

The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

NEWSLETTER

November 2013



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2012 – 13 VIBS Officers

President: Mark Paterson
Vice President: Vacant
Treasurer: Larry Phillips
Secretary: Tibby Soloway
2014 Convention chair: Bob Taylor
Librarian:
Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell

Next Society meeting: Monday, November 18, 2013

Annual 50/50 Auction: We know it's hard to part with your trees, but, please, bring in some quality trees for the auction. It's a fund raiser for the club! Anything bonsai-related will be appreciated!

Expert advice: There is a standing invitation to all members to bring in any tree that you would like an opinion or advice on – tap into several hundred years of collective bonsai experience.

Raffle table: The raffle table will not be held this evening.

Memberships due: 2014 membership fees are due January 1st. In past years we have put up an incentive to be drawn from the names of those who have renewed their memberships by the January meeting. The "prize" may be a refund of your membership fee. There may be other incentives, too!



October – Mark demonstrates needle plucking

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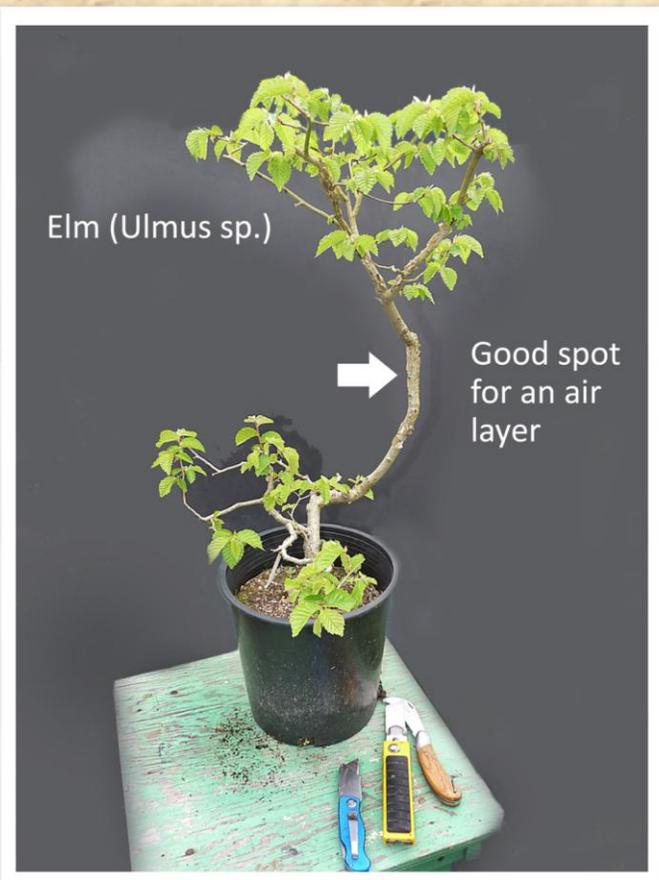
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Annual 50/50 Auction

Our annual auction used to be held at our August meeting but other events scheduled for that same time this year saw us opt for a November auction. One of the first things that comes to mind with an auction so late in the year is that one won't be able to see the leaves on deciduous trees but the limbs and branches will be uncluttered and the "framework" exposed for your imagination to go to work on. To me, that's a bonus.

We are hoping that people choose to enter some nice trees, as donations to the club, or as something that they could be satisfied in sharing 50% of with the club. The auction is usually a good opportunity to find a hidden gem at a reasonable price.

Here is an Elm that I found at last year's auction and purchased because I saw potential for "two trees from one". This past May I created an air layer. By mid-July the plastic wrap was full-to-bursting with new roots. I cut the top off on July 22 and potted it up. Both the original tree and the air layer grew vigorously until fall. Elms (*Ulmus*) are a very forgiving genus in cultivation and air layer readily.



Below: Note the "V" shaped notches – this allows the new roots to arise from several heights in the air layer for a more natural look.



Scraping trunk to remove all traces of the cambium layer

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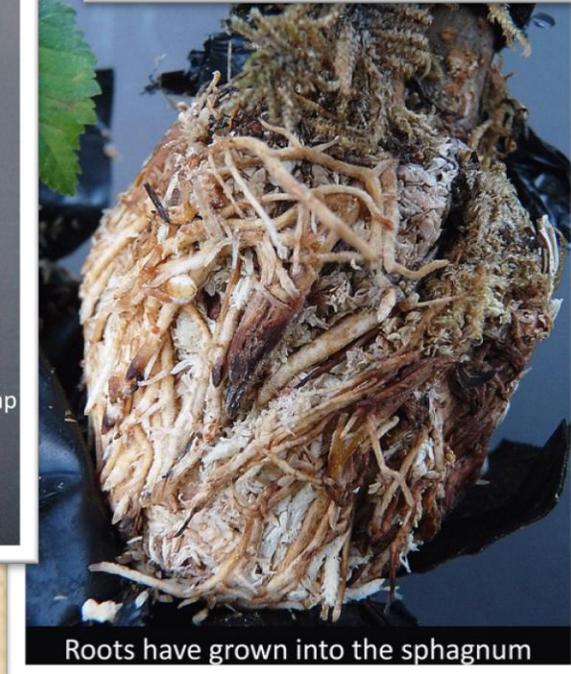
(Left) Wrapping the de-barked (and “de-cambium-ed”) trunk with wet sphagnum moss and plastic.



(Right) the air layer sealed in plastic



Ready to cut the top off & pot up!



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This tree wasn't labelled with a species name ... I didn't think it a big deal as many of the hundreds of Elm varieties are now being shown to be highly variable clones of *Ulmus minor*, the Field Elm of Britain and Eurasia. I'm comfortable calling this elm *Ulmus minor*. (*Ulmus parvifolia*, the Chinese or Lacebark Elm, is a distinct species, again with many varieties and cultivars).

Next spring, once these wee trees have leafed-out again, I will post the results of this project. In the meantime, take advantage of our auction to add to your collection, one or two trees at a time!

Part horticulture and part art, bonsai has become a gardening category in itself. That's because there are so many families of bonsai trees & plants, each with its own needs and techniques for maximum growth – Herbert L. Gustavson in *The Bonsai Workshop* 1994 (Submitted to the Newsletter by George H)

Bonsai Garden update:

As her final project in the Master Gardener's course at HCP, Nancy Keehr researched and labelled the trees in the Bonsai Garden. The bonsai now have black plastic stakes with all pertinent information. Nicely done Nancy!



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The 2014 PNBCA Convention in Victoria

This is a good time for all of us to give some thought to attending next October's convention in Victoria. Previous conventions here have been outstandingly successful and we are hoping for the same thing this time around. The Harbour Towers Hotel is a great venue for this event and there will be many opportunities for learning a great deal more about your favourite pastime.



VANCOUVER ISLAND
BONSAI SOCIETY

PNBCA - 2014 October 3-5, 2014
Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association
Harbour Towers Hotel, Victoria, B.C.

Single Full Registration\$265
Received before July 1st, 2014

Family Full Registration \$470
Received before July 1st, 2014

25th ANNIVERSARY!
1989 - 2014

PNBCA Bonsai Convention 2014:
Colin Lewis Michael Hagedorn John Romano Tak Yamaura

Colin Lewis is the author and co-author of many of the best-read bonsai books in the English language. He has vast experience in most areas of bonsai and publishes an exceptional newsletter. I highly recommend subscribing to it.

On his website Colin says: "For almost four decades I have striven to recreate images that stimulate in those who view my trees the same emotions that I experience as I wander through that fanciful landscape of the mind, where anything is possible."

An excellent website, well worth a visit: <http://www.colinlewisbonsai.com/>

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Michael Hagedorn is a founding member of the Portland Bonsai Village, an organization of bonsai professionals in the Northwestern USA that fosters the educational and economic wellbeing of our bonsai community. Formerly a well-known bonsai potter, he creates, teaches, and writes about bonsai: Michael actively teaches at home and internationally, maintains client trees, is currently nibbling on a couple more books, and offers recent bonsai work and musings on the weekly blog. See: <http://crataegus.com/>

John Romano, from Rhode Island, has won various awards and has written various articles in major bonsai magazines:

- Bonsai Today, International Bonsai, ABS Bonsai, BCI Bonsai Magazine
- Currently writing a regular column for International Bonsai Magazine on shohin bonsai called 'A Little Magic with Shohin Bonsai'
- 3 trees exhibited in the Native American Bonsai Exhibition at the ABS Bonsai Symposium in Sarasota NY in 2006 (all published in the commemorative album).

John works and teaches out of New England Bonsai Gardens. His column on Shohin (bonsai that measure within 10" from top of the pot to top of the tree) caught our attention and given the increasing popularity of Shohin bonsai, we thought we would bring John out for a visit to the West Coast. See: <http://kaikouschoolofbonsai.com/>

Tak Yamaura, owner of Japan Bonsai in Surrey Japanese horticulturalist, Takaaki (Tak) Yamaura, was fortunate enough to train under the great bonsai master, Toshio Kawamoto, while at the University of Agriculture in Tokyo.

With more than four decades of experience, Tak has become renowned in North America as a *Bonsai Master* and leading authority on bonsai.

He founded Japan Bonsai over 40 years ago in Surrey and is passionate about and devoted to providing the highest quality bonsai as well as education through his classes, demos and lectures. See: www.japanbonsai.com/

This is a very significant roster of bonsai artists and we expect that the workshops will fill quickly. There is a maximum of 10 spaces per workshop with the possibility that a few will be limited to 8 applicants.

In next month's newsletter there will be a description of workshops and related costs (over and above the cost of registration).

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Creating beautiful bonsai is a meditative process – a tree whose natural growth is stunted by the forces of Mother Nature – or an avid bonsai artist ... A journalist describing the work of Jack Sullivan, founder of the Vancouver Island Bonsai Society.

Natural Pest Control – up in my neck of the hay fields (Central Saanich) we have an interesting critter that inhabits our yard and earns its living keeping the population of aphids, mites, earwigs, weevils, slugs, caterpillars and others, under control in the yard and on my bonsai benches. *Podarcis muralis* is a European wall lizard that was released into the wild about 25 or more years ago when a “petting zoo” closed in the Highlands and the owner, apparently, turned loose a number of his “pets”. They began turning up around Brentwood Bay 15 years ago, their colonization assisted greatly by young lads, ever fascinated by the scaly, nimble little reptiles, collecting them in local ditches & rocky outcrops and taking them home. By now they’ve spread pretty much throughout Central Saanich (& likely elsewhere on the Peninsula).

Now, without a doubt, releasing an alien species anywhere is a contemptible act of ecological irresponsibility. Let there be no doubt. The lizards in my yard alone number in the hundreds and they inhabit almost every available niche in the yard. They are tremendously successful and the population seems to increase yearly. I personally believe that the local populations are beyond control, although when they crawl up fence posts on a warm winter day, the American kestrels hang out in the treetops and feast on them in the most amazing acts of aerial snatch-and-grab. The garter snakes make them part of their diet throughout the warmer months and the local cats love them to bits.

We’ve come to accept their presence and really have a soft spot for these creatures. The adults can be up to 6 inches, or so, in length. The young hatch, several times a year, from leathery eggs about the size of a couple of TicTacs. About a dozen young ones inhabited a sizeable Japanese Larch bonsai this fall (the late August hatch). I was fortunate enough to have my camera with me when several crawled from among the needles to sun themselves on a knot. The knot is about 2” across:



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Winter Bonsai Care – if your bonsai trees are left outdoors, and most (outdoor) trees are, you might want to tilt the pots (with a stick, or a stone) to facilitate drainage toward a drain hole. Sometimes an accumulation of water occurs on that inner bottom surface and many bonsai don't like it.

Some growers even go as far as putting tinfoil rain caps on the surface, or partial surface, of the soil to help shed excess rain.

Many people move their pots to the ground to take advantage of the additional thermal advantage of radiated heat from the large ground mass.

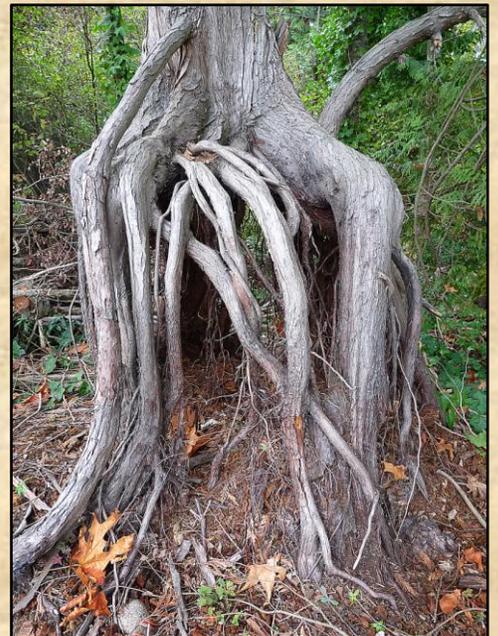
As mentioned every year, the biggest killer of outdoor bonsai are the cold dry "outflow" winds that roar down the Fraser Valley when cold high pressure settles in over parts of the interior. Mulch and/or otherwise protect your trees during these times. I mentioned this last month (and last year) but it bears repeating.

No fertilizer required until Spring.

Remember – many nurseries are still holding plant sales. I was quite pleased (OK – very, very pleased!) with what I found in my neighbourhood. I don't think I'll mention any names this time because I'm not quite finished bargain hunting. (Do I have to insert an LOL here? Really?)



Nurse stumps & logs – trees do the strangest things. Here's a root-over-stump style Western redcedar with a branch that went "walkabout" looking for light, found it, and grew upward about 20 feet. Meanwhile, the stump that initially "nursed" the larger tree has disappeared almost completely. It's a fairly common phenomenon among cedar, hemlock & huckleberry. It gives me ideas!



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Membership Renewal / Application Form 2014

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



Wasn't the fog lovely?