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# Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2013

Q3

Highlights from the 2013 International  
Bonsai Convention in Yangzhou, China

Sunrise on Australian Bonsai; BCI 2014  
Queensland, Australia

The 2013 European Bonsai Convention,  
Audincourt, France

Scorpion Rising; A *Juniperus communis*  
'Hemispherica' from southern Italy

The Larch: Deciduous  
Charm, Conifer by Nature

Recaredo; a manifesto  
for a contemporary bonsai



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## President's Message

This is an exciting year for bonsai and stone enthusiasts worldwide. The quality of trees and stones on display at various major venues in different regions of the world is excellent, showing a steady improvement year after year. Our BCI convention was a grand affair thanks to the support we received from our colleagues at the Slender West Lake Scenic Area and from the City of Yangzhou. Soon after the convention, BCI published its 50th anniversary photo book of the 50 best trees and the 50 best stones submitted to our global photo contest. Thanks to the efforts of members of the BCI board and to many of our members, we are moving forward with plans to further improve our services to our members and to promoting bonsai and stone appreciation.

First, some words about our recent convention. Yangzhou city officials informed me that 3,000 Chinese and 300 foreign visitors attended the convention. The combination of the convention facilities at beautiful Slender West Lake Scenic West location and nearly ideal weather resulted in a larger number of visitors than anticipated. So many visitors wanted to see the distinguished slate of demonstrators that they nearly overwhelmed the stage where the demonstrations were being held. It was great to see so many people interested in seeing how superior bonsai are made. We owe a great debt of thanks to the level of organization and planning that went into our convention. Mr. Zhao Qingquan worked with a committee for four years in planning this event. Zhao's leadership and commitment to our convention was exemplary.

BCI has a limited presence in China; however, one of the outcomes of our convention was an agreement between BCI and the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture, the official organization responsible for oversight of penjing hobbyists in China, to promote BCI in China. Articles from our BCI magazine will be translated and published in China and a BCI-China membership group will be formed, one that will conform to Chinese law. We expect to have many new BCI followers in China as a result of this new cooperative effort.

Immediately after the convention, a hardy group of 56 people left Yangzhou on a week-long tour that took the group to different scenic areas, historic locations, and, of course to several fine collections of penjing. This included a visit to the outstanding collection at Tiger Hill in Suzhou and the collection at Huangshan City. The highlight of the tour was the two days spent high in Mount Huang (Yellow Mountains). Hiking the up and down paths took us to one incredible vista after another. Seeing the pine trees growing in the crevices of the steeply rising peaks was inspiring. It was easy to understand how these sheer mountain sides and their clinging pines led to the development of the literati style. Everyone on the tour had an experience of a lifetime.

Initial reactions to our new BCI book, *Best of BCI: 50 Stones, 50 Trees, 50 Years*, has been very positive. The book was published in May and our publisher began shipping copies in early June. We sold nearly 50% of the print run in the first month. This is an incredible response, especially considering the state of hard copy books produced today. If you



We owe a great debt of thanks to the level of organization and planning that went into our convention in China. Mr. Zhao Qingquan worked with a committee for four years in planning this event. Zhao's leadership and commitment to our convention was exemplary.

haven't already ordered your copy, please do so before all the copies are sold. We do not anticipate printing a second edition, so the next few months may be your only opportunity to acquire this important book.

It is not too early to start planning to attend the BCI 2014 convention that will be held on the Gold Coast in northeastern Australia. This will be another great convention and allow attendees to combine the convention with a vacation in Australia or nearby New Zealand. Opportunities like this do not happen often, so I urge our members to seriously consider attending our next convention. Details about the convention, including registration forms, can be found on the BCI website at [bonsai-bci.com](http://bonsai-bci.com).

Finally, I want to encourage you to visit and support the public institutions, mainly botanical gardens and parks that have bonsai and penjing collections on display. These institutions located in many countries deserve and need our support. Recently, the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) in Washington, D.C., home to the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum, is closing to the public three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) due to continued budget cuts. This museum is the largest, oldest, and one of the finest in North America. The USNA has experienced several budget cuts in recent years and staff positions have been eliminated. These institutions need our support. They are the front line of developing an awareness of bonsai and related art forms among the general public. For many people, seeing bonsai and penjing at these institutions is often their first exposure to the art form we cherish. BCI regrets this partial closure and we hope that this is a temporary measure. 🌳

Tom Elias, President  
Bonsai Clubs International



*You are invited to be a part of the BCI Vision.*

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!  
Any donation you can make will help.**

You can make a difference with the following projects:

- Naming Rights for our Annual World Bonsai Styling Competition
- Multi-lingual magazine—Chinese and Spanish edition

*Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!*



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## FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue, we are reporting on the recent and very successful International Bonsai Convention in Yangzhou, sponsored by BCI and hosted and organized by Slender West Lake Scenic Area Organizing Committee and the City of Yangzhou. I have been viewing thousands of photographs and hours upon hours of videos and even though I did not attend, seeing all these images makes me feel like I did. I am thankful for the technology that allows us to revisit the Convention and to the many people who made it happen and who recorded the event. BCI is celebrating its 50th anniversary representing 50 years of volunteer activity by many presidents, vice-presidents, directors, editors, ambassadors, committee chairs and other countless volunteers who have all contributed to making BCI what it is today.

These are, and have been, key individuals that connect and unite cultures, nationalities and special interest groups that are normally close-knit communities, isolated by geography, language and customs. People like these, what sociologists call “bridge people”, brought this Convention to life. Bridge people are immigrants that bring new experiences and knowledge to their adopted land, they are travelers that venture all over the globe forging relationships with people they meet, they are talented individuals that share their art and creativity with kindred spirits in foreign lands. Many live between two or more cultures and help to bridge the gap that often separates us. The BCI organization has been fortunate to have attracted these unique individuals over the years for they have made possible all the “bridges” built by BCI across the globe. With this convention in Yangzhou, BCI has strengthened and reinforced its ties and friendships in China and in 2015, the International Bonsai Convention returns to China in the city of Guangzhou. The current BCI leadership is committed to opening new horizons for BCI and providing new experiences for bonsai and stone appreciation to our members. See for yourself the results of all this work by watching the short video on the recent Convention that was produced by the Slender West Lake organizing committee. You will be impressed with the scope of this event. The link is on the BCI home page.

Other features in this issue are from bonsai artists in Italy, and USA. We also report on bonsai events in France and Italy. Our feature report is from the 2013 convention in Yangzhou and we expanded the magazine by eight pages to showcase the tree and stone exhibit there. Most of us in the West have embraced the Japanese bonsai aesthetic but I wonder what will come next as we are all inspired and stimulated by increased exposure to Chinese penjing and shangshi? 🌳

Joe Grande, Canada ([bcieditor@grandesign.net](mailto:bcieditor@grandesign.net))

## BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

### MISSION STATEMENT

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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*BONSAI & Stone Appreciation Magazine* (ISSN 1068-6193 USPS 901-680) is published quarterly by Bonsai Clubs International, Inc., at 26003 Lake Road, Bay Village, OH 44140, USA, & is sent to its members. Annual membership dues include a 1-year subscription to the Magazine. Back issues are available at the current cover price from our business office. Periodical postage is paid at Cleveland, OH, the USA, and additional mailing offices. This issue is printed in U.S.A. Postmaster: send address changes to *BONSAI & Stone Appreciation Magazine*, P.O. Box 40463, Bay Village, OH 44140-9998.

#### Advertising, Editorial Policy and Deadlines:

For advertising space or rates, please e-mail advertising representatives listed above.

The Magazine reserves the right to edit all materials accepted for publication. Articles requiring extensive editing will be returned to the author with suggestions from the editorial staff. Manuscripts, drawings & photographs, with clear identification for captions, should be provided electronically, on disk, or via email or internet.

Digital images must be provided at 300 dpi resolution for an 8 x 5 inch size minimum.

Authors are requested not to submit articles simultaneously to another publication.

#### PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Month	Closing Date
Q1	J/F/M	November 1
Q2	A/M/J	February 1
Q3	J/A/S	May 1
Q4	O/N/D	August 1



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JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

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**Shangshi and Penjing from IBC 2013 exhibit in Yangzhou:** The penjing is a wind swept *Fraxinus hupehensis*, a species of ash native to Hubei province in China, exhibited by Qu Yi Garden in Shen zhen, China.

The poetic name of the shangshi stone is "Dry Earth." It is a juanwenshi or Spiral Pattern Stone exhibited by the Nanjing Penjing Shangshi Association, Jiangsu province, China. Photo by Gudrun Benz.

More shangshi on page 13 and more penjing on page 18.



By Kath Hughes, UK and Tom Elias, US  
Photos by Kath Hughes, Malcolm Hughes,  
UK; Gudrun Benz, Germany; and Slender  
West Lake Scenic Area Organizing  
Committee, China

H I G H L I G H T S F R O M

2013

International  
Bonsai Convention,  
Yangzhou, China



BCI's 50th  
Anniversary  
Celebrations

**W**hat a way to celebrate fifty years for BCI—an international convention staged for BCI by Yangzhou City, Jiangsu Province, located along the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, around 130 miles north-west of Shanghai.

Yangzhou is a modern city with a very long history of culture and civilization. Renowned throughout China for its famous scenic features as well as poetry, art, penjing and not to be forgotten Huiyang food, Yangzhou City were our hosts for this event and they truly succeeded in making it memorable. Nothing was too much trouble, nothing was left to chance—the hospitality was incredible.



Top; Opening ceremony, first day, the convention is formally opened by convention hosts, and BCI officers. Left to right; Zhu Minyang, Yangzhou Mayor; Glenis Bebb, BCI Vice President; Mao Weiming, Deputy Governor of Jiangsu People's Government; Tom Elias, BCI President and Xie Zhengyi, Secretary of Yangzhou Municipal Party Committee.



Middle column, top to bottom; Dignitaries at the opening ceremony  
Zhao Qingquan, far left, and other Yangzhou and Slender West Lake officials who were part of the planning team for the convention.



For us, the BCI Board, the event started early on the Wednesday morning with a Directors meeting at the Grand Skylight Hotel. A great deal of ground was covered during the day that can only lead to improvements in what BCI offers to its membership. The day included presentations for future BCI Conventions with the 2014 event presented by Lindsay and Glenis Bebb for the Gold Coast of Australia. For 2015, there were two proposals with Chiara Padrini presenting for Puebla, Mexico and a delegation headed by Ng Shin Fat and Huang Jiuwei presenting on behalf of Guangzhou, China. In voting, the Board was unanimous in favor of Guangzhou.



The event for 2016 is already agreed upon and is to be staged in Vilnius, Lithuania whilst I.C. and Helen Su along with Min Hsuan Lo for Chung Hwa, Taiwan, presented the venue for 2017: A generous presentation that had us all anticipating a great occasion.



Board members were elected for the coming term of office and programs for new ventures were discussed and voted upon. The day ended with an excellent buffet dinner at the hotel.



Above, top to bottom; Welcoming speeches were given by Ding Chum, Standing Vice Mayor of Yangzhou; Xie Zhengyi, Secretary of Yangzhou Municipal Party Committee; Tom Elias, BCI President, Zhu Minyang, Yangzhou Mayor.

Above; Zhao Qingquan with past BCI President I.C. Su and his wife and BCI board member Helen Su.





50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

*Top left;* Convention hosts prepare the ceremonial cake.

*Top right;* The inevitable candle blowing and exchanging of awards to commemorate the occasion ensued and finally collapsed in humor as the giant cake became a mass of cream as it was cut and portions handed around.

*Bottom right, facing page and bottom this page;* The speeches were followed by a kaleidoscope of color from dancers, musicians and singers in every conceivable incandescent color you can dream of. This was all captured on video and projected onto a gigantic screen.

Thursday, the first full day of the Convention, started early and gained momentum as the day progressed. An Opening Ceremony in true Chinese style, began with a performance by a bevy of attractive young girl drummers, obviously enjoying the occasion, and was followed with the formal opening in a large ceremonial hall with the inevitable round of speeches from BCI President, Dr. Tom Elias together with a number of local dignitaries comprising the City mayor and representatives of local government. Tom excelled himself with a well-rehearsed introduction in Chinese.

Delegates were then transported to the famous Yangzhou Slender West Lake scenic park, the venue for the exhibitions, demonstrations and trade fair near the world famous penjing garden. This is a vast public

park, part of the renowned Slender West Lake beauty spot. Fortunately, for all, the weather was extremely kind with sunshine and temperatures in the lower 20s, as the entire event was held outside in the large park.

The exhibition included a vast display of 150 or more, large penjing and landscape plantings together with a further exhibition of as many Chinese stones, with an accompanying display of photographs of international stones and trees from the BCI Photo Competition. The Chinese hosts prepared large poster sized prints of each of the 50 best stones and 50 best trees in the BCI 50th anniversary photography contest. An entire building was set aside for the photos that were also used in the BCI new book *Best of BCI: 50 Stones, 50 Trees, 50 Years*.



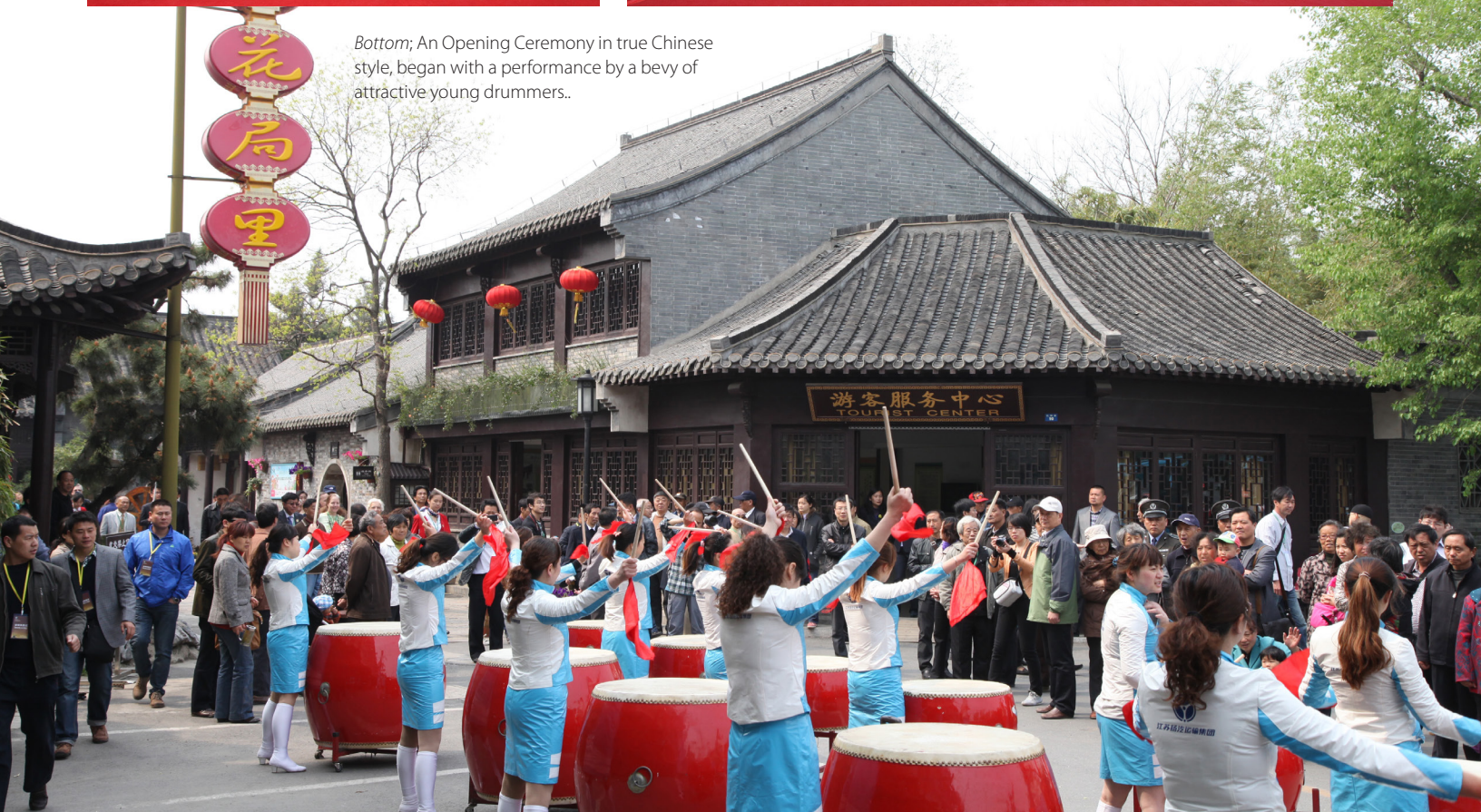
Top row; Vendor area with many trees for sale, some large enough to require serious transport equipment.

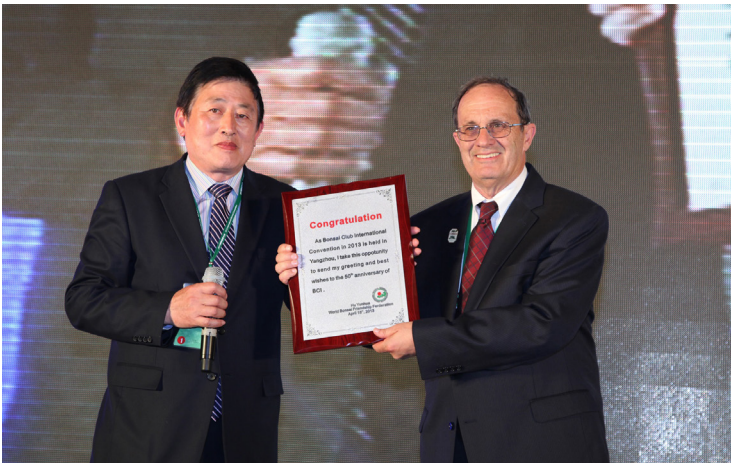


Middle row; This marble monument in Slender West Lake that was installed to commemorate the International convention and BCI's 50th anniversary meeting in Yangzhou. The unveiling took place on the last day of the convention.



Bottom; An Opening Ceremony in true Chinese style, began with a performance by a bevy of attractive young drummers.





At the closing ceremony Hu Yunhua, Chairman of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation presenting BCI president Tom Elias with a plaque with greetings and best wishes to BCI on the convention in Yangzhou. .



Tom Elias, president of BCI presenting I.C. Su with the BCI Distinguished Service Award at the closing ceremonies.

The demonstrations, with the exception of Hu Yunhua who gave a lecture on bonsai and penjing, and Chiara Padrini who gave a lecture on stones, both of which were held in separate halls, were all located on an enormous lawn in individually constructed gazebo-like structures, each with ornate Chinese-style roofs. Demonstrators performing over the two days comprised a great deal of international talent, namely:

Kunio Kobayashi (Japan), Lo Min-Hsuan (Taiwan), Cheng Cheng-Kung (Taiwan), Lindsay Bebb (Australia), David De Groot (U.S.A.), Budi Sulisty (Indonesia) and bonsai masters from China comprising Hu Leguo, Ng Shing-Fat (Hong Kong), Liu Chuangang, Zhao Qingquan together with the notable Chinese potter, Gong Linmin.

The demonstrators worked in three-hour stints, giving the many hundreds present an opportunity to see every kind of material worked upon. If there was a problem, it stemmed from the enthusiasm of the audience, with far too many people trying to watch the demonstrators at work. It was difficult to restrain the enthusiasm and in some instances, the crowds had to be prevented from mounting the stage thus stopping others from viewing the proceedings!

The results, in almost all cases, were some spectacular trees. The material the demonstrators had to work on was large and of a great variety of species. In most cases they were previously styled material that had been allowed to grow out for many years – the demonstrators had scope to produce very stunning results in three to four hours.

That first hectic, activity-filled day finished with the Welcome Banquet and 50 Years of BCI Anniversary Celebrations located in the splendor of the Yangzhou Guest Hotel. Around 200 guests assembled in the luxury of the banqueting hall, ballroom to be royally fed and entertained by the City of Yangzhou. The inevitable speeches, by everyone of significance, was followed by a kaleidoscope of color from dancers, musicians and singers in every conceivable incandescent color you can dream of. This was all captured on video and projected onto a gigantic screen to the extent we were completely overwhelmed by a cacophony of sound and color.

The evening culminated with a vast three-foot highly elaborate and iced birthday cake to celebrate the occasion. The inevitable candle blowing and exchanging of awards to commemorate the occasion ensued and finally collapsed in humor as the giant cake became a mass of cream as it was cut and portions handed around.

Day Two dawned rather cooler and cloudier and appeared to threaten rain. Another morning at the exhibition site and further demonstrations with the crowds rather more controlled than on the previous day.

The afternoon saw us all taken by coach to visit two famous and ancient Chinese classical gardens, Ge Garden and He Garden, both extremely beautiful and as one would expect, totally Chinese—a riot of color, mostly pinks and reds, forty-foot high bamboos, rocks and water features to die for. In all, a very interesting and enjoyable afternoon for inspiration, not to try to re-create!

*Middle right;* Hu Yunhua gave a superb lecture to a packed auditorium on penjing. He talked about the different types of penjing and gave many fine examples of excellent penjing and contrasted those with examples of poor quality trees. This helped people appreciate the qualities of great trees.

*Bottom right;* Chiara Padrini gave a comprehensive lecture on Suiseki in Europe with an overview of the work of collectors from Russia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal and of course, from Italy.



DEMONSTRATIONS

Top left; Kunio Kobayashi (Japan)

Top right; Cheng Cheng-Kung (Taiwan)

Middle left; Hu Leguo (China)

Middle right; Ng Shing-Fat (Hong Kong)

Bottom right; Lo Min-Hsuan (Taiwan)

Bottom left; Lindsay Bebb (Australia)



**Convention Videos at [www.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.bonsai-bci.com)**  
Watch videos from the 2013 International Bonsai Convention on the BCI website for the sights and sounds of this exceptional Convention.  
There is a professionally produced, 10-minute video on the Convention and unedited videos of the many demonstrations. Visit the website often as we post videos and photo albums from this Convention.





After dinner that evening, the day concluded with a boat trip on Yangzhou's Grand Canal—a section of the oldest canal in the world. Spectacular it was; we travelled for an hour by dragon boats, observing a further kaleidoscope of color, this time, the ever-changing scenes of Yangzhou at night along the canal bank.

On the final day of the convention, buses took the attendees from their hotels back to Slender West Lake for additional activities and for a final viewing of the specimens on display and to interact with colleagues from various countries. Immediately after lunch, the BCI Annual General Meeting was held. Approximately thirty people from many countries attended the meeting to be briefed on current and planned BCI activities. This was also an opportunity for BCI officers to obtain important feedback from clubs and members.



**DEMONSTRATIONS**

*Top left;* David De Groot (U.S.A.)

*Top right;* Budi Sulisty (Indonesia)

*Middle;* Liu Chuangang (China)

*Bottom;* Zhao Qingquan (China) and his team with their magnificent creation, a large water-land penjing featuring pine trees.



**Convention Videos at  
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There is a professionally produced, 10-minute video on the Convention and unedited videos of the many demonstrations. Visit the website often as we post videos and photo albums from this Convention.

In the afternoon, Zhao Qingquan lead BCI delegates throughout the new penjing garden, indoors and out-of-doors. Attendees had the opportunity to see some of the finest examples of beautifully groomed Yangzhou style trees and other trees. This facility houses some of the finest examples of penjing in China.

At the request of the Mayor of Yangzhou, Slender West Lake officials erected a large marble monument as a tribute to the convention and BCI's 50th anniversary. Together with officials of the City of Yangzhou, BCI official held a formal unveiling ceremony of the monuments. Immediately afterwards, the large group walked a short distance to the penjing garden for a formal tree planting ceremony, and the unveiling of permanent plaques honoring each of the demonstrators at this convention. Each of the events was carefully orchestrated and unfolded with ease and dignity: A tribute to the officials who worked for four years in planning this huge international event.

That evening, a grand closing banquet was held complete with an hour-long series of performers. This professionally produced entertainment was punctuated with short closing remarks, the presentation of awards, and the presentation of a plaque from the Chairman of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation to BCI President Tom Elias. In his closing remarks, Tom thanked the Yangzhou city officials along with the administrators of Slender West Lake for their excellent planning and support of this convention. His remarks in English and Chinese were clearly appreciated by the Chinese hosts. 🌳



*Above;* Notable Chinese potter, Gong Linmin demonstrated various slab building techniques as he created by hand several containers in front of an appreciative audience.

*Bottom;* The demonstrations were all located on an enormous lawn in individually constructed gazebo-like structures, each with ornate Chinese-style roofs.



# Shangshi

## Chinese Viewing Stones 2013 International Bonsai Convention in Yangzhou, China

Text and Photos by Gudrun Benz, Germany

*Top; Malachite*

*Bottom; Fengli, animal-shaped  
stones, Panda bears. Gobi desert.  
Golden Award*

**W**ith an area of 9.6 million square kilometers, China is the fourth largest country in the world and one of the most populous nations on earth with about 1.3 billion people. But it is also a land of beauty. Yangzhou is one of its oldest cities which history goes back about 2500 years. It is located in Jiangsu Province and thanks to its position on the Grand Canal it developed into a prosperous city. It is famous for its gardens created by merchants who made their fortune in salt and silk. The two key attractions of the city is the Slender West Lake and Daming Si with the nine-story pagoda Xiling, a temple built already in the fifth century in the northwestern suburbs of Yangzhou. Nowadays, Yangzhou is a lively modern city with a population of 4.6 million people.

It was a great opportunity for BCI that the Yangzhou Municipal Government and the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture, Flower Bonsai & Artistic Stone Branch successfully bid for the 2013 BCI convention. Yangzhou is not only famous for its landscaping and poetic painting but also for penjing. In 2009, the Yangzhou Penjing Museum was opened. It is located in Wan Hua Garden of Slender West Lake and houses many traditional forms of penjing trees and water-and-land penjing. Therefore it is ideal as a bonsai convention venue.

The focus of the 2013 convention was on penjing. More than 200 penjing trees and water- and land-penjing were shown at the outdoor exhibition area of Songjiacheng Scenic Spot in Slender West Lake Scenic Area. About 100 viewing stones were exhibited in a room in the building called "Moon City" within the same area. Shangshi are modern Chinese Viewing stones. The convention exhibition was an invitational





Above; Malachite, Bronze Award. Below; Dahua stones, Guangxi Province, China. Silver Award



Above; Bronze Award. Below; Golden Award.



event. All exhibits were of Chinese origin and were selected for exhibition by Nanjing and Shanghai Penjing & Viewing Stone Associations.

Chinese viewing stones are often bigger than Japanese Suiseki. But often they distinguish also in shape and color. Whereas traditional Chinese Scholars' rocks are mostly grey to black limestone of abstract shape, named by their place of origin, the city of Lingbi in Anhui Province, west of Shanghai or Yingde in Guangzhou Province, south China. Taihu and Kunshan stones are also traditional scholar's stones. Nowadays color stones and/or object stones are often preferred. Well known color stones such as Dahua stones are found in the Red River near the city of Dahua in Guangxi Province. They are of very hard material with shiny surface. (Porcelain or pottery stones are Caitao stones and are regarded as separate from





Dahua). Object stones suggesting a human being or an animal are much appreciated which is reflected in the price, mainly if the shape suggests a turtle, symbol of long life, or a dragon, the symbol of the emperor and luck.

In addition to stones also a few minerals were shown such as malachite, turquoise, agate (from the Gobi desert) and some beautiful stone carvings that are typical for Chinese exhibitions.

Chiara Padrini from Italy delivered a comprehensive lecture about Suiseki in Europe. First she made honour to late Willi Benz, showing some of his favorite stones of his collection. Then she gave an overview about works of European collectors from Russia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland,

Top left; Lingbi stone. Anhui Province, China. Silver Award

Bottom Left; Dahua stone. Guangxi Province, China. Silver Award

Top right; Petrified wood, Silver Award

Bottom right; Bird sitting on the nest. Silver Award



Top; Lingbi stone. Anhui Province, China. Bronze Award  
 Bottom Left; Dahua stone. Guangxi Province, China. Silver Award  
 Middle right; Lingbi stone. Anhui Province, China. Bronze Award  
 Bottom right; Dahua stone. Guangxi Province, China. Bronze Award

Facing Page:  
 Top left, right and Middle right; Dahua stones. Guangxi Province, China.  
 Top right and Middle right; Silver Award  
 Middle Left; Animal-shaped stone, "Worm." Bronze Award  
 Bottom left; Animal shaped stone.  
 Bottom right; Black stone. southern China. Bronze Award



France, Spain, Portugal and of course, from Italy. She pointed out the kind of material, which can be found in different European countries, and also the preferred trend of stone appreciation in Europe. At the end of her lecture, the show of Italian stones was accompanied with classical Italian opera music, a very emotional moment where the combination of stones with the beauty of the music created a special atmosphere. 🌸



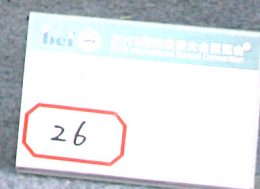
# Penjing Exhibit

**2013 International Bonsai Convention  
in Yangzhou, China**

Photos by the Slender West Lake Scenic  
Area Organizing Committee, Malcolm  
Hughes and Kath Hughes, UK



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Yang Min





Species; *Ficus microcarpa*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Murraya paniculata*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Juniperus formosana*: Exhibitor; Hua Runwei



Species; *Lonicera japonica*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Chen Wenjun



Species; *Pinus thunbergii*: Exhibitor; Lvye Villa



Species; *Distylium chinense*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Fraxinus hupehensis*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Juniperus chinensis*: Exhibitor; Wang Jiqiang



Species; *Sageretia thea*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Pinus densiflora*: Exhibitor: Xia Jinming



Species; *Juniperus formosana*: Exhibitor: Jiangdu Longchuan Bonsai Garden



Species; *Eugenia uniflora*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat

Species; *Celtis sinensis*: Exhibitor; Hong Kong Bonsai & Stone Association





Species: *Juniperus chinensis*. Exhibitor: Yang Guisheng



Species: *Ulmus parvifolia*. Exhibitor: Chen Wenjun



Miniature penjing. Exhibitor: Jin Jianguo, Chen Jie



Land-Water Penjing: Exhibitor; Xu Yongchun



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Xu Yongchun 徐永春



Species; *Bougainvillea spectabilis*:  
Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Blachia siamensis*: Exhibitor; Shen zhen Qu Yi Garden

Species; *Bougainvillea spectabilis*: Exhibitor; Hong Kong Bonsai & Stone Association



Species; *Fraxinus hupehensis*: Exhibitor; Qu Yi Garden: Exhibitor City: Shen zhen



Species; *Buxus sinica*: Exhibitor; Yangzhou Penjing Museum



Species; *Eugenia uniflora*: Exhibitor; Lu Zhiwei



Species; *Celtis sinensis*: Exhibitor; Luo Xiaodong



Species; *Serissa japonica*: Exhibitor; Shen Zhen Qu Yi Garden



Species; *Bougainvillea spectabilis*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat



Species; *Ulmus parvifolia*: Exhibitor; Wang Jiqiang

30

请勿触摸

31



Species; *Sageretia thea*: Exhibitor; Zhen jieqiang



Species; *Sageretia thea*: Exhibitor; Xie Rongyao



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Yangzhou Bonsai Museum



Species; *Sageretia thea*: Exhibitor; Huang Jiuwei



Species; *Juniperus chinensis* Exhibitor; Qu Yi Garden, Shen zhen



Species; *Phyllanthus reticulatus*: Exhibitor: Qiu Bohong



Species; *Juniperus formosana*: Exhibitor: Fragrant Garden



Species; *Juniperus formosana*: Exhibitor: Shi Peiyuan



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Shanghai Botanical Garden



Species; *Murraya paniculata*: Exhibitor; Qu Yi Garden, Shen zhen



Species; *Pinus parviflora*: Exhibitor; Shen Shuiquan



Species; *Eugenia uniflora*: Exhibitor; Hong Kong Bonsai & Stone Association



Species; *Ficus microcarpa*: Exhibitor; Huang Jiuming



Species; *Sageretia thea*: Exhibitor; Yang Min





Species; *Celtis sinensis*: Exhibitor; Luo Xiaodong



Species; *Atalantia buxifolia*: Exhibitor; Luo Xiaodong



Species; *Ficus microcarpa*: Exhibitor; Ng Shing Fat

# The French ConneXion

## The 2013 European Bonsai Convention Audincourt, France

By Kath Hughes, Photos by Malcolm Hughes, UK



Background image; River Moselle

Top insets; The Peugeot museum and part of the Peugeot Collection

Bottom insets; Buildings that make up the centre  
Facing page, bottom right; Traders by a very cold  
riverside

NEW TALENT CONTEST 2013

Top left; Winner 2013 Martin Bonvie Holland

Top center; Runner up Marcus Watts UK

Top right; Raw material for the competitors

Middle right; Competitors at work



Early April, spring so we thought, and it is time for the annual European Bonsai Association Convention. Staged each year in a different member country, with currently nineteen member countries, it gives bonsai enthusiasts the opportunity to see a great variety of European countries and cities – in 2011, Ratingen, Germany, 2012, Ljubljana in Slovenia and now, 2013, Audincourt in east-central France.

Audincourt is located near the Swiss border in the foothills of the Jura Mountains. With its neighboring town Montbéliard, it is home to the Peugeot/Citroen car industry as well as an attractive Swiss-like mountain town.

Having journeyed from the United Kingdom through northern France in glorious spring sunshine, we reached the foothills of the mountains in the renowned Moselle Valley, famous for its fine white wines. Suddenly the glorious sunshine disappeared and was replaced by thick white mist and low dense cloud, very soon to turn into a blindingly thick horizontal blizzard – how quickly weather can change.

That was to be the first taste of the weather in store for the weekend: Maybe not so much blizzards, but sleet, occasional snow and sub-zero temperatures. Bonsai trips in Europe in 2013 seem fated as far as wintery conditions are concerned; first the Noelanders' Trophy in January and now Audincourt in April. Could it be the effects of climate change?



DEMONSTRATIONS

Top left; Francois Jeker France, starts work on the Buxus  
Top right; After some hours  
Bottom right; Completed  
Bottom left; On display



The Convention venue was the Cultural Centre in Audincourt and comprised some six large halls and buildings situated on a vast site on the bank of the Moselle River. Unfortunately for us, the participants, these buildings were spread out at least 75 meters apart on a large landscaped area by the river. The main exhibition was sited in a large, well-lit gallery-like hall, an excellent venue for an exhibition of many quality trees and stones from a variety of European countries, together with a number of trees from the French Bonsai Federation.

The quality trees and stones were recognized by the presentation of awards from the French Bonsai



#### DEMONSTRATIONS

*Top left; Chiharu Imai, Japan start work on a pine*

*Top right; Middle left and Bottom left; Work progresses as the tree starts to take shape*

*Bottom right; Refining*



Federation, the European Bonsai Association and Bonsai Clubs International Awards of Excellence. On behalf of BCI, I selected a special *Carpinus* group, owned by François Jeker, just breaking into bright green spring leaves. In her capacity as a leader within the European Suiseki Association, I asked Gudrun Benz to select a stone worthy of the BCI Award and she chose a stone belonging to Sarka Čermakova of the Czech Republic.

Other buildings provided sites for demonstrations from Koji Hiramatsu and Chiharu Imai from Japan, together with France's leading bonsai master François Jeker; another area housed the demonstrators from the French Federation. Yet another accommodated the annual New Talent Contest competition while the traders, around thirty in number, were located in individual, small open-fronted tents, reminiscent of a medieval pageant and which in fine weather would have been ideal and rather spectacular, but in such weather conditions as we were experiencing, left our hearts bleeding for the poor traders, huddled Eskimo-like in mountains of clothes, selling their wares from icicle encrusted tents, located on somewhat soggy ground.

Working on some challenging collected pines, the demonstrations from the Japanese were good, entertaining and informative. For some, these demonstrations were purely visual as the only translation enjoyed by members of the audience, was from Japanese into French. François Jeker fulfilled our high expectations



as he worked for two days on an enormous Buxus, carving and styling to produce a masterpiece that reflected skill, perseverance and hard work.

The New Talent Contest, with sixteen contestants, winners from competitions in their various countries, entailed the participants working for four hours on some of the most difficult and challenging competitive material ever seen at such an event. These were Korean grown Juniperus chinensis, some two feet in height and similar width, with a vast selection of thick branches and a dense mass of foliage. They truly had to work for their allotted four hours. One or two took the easy way out, removing most of the branches, leaving themselves little to struggle with. The majority accepted the challenge and, all credit to them, produced

EXHIBITION

Top left; BCI Award of Excellence; *Carpinus betulus*, Francois Jeker, France

Middle left; BCI Award of Excellence presented by Gudrun Benz to Sarka Čermakova

Top right; *Rosmarinus officinalis*, David Jamet, France

Bottom; European Suiseki Association Award, Jean Marc Pouillon





EXHIBITION

Top; *Pinus thunbergii*, Libor Kajs Cz R European Bonsai Association award of merit  
 Middle; *Juniperus chinensis*, Rudolf Butzberger, Switzerland  
 Bottom; Shohin composition, Udo Wollenhaupt, Germany

some excellent trees. Clearly, we have some new bonsai masters in the making.

Saturday evening some 240 people attended the Gala Dinner in a most unusual and, can I say, extraordinary venue – the Peugeot Museum. This housed items from 1810 to the present day and comprised around 200 vehicles ranging from the earliest 19th century motorcars and bicycles to present day cars (including Formula 1 Grand Prix models) and futuristic concept cars. All were in pristine condition and in terms of value, amounted to millions. The dining area was located on a mezzanine floor, suspended above a section







EXHIBITION

Facing page, top left; *Juniperus chinensis*, B & H Obermayer, Germany

Top right; *Potentilla fruticosa*, Walter Schmutz, Germany

Bottom left; *Pinus Sylvestris*, Laurent Breysse, France

Bottom right; *Pinus thunbergii*, Bob van Ruitenbeek, Holland

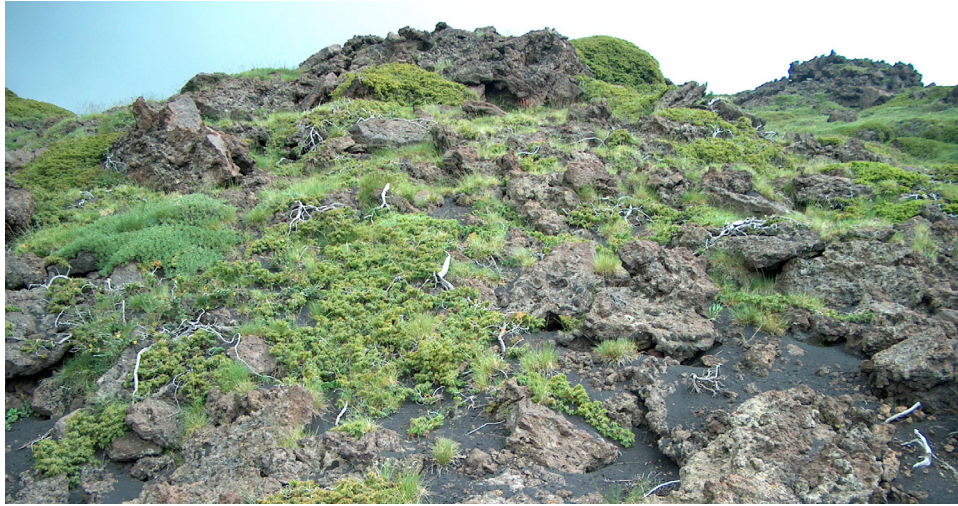
This page, top; *Juniperus sabina*, Nicla Crivelli, Switzerland

Bottom; Character stone, Gudrun Benz collection

of this display of motoring history and memorabilia. The dinner was a relaxing interlude and included entertainment by Kodo drummers, followed by a magician. The evening included a five-course dinner and allowed time for the presentation of awards to all the exhibition winners and New Talent awards together with an 80th birthday presentation to the European Bonsai Association President, Reg Bolton.

This proved to be a full and entertaining event, the exhibition attracting many hundreds of visitors over the Saturday and Sunday, despite the cold and damp weather. Ironically, as we all set off home, the sun chose to come out in all its glory! 🌲





# Scorpion Rising

*A Juniperus communis 'Hemispherica'*  
from southern Italy

Text and Photos  
by Giacomo Pappalardo, Italy

Translation by Joe Grande



1. An image of a Hemispherica juniper in nature among the lava rocks of Etna. In less rocky areas the foliage is hemispherical in shape, hence the name *J. Hemispherica*.

2. The plant after harvesting.

3. The plant on pallets after transplanting.

4. Detail of dead wood weathered by time. The plant is ready for initial processing.

**T**he common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) is a very well-known species in the bonsai world as is *Juniperus rigida*. In this article I present to you Hemispherica, one of the many European varieties of *Juniperus communis* that can be found in southern Italy.

The Juniper Hemispherica grows in the south of Italy at elevations from 1500 to 2500 m. and is found in Sicily and Calabria. This enduring plant can live up to 1000 years and so frugal, it can adapt to live in any climate and soil, tolerating drought and high winds.

In nature it assumes a creeping habit forming foliage pads hemispherical in shape, hence its name.

The plant in question captured my attention in 1999 during one of my usual walks on the slopes of Mount Etna. It was partially hidden by other younger junipers, and I wondered how often I had visited this area but had not noticed it until now.

**The second processing carried out in 2005 after two years from the initial processing performed at Arco (of which I have no photos to show you)**

1. Detail view from the right side of the plant where the cracks are clear natural dry wood and the big dry root that resembles the tail of a big scorpion.
2. Here is a picture of the right side where you can see the steep slope of the tub that allows you to work in the best way.
3. The left side of the plant that shows well the length of the cascade.
4. The juniper two years after the initial processing and ready for a second processing.
5. Detail of the first branch to delete that crosses the trunk.
6. The elimination of branch which later will be further thinned.
7. After the elimination of the branch and processing jin.
8. The plant at the end of the process.



1



4



2



5



6



7



3



8



1



2



3



4



5



6

After my initial attraction I had the opportunity to closely examine it, which I did before I decided to harvest the plant. A hasty analysis allowed me to see several focal points that were worth framing with a nice canopy. The feature that struck me in this plant was dead wood which constituted 80% of the trunk, but this in itself was not a rarity since it's a characteristic of this species at certain altitudes. The old dead wood in this specimen was striking; lines of cracking and chapping were all natural and had a captivating attraction. The plant had a big dead root that resembled the tail of a big scorpion. Future work addressed choosing a design that would highlight the dead wood with its natural fissures and cracks and the role of the canopy would be to frame it to make the tree look natural.

The work was not easy for several reasons. First, the position of the plant in the training container did not allow a complete picture of the lower part of the trunk and second I had some serious doubts about how long the main cascading branch should be. Since it had excellent branching, I decided to keep a good portion of the branches that would make a full cascade and I would have had time to decide what to do.

After the first styling in 2003 during a demonstration in Arco, of which I have no photos to show you, the plant remained in Sicily with a friend while I was transferring to northern Italy. I had the plant for two years after the first styling, I decided to wait for spring (best time to work a juniper) to do a secondary styling. On that occasion, I was able to revise some parts of the plant that I had left untouched during the first operation, such as the first branch, which was fed by another vein along with the main vein that fed the entire crown. This vein crossed the main trunk distracting attention from the trunk and creating confusion to the whole, so I decided to delete it, leaving only the initial part that I turned into a jin. On the canopy, I removed several low branches but remained uncertain about the length of the cascade branch. At this stage it went well with the height of the apex so I would take further time to decide the final height.

**The same year the crown was shortened further.**

1. After deliberation I decided to further shorten the cascading branch.
2. The plant view from the top.
3. Some low branches that I intend to delete.
- 4-5. The moment of the cut and the cut branch.
6. The plant after the elimination of some low branches and definitely improved.

**Facing page; A year later, in 2006, before repotting the tree was further worked for the final styling.**

1. After a year since the last styling and it's time to repot the plant, but before repotting, the plant needs further work.
2. Detail of the vigorous spring foliage.
3. Detail of the trunk that should not be hidden by foliage but framed by it.
4. The plant top view must be further trimmed to emphasize the trunk.



1



2



3



4

Repotting the tree. Note the soil consists entirely of lava rock that in southern Italy is a very good soil but in the north retains too much water.

Note the roots at the bottom of the container. The plant needed a transplant which had been delayed for too long

More branches eliminated during the last redesign.





1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

In spring 2006, the day arrived to repot the plant. I had delayed until then expecting to find a suitable container to the plant that did not arrive on time. So I decided to repot the plant in a provisional pot because the plant was beginning to show the first symptoms of intolerance to lava that in the south of Italy is an excellent soil for cultivation but in northern Italy holds too much water which this species does not tolerate. The hemispherical juniper prefers frequent watering associated with a perfect drainage and little water retention of the soil. For this, I advise pumice in

the early stages of germination and cultivation, and akadama and pumice when it is in a bonsai pot.

During repotting I tried to remove the majority of the very fine lava that remained constantly wet. After a month of uncertainty the tree responded slowly to the transplant, but I had to wait until the spring of 2007 for abundant vegetation that prompted me to style the plant for the third time.

At that moment I had a clear idea of the final length of the foliage that was further

### The bonsai in 2007

1. The final touches to the plant. The foliage is resized to allow more prominence to the trunk and makes the deadwood the real focal point of the plant.
2. The juniper seen from the future front.
3. Detail of deadwood of the upper trunk has a magnetic attraction.
4. Jin also do their part.
5. The foliage in recovery after a shaky start.
- 6-7. The tree once again has grown many roots and is ready for its new pot.
8. Preparing the custom pot I asked John Pitt to make.
9. Settling the tree into its pot using only Akadama.

**Facing page; October 2008, Lo Scorpione, shows its elegance.**

shortened to emphasize the trunk and the dead wood, the real focal points of the plant. So without further delay I shortened the length of the lower branches and repositioned the rest of branches.

The result was in line with the design I had in mind, but I could not display it correctly.

With plants this old and valuable, if you do not have a clear idea on how to proceed, take the time necessary to achieve your objective. Don't make hasty decision from which you cannot recover.

The plant needed two more years of thickening as well as a new pot with a very jagged edge that would allow me to place the thick dead root outside it. The pot was made by my friend John Pitt, a great English ceramic artist. I waited for one year to place it in the new pot.

On the facing page you can see the tree in its new bonsai pot.

Good bonsai to all. 🌲

**Tips for maintaining a *Juniperus communis***

Expose to full sun throughout the year.

Use very porous soils with little water retention (Akadama grain sizes from 4 mm to 8 mm) that allows frequent watering without risk of waterlogging.

Fertilize frequently during their growth cycle with both organic solids for the soil and organic liquids for the foliage.

Diseases: root rot is the only disease that can lead to death of the plant (use antagonistic mycorrhizae or broad-spectrum fungicide), sporadically scale insects are a problem on the small interior branches that get less sun or if you keep the plant in the shade (use contact insecticide). The gray aphid very rarely (use systemic insecticide). Sporadic attacks of bark beetles on weakened plants (use phosphate ester based insecticides).







# Deciduous Charm Conifer by Nature

# LARCH

Text and photos  
by Danilo Scursatone, Italy

Translation by Danilo Scursatone  
and Joe Grande

## *Larix decidua*

**T**he common larch or alpine larch, *Larix decidua*, is a conifer belonging to the large family of *Pinaceae*, native of the mountains of central Europe and widespread across the Alps and Carpathian Mountains. The feature that distinguishes it from most other conifers is that it totally loses its needle-like foliage in winter. Even the inexperienced observer can identify at first sight the larch among a mountain forest in its wintry dress.

The leaves of the larch are needle-like, tender, 2–3 cm long, distributed in clusters of 20–30 needles, arranged on short branches called brachyblasts. The needles are green emerald in March, and become darker green with the advance of the season and then transform into a beautiful golden yellow in autumn before falling.

The larch is a monoecious tree, meaning they have separate male flowers and female flowers on the same plant. Its flowering and fruiting is not so frequent. It happens every 5–10 years on trees with a minimum of 30–40 years of age, and we must consider that the seeds produced by the cones in the first 80 years of the tree's life are sterile. Flowering takes place in the months of April to May, just before the opening of the needles. The female flowers are oval in shape of about 1 cm length of purple-red, while the male flowers are less visible and smaller: 0.5 cm, of yellow color.

The male cones are yellow and deciduous after pollination that occurs in the spring. The cones generated by female flower are green and then, when ripe, light brown, conical-ovoid, 2–6 cm long, 1.5 to 2 cm wide, with 30–70 winged seeds that protrude from the base scales, light green when immature, then brown violet.

The cones ripen in September to October and the propagation of seeds, about 3–4 mm, occurs in October to November when the cones open their side flaps and are ready to disperse. Wind, birds, water and the favorable terrain will do the rest.

The larch, being a microthermal species, is very resistant to cold and is able to survive at the extreme temperature of minus 50° C.

Forest of *Larix decidua* in summer-autumn, Colle Lombarda/ north Italy



Forest of *Larix decidua* in winter dress, Ceresole Reale/ north Italy

A pioneer species that grows on poor and mixed soils, deficient in organic elements critical to other species, nevertheless prefers soils with a poor surface structure but rich in humus below. The biggest natural formations are found commonly in the Alps between 1200m and 2500m and higher, and between 550m and 1500m in Eastern Europe.

Like all pioneer species, larches tend to colonize new territories especially if the environmental conditions are right. The larch, being a sun-loving species, forms pure stands that grow well in sun-drenched areas, or is mixed with red spruce, *Picea abies*, white spruce, *Picea abies* var. *alba*, stone pine, *Pinus cembra*, mountain pine, *Pinus mugo*, and Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*. In the mountains, where sheep farming has destroyed all vegetation, the common larch is slowly returning, opening the way for other conifers, especially spruce.

Of particular interest to bonsai artists is the morphology of this attractive conifer that offers an upright growth habit, straight or curved trunk at the base, and an irregular crown, broad at low altitudes and narrower at higher altitudes to better withstand the impact of heavy snowfall. Its primary branching presents

big and long trunks, curved downward and upward at the ends. The secondary branching presents long thin twigs and pendulous. Tolerates pruning of the branches wrong, being one of the few conifers that can repel sprouts from the trunk, moreover any large ruptures of the same trunk or primary branches, caused by avalanches or extreme weather events. The bark smooth and gray at a young age is very thick, rough and brownish in old larch trees, in which it breaks into scales that reveal the characteristic reddish color of the inner part of the trunk.

Its primary branches are big and long, bent downward and ascending at the ends, while the secondary branches have long, thin and pendulous twigs. It tolerates pruning of incorrect branches, being one of the few conifers able to send out shoots from the trunk larch also tolerate severe breakages in the trunk or primary branches, that are caused by snow or extreme weather events. The bark, smooth and gray at a young age, is very thick, wrinkled and brownish in old specimens. When its scales flake, they reveal the characteristic reddish color of the inner layer of the bark.

Larch can live up to 800 years or more, as in the case of the age-old larches in South Tyrol in St. Gertrude, Ultimo, Italy. In this place, there are three gigantic larch specimens, one of which has a trunk circumference of more than 8m and a height of over 34m, a true millennial giant, a heritage to humanity.

### The larch as bonsai

All these features combine to make the larch particularly suitable for shaping as bonsai. Its great aesthetic value, as an ornamental plant in gardens or in Alpine forestation, makes the larch, from the point of view of bonsai, a unique tree because it combines two characters: the great beauty of deciduous trees that changes with the seasons and the vintage look of a primeval conifer.

The choice of the starting material to be styled as bonsai falls predominantly to older specimens. Both cultivars and those collected in the wild have bark more suitable to express the nature of the tree in its adult stage, the point at which the larch makes the most of its great aesthetic potential. Adult plants result in interesting and believable larch bonsai.

As I have said many times in my articles, the observation of nature is essential to perceive every little detail to be improved in the process of shaping a bonsai tree.

Due to larch having characteristics of conifers and deciduous trees, its shaping must include techniques adapted to the shaping of conifers and those suitable to shaping deciduous trees, applying them correctly at the right time and in respect to the tree's spirit.

The first styling of the starting material involves the study of the tree and recognizing its strengths. Also, assess accurately the future development in accordance with the nature and characteristics of the species. This first step can take a very long time, it is important not to make fatal errors (especially for wild plants). If you do not have a clear idea, I suggest you wait and not rush and assess the tree at different times, or even wait for the natural evolution that sometimes offers unpredictable solutions. Often we observe trees in the wrong context: Haste caused by our need to market, show or exhibit the tree.

A design can be of help: A simple sketch, as the great master John Yoshio Naka used to do, or with the aid of modern techniques, using design software dedicated to prepare a photomontage of the plant in its various stages of development—less attractive and intuitive than the drawings of the great John, but effective.

Choosing the optimal solution for the tree and picking the best time to do the work (you can experience good results during the quiet time of autumn and winter), you can style it according to how established it is, using techniques for conifers: wire, bending of trunks, controlled breaks and creating deadwood depending on the type of work that will be necessary, taking care to protect the precious bark at the points of highest stress by wrapping with raffia before wiring.



Even when considering that this species is highly tolerant to bonsai techniques, it will be necessary to observe a period of rest for the larch after the first styling. I recommend at least two years, during which time we must provide care with appropriate fertilization and refrain from any other type of intervention to help it recover from the trauma of the first shaping.

*Larix decidua* bonsai in autumn dress

Having outlined the structure of our larch, we can proceed to refining, keeping with bonsai techniques suitable for deciduous trees, mainly with pinching and pruning of the secondary branches which must be compact and close to the trunk primary branches. The goal is to obtain a secondary branching, short, dense and rich in brachyblasts.

To compact the primary branching, it is generally pruned at the second to third internode to reduce the overall length of the branch. Successively, in the next growing season, we are going to increase the



*Larix decidua* bonsai in summer dress

branching density by pinching the new twigs issued from the primary branch at the bud's opening, when the branch is still green, keeping 2–3 cm of grown.

This process will facilitate the production of new buds on the branch in parts that were free, essentially a retreat of the buds, which will lead to further compaction of branching. These new buds, in turn, generate new brachyblasts, which will form the secondary branching. Pinching and pruning operations will be repeated until you get the right and natural balance between crown, trunk and branches.

After obtaining the foliage balance necessary for our larch, we can proceed to move it from cultivation pot to bonsai pot, taking care to respect its roots and its important mycorrhizae. It is a good rule, in the transfer from cultivation pot to bonsai pot, to choose the bonsai pot without following aesthetic rules regarding the size, but to favor, if it is necessary, the preservation of the whole root ball.

The bonsai pot can be replaced later (after a period of 3–4 years) with a more appropriately sized pot as long

as this is possible without risking the health or life of our bonsai. If reducing the pot size is not possible, we accept the larger pot without too much trouble and consider this a characteristic of our bonsai and not a defect.

The choice of the pot, from the aesthetic point of view, will follow the rules suggested by the style in which the bonsai was shaped, but above all will have to harmonize with the character of the larch giving naturalness to the whole pot-tree combination. The color of light or dark leather harmonizes well with the bark of the larch, but also gray in different shades can be a good solution. The pot can appear in classic forms or with innovative and sophisticated forms for that specific subject. Much will depend on the taste of the artist, who, having overcome the rules, will be able to find an appropriate solution in form and color to his or her beautiful bonsai larch.

As we have seen, the larch is a species with exceptional features for styling as bonsai and my advice to anyone in the appropriate environment for the cultivation of this conifer is, try one. In all likelihood, there will be great and lasting satisfaction for you as it has been for me. 🌲

## The Larches

### Eurasian

#### Northern, short-bracteates

*Larix decidua*, (syn. *L. europaea*), European Larch. Mountains of central Europe.

*Larix sukaczewii*, Russian Larch. Russia west of Ural Mountains.

*Larix sibirica*, Siberian Larch. Plains of western Siberia.

*Larix gmelinii*, (syn. *L. dahurica*), Dahurian Larch. Plains of central Siberia.

*Larix cajanderi*, Plains of eastern Siberia.

*Larix kaempferi*, (syn. *L. leptolepis*) Japanese Larch. Mountains of central Japan.

*Larix principis-rupprechtii*, Prince Rupprecht's Larch. Mountains of northern China (Shanxi, Hebei).

#### Southern, long-bracteates

*Larix potaninii*, Chinese Larch. Mountains of southwestern China (Sichuan, northern Yunnan).

*Larix himalaica*, Langtang Larch. Mountains of central Himalayas.

*Larix mastersiana*, Masters' Larch. Mountains of western China.

*Larix speciosa*, Yunnan Larch. Mountains of southwest China (southwest Yunnan), northeast Burma.

*Larix griffithii*, (syn. *L. griffithiana*), Himalayan Larch. Mountains of eastern Himalaya

### North American

*Larix laricina*, Tamarack, Larch or American Larch. Parts of Alaska and throughout Canada and the northern United States from the eastern Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic shore.

*Larix lyallii*, Subalpine Larch. Mountains of northwest United States and southwest Canada, at very high altitude.

*Larix occidentalis*, Western Larch. Mountains of northwest United States and southwest Canada, at lower altitudes.

# Sunrise on Australian Bonsai

The 27th National Bonsai Convention, August 2014  
QT Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia will be hosted by  
the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs and BCI

**M**ake plans now to attend next year's national bonsai convention down under and meet up with your bonsai friends from around the world.

Your host will be the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd, the national body representing bonsai clubs and societies throughout Australia and New Zealand. There are currently 59 Member Clubs throughout Australasia.

The Association was formed in Sydney in 1980 and began life under the company name Australian Associated Bonsai Clubs. The Association is managed by an Executive Committee consisting of seven voluntary Directors who serve two year terms of office. Each Member Club and Society is represented on the committee by two Representatives.

The Gold Coast is Australia's premier holiday playground and the venue for this convention will be the QT Gold Coast, the most recently refurbished property on the Gold Coast, Queensland.

QT Gold Coast is situated on the city fringe of Surfers Paradise, with direct access to many airports in Asia from its own international airport and a one-hour drive from Brisbane international airport for people from the Americas and Europe.

The Convention will be hosted in the QT Ballroom with all meals served in the Pipeline Room. The Sunset Room and Lounge will host an exhibition of Australia's premiere bonsai and suiseki. A retail area will be hosted in the Long Beach Room.

There is a choice of restaurants on site, the Stingray Bar, the Bazaar Market place, Yamagen Teppanyaki BBQ Grill and Fixx Cafe. Other facilities include disabled facilities, 24 hour reception, room service, pool, gymnasium, guest laundry service, laundromat and internet cafe.

QT Gold Coast offers five star Gold Coast chic hotel rooms with sleek designer bathrooms, custom design features.

You can choose Mountain River View rooms, offering beautiful views of the surrounding hinterland, or the Ocean View rooms, offering stunning views of the



South Pacific. Both offer a private balcony, workspace, flatscreen HD TV, bespoke bathroom and deluxe amenities. The Ocean View Suite features incredible ocean views, a separate lounge room and private balcony, a powder room and master bedroom. The ensuite bathroom features a Japanese deep-soak bath with views and premium amenities

The 27th National Bonsai Convention is a three-day event where you can register for one, two or all three days.

Full Registration for the convention includes all demonstrations on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, entry to Exhibition and Sales area, lunch, morning and afternoon tea on the three days and Convention kit.

Day Registration includes all demonstrations on the chosen day, entry to Exhibition and Sales area, lunch, morning and afternoon tea and Convention kit.

## Convention Registration details at:

<[www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com)>  
<[www.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.bonsai-bci.com)>  
<[www.aabcltd.org](http://www.aabcltd.org)>

## Hotel Reservations for QT Gold Coast;

Phone: 61 7 5584 1200  
<[www.qtgoldcoast.com.au](http://www.qtgoldcoast.com.au)>

Key in promo code 'CON' for stay dates:  
18–28 August 2014.



**The headliners booked for the 27th National Bonsai Convention are well-known artists with international reputations for excellence.**

**Zhao Qingquan, China.** Zhao is an International bonsai Instructor from China and has devoted himself to bonsai for about forty years. His creations combine Chinese traditional culture with modern aesthetics. He has demonstrated in international bonsai conventions many times having completed more than 100 Chinese Penjing demonstrations in a dozen countries.

He has published more than 10 bonsai books. His latest book *Chinese Penjing (Penjing: The Chinese Art of Bonsai)*, written in English, was published in 2012.

**Shinichi Nakajima, Japan.** Shinichi-san was born in 1948. He is the second Nakajima generation of bonsai masters and operates his own bonsai nursery in Tokyo.

He has travelled all around the world to share his bonsai knowledge as the official representative of the Nippon Bonsai Association.

He is the former President of The Nippon Bonsai Growers Group.

**Chen Wenjuan, China.** Ms Chen Wenjuan is the Bonsai Curator for Mr Xin Changbao's Bonsai Park in Changzhou. She is responsible for the management and creation of bonsai.

Her awards and appearances include demonstrations at the 7th National Bonsai Exhibition in Nanjing, China in 2008, at the WBC in Puerto Rico and at the Hawaii Bonsai Convention in 2009. Also in 2009 Ms Chen's bonsai was selected as one of the 200 Honorable Mentions in WBFF World Bonsai Photo Contest.

In 2010 she demonstrated at the Guangzhou International Bonsai Invitational Exhibition, won Best Creativity Award in Dow Cup, Chinese Penjing Competition of Chinese Penjing Exhibition and won two Golden Prize Awards in Guangzhou International Bonsai Invitational Exhibition. In 2012 Ms Chen conducted a demonstration and workshop at the All India Bonsai Convention and Exhibition.

**Budi Sulisty, Indonesia.** Budi started doing bonsai in 1976. He joined the Indonesian Bonsai Society in 1982 and is considered one of the bonsai pioneers in Indonesia. He started teaching bonsai in 1984.

He has written several books on bonsai in the Indonesian language. His last book *The Tropical Bonsai Gallery*, was published in 2008, in English. He also writes in local and international magazines. Commencing in 1985 he taught bonsai on National Television in Indonesia for almost ten years.

Budi has been invited to give demonstrations, workshops and judge bonsai in several countries in



Asia, Australia, America, Africa and Europe. He was the first person in Indonesia to be awarded by Nippon Bonsai Association for his work *Eugenia uniflora* in 1988 and in 2006 his work *Tamarindus indica* won the runner up prize in the World Bonsai Contest.

Budi was the headliner in the First Asia Pacific Bonsai Convention and the Chief of Operation in the 9th ASPAC Bali. He is a Director of BCI, The Chairman of Indonesian Bonsai Society – Jakarta Chapter and Vice president of The Indonesian Bonsai Society.

**Nikunj and Jyoti Parekh, India.** Nikunj and Jyoti are from Mumbai, the Mecca of bonsai in India and have introduced a vast number of Indians to bonsai. Between the two of them they tend their more than 1000 bonsai at their terraced apartment in Mumbai and at a farm 75km away.

Jyoti began experimenting with tropical trees in the early 1970s and by 1979 both founded Bonsai Study Group of the Indo-Japanese Association. Almost all of the students, personalities and teachers of bonsai in India, at one time or another, have undergone training with them. They have co-authored two books, *Wonderworld of Tropical Bonsai* and *Wonderworld of Bonsai & Saikei*.

They are both widely travelled.

Nikunj is Director for India Region of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation and a Director of Bonsai Clubs International.

**Tony Bebb, Australia.** Tony began bonsai at the age of 13 when he attended his first workshop with Tom Yamamoto.

In 1984, having just turned 17, he started work at the family bonsai nursery in Brisbane, and his father started teaching him the art of bonsai. He worked there for 16 years, learning about, teaching and growing bonsai.

He is a nationally and internationally registered bonsai tutor and demonstrator, and is well respected for his ability and expression, as well as his individualism and freedom of thought.

Tony regularly travels throughout Australia and New Zealand conducting workshops and demonstrations with a number of guest artist appearances at National Conventions in both countries.

He also has the honour of demonstrating at the World Bonsai Convention in China 2013. Tony now conducts private workshops for fellow enthusiasts and is the current President of the Bonsai Society of Queensland.

**Chris Di Nola, Australia.** Chris started bonsai in 1999 and dived in head first and went to as many shows, workshops and classes as possible. Chris loves the challenge of working on collected material, junipers and his favorite style is literati.

Chris has a unique and laid back approach to bonsai and enjoys a good joke or two while sharing the art of bonsai with his mates.

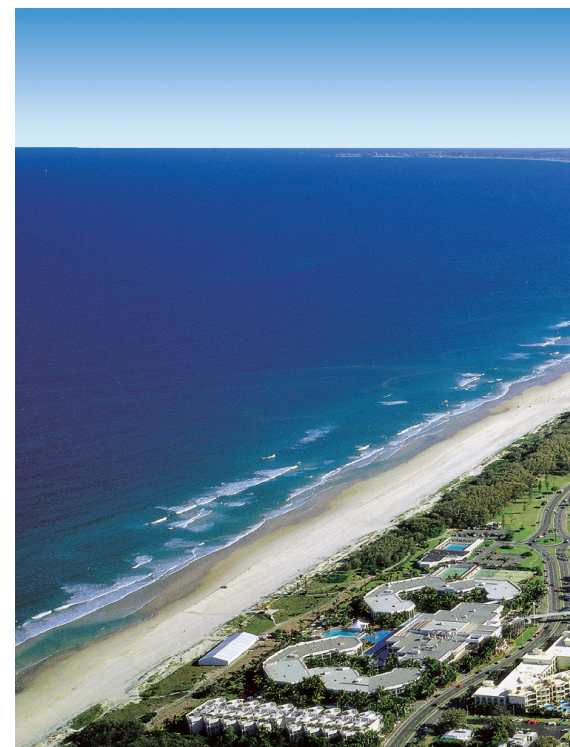


**Joe Morgan-Payler, Australia.** Joe has been involved with bonsai for the last 15 years, during which time he has studied under many of Australia's top artists, visiting tutors as well as in a professional bonsai nursery studying under Mr. Urushibata in Shizuoka, Japan. He enjoys working with all species and is interested in re-styling, refinement and display.

**Frank Michalic, USA.** Bonsai Pendant Workshops. Each workshop participant will create their own bonsai pendant, with the help of second generation bonsai artist Frank Mihalic from the USA. With the instructors help you will make your own bonsai design out of wax, and the wax pendants will be taken back to the USA to be cast and polished in Sterling Silver (925). Then your pendant will be shipped back to you here in Australia.

Frank is one of a few second generation bonsai artists in the United States today. Frank has perfected his craft under the critical eye of his father, bonsai master Tony Mihalic. Tony founded Wildwood Bonsai Gardens in 1946. Tony specializes in the rock and forest styles of bonsai known as Saikei. Frank routinely travels to the Far East to perfect his skills with various world renowned bonsai masters and growers.

In 1979 Frank founded Ichiban Publishing, a publishing company dedicated to bonsai related materials. He wrote and published, *The Art of Bonsai*, releasing it in various formats, the *Bonsai Screen Saver CD*; *Bonsai Online Magazine*; *Bonsai for Kids*





From the far left; Zhao Qingquan, Shinichi Nakajima, Chen Wenjuan, Budi Sulisty, Nikunj Parekh, Jyoti Parekh, Tony Bebb, Chris Di Nola, Joe Morgan-Payler, Frank Michalic, and Tom Elias.

a children's instructional bonsai book, in English, Spanish, French and released in various formats.

Frank has been sculpting and making jewelry since he was a small boy. Always interested in Cameos, he travelled to Torre del Greco, Italy, where he was lucky enough to meet master Cameo carver Giovanni Ventresca. Mr. Ventresca was so excited by Frank's desire and interest in learning how to carve Cameos that he took the time to teach him these Italian old-world Cameo carving techniques.

Frank has also studied Lost Wax Carving and Casting at the Revere Academy of Jewelry in San Francisco, CA.

**Tom Elias, USA.** Suiseki Display Critique. Tom Elias is currently the President of Bonsai Clubs International; Chairman of the View Stone Association of North America, International Consultant to the World Bonsai Friendship Federation and President of the Southern Breeze Tree and Stone Club in southern California.

Tom has written or edited eight books and over 150 articles. This includes the books *Chrysanthemum Stones*, *The Story of Stone Flowers* and *Best of BCI: 50 Stones, 50 Trees, 50 Years*, and over 30 articles on bonsai and stone appreciation. He and his wife, Hiromi, have assembled one of the largest private collections of Chinese viewing stones and Japanese suiseki in the US. Tom also has a successful web site, [www.vsana.org](http://www.vsana.org), on Asian viewing stones. He is a popular lecturer and has given presentations in 12 countries. 🌳



Middle and Bottom left; QT Gold Coast, venue for the convention and the Gold Coast, Queensland.

Right Column; QT Gold Coast hotel rooms and restaurants.



# TEN YEARS LATER

## Torulosa Grove on the Seashore

Text and photos by Lew Buller, USA

**T**his Hollywood juniper saikei was created in the spring of 2003 with trees I had been training for two years and gave only a hint of what it would become over time. It was modeled after Toshio Kawamoto's *A Pine Grove on the Seashore*, except that the pines were replaced by Hollywood junipers, *Juniperus communis* 'Tortulosa'—a great favorite in Southern California. While new to saikei, I knew that most of the requirements for successful development could be met, as I had grown the Torulosa junipers in pots for two years under these conditions.

**Fertilizer:** my usual fertilizers worked

**Sun:** junipers like San Diego sun

**Soil:** they had been growing in my standard bonsai mix

**Water:** Torulosas tolerate alkaline water. Drainage would not be a problem. Although there were no holes in the slate, it sloped from one side to another and would drain freely. The problems would be maintaining the design and transplanting/changing the soil.

By the spring of 2004, the trees had begun to fill out. Now was the time to begin balancing the composition by reducing the foliage of the stronger trees and letting that of the weaker trees grow. I had trimmed them in the pots and in the process, learned that it is difficult to make a torulosa sprout back on inner growth and that if they are trimmed too severely, they will revert to juvenile growth.

In the ground, torulosas are known for their long, spiraling branches, with strong leaders at the tip. Initially, I let the leaders in the saikei grow to help develop the trunks. In the long run, the leaders had to go. They stimulate rapid, vigorous growth that cannot be offset by restricting the roots in small pots. Ultimately, the trees may have to be potted separately, but they will be kept together as long as possible.

Skip forward four years, after the trees had been trimmed at least once each intervening year. In the November 1, 2008 photo, the saikei is not dressed for show. There is no moss. Because moss is hard to find in San Diego (adobe for muck is easy to find; muck is a mixture of adobe or clay and long-fibered peat moss), I only use moss and other vegetation when the planting is going to be shown. To keep the soil from washing away from the roots, I surrounded it with 2-inch screen wire. Roots are not tempted to grow though the screen as they do not like sun.

After the 2008 trim, the leaders are gone, the foliage has been thinned, and the canopy is rounded. While I am still developing trunks (see the 2003 photo), I

Below; Torulosa Grove on the Seashore, 2003

Bottom; Spring, 2004







want sunlight to hit the bottom branches so they will remain low and alive. So the leaders were removed and the branches opened up.

Trees grow. Keeping the proportions of the design was problematic. Removing the center from a whorl of needles slowed the changes, and pinching back the other needles helped retain the design if not the size. As the foliage turns brown when scissors cut across several of the fine scales, pulling out the tip of the needle works better because fewer scales are damaged. Until I get the *Torulosa saikei* ready for show again, the trees will continue to grow. The round-top design will stay.

The saikei needed fresh soil. The trees had been trimmed on a regular basis, but it was not until 2011

that I attempted a change of soil. The fine roots did not crowd one another. Even roots above ground thicken very little, but most of the nutrients in the soil had long ago been washed out and larger particles weathered into smaller particles.

There was no way I was going to remove the trees individually and change soil. That would have made it very difficult, if not impossible, to keep exactly the same composition. The way I changed soil was a combination of three techniques. Trenching around the

*Top left*; Before trimming, November 1, 2008

*Middle left*; After trimming, November 2, 2008

*Top right*; Leaders on *Torulosa saikei*

*Middle right*; Trenched, wedged and cleaned, 2011

*Bottom left*; Muck wall and fresh soil replaced, 2011

*Bottom right*; May 30, 2011



Top; Photo montage of the base from 2004 and the trimmed top from 2011. This acts as my guide as I develop and refine this saikei.

Bottom; The saikei photographed in May, 2013



outside edge, long used in Japan to provide fresh soil to very old trees without removing the trees from the pot, came first. Second, wedges of soil between the trees were removed and replaced with fresh soil. Different spots will be used for wedging the next time soil is changed. Lastly, between one-quarter and one-half an inch of soil was removed from the top, getting rid of any crusty build-up and providing a looser mixture that would allow water to enter more easily.

While changing the soil and applying fresh muck left the saikei short of being ready for show, if I wanted to get it ready for show, all I needed to do was apply a thin layer of fresh muck, attach moss to the new muck, add some small accessory plants, and finish with the fine golden decomposed granite that represents water.

The trees were trimmed again in early 2012 and then let grow. In San Diego, trimming trees between mid-November and mid-January allows them to recover and be show-ready by late April. Next time I show the tree, I will add moss, plants, and decomposed granite to represent water. The final improvement will be a cover of fine black soil to hide the white pumice. The photo above shows how the saikei appears in my backyard now. The top photo shows what I plan for the future. It is a combination of the base from the 2004 trim and the trees from the 2011 trim. This is my guide for the continued development of this saikei. 🌲



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**Bonsai Process:**  
experience,  
knowledge and  
a little help from  
a master

# RECAREDO

**a manifesto for  
a contemporary bonsai**

By Massimo Bandera, Italy

Photos by Sito Farragut and Massimo Bandera

Translation by Joe Grande, Canada

“When you happen to find exceptional material to make a nice bonsai, an inexplicable special bond can occur between the artist and the end client, leading to the formation of a masterpiece. In reality this is rare, but in the history of this bonsai it is precisely what happened: A Phoenician juniper, *Juniperus phoenicea*, that we have called Recaredo, after the Visigoth King of the seventh century, in memory of the force that expresses this bonsai that seems to have fought a thousand battles.”

Kunio Kobayashi first worked on this juniper, a yamadori from southern Spain collected by club Ullastre of Palma de Mallorca, in 2003. The result of the first styling was an informal upright with much deadwood features. Note the first main branch on the right side. These are the only photos showing the first work by Kobayashi. Photos on this page courtesy Juan Avila, Spain.



The simultaneous work imposes a considerable technique to create a perfect bonsai that reflects the strength of nature with a particular harmony that conceals a great balance between the signs of near death seen up close and the rigorous growth of a profuse and impetuous canopy. The carved parts of the old and ancient trees are impressive, and most green parts must be lush.

The strong and victorious contrasts are a wish for a long life for the viewer.

The images of nature and the human world are seen through the eyes of nature itself.

The contemporary bonsai raises art to where the expression becomes an impression.

The result separates items in a two-dimensional abstraction: asymmetry and simplicity are natural keys to confront the observer. The visual experience becomes an emotional moment that evokes memories and deep feelings of the spirit without being limited by the subject and the formal beauty of classicism.

The detail is freed from its subject from which it no longer comes: a contemporary form, as a “design object”, which expresses the purity of the essence of the object.

The simplicity emerges from freeing nothing superfluous, not only in physicality, but also in the way that the viewer is fascinated by the challenge: nature is the real teacher of beauty!

The aesthetic experience becomes an intimate and profound emotion, not only enjoyable, not only artistic, but also spiritual.

Recaredo, like any great contemporary bonsai, is impressive for its aesthetic power, uncommon, but which captures one of the great secrets of nature, one of its most intimate truths: the beauty of asymmetry leaves empty spaces and frees the big energy of the movement. As in a spiritual path there remains nothing superfluous, but only what is truly natural, from the vacuum “everything” and “nothing”.



Above; After Kobayashi worked on this juniper, the original owner sold it to one of my clients, Sito Farragut, who seeing it as a difficult job, asked me to work on it. When I saw it for the first time I fell in love, for I could see the grand bonsai hidden in the bush it had become, neglected for eight years. The photos above show the condition of the juniper before styling it.

The real beauty and uniqueness of the true avant-garde bonsai is the “emptiness,” but it does not mean the absence of something (a sculpture is empty when you miss the person who it should represent). It means absolute reality, empty of determinations and identifications. In fact, all that is determined and qualified has a relative existence and not absolute.

This is the meaning of this bonsai: the absolute reality is empty of every determined shape and as such limited and conditional.

The observer can thus reach the absolute reality of nature emptying the mind of all preconceived idea, of every thought...

The void is the profound essence of the image: Its aesthetic experience, its beauty. 🌲

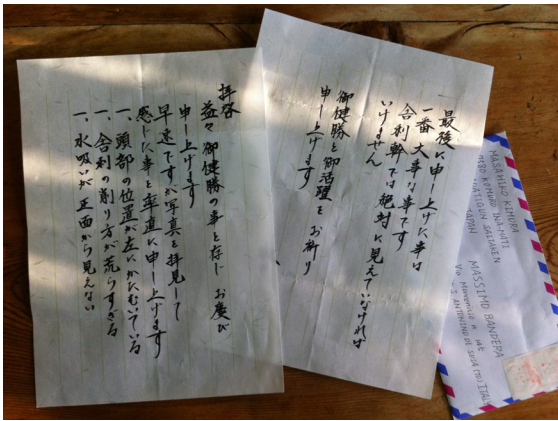
(continued overleaf)



Left; Work starts anew on the Phoenician juniper I named Recaredo, after the Visigoth King of the seventh century. The details below show the refinement of the deadwood and the decision to eliminate the first branch to feature the sculptural drama of the trunk.







Facing page; Four views of Recaredo after I finished the second styling. This is when I wrote to my sensei, Masahiko Kimura, to ask for his advice and opinion. Kimura's been my teacher since 1993. I study with him on my trips to Japan and seek his advice on the more difficult work, something I have done for twenty years, and the teacher is always very helpful.

This page, top left; Kimura's handwritten response and roughly translated, he says; "Massimo Bandera sama, Congratulations for your work and I'm glad you're well and healthy.

I come to the point.

I express my suggestions to improve the work from what I can see from the pictures:

- 1) The position of the vertex is too tilted to the left, position slightly to the right;
- 2) Surface machining of the shari is too chiseled, best to make it more smooth;
- 3) Live vein is not visible enough from the front, turn a little. This third point is the most important because, for a trunk with a shari, the live vein should absolutely be seen.

I give you all the best for your business and wish you good health.

Masahiko Kimura"



Top right; The third styling, following the advice of Masahiko Kimura.

Middle left; Owner Sito Farragut is applying a lime sulphur formula to the deadwood.

Bottom left; Recaredo repotted in a temporary pot and after a season's growth. The pot is rotated to show the live vein on the left side of the shari. The tree is now ready for a special pot with this position in mind but first, the new pot (bottom right) needs a little work. Note the chip and crack on the bottom left.

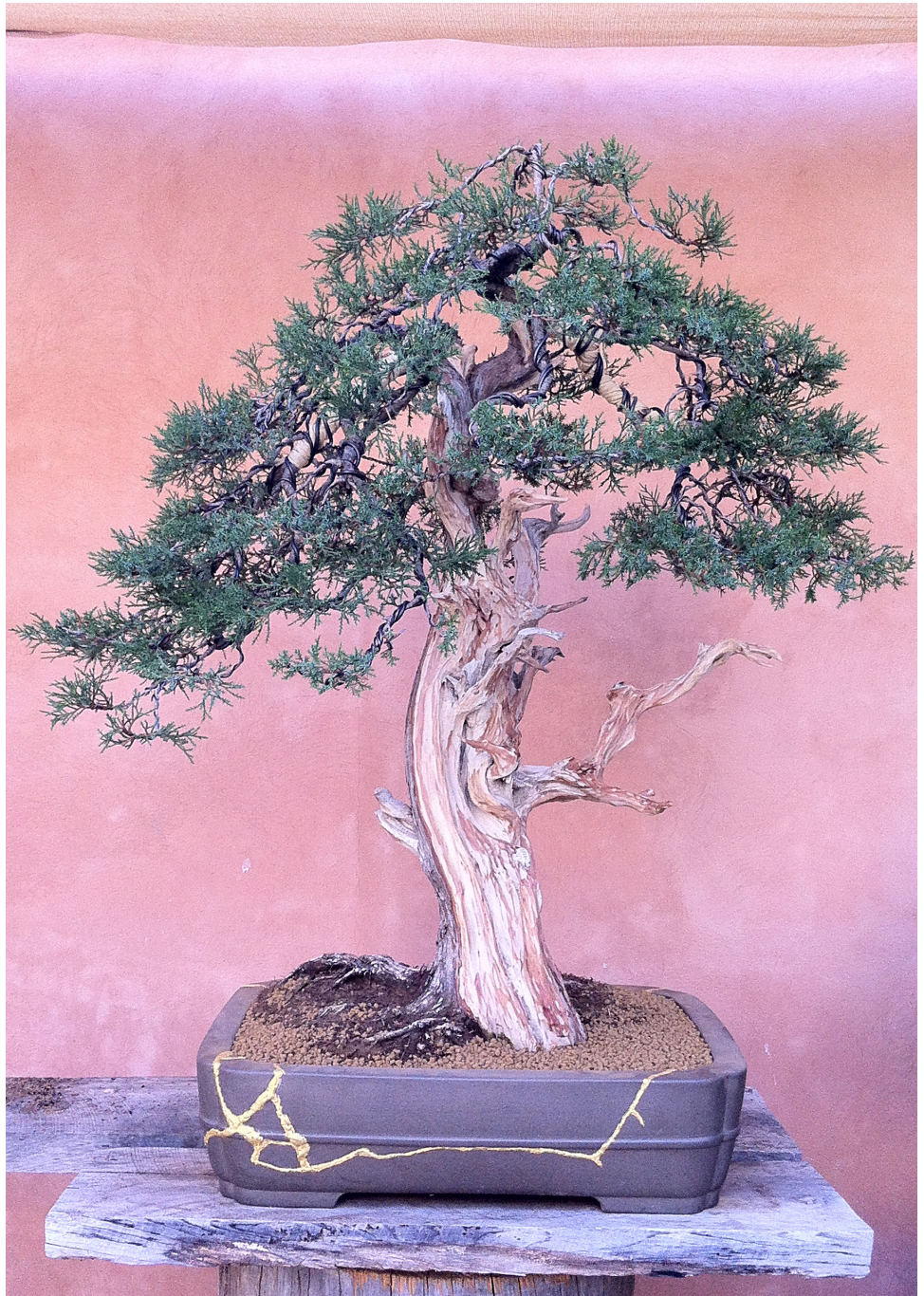




Above; I broke the damaged pot so that I could restore it using an ancient Japanese technique called *Kintsugi*, meaning "golden joinery," that involves gluing together the broken pieces with lacquer resin and gilding the surface with powdered gold to highlight the breaks and to express *wabi* and *mono-no-aware* (literally "the pathos of things"). This creates an awareness of impermanence, or transience of things, and a gentle sadness (or wistfulness) at their passing. *Kintsugi* dates back to 15th Century Japan. Collectors became so enamored of the new art that some were accused of deliberately smashing valuable pottery so it could be repaired with the gold seams of *kintsugi*. *Kintsugi* became closely associated with the ceramic utensils used for Japanese tea ceremony.

Bottom left; The carving on the shari is further refined.

Bottom right; Recaredo after repotting into its new kintsugi container







Recaredo, *Juniperus phoenicea*, h 100 cm.  
photo courtesy Estudi Ramon



## BCI Awards of Excellence at Arcobonsai

By Massimo Bandera, Italy

The 28th Arcobonsai opened Friday, May 3 in the elegant halls of the Municipal Casino, surrounded by stands of the 15th Arcofiori, an exhibition of horticulture and typical products of local agriculture, and closed Sunday night under a light rain that forced more than one exhibitor and latecomers to take shelter. In the two previous days and most of Sunday, the weather was favorable for at least twenty-thousand visitors (a conservative estimate) filling every available space between the stands which offered beautiful bonsai, araki (collected trees from the wild), pots, equipment, soils, complimented by stands of horticultural and local products.

More than 2,500 tickets were sold for the Salone delle Feste which hosted an exhibition of over fifty splendid specimens of bonsai, presented by the Schools and the

Above; Arco town center with vendor stalls.

Left; The Plaque of the President U.B.I., presented by Luciano Granato, was awarded to an olive tree from Medi Bonsai (Spain).

Right; The award "lo difendo l'Ulivo" was awarded by its designer Gianni Picella to a plant of the Primo Cielo Bonsai Club.



Clubs participating in the Trophy. Even the suiseki, though limited in number, were properly presented thanks to Ezio Piovanelli.

In his closing remarks, the president of Arcobonsai, Gabriele Sbaraini, thanked the public authorities (Province of Trento, Town of Arco, Consulate General of Japan in Milan, Community Alto Garda and Ledro, InGarda, A.M.S.A. Spa and Cassa Rurale Alto Garda di Arco) and individuals who have made it possible, even in these difficult economic times, were rewarded for their commitment.

Arcobonsai has confirmed year after year that it is at the top of the bonsai community. As many as forty-one clubs competing for the 12th Arcobonsai Trophy, and five schools have shown with their teaching methods the high level of knowledge, that step by step, are spreading all over the world.

Among the innovations in recent years are volunteer associations offering local cuisine serving thousands of dishes typical to this region.

The President of Arcobonsai also was keen to stress the growing attention that Arco bonsai has been able to at-



tract over the years, becoming the most important market in Europe for scholars and enthusiasts of bonsai. Thanks also to the quality of the experts such as professors Marchesini, Bragazzi, Cipollini and Bonini, who this year were joined by Silvia Orsi. Arcobonsai also featured Kusamono and shitakusa (companion plants). The quality of the exhibition, bonsai market, prebonsai, containers, equipment and literature—thanks to the 47 exhibitors—has become one of the most popular European events for attendance, quality and quantity of the products on display.

At the closing ceremony of the 28th Arconbonsai the winners of numerous prizes were announced. The



award “Io difendo l’Ulivo” was awarded by its designer Gianni Picella to a plant of the Primo Cielo Bonsai Club; The Plaque of the President U.B.I., presented by Luciano Granato, was awarded to an olive tree from Medi Bonsai (Spain) who also received the IBS (Bonsai and Suiseki Instructors) plaque delivered by President Sandro Segneri; The BCI Award of Excellence (Bonsai Clubs International) was represented by the Director Massimo Bandera who awarded Ezio Piovanelli’s suiseki and Bonsai Club Versilia’s Sabina Juniper.

Ezio Piovanelli’s suiseki and Bonsai Club Versilia’s Sabina Juniper were awarded the BCI Award of Excellence by BCI director, Massimo Bandera. The Prize “Città di Arco Memorial, Emilio Parolari” awarded by the public to Bonsai Club Do Groane for the forest of Junipers.



The Prize “Città di Arco Memorial, Emilio Parolari” award by the public who attended the show went to Bonsai Club Do Groane for the forest of Junipers;

In closing, Napoli Bonsai Club was the winner of the Arcobonsai 2013 Trophy, while the Bonsai Club Rivalta e l'Associazione Bonsai Perla dello Ionio came in second and third place.

A bonsai pot that Arcobonsai had made for its 25th anniversary was presented to all the clubs present, non-winners of awards, in memory of the three days. 🌳

Top to Bottom; An example of the high-quality bonsai in Vietnam. Photo by Michal Sebo.

BCI travellers; from left; Rosemarie Voelker, USA; Mai Hoanh Kim, Vietnam; Adriana Bonini and Adriano Bonini, Italy; Chiara Padrini, Italy; Norma Rodriguez, Puerto Rico; Maria Rios, USA; Norma Harvey Hall, Australia; Andrea Zlochova, Republic of Slovakia.

Mrs. Honey Hoang Ny President of Vietnamese Bonsai association welcomes us.

See you next time! From the left: Hoang Ny, Ramon Scattolin, Adriano and Adriana Bonini, Mai Hoanh, Maria Rios and Rosemarie Voelker, Chiara Padrini, Andrea Zlochova, Michal Sebo, Norma Harvey Hall. In front: Norma Rodriguez, Santiano Marita.



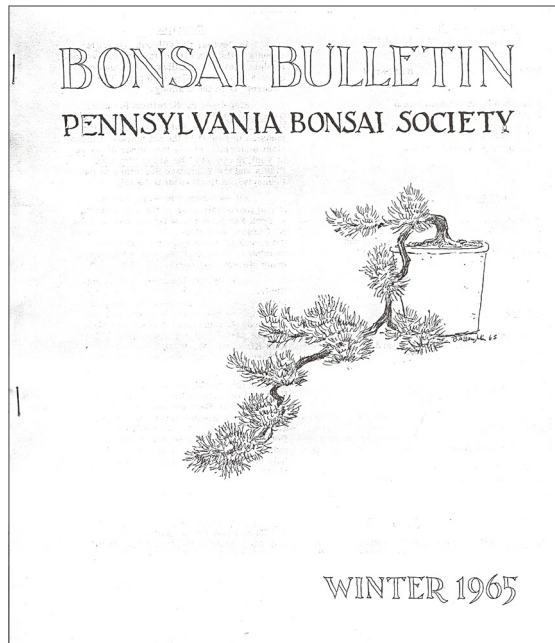
## A Vietnamese Welcome for BCI Visitors

By Chiara Padrini, Italy

On the way to China and the fabulous BCI 50 anniversary convention in Yangzhou I had an amazing tour in Vietnam with a group of friends from many countries.

At our arrival in Ho Chi Min City airport we were warmly welcomed by the Vietnam Bonsai association and its President Mrs. Hoang Ny (Honey) with a orchid necklace. We met many Vietnamese bonsai artists who welcomed our group and we had an interesting exchange of information. Experiences in different countries was the topic of our conversation. Vietnam has a high level in training bonsai and beautiful collections can be seen all over the country. Bonsai technique courses are regularly held in the headquarters of Thanh Tâm bonsai school with an intense teaching activity. 🌳





Top left; *Cedrus atlantica*, donated to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum by Fred and Ernesta Ballard of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Top right; In 1965 a drawing of the bonsai was featured on the cover of the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society Bulletin.

## A New Container for the Blue Atlas Cedar

By Jack Sustic, Curator, National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, U.S. National Arboretum

In 1990 this blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*, *Glauca Group*) was donated to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum by Fred and Ernesta Ballard of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Top left). Fred was a founding member of the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society and served as president of the National Bonsai Foundation from 1990 to 1996. This bonsai has been in training for 52 years and was purchased as a whip from Monrovia Nursery in 1960. While visiting the Ballard's home in the early 1960s, Yuji Yoshimura did the initial styling by dramatically turning the upright whip into a cascade. Later, during a visit to their home, John Naka suggested that an apex be developed, so the topmost branch was turned up to create one. In 1965 a drawing of the bonsai was featured on the cover of the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society Bulletin. (Top right).

For many years I've felt this tree deserved a better container, but finding the right one proved a challenge. As a result, a Bonsai Container Purchase Award Competition was sponsored by the National Bonsai Foundation in 2011 with the purpose of commissioning an American-made container for the tree. Specifications and parameters for the container were provided to artists entering the competition.

Each artist was allowed to submit up to three drawings with their design proposals. Three potters entered the competition. Since I was the person to select the winner, the names of the potters were not disclosed to me. I could tell that all the entries were carefully thought out; as each entrant's attention to detail, design and experience was obvious. They didn't make my job of

selecting one container easy! I started with a general idea of the desirable qualities the container should have. The blue Atlas cedar reminds me of a Japanese white pine in the sense that it has short needles and both species have a similar soft appearance to them. Taking the foliage texture into consideration, it has a softer feel overall when compared to a rugged juniper or pine. The lines of the trunk and branches are sinuous with minimal sharp or abrupt changes in direction.

Because of these elements, the tree needed a container that was both visually soft, yet strong enough to support and complement the overall composition. When deciding on which container to select, I was reminded of an article that Mr. Ballard wrote in 1975. In it he wrote, "Perhaps the only way to learn how to choose a container is to have a friend tell you that you have chosen the wrong one."

Beyond the ability of the container to support a healthy bonsai, pot selection for bonsai is based on solid aesthetic principles coupled with a certain amount of informed subjectivity; what one person likes the next person may not. So armed with some experience I set about selecting the best container.

I finally selected a container submitted by Sara Rayner. Sara has been working as a self taught potter for 37 years. For the last 22 years she has worked solely on creating bonsai containers. Working out of an old carriage house in her home town of Red Wing, Minnesota, she originally became interested in bonsai 24 years ago when she attended a bonsai convention in Minneapolis. The rest, as they say, is history. Sara's distinctive work is highly respected and her containers are a prized possession in any collection. I asked Sara to share some thoughts on the winning

Bottom; Sara Rayner in action





Top left; Blue Atlas Cedar in its new Sara Rayner container.

Middle; A beautiful stone graces the entrance to the Exhibition of the Congress of Sicilian Bonsai Clubs..

Bottom and detail; Olive, Paolo Miano, awarded the Alfio Ragazzi Memorial (Alfio Ragazzi is an Italian Soldier and member of the Messina Bonsai Club who was killed in Nassiriya during the Iraq war)



container. “First and most important it had to be a form that I could work with. If you only do wheel work, then there are limitations. As I only do wheel work, the container would have to be a round, or a rounded square semi-cascade. The tree felt very feminine so I decided to go with round. The concave flare of the design was to give the tree a strong “lift” up and away from the pot wall for more effective negative space and a feeling of being placed on a pedestal. I felt the unglazed dark clay finish with gunmetal blue highlights would work the best in picking up the cast of the needles. I was happy with the choice made by Jack Sustic, and happy with the finished container.”

Thank you, Sara for producing such a fitting piece for our blue Atlas cedar. The tree and new container are now on display in the North American Pavilion to be enjoyed for years to come. 🌲

## A Taste of Sicily, the Nature of the Mediterranean and the Beauty in the Details

Photos and Text by Chiara Padrini, Italy

On 25 and 26 May I returned to Messina in beautiful Sicily to bring the BCI Awards of Excellence to the Congress of Sicilian Clubs organized by the fantastic team of Bonsai Club Messina, led by Giuseppe Sfravara, Ignazio Amenta and Mimmo Abate, under the regional coordination chaired by Franco La Rosa.

The event comprised an exhibition of bonsai and suiseki, the new Sicilian talent competition and demonstrations by Paolo Miano and Michele Andolfo, one of the most successful Italian instructors, with his promising students, Sebastiano Villante and Giovanni Mugnas. The trees and stones from this land blessed by God, generous in scenic beauty and history for those who are lucky enough to live in or pass through it, were appreciated by all.

The Mediterranean nature has done most of the work, demonstrating how it is valid to cultivate the trees of your land, to enhance their beauty and, in the case of stones, to search for materials that the area can offer.

Sicily is the kingdom of the olive, myrtle, rosemary, cork oak, lantana, bougainvillea and here I provide some images of these species, highlighting their great potential and the details that offer exceptional starting





*Top left; Rosemary, Michele Cotugno*



*Top right; Bougainvillea, Mimmo Abate*

*Middle right; Myrtle, Giuseppe Bisignani, I.B.S. Bonsai Award*



*Middle left and Bottom left; Quercus suber, Francesco Giammona*

*Bottom right; Viburnum lantana, Wayfaring Tree, Pietro Samprisi, Sicilian Coordination Award*





material for bonsai. Some trees are in development, others have already achieved a good level of maturity. Bonsai practice has grown greatly in recent years in Sicily thanks to the ongoing teaching of expert instructors and the enthusiasm and passion in the air.

Many prizes were awarded and I had the pleasure of presenting two BCI Awards of Excellence to a Phoenician juniper by Vito Miano and to a Sicilian stone, the Cormorant, with expressive and communicative power, found and owned by Mimmo Abate. 🌲



Top right; BCI Award of Excellence; Phoenician juniper, Vito Miano

Middle right; BCI Award of Excellence; Cormorant, place of origin: Sicily, Mimmo Abate,

Top left; Camel, Giuseppe La Rosa, Small but very impressive stone, winner of Chiara Padrini Suiseki School Award

Bottom right; Cascata (Waterfall), place of origin Sicily, Mimmo Abate, winner of IBS Suiseki Award

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Compiled by Alan Walker, USA. Email; [awbonsai@bellsouth.net](mailto:awbonsai@bellsouth.net) • BCI cannot be responsible for programs and/or presenters, venues, dates, or other details subject to change.

**12-15 September 2013: For the Love of Bonsai:** ABS Learning Seminars hosted by the Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society at the Holiday Inn in Saratoga Springs, NY. Also featuring the Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. Registration is \$260 for ABS members or \$300 for non-members prior to 2-1-13 and \$290/\$310 thereafter. There are material fees for workshops. For details visit [www.loveofbonsai.com](http://www.loveofbonsai.com) or contact Pauline Muth, Seminar Chair at 518-882-1039 or write her at 7 Western Avenue, West Charlton, NY 12010.

**14-15 September 2013: James J. Smith 2013 Juried Bonsai Show & Exhibition** at Port St. Lucie Civic Center, 9221 S.E. Civic Center Place, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952 USA. Admission is free. First prize is \$1000, second is prize \$500, and third prize is \$300.

**25-27 September 2013: WBC 2013 at Jintan, China.** Details at [www.wbff-2013.org/indexaction!pbviewbyid.action?pbclId=213](http://www.wbff-2013.org/indexaction!pbviewbyid.action?pbclId=213).

**10-13 October 2013: V Anniversario del Museo Tatsugoro** at Hotel Comfort Inn at Córdoba, Veracruz, México. Featuring Kunio Kobayashi, Taiga Urushibata, Marc Noelanders, Sean Smith, Lorenzo Contreras, Enrique Castaño, Juan Llanos, Carlos Llanos, José Santiago, Gerardo Palmos, and Gabriel Moreno. Details and registration at [info@tatsugoro.com](mailto:info@tatsugoro.com) or call 1-787-413-3840 or 1-787-993-2180.

**12-13 October 2013: Exposition de Bonsaïs de la Fédération Française de Bonsaï at Maison Rouge, Mertzwiller** (Bas-Rhin, France). Details at [www.matsugawa-bonsai-club.fr/preselection-regionale-2013/](http://www.matsugawa-bonsai-club.fr/preselection-regionale-2013/)

**18-20 October 2013: 12th Koju-Ten** at Zuishinin Temple in Kyoto, Japan by Koju-kai (Official club of All Japan Bonsai Association) phone +81-75-691-5296. Admission: ¥400

**24-27 October 2013: 2013 Biennial South African Bonsai Association Convention** hosted by the Eastern Bonsai Society at Johannesburg, South Africa. Featuring Rob Kempinski, Ryan Neil, and Walter Pall. Details at [bonsai@pixie.co.za](mailto:bonsai@pixie.co.za).

**25-27 October 2013: 26th Kyushu Miyabi-Ten at Grandmesse, Kumamoto in Japan** by the All Japan Shohin Bonsai Association phone +81-75-691-5296. Admission: ¥500

**31 October-3 November 2013: GSBF Convention XXXVI: Bonsai Outside the Box** at Marriott LA Burbank Airport Hotel featuring David DeGroot, Suthin Sukosolvisit, and Peter Warren along with Mauro Stemberger, Kathy Shaner, Dr. Tom Elias, Sean Smith, Cheryl Manning, Al Nelson, John Doi, and Ryan Nichols. Golden State Bonsai Federation also offers pre-convention collecting trips for suiseki and California junipers. Special convention rate of \$99 for the hotel. And a Hollywood Halloween party! Details at [www.gsbfcconvention.org/](http://www.gsbfcconvention.org/)

**31 October-3 November 2013: Shugaten (秋雅展)** is an annual exhibition held at Ueno Green Club in Tokyo (上野グリーンクラブ, Tel: 03-5685-5656) (3-min. walk from Nezu Station on subway Chiyoda Line) by AJSBA (All Japan Shohin-Bonsai Association, 全日本小品 盆栽協会, Tel: 075-691-5488). You can also buy bonsai at the sales corner. Admission: ¥600.

**Saturday, 2 November 2013: LABS 2013** will be hosted by Bonsai Society of Acadiana at the First Methodist Church in New Iberia, LA. Details TBA at [www.LCBSBonsai.org](http://www.LCBSBonsai.org).

**2-3 November 2013: Wigert Nursery Open House** featuring Charles Ceronio of South Africa. Demos are Free to the public and prices for workshops will be announced later this year. Workshop material: Brazilian RainTree, Feather Acacia, and Green Island Ficus. Workshop space is limited. Details at [www.wigertsbonsai.com/](http://www.wigertsbonsai.com/).

**November 2013: 28th Hokuriku Miyabi-Ten** at Kanazawa by the All Japan Shohin Bonsai Association phone +81-75-691-5296. Admission is free.

**November 2013: 34th Taikan-ten (日本盆栽大観展)**, is the biggest annual bonsai exposition in the Kansai (west Japan) area held at Miyako-Messe in Kyoto (京都市勧業館みやこめっせ). 8 minute walk from Higashiyama Sta. on subway Tozai Line or 15 min. by bus from JR Kyoto Station to Kyoto Kaikan-mae Bus Stop. Vendors. Admission: ¥800.

**9-12 January 2014: 39th Gafu-ten** at Miyakomesse in Kyoto Japan (京都市勧業館みやこめっせ). 8 minute walk from Higashiyama Sta. on subway Tozai Line or 15 min. by

bus from JR Kyoto Station to Kyoto Kaikan-mae Bus Stop. Vendors. Admission: ¥800.

**February 2014 from: 88th Kokofu-Ten** at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum at Ueno Park. Admission: ¥1000. Bonsai market is open at the Ueno Green Club near the museum. Japan Bonsai Association phone +81-3-3821-3059.

**February 2014: 3rd Tokai-Miyabi-Ten** at Shonai-Ryokuchi Green Plaza in Nagoya, Japan. Hosted by the All Japan Shohin Bonsai Association. Admission is free. Hosted by the All Japan Shohin Bonsai Association.

**21-23 March 2014: 22nd Shunga-Ten** at Hanamizuki Hall (Mizu-no-Yakata) in Tsurumi-Ryokuchi Park in Osaka, Japan. Admission is free. Hosted by the All Japan Shohin Bonsai Association.

**21-24 August 2014: BCI 2014: Sunrise on Australian Bonsai** will be held at QT Gold Coast Hotel, 7 Elkhorn Street, Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. Featuring Zhao Qinquan and Shinichi Nakajima with Chen Wenjuan, Budi Sulisty, Nikunj & Jyoti Parekh, and Tom Elias as well as Australians, Tony Bebb, Chris Di Nola, and Joe Morgan-Payler. Details at [bonsai-bci.com](http://bonsai-bci.com) and [www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com) and [www.aabcltd.org](http://www.aabcltd.org).

**18 - 21 October 2014: International Bonsai Art & Culture Biennale:** When Art and Culture Meet Through Bonsai in Yogyakarta, Indonesia at the Vrederburg Fortress Museum in concert with the celebration of 258th birthday of Yogyakarta City. Competition for the Sultan Trophy for the best bonsai along with art & cultural activities during the event, e.g. demo of batik drawing, silver jewelry, ceramic making, painting, sculpture, traditional music (gamelan) & dance, and wayang (puppet) show. Details TBA at [www.internationalbonsaibiennale.com](http://www.internationalbonsaibiennale.com) or from Robert Steven at [robertbonsai@hotmail.com](mailto:robertbonsai@hotmail.com).

**September 2015: American Bonsai: Reforged & Refined** hosted by Ryan Neil at the Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR. Details at [www.artisanscupofportland.com](http://www.artisanscupofportland.com).

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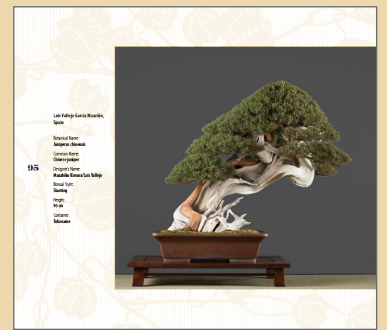
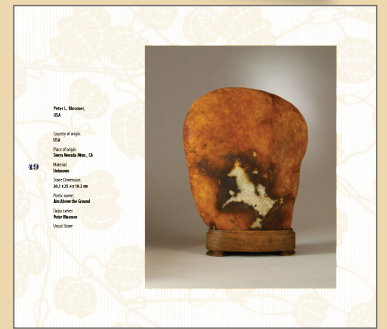
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