

VIBS Newsletter May 2020 #1

Enjoying Bonsai on Vancouver Island

(and other places)

Greetings VIBS Enthusiasts,

First, thank you to all those who contributed the following bonsai material to inform and entertain us during these 'interesting' times. Please keep sending us more bonsai stories and information for the June and subsequent newsletters; or even a few thoughts on how you are managing in these times. This is an excellent way to keep connected and support the hobby we all enjoy.



Second, some club business: Your executive this year:

Kevin Ronneseth: President

Brian Stocker: Secretary

Gordon Lidstone: Vice President

jJ Siemens: Director of Membership

Silvia Schmidt: Treasurer

Ben Lyon: Director

The executive has the fun challenge of working out what an executive will do in this unusual year. Our Society's purpose, 'is to further the interest in bonsai as an art and a craft through educational activities and the exchange of information and knowledge between its members, within a fun respectful environment'.

This newsletter, hopefully, is one avenue for accomplishing this. Other club business will follow in subsequent club newsletters.

Third, here are some of the contributions received so far. Any suggestions on improvement for future newsletters are welcome; and help writing articles is very welcome; and strong criticisms will earn you the right to be the editor of the next newsletter 😊.



First things first, and likely later also, some bonsai humour.

I met a lot of new people at the Bonsai Convention. We all exchanged pleasant trees.



Figure 1: Gate to the Backyard

Kevin Ronneseth: With more time on my hands I've taken on new activities. One of these was to build a new gate (Figure 1) to my backyard. After getting my bonsai up on to the benches, I noticed a couple of my twin trunk bonsai had one of the trunks in the pair flushing out much earlier than the other, as shown in Figure 2. Why is this? Was there more sun on one side where the bonsai were bedded down



Figure 2: Left side of maple flushing more than the right

for the winter? Is it a survival tactic in case of a late spring frost? Any thoughts? I am happy to report both sides are now flushing nicely. Just in time for those pesky green cankerworms Ugg! Does anyone have a good method for addressing these other than using BTK?

John Simpson: Here are a few bonsai websites that I look at often.

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheBonsaiStudent?feature=watch>
- <https://www.bonsainut.com/>
- <http://bonsaimirai.com/>
- <https://www.bonsai-nbf.org/japanese-collection/>
- <https://bonsaitonight.com/>

Silvia Schmidt: Here are a few bonsai websites that I look at often.

The attached link is to Bonsai Mirai's "Bonsai Beginner Series".

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6f61Fg1nbGg9D1McgEjk9mAr0sl-iJGX>

There are 10 videos in total which are very well done. Ryan is an excellent teacher.

I follow numerous sites, however, these two are the ones I follow almost daily:

Ryan Neil (I have a membership to Ryan's club) at: www.bonsaimirai.com

and,

Jonas Dupuich at: [www.bonsaitonight.com](https://bonsaitonight.com) (sign up for Jonas' informative newsletters)



Figure 1 The tree's original base

Cam Gray: Here's a photo-series of a current project I have on the go; to fix some issues with the base on a Hawthorne. In a nutshell the base was bad looking, and I opted to air layer the tree, to remove the bottom, and start with a fresh set of roots, from which I can hopefully create a good *Nebari*.



Figure 2 Close up of the current base

Figure 1 The tree's original base. As you can see in figure 2, the base looks a little bit like the fingers on the old yellow pages. I decided to air layer about 4 inches above this. I removed a ring of bark, and placed a small pot (7-11 Slurpee container after son was done with it) of bonsai mix + sphagnum moss into the pot and kept wet for about a yr. In Figure 3 you can see that



Figure 3 An early sneak peek at the new roots

I removed the pot for an early sneak peak. Some roots starting to form. But not ready yet - waited longer until numerous roots popping out.



Figure 4 Shows new shoots popping out all over

Figure 4 shows new shoots popping out all over the tree about a month after cutting it from its original

base. Figure 5 is a recent photo of the tree as it's waking up (ignore the small cuttings I placed in the pot - I was keeping them in the sphagnum to root)



Figure 5 A recent photo of tree waking up

I will let it get hearty over the next year or two. In my experience Hawthornes like direct sun, so once it's established, I'll move it from the shade, into full sun.

Don Lindsay: I have a question regarding wiring which came out of the following two videos which I happened to view sequentially.

Both guys are just learning how to stream video from home during the lockdown.

The first is a video by a respected Danish bonsai practitioner, Morten Albek, who seems to enjoy cold coffee.

I learned an interesting technique for maples, but my curiosity was aroused by his comment about wiring. His expertise is with *Shohin*, but I don't believe his wiring comment was specific to *Shohin*.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv3Lq85Abl8>

The 2nd video is from a well-know UK practitioner, Peter Warren, who mumbles. Towards the end of the video, without comment, he wired in exactly the way that the Dane advised against - wiring only one branch of a tree.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwppqsQrf2k&feature=emb_rel_end

Does anyone have experience with this - one way or the other? I would be very interested in a discussion as I have no wiring experience.

Cheers

Don Lindsay



Squirrel brains?
This one is feeding at my squirrel proof bird feeder. He does have one arm being squished while eating; a believer in 'no pain, no gain' apparently,
Kevin Ronneseth



Greg Nowakowski

Hello Kevin, Thankyou for initiating a discussion about bonsai during these challenging times. Of course, I'm missing a direct approach with our monthly meetings. Also, I prefer not to invite myself to Maurice's place; normally we would meet on average once per month to exchange experiences and ideas. There is no doubt that Maurice is a great guy that knows how to share with others his incredible knowledge of bonsai.

I have a suggestion, that works well with the other club I'm a member of. Computer application Zoom allows group sessions online. It seems to be a very popular form of group discussion and presentations these days. Perhaps someone from the executive group would like to be a facilitator for the teleconferences. I wouldn't expect every member to participate in the sessions - I'd say about 30% most likely would, based on the other club's participation.

I'm myself on self-imposed quarantine. That suits me fine as it allows me to focus on the bonsai garden. My wife Shirley does all the shopping for food (trips for the groceries every two weeks on average). We canceled newspaper delivery and check the mail once per week, with all the careful approach to the letters. We have friendly meetings with our neighbours from time to time, over the fence. And that would be all the contacts with the outside world we have.



I decided this winter, the first time in my life, to propagate from seeds. The small seedlings of *Solanum Pseudocapsicum* (also known as *Christmas or Winter Cherry*) are

doing well. They allow me to experiment with root and leaf pruning, and later with shaping into trees, but most of all, I can watch them growing and developing into small bonsai in real-time. It is a form of exercise that I'd recommend to every bonsai enthusiast. Since I have quite a few of those small plants, I'll make them available to the club members in the form of raffle prizes, once we resume our monthly meetings.

I hope you are doing ok with that virus. In my opinion, total isolation for four weeks would have solved the problem by now. In any case, I wish you and your family well.

Take care, and thank you again for reinitiating our meetings, albeit in such a different format.

Greg N

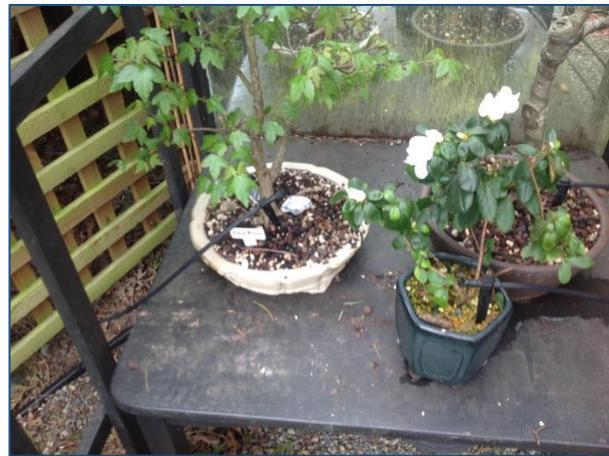
Lynne Majid



Re: my bonsai

Hi everyone, how wonderful to have even more time to enjoy bonsai care and maintenance. I repotted 6 bonsai, several being taken out of the ground, in late February. Because it was still so cold, I rigged up a makeshift greenhouse for their 6-7 weeks of sheltered aftercare. All but one survived.

The big news for me was installing a dedicated irrigation system to include individual spigots to each tree. I've never had a watering system in my yard, so it was a momentous decision, but so glad I did it!



Anyone wanting more info can email me at majidlynne@gmail.com. Pictures to follow, stay well, Lynne

Some Final Thoughts:

I noted earlier, "that we live in interesting times". I asked a friend about how he copes with these large life-changing situations? He replied that his life now has a greater scope, that his experience of life is now larger, that it now includes this new reality. Something to be embraced.

I believe our Bonsai hobby can support us in this new reality. That it helps keep us grounded and that this grounded energy will be registered by those we interact with. People out there can use all the grounded 'bonsai energy' we can produce. So, let's continue to enjoy working with our bonsai, becoming ever more thoughtful and creative in our pursuit of refining our trees.

Again, please keep sending me your contributions for future newsletters. We would like any of your bonsai thoughts, humour, updates, photos you are willing to share. Even if you have shared already, please share some more.

If you have any answers to the questions posed in this newsletter, please send those in. If you have any requests on what else you would like to see or hear about, please tell us.

You can send your contributions to: kevinronneseth@shaw.ca

Thank you, Kevin
Club President

btw: What do I know about bonsai trees?Very Little 😊