

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

March 2014



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### 2014 VIBS Officers

President: Mark Paterson  
Vice President: Vacant  
Treasurer: Larry Phillips  
Secretary: Tibby Solloway  
2014 Convention chair: Bob Taylor  
Door & Raffle: Susan Vidal  
Librarian: Kathi Morrison  
Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell

**Next Society meeting: Monday, March 17th, 2014**

**Happy St Patrick's Day Everyone !!!**

**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:** Any contributions to the raffle table will be very much appreciated by all. It is a great fund raiser for the club and a very popular feature of our monthly meeting.

**Memberships due:** 2014 membership fees are due January 1

**Club activities:** Please give some thought to what you would like to see happening in the club this year. We will be looking for your opinions over the next couple of months and hope that a survey will indicate what the membership wants by way of bonsai-related activities.

**Annual General Meeting:** We will be holding our annual General Meeting Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.

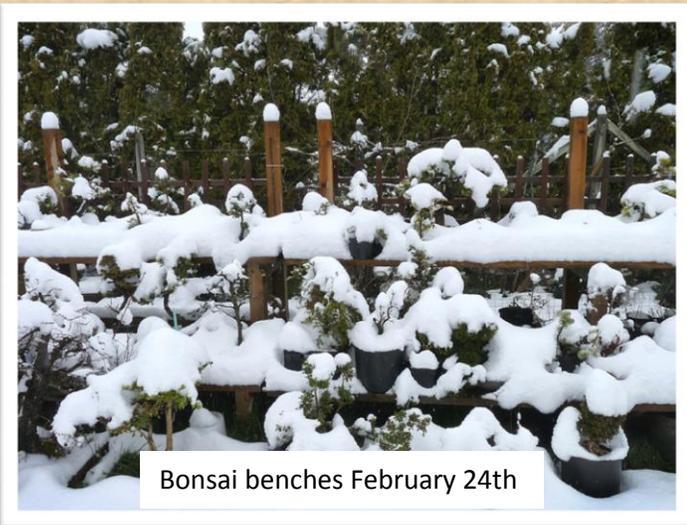


Jim M conducts a pruning symphony at the February meeting

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**Winter 2014** has been a bit of a trial in some ways, with two major cold snaps since Fall interspersed with very mild periods, significant snow and some rather heavy rains having put our wee trees to the test. Most of my trees seem to have survived although I do have a couple that are clearly not going to awaken. I've noticed three broken pots, one of them a bit of a favourite and, I must say, the moment of realization wasn't particularly gracious in the verbal sense. I hope no one was listening.



Bonsai benches February 24th

Now, it would appear, Spring is beginning to burst out all around us, as evidenced by the profusion of plum blossoms on display up and down local streets and lovely light green leaves appearing here and there. It doesn't seem all that long ago that I was staring out into the yard and wringing my hands in anguish as the temperatures dropped back to the neighbourhood of -10 C and snow blanketed my bonsai benches.

For the last month, most of us have been busy potting deciduous trees and finishing up the pruning & styling of these same plants. Most any type of tree can be worked on at this time of year. Many of us leave pines until late spring to concentrate now on deciduous trees. Once deciduous trees start to leaf out it is getting to be too late for repotting or potting up safely.

As to repotting, younger, rapidly growing trees should have their soil changed annually at this time. Some older trees can go two or three years between repotting sessions. Slower growing conifers and some evergreens may not need their soil changed more than every three to five years. Vigorous, healthy trees don't need their soil changed often and should be left undisturbed until repotting is warranted (usually there are observable symptoms).



Witch-hazel (Hamamelis species) March 15th

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Deciduous trees shouldn't be fertilized until the leaves have hardened off - not until all of the leaves are out and branch tips are starting to grow. If fed too early, a big flush of growth will likely result which translates to long internodes and larger leaves. It can take the rest of the season to get things back to proper proportions.

For trees that have been repotted, it is recommended to water lightly after roots have been put through the trauma that invariably comes with the process (although my trees go right back onto my benches and take whatever the rain gods throw at them). About a month in light shade is recommended for newly repotted trees.

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### Annual General Meeting – March 17<sup>th</sup>

We will hold our annual General Meeting this month. Because their two year terms are up, we need to elect President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and three Directors. The incumbents are permitted to stand for re-election.

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### Show & Tell

We experimented for a period of time with a new format for Show & Tell, whereby members who brought in a tree, or other item, stood by their subject and those interested in the particular item could gather round and join the discussion of that tree or item.

We heard from enough people that they preferred the old format, where items brought for Show & Tell were arrayed at the front of the hall and discussed in sequence for assembled members, that we decided to go back to the way we used to do things.



Show & Tell: Bob T. with members' trees

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The following article appeared in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria newsletter "Happenings" Volume 1 No. 6 and is reproduced here with permission. Minor editing was necessary to fit this format.

### Feature: Bonsai at the Gallery by Joan Fraser

Bonsai, translated as "tree in a tray," first came to Jane P's\* attention when she was on a trip to Japan. Her fascination with the elegant simplicity of this "living art" led to her becoming a grower herself. Now she is in charge of a team that visits the Art Gallery every week to care for the examples that are chosen for show by members of the Vancouver Island Bonsai Society.

Jane's enthusiasm is infectious and it is not long before she has an inquirer looking at the exhibits with new eyes. The themes are seasonal. In the spring it is blossom, like azaleas and cherries, and in the autumn



Photo credit: Joan Fraser

it is fruit, berries, and colour seen in the leaves of tiny deciduous trees.



Photo credit: Joan Shimizu

Late in the year there are exquisite "winter silhouettes." Evergreens have a year round appeal. The plants are kept outdoors on a small porch (above, right) near the entrance to the Pollard Gallery. When Jane and her crew are there they carefully check each item, adjusting maintenance routines to match variations in the weather. If it is very hot, the often shallow trays may need daily watering to prevent their drying out. Helpers also deal with natural perils like loopers in the summer and falling fir needles and leaves in the autumn and winter.

According to the Society's pamphlet, "Bonsai is an illusion. A good bonsai should look like a real tree or forest in style and perspective." Shape is all important. To achieve this, young plants are often wired; at early stages they are said to be "in training."

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Photo credit: Joan Shimizu

On Vancouver Island a plant (like pine or cedar) can be collected from the wild, in which case it may be older than a nursery plant. This is desirable because the look of age, like girth in a trunk, is much prized. One of the techniques to enhance the aged look is to attach a dead branch, or jin, (see above, left) by cutting off the tip of the branch and stripping away the bark. Before that can be done the right shape must be achieved by judicious pruning which calls for an artistic eye.

Jane P, a Vancouver Island Bonsai Society volunteer takes care of the AGGV

Choosing a tray to complement the mature tree is an art in itself especially now that Japanese ware is increasing difficult to find. There are classic artistic standards for presentation of bonsai but in essence the shape of the tree dictates the shape of the tray. Ideally, a tree with a feminine shape is planted in an oval tray, and a rugged masculine tree in a rectangular tray. Sometimes a grower may choose to make a landscape by counterbalancing a tree with well shaped stone. In 2012 the Bonsai Clubs International presented the Victoria group with a medal of excellence for its long-standing display in association with the AGGV. Apparently ours is the only art gallery in Canada to display bonsai. Judy Thompson, the Gallery's librarian and archivist, searched Galley files to discover how this came about. She discovered that the idea of having an Asian garden, including both garden and bonsai, started in the mid-70's when the Asian wing to the Gallery was being built. Volunteers helped to clear the property, to get donations of many plants and shrubs, and to add an old stone lantern and stone water basin.



Photo credit: Joan Fraser



Photo credit: Joan Shimizu

The garden was ready in time for the opening of the Asian wing in October 1977. Local artists Margaret Ely and Peggy Bartholemew were instrumental in starting this project. Peggy enlisted the help of the Asian Art Society, which donated initial funding and originally maintained the gardens. Sometime later upkeep of the bonsai was turned over to the Bonsai Society, who have been doing it ever since. Recently the Society also has been busy helping to establish a bonsai garden – only the second in Canada – at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific.

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3 photo credits Joan Fraser

### Bonsai Garden Update

Larry P and Jim M welcome volunteers to help them get the 2014 season underway. There is a great deal to be done this Spring, so please consider giving some of your time to assist in the continuing evolution of this unique & very special bonsai garden. If you have any time that you can contribute on Wednesday mornings please speak with Jim or Larry at our meetings or look them up at the Horticulture Centre on Wednesdays around 9:00 a.m. at 505 Quayle Road, Gate #3.



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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014

Family Full Registration ..... \$470  
Received before July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014

**25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY!**  
**1989 - 2014**

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

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Some photos...



Teague was a busy fellow at the February meeting, talking about “eco-friendly” fungicides & insecticides, as well as offering up his usual expertise on bonsai. Thanks Teague!

(Below) Last week Bob & I made our way over to Japan Bonsai for a visit with Tak Yamaura



Examining 40 year old Tsukomo cypress



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### Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

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



Winter hazel (Corylopsis sp) flower - March 15th