



# VANCOUVER ISLAND BONSAI CLUB

**Monday, June 18, 2007 . . .**

**Our Next Two Meetings:**

*Monday, June 18, 7:30 pm*

*Monday, July 16, 7:30 pm*

*Garth Homer Society Auditorium  
813 Darwin Avenue, Victoria*

**Conifers** - 5 simultaneous demos on pruning and pinching back.

**Show and Tell** - Small is beautiful: Shohin and mame. Bring in your little ones and get a chance to show them off. Also bring in your Bus Trip treasures.

**Panel Discussion** - Are you worried about the health of your tree? (Bring in your ailing tree for advice)

***Coming in.....***

**July** - Show & Tell - Root over rock  
- Tips on summer care and protection of trees

**August** - Theme is Indoor Bonsai; also clinic on sharpening tools.

**We're Sorry**

Due to some miscommunication with management of the Garth Homer Centre when we changed our meeting times, the hall was not available to us on May 18th.

We would like to sincerely apologize to all who showed up including all the potential new members

Randy



**Doug Miller**, a long time club member, passed away on May 31, 2007. A memorial service was held on June 8th at the First Memorial Funeral Services in Royal Oak. Doug was a very avid gardener and this can be seen in the kinds of trees which were planted throughout his lovely yard. We would like to extend our condolences to the Miller family, he will be missed.

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

**Randy Kowalchuk** (President) **Judy Horsland** (Treasurer)  
**Bob Taylor** (Past President)  
**MallShow Coordinator - Wayne Swanson**



## Defoliating or Leaf-cutting Bonsai

Defoliating or leaf-cutting is a technique that involves removing the leaves of deciduous and broad-leaf bonsai during the summer, it forces the bonsai to produce a replacement set of leaves in a second 'false' spring flush of growth. This replacement set of leaves results in increased ramification and leaf density, a reduction in leaf size and internode length, and finally, superior fall colors.

### A Warning about Defoliation

Many enthusiasts first try defoliating on trees that are not horticulturally and/or aesthetically ready for defoliation.

Before describing defoliating techniques in detail, it is worth highlighting the need for trees to be healthy and vigorous before leaf-cutting is carried out. The removal of the leaves from a tree is debilitating and will temporarily weaken any bonsai; defoliating should only be carried out on vigorous specimens that will be able to recover from the process. Trees that are showing signs of weak growth, whether it be due to recent repotting, disease, styling or recent hard pruning, are not suitable for defoliating.

Be aware that defoliating can be so taxing on a bonsai that failure to respond can occur if the tree is not vigorous; parts of the branch system can be weakened to the point that they die-back.

Defoliating is also a technique intended for 'finished' bonsai only; a tree intended for defoliation will have the trunk, primary, secondary, and tertiary branches established. Defoliating a tree that requires branch or trunk building will slow down development of these parts greatly.

Different tree species react in a variety of ways to defoliating; some respond quickly and strongly to total defoliation ( to the extent that they can be defoliated more than once a year ) while other species it is preferable to only partially defoliate.

### Total Defoliation

The most common way to defoliate a tree is to remove each and every leaf with scissors, leaving the leaf-stalk or petiole behind. The remaining petioles nourish the tree as new buds contained within the leaf-axils begin to extend and open out. As the new leaves start to open out, the petioles dry out and fall away from the branches.

After defoliating a tree, leave it in good light to stimulate stronger budding, particularly from inner and lower branches. Without leaves, a defoliated bonsai will require less watering. The new leaves start to emerge 3-6 weeks after defoliation ( depending on the exact timing, tree vigor, and tree species ) and are smaller and more numerous. Vigorous trees will also back bud as a result of defoliation.

The exact timing of defoliation differs from one tree species to another. As a very general guideline, leaf-cutting can be carried out after the spring flush of growth has hardened off (the leaves lose their spring color and become more 'leathery'). For more detailed timing notes please see the specific timing guide later in this article.

Immediately after total defoliation, the tree is bare for the first time since spring and it is possible to study the branch structure; this is an ideal time to prune, wire and style a deciduous tree.



## Defoliating or Leaf-cutting Bonsai cont'd

### Species Suitable for Defoliation Techniques

This list is by no means complete; other species can be defoliated but I would strongly suggest that unless a particular tree species is recommended for total defoliation by an experienced enthusiast, first try a limited amount of partial defoliation on a specimen to gauge its reaction to defoliation techniques.

Defoliation is normally carried out around midsummer, however, some species are best defoliated a little earlier, in late May, the others in mid June. Please note that different climates and differences of growing seasons will alter the optimal time to defoliate according to where you live.

### Species to be Defoliated in May

*Crataegus* species Hawthorns: Total defoliation in May but partial defoliation of larger leaves is normally adequate.

*Fagus sylvatica* European Beech: Partially defoliate larger leaves from May. Complete defoliation has varying degrees of success and is not recommended.

*Quercus robur* European/English Oak: Total defoliation of very vigorous specimens only, weaker trees will respond with fewer, larger leaves. Partial defoliation of large leaves often adequate.

*Sageretia theezans*: Total defoliation can be carried out before June and with very vigorous trees, a second time after midsummer.

*Ligustrum* sp/Privets: Total defoliation can be carried out before June and with very vigorous trees, a second time after midsummer.

*Ulmus* various species Field Elms: Total defoliation in May, also helps combat thickening of the tertiary twigs that can be a problem with Field Elms; particularly for mame and shohin sized trees.

*Ulmus parviflora* Chinese Elm; Total defoliation in early May can be followed by a second total defoliation after midsummer if tree is vigorous enough. With only a small leaf-stalk and huge number of leaves even on mame sized bonsai; rather than cutting with scissors, remove leaves with fingers, pulling away in the direction of the branch to avoid damaging the new buds or branches.

### Species to be Defoliated in June

*Acer palmatum* Japanese Maple; Total defoliation in June is excellent for increasing ramification and reducing leaf size. Partial defoliation of large leaves recommended for the weaker red-leaf Acers.

*Acer buergerianum* Trident Maple; Total defoliation can be carried out twice a year on vigorous specimens.

*Carpinus* Hornbeams; Total defoliation of only the most vigorous specimens. Otherwise partial defoliation.

*Fuchsia* species; Total defoliation can be carried out twice a year on vigorous specimens.

*Malus* Crab Apples; Total or partial defoliation.

*Zelkova serrata*; Partial defoliation of all but the weakest branches can be carried out.



**HACKING**  
at the  
**HILTON**

**Cutting Edge Bonsai**

September 21-23  
Hilton Hotel  
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2007 Pacific Northwest  
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HOSTED BY THE  
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## Vancouver Island Bonsai Club

### Membership Renewal /Application Form for 2007

I wish to renew my membership\_\_\_\_\_ or I wish to apply for membership \_\_\_\_\_ (New member)  
Attached is \$20.00 for single membership\_\_\_ or Attached is \$25.00 for family membership \_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you would like to receive the Club Newsletter by Regular mail\_\_\_\_ or  
by email notification of posting to the club website\_\_\_\_\_

If you are mailing this form, please mail to:

Vancouver Island Bonsai Club  
PO Box 8674  
Victoria, BC. V8W 3S2