roots took center stage. The focus of the next year would be replacing the old soil with a better mix. There is not much space in a bonsai pot and soil that is essentially useless to a tree, such as compacted soil or water retentive soil, greatly limits the number of healthy feeder roots. With few feeder roots the growth potential of a tree is marginal at best, and it would be hard pressed to survive contemporary styling techniques.

What I did with this juniper was bare-root the front half of the root mass in March 2002. I removed 1/2 of the original nursery soil all the way to the trunk. I did not touch the back half, other than to expose an inch of roots to encourage them to grow into the new soil. The old soil in the front half was carefully removed with a curved tweezers, raking the soil and roots from the trunk base outward. There were a good number of healthy roots near the trunk.

The replacement soil for the barerooted front half was 1 part akadama, 1 part pumice, 1 part lava, and a small amount of decomposed granite and charcoal. Akadama is volcanic clay, and because of its ability to encourage highly ramified fine roots it is the Stradivarius of soils for bonsai. It should be noted that the particle size for all of these ingredients was large, about 1/3" . The high percentage of air in this mix supports the rapid growth of feeder roots, which in turn build up the strength of a tree.

In the spring of 2003 I once again attended to the roots. This time I did the reverse: The back was bare-rooted and the front was left alone. The akadama mix in front was full of fine feeder roots and the mass held together well. Handling the root zone in this manner has several advantages. First, a radial root system can be easily organized. Second, the tree is relieved of compacted, old soil all the way to the trunk base.



The soil quality near the base of the trunk, in the zone commonly called the 'nebari', is very important. Often enthusiasts repot by nibbling away at the peripheries of the root ball and ignoring the area near the trunk. Eventually the only habitable soil for new roots to grow in is the inch or two next to the pot sides. This greatly limits the usable soil in an already limited space. By using curved tweezers the old, useless soil near the trunk may be carefully removed.

Third, there is no question where soil was replaced the year before, as long as you are consistent in approach: One side is bare-rooted, and at the next repotting the other side is barerooted. And finally, within two repottings, the entire root system has been shifted to another soil mix. This technique should be considered only for trees that are reasonably vigorous and healthy.

Having replaced all the old soil, refining the foliage became the next focus. There were many long, spindly branches with tufts of foliage at their ends, resulting from the shading of interior I shoots. Since I wanted to leave as much foliage as possible in these early stages to keep up the strength and momentum of the tree, I ended up wiring more branches than would be; eventually kept. I also put more bends in them to shorten them up to the desired profile. Selective pruning later on would reduce their number. Juniper foliage should look soft. Each tuft of foliage was spaced so there was room for growth, and the bottoms were plucked clean for a tidy appearance.

I potted the juniper in a rough nan-ban style ceramic container because I felt the twisted root, which is somewhat unusual for junipers, required a more informal pot. The strong, formal square pot that was used to train the tree would have been in conflict with the informality of the raised root. Also, the tree is a cascade, which is a style associated with high cliffs and rugged terrain, and this pot suggested such an environment. After refining the tree in the summer of 2003, it measured 14" wide.

WORLD BONSAI CONVENTION

Bonsai and Viewing Stone enthusiasts worldwide are planning to attend the 5th World Bonsai Convention in Washington, DC, **May 28-31**. Full information can be found at <www.bonsai-wbff.org/wbc5/main.htm>.

PNBC XVI CONVENTION "BACK TO OUR ROOTS"

To be held 16-18 September, 2005, in Bremerton, Washington, sponsored by Evergreen Bonsai Club (www.EvergreenBonsaiClub.com). This is the event that our Club sponsored last year.

Registration (for Canadians) is \$167.00 each / \$322.00 for a family, in US funds, before 30 April; prices go up after this date. Printed copies of the information and registration forms will be available at our March meeting.

Workshops:

Dan Robinson - an all day workshop on a large specimen tree,
Stan Serbouski - Crabapple,
Jerry Meislik - Brazilian Leopard Tree,
Tak Yamaura - Shimpaku Juniper.
Yasuo Misuya - Sold out
Kathy Shaner - Sold out.

Hotel:- Hampton Inn at Bremerton (just opened); convention special price of \$85.00 US per night. Tel. 360 -405- 0200. When calling please ensure you designate your reservation at the above bonsai convention rate. If you are planning to attend, please do not leave it to the last minute as registrations go up in May and the workshops, as you can see, are filling up.
