

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

March 2013



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### 2012 – 13 VIBS Officers

President: Randy Kowalchuk  
Vice President: Mark Paterson  
Treasurer: Larry Phillips  
Secretary: Jim Haskins  
Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell  
Activities: Francois Frutiger  
Librarian: Vacant

**Next meeting: Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 7:30 pm**

**Show & Tell:** Let's see your pines! Or other lovely trees!

**March theme:** Repotting again ... and please bring in trees to show us ... we'll offer advice, gentle critiques, actual hands on styling (just like at the salon) and all manner of suggestions. Don't be shy ...

**A generous gift!** Earlier this month we were contacted by Sue Wright, a well-known local horticulturalist and garden designer who generously presented us with the donation of a lovely Japanese larch.

**Election results:** As a result of the elections at our last meeting we have some new (well, some not that new ...) names. If we can get them to hold still long enough we will perhaps have a photo line-up in the next edition.

**And the winner is:** Gail G. was the lucky person whose name drawn in our contest for early membership renewals. Gail wasn't present at the meeting but has been informed.

**Raffle table:** We will have the always popular raffle table – please bring in your donations to support the Society

**Bring a tree:** As mentioned at the February meeting – please feel free to bring in one (or more) of your trees – to show, to seek advice on, to work on or to ...

**No Idles of March:** Barney Hiney of our club is coordinating a Bonsai information session at the Oak Bay Avenue Garden-Works Centre. Barney is looking for interested persons to join him in this activity on March 23-24. Please see Barney at Monday's meeting. Also see page 13.

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### In Memoriam – Bob Deryk

In late February the Bonsai community of Vancouver Island lost a highly esteemed penjing artist known to many as “Bonsai Bob”.

Many of us knew him as “Pothole Bob” after his home at the Sooke Potholes. His Sunday open house invitation ran for years in this newsletter and the invitation was taken up by hundreds of people over the years who, upon arrival, found themselves wandering in a wonderland of miniature delights, marveling at the meticulous artistry of his bonsai and penjing creations. Bob was a gracious host and an encyclopedic source of bonsai advice to his visitors. His countless contributions to this club over many years provided bonsai stock, raffle table delights and above all, his highly valued mentorship.



Bob’s earliest years were spent in an internment camp outside of Jakarta, Indonesia during the Second World War. Bob once shared that he, along with his brother and mother, spent years enduring the most incredibly difficult conditions there. After the war, Bob settled in Canada, and eventually made his way to Victoria, and then to Sooke where he settled on land now owned by the Land Conservancy, in the forest alongside the beautiful Sooke River. The humble lifestyle he adopted there, without electricity or running water, spoke of his deep need to be free of physical constraints and free of dependency on most modern conveniences.

Bob’s last days were marred by disturbing legal issues. The prospect of having to part with his collection to cover legal costs, or the thought of losing his freedom, may be among the reasons Bob saw fit to bring his life to an end on his own terms. Bob created a bonsai wonderland – his creations left many seasoned bonsai artists quite astonished by the artistry and magnificence of his collection. These trees and penjing landscapes, along with a few select friends, were Bob’s true family. His bonsai legacy will, given proper care, likely outlive most of us. We hope Bob’s spirit will dwell among the trees in the miniature worlds he created.



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A few of Bob's creations:





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Photos: John Mitchell

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### Once again (because it's really important)...

The **2013 PNBCA Convention "Combining Two Worlds"** is being held in Spokane, WA on the weekend of September 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.

Workshop presenters include:

The Penjing master **Robert Steven** from Indonesia - collected Hawthorn (Friday a.m.) & Bring Your Own Tree (Sat a.m.) The Collected Hawthorne workshop is already SOLD OUT. The field grown Yew workshop, Friday afternoon is also SOLD OUT. I do believe that "silent observers" are still able to watch the workshop proceedings (a privilege that comes with registration).

**Ryan Neil** – apprenticed with master Masahiko Kimura - collected Ponderosa Pine (Friday all day). The workshop cost is \$200 (U.S.) plus the cost of the tree (chosen in advance of the workshop - \$400 to \$1000 U.S. per tree.)

**Michael Hagedorn** – a capable Portland expert already known to many of us, apprenticed with master Shinji Suzuki - (a number of topics through the weekend, including Japanese maple that "have some age and present many styling opportunities", Dwarf wisteria, etc)

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**David DeGroot** – the internationally respected curator of the Weyerhaeuser Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection and a gifted designer and author. He studied in Japan with Yasuo Mitsuya and has been very active in bonsai since 1972. He will be presenting workshops on Cork bark Japanese Black Pine (large & small) and Shimpaku juniper. The junipers are said to have “substantial trunks with great movement”. **David has generously agreed to advise us this Spring on the creation of the Bonsai Garden at HCP. His decades of experience curating the Weyerhaeuser collection provide us with the rarest of opportunities to consult with a preeminent authority on the creation & management of bonsai gardens.**

**It bears repeating:** These annual PNBCA conventions present marvelous learning (and socializing) experiences and are well-worth attending, if you are able to. The impact of attending and representing our club can't be underestimated – it is to our great advantage to be represented at these events and talk to others about our club. The conventions are always a great opportunity to see amazing bonsai and learn from others! Registration is required and workshops often sell out. Don't delay!

Check the website: <http://www.inlandbonsai.com/convention/workshops.html> as well, check out the websites of the presenters mentioned above – tremendous resources full of ideas & information.

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**October 3-5, 2014:** the Vancouver Island Bonsai Society (that's us!) is hosting **the XXV Annual PNBCA Convention** in Victoria at the Harbour Towers Hotel. This is the same location that we held the 2009 Convention and found the facilities there very well-suited to our purpose. It's a lovely hotel with great staff in a super location one block off the Inner Harbour. We are working to arrange for **Colin Lewis, John Romano** and **Tak Yamaura** to attend as workshop presenters. We will likely be adding a forth headliner soon. As planning progresses I will ask the Convention Planning Committee to provide details to the newsletter.

**Colin Lewis** has gained international recognition as a bonsai master and has authored some of the classic books on bonsai creation and design. Always a popular workshop presenter, he is the owner of Colin Lewis Bonsai Art and lives near Portland, Maine.  
[www.colinlewisbonsai.com/](http://www.colinlewisbonsai.com/)

**John Romano** is a regular contributor to Bonsai International and other publications, writing authoritatively on Shohin bonsai. John is one of the foremost Shohin bonsai artists in North America and lives on Rhode Island.



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**Tak Yamaura** is the owner of Japan Bonsai Garden Art in South Surrey, the premier source of quality bonsai in B.C., and probably in Western Canada. Tak is renowned for his bonsai artistry, high quality bonsai stock and unflagging support of clubs like ours.

[www.japanbonsai.com/](http://www.japanbonsai.com/)

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### **Where can I find some pot(s)?**

Real “stoneware” bonsai pots are difficult to find here on Vancouver Island. Be it known that there is a fair collection to be found in the basement of Quonley’s Gifts & Grocery, 1628 Government St at the corner of Government & Fisgard St in Victoria.

There seems to be quite a few small, glazed coloured pots quite suitable for not-so-big bonsai. At a higher price one can find all sizes of more traditional pots in a smooth light brown colour. Prices start at a little over \$24 to a little over \$50 for the large size. – George H

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### **Repotting**

An article appeared in the February newsletter, but the message bears repeating in this prime, end-of-winter repotting “window”.

For trees that require it, repotting is an important early springtime activity. Deciduous trees are best repotted when the buds have swollen to a pre-break stage. Feeder root loss when repotted later in the season can cause unintentional damage to branches that have been deprived of their energy source. Conifers can be repotted to the elongated candle stage (before the needles on the new candle have become distinct).

On meeting night, we will demonstrate repotting techniques. Please bring in any tree that you need any advice on. We will have a limited supply of planting mix available at a cost of \$1.00 per litre.

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**HCP Bonsai Garden update:** Posts have been put in around the perimeter pathways for individual bonsai stands. The volunteers are ready to put posts in for two bonsai bench locations.

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### **Bonsai Garden update cont'd:**

The Wall of Fame is under construction in William's workshop.

A plan for a potting and tree care area at the top (north) end of the Garden has been drafted and is ready for review by the HCP Head Gardener.

David DeGroot will be here near the end of March to advise on what else we might do to complete the Garden for opening.

The emphasis in the upcoming year is to finish the infrastructure we started last year. The addition of shrubs in open spaces around the Garden is being planned for this year.

The target date for the opening of Phase 1 is early June. The rainy weather has been holding up progress.

- Larry Phillips

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### **Vancouver Island Rock & Alpine Garden Society Spring Show**

Come and see a dazzling display of rock and alpine plants at the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society Spring Show.

Many rock & alpine garden plants make great accent plants and there is a terrific selection at the show with offerings of unusual plants from local and out-of-town vendors.

Place: Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Rd.

Date: Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> & Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Time: In past years: Friday 1 pm to 8 pm & Saturday 9 am to 4 pm (no times on their website)

The show welcomes non-member exhibitors, so consider entering your best bonsai in the competition and you may win "Best Bonsai in Show" and have your name engraved on the silver trophy! Entry forms will be available at the show.

There are 3 classes in the Bonsai section of the Show: Evergreen bonsai, deciduous bonsai, and Bonsai in flower.

See their website: [www.virags.ca/](http://www.virags.ca/)



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On May 7<sup>th</sup> 2013, **the Victoria Horticultural Society** is holding their **Annual Plant Sale**. Bonsai Society members are welcome to book sale tables at this event--the more the merrier! Please contact Sale Co-ordinator **Carol Proudlove** at [250 721 3532](tel:2507213532) or [c.proudlove@shaw.ca](mailto:c.proudlove@shaw.ca) for more info. The Table Fee is 10% of Sales (e.g. if a Vendor sells \$100 worth of plants/garden-related merchandise, the Fee is \$10, based on the Honor System). We hope to hear from you, and to see some of your members at our Sale. See: [www.vichortsociety.org/](http://www.vichortsociety.org/)

When: Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2013 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Where Garth Homer Centre 813 Darwin Avenue, Victoria

What: Our annual botanical smorgasbord with plants from local specialty nurseries and home growers.

Sincerely, Gordon Robe Editor, VHS *Gardenry*

Tel: [250 598 1607](tel:2505981607) Fax: 250 598 1616 email: [grobe01@telus.net](mailto:grobe01@telus.net)

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### March Bonsai Care – mainly repotting

March is the most active repotting time of the year, such a significant activity this month (or should be) that we will continue to emphasize the theme by repeating it again this month – with a few new words. A more detailed description of the mechanics of the process can be found in last month's newsletter.

It is really important to repot any non-blooming/ non-fruiting deciduous trees that need it before they come into leaf, lest the rigors of repotting (& the slicing of roots) cause branches to die back. If not repotted well in advance of leafing out, it is best to leave repotting until late fall or winter.

Fruiting and flowering bonsai usually require repotting once a year if they have grown vigorously in the last growing season but wait until fall/winter if already leafed out.



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Deciduous trees can often tolerate two, three, or more years in the same pot but that is not necessarily the best practice.

Most conifers are quite forgiving about timing and I've heard that some of us repot pines throughout the year. The repotting frequency for more mature conifer bonsai is usually from four to five years, but one does hear of extremes ...

Younger trees (full of vigour) & trees in the Shohin range (smaller pots) may need repotting yearly.

Each tree is different, and you must learn to look for telltale signs. Ask our 'experts' at any club meeting!

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### **Bonsai Theft**

Further to the e-mail on this topic I sent out earlier this month, I've been making some notes as things occur to me. Here are a few thoughts:

Take "portraits" of your trees. Use a backdrop to isolate the bonsai from background distractions. Take pains to get a good photo – use light coloured materials (like foil or white poster board) to reflect light into the tree to show branch structure. Keep your tree portrait inventory updated. Winter and early spring are good times to record the “framework” of a deciduous tree – useful in identification (no two are alike ... to borrow an oft used phrase).

Make sure that your trees can't be seen from the street. Choose your display location carefully with this in mind. Latticework screens – often cedar – can be purchased at a lumberyard and used to block the view (requires assembly!).

Consider purchasing and installing a “game trail” camera equipped with an infrared “invisible” flash that uses a motion detector to take a photo or video. It might be of considerable value, and be more useful to the police, if there were photographic evidence of the prowler, hopefully showing their “best side”. They are usually quite portable devices.

If the prowler is a deer, you may come away with some lovely wildlife shots. Game trail cameras are battery powered and usually range in price from \$100 to about \$500. They can often be found on sale.

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Some of the newer game trail cameras come complete with holes cast into the plastic housing so that you can use a bike-lock cable to attach them to a tree or post (apparently, when they are found in the woods by certain villains, they are stolen with great enough frequency to make this alteration necessary).

Game trail cameras are available at Canadian Tire, Island Outfitters and other hardware locations. One of the best selections I have seen is carried by Princess Auto in Langford and they come up on sale at various times. They are portable and battery powered.

There are other security cameras and assorted devices available elsewhere – it's a growth industry, it seems. I have recently been made aware of a security camera carried by Costco – the Night Watcher NW700 – that has several very interesting features, including a video camera that tracks the action and a speaker that can broadcast a recorded message. It must be hard wired to an electrical supply so the services of an electrician may be required.

Never underestimate how bold a thief may be. Don't presume that just because your trees are close to the house that they are safe from the thief who covets them and thinks they would look better at their place than yours. The practice of thieves "shopping" for desirable items for "customers" is widespread, too. There are markets, usually far from the scene of the crime, where people are delighted to purchase a lovely little tree at a bargain price.



When potting up a tree, especially into a new or relatively clean pot, use a metalworker's paint marker to put some identifying marks inside your pot – your name and address, for instance. Paint markers are available at Lordco, KMS Tools, and other auto parts stores. The brand I have is Brite-Mark and I bought it at KMS.

Wiring a metal tag, like the ones from Lee Valley that can be labeled with pressure from a ball point pen, or the metal tags punched out by the club's new Dymo label maker, into the pot will provide an ID in the event that you are called upon to identify your tree.

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### **Bonsai 101 Workshop at Russell Nurseries**

**Date:** April 13, 2013

**When:** Starts at 9:00 AM with selection and purchase of trees for workshop.

Bonsai workshop starts at 10:00 AM for members and Russell customers.

This is an opportunity, especially for new members, to have someone with experience help them select nursery stock for bonsai and then help them style their selection in a workshop.

Bob Taylor will conduct the workshop. The workshop will show what can be done with three types of nursery stock ... a bonsai whip, 1 gallon, and 5 gallon stock.

Russell's will provide the demo stock and have trees available for purchase. There is no charge for the workshop. The only charge will be for the tree(s). VIBS members are welcome to come out to the event just to participate in the workshop.

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### **A New Tool**



The Society recently purchased a Dymo M1011 Rhino metal tape embosser that is capable of printing Dymo-style text on aluminum tags. These tags can be used as a more permanent system of labeling trees with an identifying number or name (useful for those of you with lots of trees). After hearing many complaints from people who found that labeling a plastic stake using a Sharpie was far from permanent (maybe a year), a little

research turned up this useful tool. We will take orders by e-mail from members for labels that can be delivered at our meetings. There will be a small charge per label that will be applied toward the cost of the machine. If interested in more info, please see John M.



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### A generous gift!

Earlier this month we were contacted by Sue Wright, a well-known local horticulturalist and garden designer who generously presented us with a donation of a lovely Japanese larch that was a gift to her from her mother who passed away last April at an age just shy of 95 years.

This tree has been in the care of Sue's family for 71 years, having originally been brought back from a trip to San Francisco. This tree will be on display at the meeting and we will engage in a little maintenance and styling as a "class exercise". The rather large and lovely pot has served admirably as a "nursery pot" for the last 5 or 6 years.

Our humble thanks go out to Sue and her family for the donation of this enchanting bonsai larch.

Photo: John Mitchell

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### Field Day – April 21st

We are in the process of planning our annual Field Day, scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup> at the usual location (mysterious, isn't it?) Updates & directions will be provided by email to the membership as the date approaches. Always interesting & most enjoyable!

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As a bonsai fancier (a gentle label for my addiction), I am always grateful to those Garden Centres and nurseries who go the extra mile to cater to those of us who love this pastime ... Russell Nurseries, Elk Lake Garden Centre and GardenWorks ... and on the mainland, Japan Bonsai ... thank you for understanding!



# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## N E W S L E T T E R

### No Idles of March

This is a GENERAL INVITATION to the VIBS membership to participate in Bonsai activities in the Opening of Spring Event at GardenWorks in Victoria, at 1916 Oak Bay Ave on the weekend of March 23-24, 2013. (250-595-4200). **Please consider volunteering for this event!**

We have been invited to share the weekend and our Bonsai knowledge to assist GardenWorks, its customers, and curious visitors, in providing an introduction to the art of Bonsai, the club's purpose and opportunities to be involved in the Bonsai art form.

Volunteers, at various times through the Weekend, are asked to:

- Demonstrate and share information and experiences of Bonsai
- Work on and provide care and attention to their Bonsai or others'
- Provide Information of a general nature for the interested public
- Share information, tips, techniques, methods and stories
- Sell limited amounts of their own wares, plants and devices associated with Bonsai activities, such as trees, Bonsai tools and implements that don't generally compete with the Retailer.

Tables, location and limited parking is available; there is no security specifically for the Bonsai but general retail security is in place.

A sign-up sheet is available that will provide a time, detail the location and allow the member to designate their efforts.

PLEASE be prepared to:

Present a positive, friendly demeanor to those interested in bonsai

Monitor and protect your personal effects and property

Prepare/Enjoy/Display/Sell/Clean up your workspace

Recognize and appreciate the opportunities for the Club and retail owner.

Interested members can contact: Barny Hiney @ 250 595-1120, 250 889-8550 or [barnyhiney@hotmail.com](mailto:barnyhiney@hotmail.com) for further information and select preferred times of attendance during the weekend.

Please call or write with your preferred times of attendance and I will confirm a schedule and provide information for parking, working spaces, sale items and answer any questions.

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Goodbye Bob ... and thank you for your contribution to bonsai.



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### **Vancouver Island Bonsai Society**

2013 Membership Renewal / Application Form

I wish to renew my membership \_\_\_\_\_ or I wish to apply for membership \_\_\_\_\_ (new member)

Attached is \$25.00 for single membership \_\_\_\_\_ or attached is \$30.00 for family membership \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your e-mail address for information about various activities and notification of the posting of the Newsletter to the website: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are mailing this form, please mail to:

Vancouver Island Bonsai Society  
Membership Coordinator  
PO Box 8674  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 3S2