

# The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

## NEWSLETTER

March 2017



Trident maple - Spring at last!

### 2017 VIBS Executive

President: Mark Paterson

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Bob Taylor

Treasurer: Larry Phillips

Secretary: Jim Haskins

Door & Raffle &

Library: Jim & Kathi Morrison

Newsletter & Website: John

Mitchell

Also: Maurice Bombezin,

Randy Kowalchuk, David

Atterby, Silvia Schmidt

**Next Society meeting: Monday, March 20th, 2017**

**7:00 pm at Couvelier Pavilion, HCP**

**Scheduled:** Purchasing bonsai stock (Guest speaker)

**Topic:** Unworked trees – "raw stock" Mark P.

**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 years of collective bonsai experience.

**Club activities:** Please share your thoughts on activities that you would like to see. The Activities Calendar on the VIBS webpage has been updated for 2017:

<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca/bonsaiCalendar.htm>

**Raffle table:** There will be a raffle table this month. Feel free to bring in a bonsai-related donation!

**Membership renewals:** For those of you who renewed their memberships as of last meeting, the 2017 membership cards will be available at the March meeting.



*Pieris japonica* in full springtime bloom

Photo: Maurice B

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### Springtime Greetings Everyone!

There have been some recent indications that the winter of 2017 might just be loosening its grip ever so slightly - not that the rain and frost have deserted us entirely but there's something about the weather this week that seems just a wee bit gentler despite the seasonal gusts that are so typical of March. Maybe it's all that 'springing ahead' stuff that makes the evenings seem brighter and longer working some magic on me but the wee trees are showing it too. I must confess that photo above of the fresh leaves on the Trident maple are a little deceptive – the tree came out of my 'unheated' storage area where solar gain has contributed to the head start so evident here. Most of my bonsai aren't quite this advanced yet.

### The Busy Month of March at Maurice's

This is the time to re-pot deciduous trees that require it. In addition to trimming branches and roots examine your trees for:

1. Root-bound conditions - sometimes the over-growth of roots will raise a tree up in its pot. Lifting a tree from its pot and finding roots encircling the pot - round and round inside – is a sure sign that root pruning and repotting is necessary.
2. Dead twigs – can result from various conditions including frost damage but can also often result from being root-bound.
3. Broken pots
4. Excessive moss can cause deterioration of bark and interfere with water penetration of soil.
5. Scale insects on branches - visible now before the tree begins 'leafing out'.
6. Look for grubs in soil (weevil larvae can kill a tree in fairly short order by eating the fine feeder roots)
7. A good time to change a pot...larger, deeper, glazed...
8. Wire or re-wire trees as required

Wait for obvious signs of "life" before re-potting evergreens...



Early blooming species ...

Left: Japanese quince

Right: Forsythia



Photos: Maurice B.

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Also – this is a good time to pluck weeds from your pots. Watch for grasses, pepper cress and Irish Moss (to think: I used to buy it at the garden centre; now I can't get rid of it!) A pair of long tweezers works well for this task.



Pepper cress invades my bonsai! Seeds "dropped" by the finches foraging for bonsai grit.



Mosses taking over a Spruce bonsai



A sure sign of Spring at my place - introduced European Wall Lizards awaken and bask on the rocks. These are young ones, hatched last Fall & overwintered in the ground. About 5 cm in length.

Right: A nice little Japanese pot lost to the frost. One of four over the winter.

The good news: My Mediterranean olives & Satsuki azaleas survived  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  temperatures. The bad: I think I lost a Coastal Redwood to the cold (should have moved to shelter).



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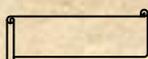
Given that it's repotting time, one might want to consider making up some bonsai soil. There are many recipes online (or talk to an experienced club member at the meeting). Make a gritty mixture incorporating black and/or red lava and/or #2 or #3 chicken grit (a.k.a. "decomposed granite"), horticultural pumice (holds water/ nutrient solution and is generally friendly to growth), bark mulch (not cedar), finely diced sphagnum moss (not peat moss), sea soil and even activated charcoal can be used in various proportions. I think homemade mixes are far superior to anything sold locally as "bonsai soil". It would be an excellent topic for a meeting night or workshop.

Red lava is available at Integrity Sales on Keating X-Road in Central Saanich, black lava is available at Aces off Oldfield Road in Central Saanich, horticultural pumice & chicken grit are available at Borden Mercantile in Victoria. Chicken grit is also to be found at Buckerfields and Integrity. Bark mulch and SeaSoil are widely available at garden centres. Sphagnum moss (dried bricks) and charcoal are often carried by outlets that cater to the orchid hobby. Red & black lava and bark mulch need to be sifted or screened to a size useful in a bonsai mix.

Most of my references are local to the Victoria area. For those readers up-Island, you likely have a variety of sources in your neighbourhood, although red & black lava might only be available at the sources listed here. It's always great to see your sunny faces whenever you get down this way!

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Further to our discussion on phoenix grafts, there is the likelihood of your driftwood or dead tree trunk deteriorating after a period of time in contact with the soil in a bonsai pot. I have had good luck using "**Wood Petrifier**" - a non-toxic product carried by Home Hardware and perhaps others. Also, **S1 Sealer**, a thin, two-part epoxy that penetrates dry wood well and essentially plasticizes it. It is available at Industrial Plastics in Victoria. Appropriate precautions are necessary in handling it as it can be quite toxic.



Above: Club member Kent MacLeod brought his grandson Luka to the phoenix graft workshop in February. A fine young man and his extraordinary granddad!

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### News from Up-Island

Our club member, **Frank Corrigan**, from mid-Island (Nanoose area) reports that the growing season is starting very slowly, as is the case here, too. He has been busy grafting JBP (Japanese Black Pine) as well as repotting and taking some Spring cuttings.

Last week a group of bonsai experts and enthusiasts from Vancouver visited Frank's nursery and together they travelled to Campbell River to visit Anton Nijhuis – yamadori expert, landscaper and dog's best friend. He has four. And awesome collected trees.

They were investigating the feasibility of using locally supplied trees in future bonsai workshops. Frank's nursery raises and supplies pre-bonsai, bonsai and yamadori to the hobby.

Frank recently successfully completed and graduated from Boon Manakitivipart's Intensive program in California in January and participated in the Bay Island Bonsai show. He spent half of January at Boon's working with Daisaku Nomoto, Matt Reel, Tyler Sharrad, John Romano and Boon. It must have been quite a time – intensive indeed. Frank has opened his Bonsai Studio and has begun to teach. He presented a Root-over-Rock Workshop for members of the Mt. Arrowsmith club, and then a Grafting workshop for some more advanced enthusiasts. The website is up and operating as well. [www.riversedgebonsai.ca](http://www.riversedgebonsai.ca)

Also, check out:

<https://anijhuis.com/page/3/>

<http://bonsaiboon.com>

<https://crataegus.com>

<https://reelbonsai.wordpress.com>

Frank intends to be at the meeting Monday evening.

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David DeGroot has confirmed that he will present another bonsai styling seminar September 24th, 2017. Cost \$150

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Some progress has been made in the effort to re-establish the Club library. We have been allocated space in the HCP library which is located in the former groundskeeper's home, just east of the restaurant at HCP. As far as I know the logistics of accessing the collection haven't been worked out yet. The library would be closed at the time of our meetings and to this point in time has functioned as a library resource only for members of the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. Since our move to HCP, Jim & Kathi Morrison have kept our library safe at home  
Thank you Jim & Kathi!

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### Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

Membership Renewal / Application Form 2017

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

Attached is \$30.00 for single membership \_\_\_\_ or attached is \$35.00 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

If you are mailing this form, please mail to:

Vancouver Island Bonsai Society  
Membership Coordinator  
PO Box 8674  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 3S2



I wish I had discovered bonsai at the same age. Sensei Luka someday!

Photo: John M