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# bcia

# Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2014  
Q1

The 50-Year Journey of an American Bonsai Pioneer;  
Bill Valavanis' love affair with bonsai

Taikan-ten; Kyoto, Japan

An Interview with  
Martin Schmalenberg

New Bonsai Museum  
of Baosheng Garden

Refining a  
Coastal Banksia

Black Pine; Strength  
and Beauty

The Renaissance  
of an Old Pine



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## President's Message

This is an exciting time to be actively involved in the world of bonsai and stone appreciation communities worldwide. Memberships and activities in bonsai societies in many countries declined during 2008-2009 wide spread economic crises. However, since that time, many societies have been experiencing steady growth and improving regional, national, and international meetings. During the last few months, I attended the 2013 Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) convention in Burbank, California in late September, and then, a few weeks later, participated in the Taikan-ten in Kyoto, Japan in late November, 2013. Both were excellent and provided ample opportunities to see outstanding trees and stones.

The GSBF is a state wide organization of California bonsai clubs that has one of the largest number of bonsai hobbyists in North America. Their convention had exhibits of outstanding bonsai, stones, workshops, lectures, and demonstrations by some of the leading younger bonsai artists in North America. Judging from the quality of the programs and the enthusiasm of the attendees, it is easy to see why California has so many great bonsai artists and serious stone collectors. GSBF publishes a bimonthly magazine for its members and, beginning in 2014, this large format publication will convert to a full color publication from its long standing black and white photographs. What I found so refreshing about this convention was the level of enthusiasm of everyone plus the increased cultural diversity of the professional artists and hobbyists. Bonsai is certainly crossing cultural and ethnic lines as it reaches a broader range of people today.

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the 33rd Taikan-ten, the largest exhibit of bonsai in western Japan, is one of my favorite venues. It is held in the spacious Miyako Messe or Kyoto International Exhibition Hall, a large city facility for conventions and meetings. Each year, excellent prized stones from private collections are displayed along with a diversity of different types of bonsai. A large and bustling sales area is adjacent to the exhibits. The atmosphere is a little less formal than the Kokufu-ten exhibit in Tokyo in February. It is a great time to see and talk with friends, many of the great artists, and leaders of the bonsai and stone organizations. The Taikan-ten is organized by the Nippon Bonsai Association. This association is under the new leadership of Mr. Jiro Fukuda, who was elected as Chairperson in May, 2013. An interview with Mr. Fukuda will be published in the Q2 issue of Bonsai and Stone Appreciation magazine.

If you haven't attended one of the major international conventions before, you are missing out on a wonderful experience. Consider attending BCI's next annual meeting that will be held in Australia's Gold Coast from August 21-24, 2014. A great team of international bonsai artists will be conducting demonstrations including Zhao Qingquan from China, Shinichi Nakajima from Japan, Budi Sulisty from Indonesia, and Nikunj and Jyoti Parekh from India. In addition, a team of Australian bonsai artists will perform. Participants will have



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the opportunity to learn how to make a bonsai pendant using the wax carving and casting techniques from the skilled jewelry artist Frank Mihalic. Immediately after the convention, a fabulous post-convention tour provides the opportunity to see some of the best known natural features of Australia. Visit our website at [www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com) to learn more about this exciting event and to register for the convention.

Thanks to each of our members of the BCI community for helping us move forward during the past year. I hope that you have noticed the improvements to our magazine, web site, and convention. This has resulted from the efforts of many of our board members, editor, business manager, and with input from many of our members. Also, we have added over 240 new members last year and have considerably improved the financial health of BCI. This will allow us to implement further improvements this year. We want to provide you, our members, with the information and services that you need. Balancing the production of a hard copy magazine with electronic information on our web site is one way to serve our diverse membership.

We published a new book, *Best of BCI, 50 Stones, 50 Trees, 50 Years*, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our organization. This volume featured outstanding trees and stones from our members throughout the world. We have now sold over 85% of the entire printing in less than nine months. This far exceeded our expectations and this book may be out of print by the time of our 2014 convention in Australia. If you haven't ordered your copy, do so soon or you may find that it is no longer available. 🌳

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!  
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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

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## FROM THE EDITOR

**W**e wish you a happy and prosperous New Year 2014 from everyone at BCI. I hope your trees reward you with lush growth and that you discover the perfect stone.

Sadly, we note the passing away of past BCI president, Mary Holmes Bloomer. Donna Banting, past editor of this magazine recounts Mary's many accomplishments and reveals her passion for people and bonsai. For many years, Mary's cheerful spirit came alive on these pages as she shared her experiences and encouraged us all to do bonsai. We will miss Mary's positive attitude.

Have you noticed lately how bonsai excellence is everywhere? If you know where to look, you'll find it all over this planet. Even the quality of bonsai that are props in television shows and movies are getting better. Some bonsai, usually a juniper, occupy the spotlight briefly as an actor performs "air bonsai," the horticultural equivalent of "air guitar" where actors mime rock musicians. The legacy of Penjing and the international success of Bonsai have permeated our modern world. A world that BCI will share with you in this issue.

We start in Australia where we take you to the permanent home of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia at the National Arboretum Canberra, the pride of bonsai associations throughout the country. Grant Bowie, Australian bonsai artist, shows us step-by-step how he improves an award-winning *Banksia integrifolia*, an Australian tree, with ideal characteristics for training as a bonsai. Australia's Gold Coast is the setting for the 2014 BCI Convention and in this issue, we announce the exciting itinerary of the nine-day post-convention tour of Australia.

Bonsai excellence is alive and well in Rochester, New York, where it is turning fifty. That's how long William N. Valavanis, American bonsai pioneer, has been growing and promoting bonsai with boundless energy and enthusiasm. Marc Arpag, a friend and student of Mr. Valavanis tells all. Next, a five-hour drive south to New Jersey takes us to Martin Schmalenberg's Stillwater Studio where he shares with us his passion for bonsai, stones and Japan.

As we head further east, we stop in Italy where Danilo Scursatone gives us both poetic and practical insights to the "king of bonsai," the Black pine. By chance, Mauro Stemberger acquires a Mugo pine in which he saw great potential. Watch as he transforms a slanting style into a semi cascade.

Collectors and artists in China, bonsai's birthplace, are honoring their legacy by creating significant gardens and museums dedicated to bonsai and penjing. Tom Elias takes us on a tour of Baosheng Gardens and introduces us to the enthusiastic collector who made it happen.

As we complete our trip around the world we are in Japan, the country synonymous with bonsai excellence and attending the 33rd Taikan-ten Bonsai Exhibition, expertly guided by Owen Reich, an American apprenticing there who is totally immersed in bonsai and its culture. 🌳

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

## MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

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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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.

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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.

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| Issue | Month | Closing Date |
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| 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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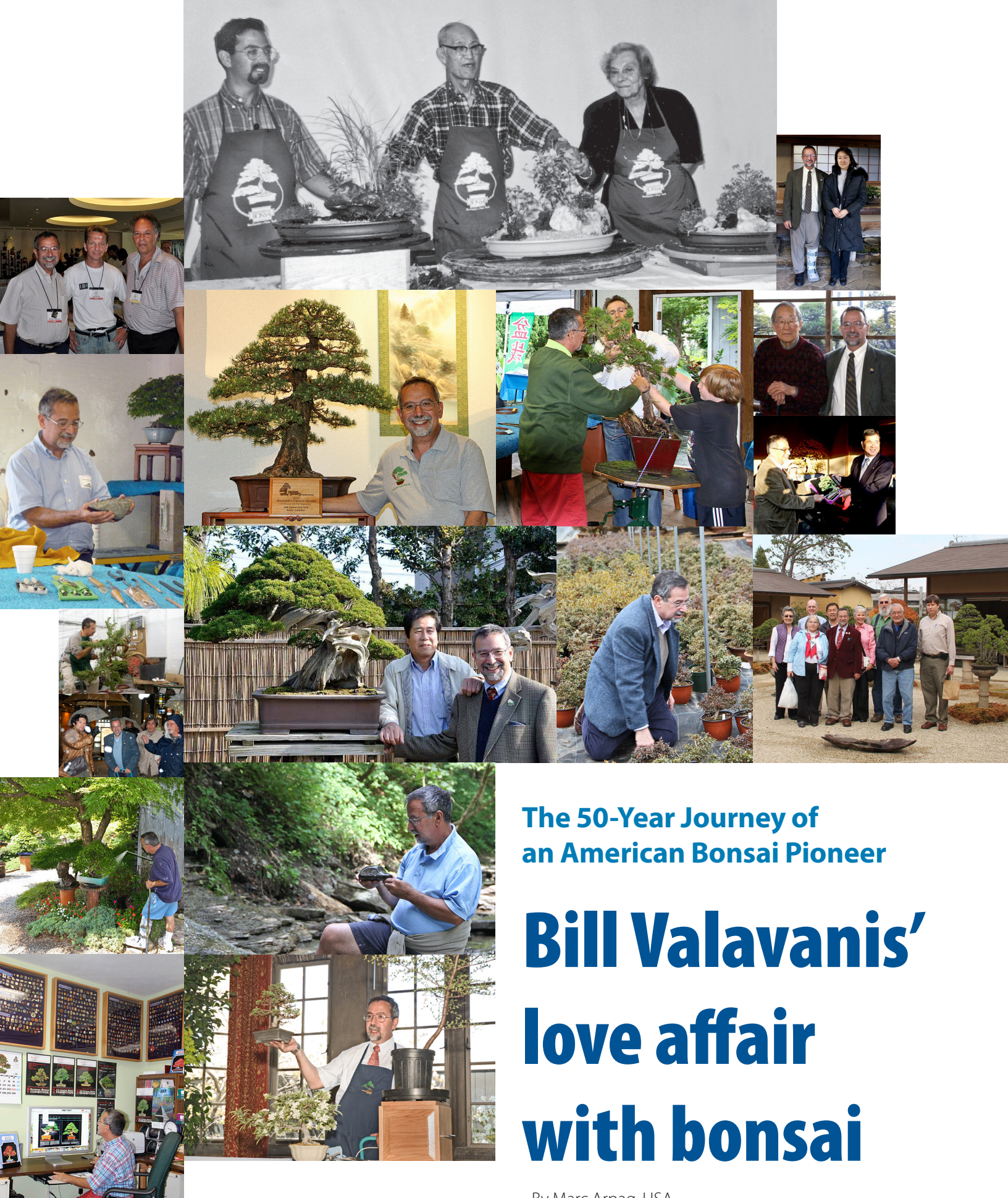
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## ON OUR COVER:

Koto Hime Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum 'Koto Hime'*, grown and trained by William N. Valavanis. This is the original Koto Hime Japanese maple introduced to the American bonsai world where he has taken many thousands of cuttings. It was grown in a three-gallon training pot and reached three feet in height with three main trunks. After the tree was "retired" from a propagation stock plant it was air layered and eventually trained as a multiple trunk style bonsai. The top of the tree which was air layered in June 1986 is featured on page 8.



The 50-Year Journey of  
an American Bonsai Pioneer

# Bill Valavanis' love affair with bonsai

By Marc Arpag, USA  
Photos courtesy William N. Valavanis and friends.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Marc Arpag is an American Bonsai Artist, long time student and friend of Wm. N. Valavanis. He is a board member of the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York and co-founder of the Suiseki Study Group of Upstate New York. His love of nature and art have also lead to his study of Japanese garden design and was honored to create the Welcome Gardens for the U. S. National Bonsai Exhibitions.

Marc has won numerous awards including the Yuji Yoshimura Award, the BCI Award for Outstanding Bonsai and the ABS Finest North American Bonsai Award at the 2nd U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition for his Eastern White Cedar Bonsai.

International Bonsai Master William N. Valavanis has reached an amazing half-century of bonsai passion and dedication. Known around the world as “Bill” due to his down to earth approach, unbounded good nature and unequalled knowledge of all things bonsai. Bill has made friends around the globe from novice students to the most recognized names in the art of bonsai. These days the title “Bonsai Master” is thrown around and even taken by people that have no understanding of what a true master is. A true master never gives himself that title, it is one that is earned and understood by those who have studied in the same discipline and recognize it.

To truly appreciate his 50-year milestone, we must look beyond a quick glance at a staggering list of achievements. Bill’s “love at first sight” turned into a life-long love affair with bonsai. When his journey began, he had an unquenchable thirst for all things bonsai and anything related, as he still does today. The Bill Valavanis of today is even a more dedicated student than when he began 50 years ago. To understand his devotion to study is to begin to understand this great man. Imagine, a never-ending quest for knowledge and insight that followed every known source. Attending two colleges and achieving degrees in ornamental horticulture was only the start to a life long dedication to studies of classical bonsai art. Bill studied with classical bonsai royalty in Japan: Kyuzo Murata, Kakutaro Komuro and the Father of Saikei, Toshio Kawamoto. He also studied the art of ikebana during those early years in Japan. In 1969, he began his study with Yuji Yoshimura for 30 years in America. Yuji’s father was a cofounder of the Nippon Bonsai Society and a renowned authority on bonsai, display and suiseki. Young Bill Valavanis drew from the hearts and minds of these great men.

From an early age Bill not only had an unquenchable thirst for bonsai and learning as much as he could, he also wanted to share what he was learning with others. It is a mark of all great teachers that they never stop learning and love to share their passion and inspire others. Bill has always promoted bonsai and not himself. Like his teacher Yuji Yoshimura, Bill has devoted his life to teaching and sharing bonsai. Looking at all his bonsai pursuits, we find a common thread of education running through all of them. It is clear that this is deeply woven part of his fabric. Both in his studies and in his teaching Bill has literally covered the globe many times over. Twice a year he travels to Japan and has attended the Kokufu-ten over 30 times! These are always extended study sessions for multiple full days of the same exhibition. Year after year, he also returns to study bonsai in the greatest collections around the world and always shares with his students and magazine subscribers. It is sometimes easy to forget where things come from and where credit is due. The brand “International Bonsai”



Korean hornbeam, *Carpinus turczainowii*, trained from a tree collected in the mountains of Korea since the early 1990s. Beginning with a heavy trunk and a couple of branches, fine twigs have been lovingly developed through the decades.



belongs to Bill in the literal, figurative and legal sense, he truly lives it and owns it!

*International Bonsai* has been the most anticipated magazine to be received 4 times per year for over 35 years by Bonsai lovers in 50 countries around the world. Each magazine is a treasure trove of photos, educational ideas and special features. They are a resource that one never tires of and are referred to many times over the years. Looking back it is interesting to see how they continue to improve just when you think they can't get any better! Behind the scenes, there is a tremendous effort, including many "up all night" sessions, to produce this superb publication.

Bill's passion and affection for bonsai has sprouted in many directions. As an artist, he has won many awards but even more importantly, he has created bonsai of unparalleled beauty and refinement. His new book, *Classical Bonsai Art: 50 years of Bonsai Passion*, illustrates the development and exquisite refinement of a selection of 100 masterpiece bonsai. Always true to his mission of bonsai education, Bill shares the details of his thoughts, techniques, history and development for each tree. During a recent seminar at the International Bonsai Arboretum, Yasuo Mitsuya said that he has noticed an emphasis on new techniques that are focused on doing things faster. He lamented that the focus was not on doing things better, just faster. Bill's focus is on achieving excellence and provides a welcome alternative to quick and easy techniques offered on the Internet. Online it is easy to be fooled about the quality of trees. The opportunity to view a Valavanis tree in leaf and with bare branch's clearly confirms that his methods and affection for his bonsai create the excellence he seeks.

As an author, contributor and publisher, his work has expanded, diversified and refined over the year. These works serve to further illustrate both a dedication to excellence and a tireless desire to improve.



Top; Mr. & Mrs. Kyuzo Murata with their daughter in law at Kyuka-en Bonsai Garden in Omiya, Japan, are commenting on photos of Bill's bonsai in June 1985.

Middle; Yuji Yoshimura and Bill Valavanis worked together to give many educational programs. During this program, guidelines for evaluating classical bonsai were presented at an International Bonsai Symposium in the early 1990s.

Bottom; Corin Tomlinson formally apprenticed with Bill Valavanis for several years at the International Bonsai Arboretum in Rochester, New York, as part of his horticultural degree program at Merrist Wood College in England.



Bill has the most extensive personal library of bonsai books, magazines, journals and photographs likely in the world. In his library is every issue of *BCI Bonsai & Stone Appreciation*, *Bonsai: Journal of the American Bonsai Society*, and *International Bonsai* as well as many Japanese and European periodicals. On his shelves are almost every Kokufu-ten exhibition albums and many, many, rare old Japanese books and other exhibition albums. He has dedicated an entire room and half of another with floor to ceiling shelves that serves as an ever-expanding resource. In his archives are over 70,000 images and he draws from both for his many educational programs, presentations and articles. Several years ago Bill's house was destroyed in a fire. His mother was the only one home at the time and was safely evacuated by a neighbor. When Bill arrived home, the fire was raging and flames were shooting out. Once he learned his family was safe, he thought of his beloved books and raced into the burning house to rescue



them. When the firefighters arrived, they found Bill running in and out with arm loads of books. Many of these books were priceless, irreplaceable historic treasures. The firefighters tried to stop Bill from going back, fearing for his safety. Undeterred he told them, "either arrest me or let me finish." Some books were ultimately lost to fire or water as well as a number of boxes containing slides but a great deal of bonsai history was preserved thanks to the devotion of this life-long scholar. Offers to help were received from around the world as friends learned of his loss.

Bill has faced health issues that have caused him to break bones, wear casts, braces and use a scooter or crutches to get around. There are witnesses around the world that can testify that this may be inconvenient but it has not slowed him down. In fact, he is even faster on his scooter and it seems to please him.

From house fires to health issues, he has faced many obstacles and challenges, each one overcome. Many times during his life he has been told something could not be done and of course he chosen to do it and do it well.

There was a void in bonsai in the USA that was talked about for many years, the lack of a national exhibition. It was said that it could not be done; it would be impossible. Bill decided to accept the challenge and risk so the first U.S. National Exhibition could be born on October 10, 2008. There have been two more, June 12–13, 2010 and on June 9–10, 2012. The fourth is scheduled for September 13–14, 2014. They stand as historic and important milestones in American bonsai and the exhibition albums among the finest ever published in quality of photographs and reproduction.

Bill has never followed sports but he does share something with world-class athletes. When fans think they could perform like these athletes, what they see is only the performance, not the dedicated training, study, commitment and sacrifice that come first. Like

those world class athletes, Bill makes what he does look easy. Not because it is, but because of the enormous effort in preparation that comes first. This is true of all Bill's endeavors.

International Bonsai Symposiums, Seminars and Colloquiums have been providing in-depth and broad-ranging bonsai learning and fellowship for thousands of attendees for over 30 years. During that time, over one hundred world-class bonsai artists have shared their expertise and many young artists were given there first opportunity to reach a large audience thanks to Mr. Valavanis. Topics of special interest such as shohin bonsai, suiseiki and display have been offered to broaden the appreciation of these arts.

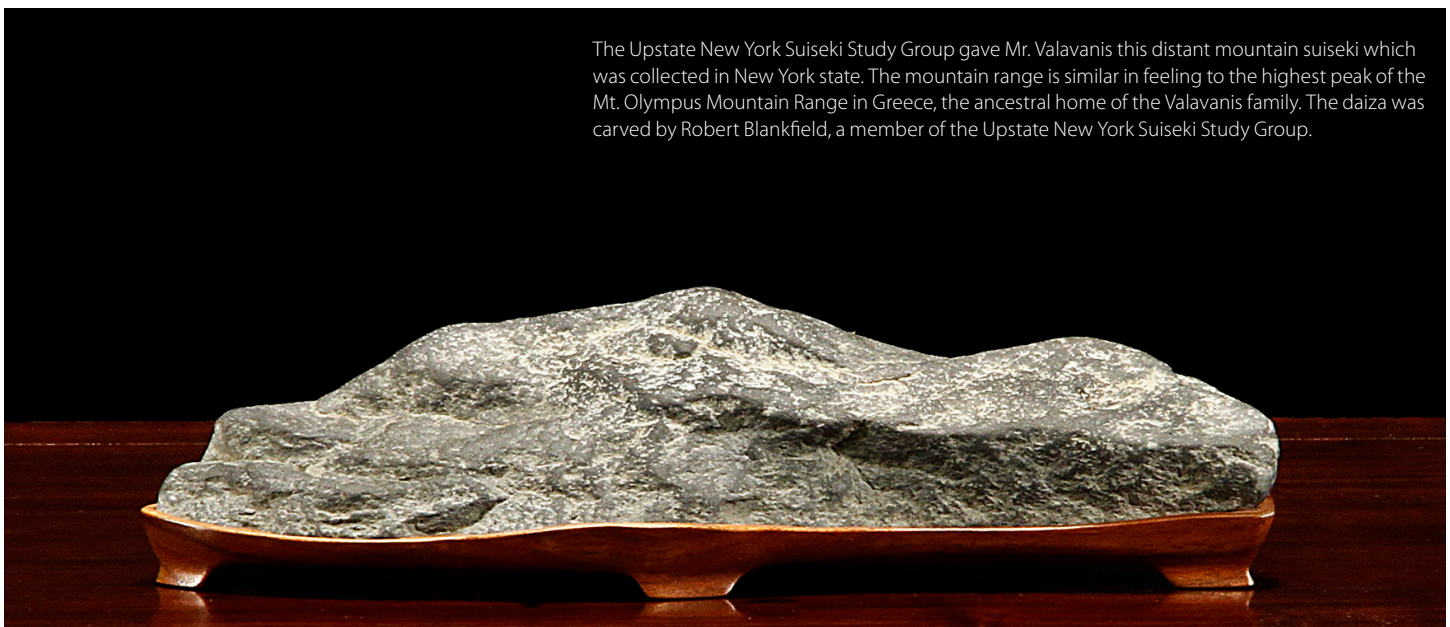
The art of suiseiki has long been appreciated by those in bonsai and it is an art that Toshiji Yoshimura shared with his son Yuji. Yuji Yoshimura authored the earliest suiseiki book in English and also shared this knowledge, insight and love of suiseiki with Bill. Through his magazine with in-depth features as well as many seminars, workshops and lectures, and through his involvement with the International Viewing Stone Symposiums, Bill has been instrumental in the growth understanding and appreciation of the art of suiseiki. Bill is also a cofounded and the spiritual leader of the Suiseiki Study Group of Upstate New York.

*Top;* Tamogawa water pool stone from the Valavanis Collection. When Yuji Yoshimura was 19 years old (1940) he rode his bicycle from his father's bonsai garden in Tokyo to Omiya Bonsai Village and purchased the suiseiki from bonsai master and suiseiki authority Kyuzo Murata. At that time it was estimated to have been appreciated by bonsai and suiseiki lovers for about 150 years. Mr. Valavanis purchased the suiseiki at Yoshimura's auction in 1975. The custom made storage box was hand crafted by Sean Smith and the history of this suiseiki was written on the inside box cover in Japanese by Seiji Morimae.

*Middle;* During the summer season the Tamogawa water pool stone is displayed in a bronze water basin.



The Upstate New York Suiseiki Study Group gave Mr. Valavanis this distant mountain suiseiki which was collected in New York state. The mountain range is similar in feeling to the highest peak of the Mt. Olympus Mountain Range in Greece, the ancestral home of the Valavanis family. The daiza was carved by Robert Blankfield, a member of the Upstate New York Suiseiki Study Group.





Top; Koto Hime Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum* 'Koto Hime,' trained from an air layer rooted in 1986. This bonsai was originally the top of the bonsai featured on the cover.

Bottom; Dwarf Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris* 'RAF,' trained from a container grown young seedling since the early 1970s. Five days were necessary to prepare this bonsai for the 2013, 36th Midwest Bonsai Show at the Chicago Botanic Garden where it placed First in the Professional Division.

Mr. Valavanis is also a great supporter, ambassador and friend of bonsai in the USA and around the world. In the past two years alone, he has done more for bonsai than most professionals will in their lifetime. With teaching and study engagements, he has crossed the Pacific Ocean eight times this year alone. He has authored three important books, *Bonsai Fine Art and Nature*, *3rd US National Exhibition Album* and *Classical Bonsai Art: 50 Years of Passion*, during this short span as well. He has held the International Bonsai Colloquium, another Symposium, the 3rd US National Exhibition, as well exhibiting and promoting the new "Winter Silhouette" Show in

North Carolina. He has also attended many regional Bonsai events to teach, exhibit and participate as a vendor. He has hosted two more Suiseki Study group Exhibitions as well as continued as an organizer of the International Viewing Stone Symposium held in Harrisburg, PA. There is a saying if you want something done, give it to a busy man. Bill has found time to teach basic, intermediate and advanced bonsai in his studio, start a local bonsai meet-up group and create a new blog making frequent and fascinating posts to "Valavanis Bonsai Blog, Welcome to my Bonsai World!" His blog currently has had close to 50,000 visitors already. Bill is also very active in the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York and is currently Vice President. His contributions are the primary reason this group is 150 members strong and contributes so much to the bonsai community. Bill is active with his church and provides flowers and displays during the year as well as helps out with the annual Greek festival serving great food to festival goers.

Our local landscape association has been blessed with Bills leadership and support of the annual "Gardenscape" show and also "Garden Artisans." Serving on planning committees, as a judge for displays, giving demos and lectures as well as creating award-winning displays of bonsai in garden settings, the local community is a better place too.

The International Arboretum is treasure to all who come to marvel at the collection of some of the finest bonsai in the USA. Highly developed and refined specimens as well as the tokonoma displays have amazed visitors from around the country as well as the world. It is here that Bill has introduced many cultivars to the USA and also where you can find the Valavanis Cypress in bonsai and in the landscape.

William N. Valavanis is much like the masterpiece bonsai he has created. His "nebari," or his roots, are deep and widely radiating having drawn from the best sources. His trunk, the body of knowledge and insight to this art, are full of character and continue to widen and branch out. His branches, areas of interest, continue to develop, ramify and refine, as does his quest for insight while sharing with the world.

In June 2013, a special Colloquium and Exhibition celebrating Bill's 50 years of bonsai creation and passion was held in Rochester, New York. Countless hours were spent in preparing and planning the display. No detail was overlooked. The relationship of all bonsai, pots, stands, accents, suiseki and memorial elements were considered. The result was amazing harmony and beauty that created a magical atmosphere. At the banquet, Bill was presented with two special gifts. The first, a beautiful green bound hard cover book of letters expressing appreciation and congratulation's from friends around the world. Lettered in gold was the title "William N. Valavanis 50 Years of Passion." Ronald Maggio presented the book to Bill on behalf of those who wrote.

Seiju elm, *Ulmus parvifolia* 'Seiju,' trained from a young field grown plant since the early 1980s. The well tapered formal upright trunk without a visual break stands firmly on the well developed surface roots. Dedicated trimming for many years has developed excellent twig ramification.





Top; Seigen Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum* 'Seigen,' trained from a young grafted tree since the early 1970s. The intense red foliage contrasts sharply with the dark blue container. This bonsai received an "Exceptional Tree Award" in the 2013 World Bonsai Friendship Federation Photo Contest.

Bottom; Silverberry, *Eleagnus pungens*, trained in the two line cascade style. The handmade American container by Ron Lang was a gift to Mr. Valavanis to commemorate his 50th year of bonsai study.



The second was a custom, handmade, commemorative bonsai container made by Ron Lang. The pot was commissioned by a group of Bill's loyal friends known as "the Crew." Jon Robbins and Marc Arpag presented the pot to Bill.

Yuji Yoshimura's daughter Emi, shared with me the following, "Recently, I think about what my father tried to teach to everyone through bonsai. I think it is not just skills. Through the beauty of bonsai he wanted to convey the respect for nature and through the hard efforts in making bonsai, I think that he wanted to show that it would develop ones inner self. I am still thinking about this".

Bill is the embodiment of the true spirit of bonsai friendship, respect, love of nature and people and development of inner spirit shared through bonsai. I know that his teachers are as proud as we are thankful.

We are all fortunate that William N. Valavanis continues to share his passion and creations with the world! 🌳



Red leaf hornbeam, *Carpinus laxiflora*, trained from a young container grown seedling by Mr. Valavanis for over 35 years. It has received numerous awards since 2006 and in 2011 the Best of Show at the combined convention of Bonsai Clubs International and the American Bonsai Society.

# Bonsai Artistry and a Passion for Stones in the Garden State



Above, Japanese white pine, *Pinus parviflora*, 'Ibo Kan'.

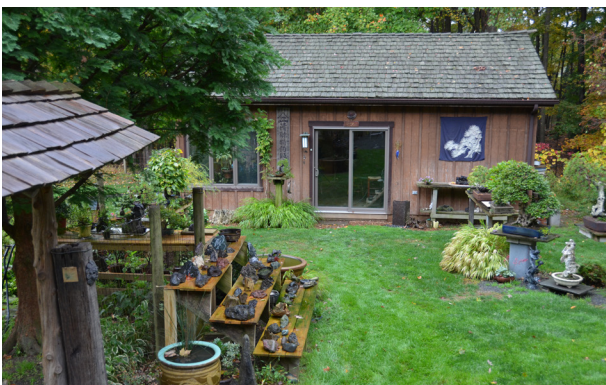
## An Interview with Martin Schmalenberg

By Joe Grande, Canada

Photos by John White, USA

**T**he Township of Stillwater, Sussex County, New Jersey, a rural farming community with a long history of dairy farming, was first settled in the eighteenth century by German immigrants. Evidence of their settlement remains in the architecture of the grist mills, lime kilns, and stone houses located throughout the valley. Here, in America's Garden State, is where you'll find Stillwater Studio and the home of Martin Schmalenberg, bonsai artist and teacher.

Martin developed the curriculum and taught Japanese and Chinese history, culture and religion at Blair Academy in Blairstown, NJ, for over twenty years and has been growing bonsai and collecting stones for over forty years. He has authored numerous articles on bonsai and Chinese Scholar stones in various horticultural journals and has been a frequent teacher of bonsai classes and workshops throughout the United States. He has a personal collection of over 150 bonsai and is a passionate collector of viewing stones from around the world. In 1986, Martin paid homage to his bonsai pursuits by designing and building a Japanese-style house using traditional and native materials. His friend and colleague Pauline Muth, a teacher herself and a supervisor of teachers, describes Martin as "the true artistic type, his talent second to none and his teaching style is top level." He recently authored a book, *North American Bonsai*, 2007, published by the American Bonsai Society (ABS) and has won numerous awards for bonsai design. Another labor of love has been his Japanese-inspired garden complete with beautiful indigenous landscape stones Martin has sourced and placed himself. Here then is an interview with Martin discussing his life in bonsai and stones.





Top; Procumbens Juniper, *Juniperus procumbens*.

Bottom left; Jack Pine, *Pinus banksiana*, 250+ years old.

Bottom right; Jack Pine, *Pinus banksiana*, 250+ years old.



**bci:** Tell us how you came to teach Japanese and Chinese history, culture and religion at Blairstown, New Jersey.

**ms:** I was in charge of the grounds at Blair Academy, but the faculty were fascinated whenever I brought bonsai into the art gallery. The Department head approached me one day and asked if I would be interested in teaching a senior elective course in Japanese history and culture. Not having any formal schooling on the subject I was amazed that he asked me. But, since I was so involved in “things Japanese,” I knew quite a bit about Japan from my hobby. So I tried, and a record number of kids signed up for it! Then I was asked “How about China?” So on it went, and I spent 22 years crafting their curriculum and teaching Asian Studies at Blair. One of the most rewarding aspects of this encounter, was that I found out that I was a natural teacher and that people responded favorably.

**bci:** What first inspired you to grow and collect bonsai?

**ms:** Like many others back in the day, I saw the little Sunset book on bonsai and it hit me like a freight train. That was 1972. I didn’t know anyone that was teaching it or if there were any books on it, so I labored on my own until 1981 when I met Yuji Yoshimura at the New York Botanical Garden and then Bill Valavanis.

**bci:** When did you know that bonsai would become a significant part of your life and what changes did this bring about to your lifestyle, your teaching career and your family life?

**ms:** It became an instant passion and so I built a small garden and had a few trees in it. In 1982, I went on a tour of Japan to see gardens and bonsai, and it overwhelmed me. I had to have more gardens and a Japanese styled house! When the tour was over, I didn’t





go back home. I stayed with some strangers for another month in Tokyo and suburbs visiting gardens. I spent a week with saikei master Toshio Kawamoto in his urban studio, and I was in heaven. When I came home, I started to tear my house apart and designed a Japanese styled home that was finished about 1987.

**bci:** What motivated you to add viewing stones to your bonsai practice and how does this enrich your experience and collection?

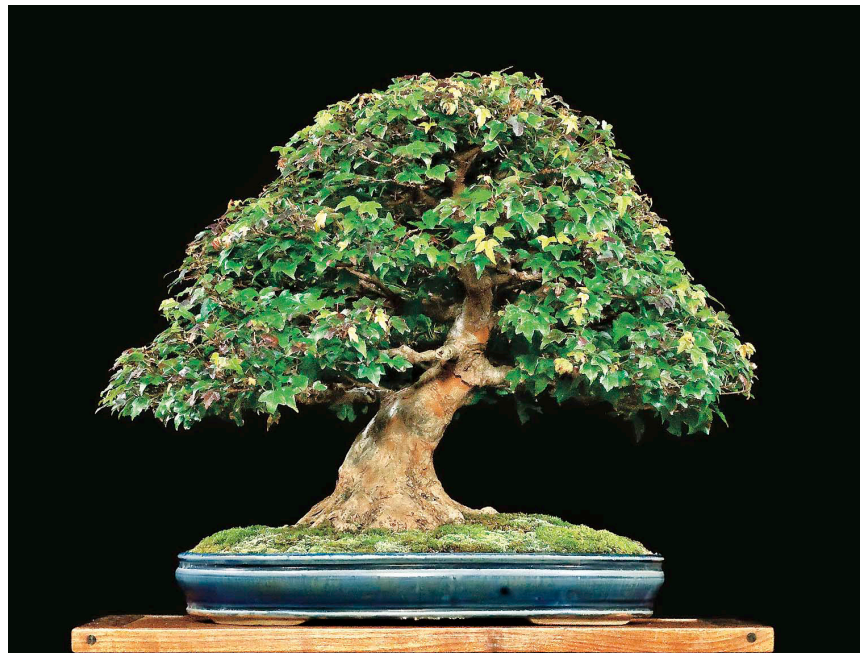
**ms:** Everyone is attracted to stones in one fashion or another. People stop and stare at stone formations and who doesn't find some interesting ones at the shore and take them home! Stones have incredible energy to them if you are receptive to it and practice looking. All cultures have understood the mystery and magic of stones. Like trees, they are of the earth, are highly evocative and add a soulful dynamic to a bonsai garden. I was exposed to suiseki in 1982 while in Tokyo, where I would go to the department stores and look at them in the glass cases. They had a magnetic effect on me. I waited till the last day that I was there and used my last \$140.00 to buy one. I still have it to this day, and it is indeed magical.

**bci:** What advice do you have for bonsai enthusiasts who do not yet appreciate viewing stones?

**ms:** I have given this much thought and its a bit of a mystery. I don't think that you can make people feel it. Stone appreciation is deeply spiritual, and has been for virtually all cultures through the ages. I have always naturally found them to be powerfully evocative. If you do bonsai, how can you not be aware of the bones of the earth and the awesome, quiet beauty inherent in so many stone forms? Like many appreciations, the magnetism, the attraction, comes from within. Stones have enormous energy, and you are either receptive to it or not. Once this energy is realized, you must practice how to be receptive to it. The



Top; Common Juniper, *Juniperus communis*.  
Middle; Trident Maple, *Acer buergerianum*, "Best Deciduous Award" (1st National Exhibit Rochester, NY).



Bottom left; Pitch Pine, *Pinus rigida*, (2nd National Exhibit NY).  
Bottom right; 275+ year old Pitch Pine, *Pinus rigida*, in training.



ancients knew how to do this, and it was part of their daily lives. There is incredible mystery to stones and mystery *is* mystery! Why validate it?

**bci:** *You have studied with notable bonsai masters in Japan. What were some important early lessons?*

**ms:** I worked in the bonsai growing fields of rural Shikoku, Japan for Hiroyoshi Yamaji during the winter/spring of 1989/90. The following winter and spring, I stayed with Mikio Oshima in Okayama, Japan. The most important trait from Mr. Oshima was the intense discipline, and he allowed me to be totally immersed in it— he drove me quite hard! The great practitioners and artists that I was around in Japan, demonstrated that without discipline, one does not advance. I stayed with Mikio Oshima, and he lived it, it was very intense and he drilled it into me constantly. You had to sweat the details, try to be a virtual perfectionist and understand time-honored traditions in bonsai. You had to be serious.

**bci:** *Which teacher impressed you the most and why?*

**ms:** As mentioned, Mikio Oshima, his focus and work ethic and a wonderful advanced sense of aesthetics. If you kept your eyes and ears open constantly, you saw and heard another dimension. He allowed me to be immersed in it. In this country, Bill Valavanis was a strong early influence when I met him almost 35 years ago. He understood the discipline of Classical Bonsai training. Nick Lenz was also a motivation years ago which helped me balance my affection for Japanese style and what he called “German Romanticism.” It allowed for a bit more freedom.

**bci:** *Who do you admire among your fellow bonsai teachers and why?*

**ms:** There are bonsai practitioners that are artists, and there are those that are natural teachers. Some say they are both, but most are one or the other. I’m impressed with my colleagues who truly are teachers, because they love to share, but they also know how to create beautiful bonsai. Ted Matson from California fits this description, as well as Bill Valavanis, Suthin Sukosolvisit, Kathy Shaner, who are just an example of some of the fine teachers in America. There is a new generation now coming to the forefront of the bonsai world in this country, and Ryan Neal demonstrates very well how to teach the intricacies of making artistic trees.

**bci:** *Do you have a favorite species for creating bonsai?*

**ms:** I do not have a favorite. They all excite me, but I do have a particular passion for pines, eastern white cedar and maples.

**bci:** *How are your trees cared for when you are away on trips and teaching tours?*

**ms:** I’m fortunate to have several friends who do bonsai as well as neighbors who are master gardeners who know how to water. Sometimes on a protracted long trip (overseas), I have to pay them; it’s a chore with as many trees as I have!



**bci:** How would you characterize the difference between bonsai and penjing? How do you think bonsai will change as more bonsai enthusiasts in America and elsewhere are exposed to Chinese penjing?

**ms:** Traditionally, bonsai tend to be more formalized, idyllic, whereas penjing are thought of as being less formalized, cultivated with a clip and grow methodology as opposed to wiring. Some people feel this a more natural look, but today, the term penjing is thought of as cultural (China), and the two forms increasingly come together. But, of course, there are outstanding bonsai in China and Taiwan that are extremely formalized.

**bci:** Historically, Americans have embraced many cultural influences and then created new expressions uniquely American. Do you think this applies to bonsai and viewing stones?

**ms:** There are regional differences in the diversity of species that are found in North America, with the attempt to replicate them as they are found growing in nature. But I don't subscribe to the notion that there are American bonsai, Italian bonsai, Norwegian bonsai, etc. Bonsai is bonsai. It is not the same as music and cuisine culturally. It has a universality that is to produce artistic trees in containers. I feel that too many people want to put a tag on the bonsai of their country, as if to say, "look at us." It is not necessary. In North America, there has been an insecurity of being behind Asia and Europe for a long time, and the need to prove that we can do it as well. The gap has dissipated quite a bit, and there are bonsai in this country that are world class in any one's definition. The geographical tag is mainly due to the native species of a particular country. The same universal perspective applies to Viewing Stones. The daiza carver can add different look, a freedom of expression, if you will, to add diversity to a stone collection. Perhaps the one difference with trees and stones is in the way they are displayed. While it certainly is a wonderful aesthetic, it is no longer gospel to have to use *shoji* and *tatami*. Here is where different cultures can demonstrate a unique atmosphere for their display. As much as I have a passion for traditional suiseki, I'm also drawn to many other forms of evocative stones that lie outside suiseki boundaries and categorization.

**bci:** You have travelled extensively in the US as a featured bonsai artist. Are there regional attitudes and approaches to bonsai in America, apart from different species and climate, or do American bonsaists share a common approach?

**ms:** I do not really notice regional attitudes. Great artists produce great bonsai all over the country, often using native material to their maximum potential. So I do feel there is a common approach in most of the country.

**bci:** How important is the local or regional bonsai club for bonsai enthusiasts? Can one learn bonsai on their own?

**ms:** When one is beginning, bonsai clubs can offer direction, guidance and awareness of the nature and scope of the bonsai hobby. And depending on the interest level, will often produce stimulation and motivation. If someone is very serious, they need to also find a competent teacher for a period of time. This can provide a quantum leap quickly in knowledge and technique.

**bci:** When was Stillwater Studio founded? What prompted its establishment?

**ms:** Stillwater Studio was founded in 2002. I have wanted an art studio for a very long time and finally was able to build it. I have personalized it to create atmosphere and a soulful nature, making it very conducive to being creative. To an artist, being immersed in this type of environment is paramount.

**bci:** You have gone to a great deal of effort to acquire large landscape stones for your Japanese-style garden. Where did you get them and how difficult was it to transport them and then find the best places for them in your garden?

**ms:** I am blessed to live in a region (Sussex County, NJ) that is on a huge limestone foundation that stretches for miles. Many of the stones have a Chinese feel to them with the water erosion so evident. To me, a garden is not a garden without stones. I have gotten help from a friend that has a backhoe, and I have





Top; collected stone: Eel River, California (antique bronze Japanese doban).

Middle; collected stone: Atlantic coast of Nicaragua in an antique Japanese bronze suiban from the Edo Period.

Bottom; collected stone: Dennys River, Maine.

Facing page, Top; collected stone: Menengai Crater, Kenya, East Africa.

Facing page, Middle; collected stone: Van Deusan River, California.

Facing page, Bottom; collected stone: Umpqua River, Oregon.



been given permission to go on large tracts of land to “harvest” them. Many I have carried alone out of the woods. Placing stone in a garden appears to be one of the most challenging aspects to a landscaper. You have to know how to set them and “plant” them to look natural. Too often people just place them around like bowling balls, and there is no soulfulness.

**bci:** Can you describe your teaching method and the nature of the courses available from Stillwater Studio?

**ms:** I teach all levels of bonsai, but over the past few years, I have been receiving more advanced students who want to fine tune and finesse their styling and design skills. My methodology is to try and show the student the artistic design forms in the material. You have to unlock the drama and evocative nature in the tree.

**bci:** What are the most important aspects of leading a workshop on Bonsai?

**ms:** When leading a workshop, a teacher needs to give everyone ample time to contemplate and work. The workshops can lose their productivity when there are too many involved. I prefer small gatherings of 6-8 people at one time. Although as I mentioned, I have more one-on-one students than any other format.

**bci:** How is this different or similar to being on stage doing a demonstration in front of an audience?

**ms:** Being on stage forces you to think on your feet quickly, and display your understanding of the inherent design in the material at hand. You have to know how to resolve problems quickly. You have to be able to unlock the evocative nature in the potential bonsai, and be able to produce a credible product. This is not the way any artist wants to design trees, but conventions still use this format and offer demonstrations which are rather limited in what the audience learns. The artist gets a chance to show off skills and entertain. Perhaps there is still a place for this.

**bci:** Editing, compiling and publishing a book is a great deal of work. Why did you publish North American Bonsai, what did you hope to accomplish and do you think you were successful?

**ms:** North American Bonsai came from the 2006 ABS convention in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. The theme of the convention was to just use native North American trees, nothing from Asia or Europe. There were those that felt it would be next to impossible to recruit enough good bonsai for an exhibit. Would there be enough diversity? Eventually, people did respond and I was

able get about 60 trees, many by personally recruiting them from known bonsai artists. ABS put me in charge of the exhibit, and then asked if I could put it in book form. It was one of the most daunting challenges ever. There were myriad problems, a dishonest publisher at the onset, and the need to have to print it all over a second time due to bad color.

But our luck finally changed and it was eventually published, giving some insight into the scope of material that we have here, as well as collecting and growing information. I was very fortunate to have a premier photographer and computer color specialist on the project.

**bci:** *You have received many awards for your work with bonsai. Of which ones are you most proud?*

**ms:** I don't seek awards. They are indeed flattering and of course its nice to see your work recognized. It can add legitimacy to your work. But, there are many folks who are driven to win as many awards as possible—a virtual trophy case, and the ego begins to overstep boundaries. I do appreciate the award given to a trident maple of mine at the 1st National exhibit in Rochester, N.Y.

**bci:** *What advice do you have for beginners to bonsai and those who are more advanced? What can they do to improve their bonsai practice?*

**ms:** My advice to both is to work hard at it. If you feel the passion, then cultivate it. Seek out conventions and expert advice, find some of the great books that are available, and practice, practice, practice! Take your inspiration from the masterpieces of the great Bonsai Masters of the past, but strive to cultivate an expression of your own vision.

**bci:** *What are you studying now and how does it fit in with your bonsai practice?*

**ms:** The aforementioned is how I am going about my own pursuit of learning. Looking to make the tree a composition and always working hard to improve. 🌲





# New Bonsai Museum of Baosheng Garden

Text and photos by Tom Elias, USA

Above; Stairway leading to the lower and upper courtyards adjacent to the two main buildings housing permanent and temporary bonsai related exhibits

**T**he art of bonsai and penjing is enjoying a resurgence in many parts of the world. Nowhere is this as evident as in China where the new prosperity and growth have resulted in rapid expansion of private and public collections of stylized trees in pots. In September 2013, the new 16.5-acre (6 hectares) Bonsai Museum of Baosheng Garden opened its doors to the public. This coincided with the joint meeting and convention of the 7th World Bonsai Friendship Federation and the 12th Asian Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki meetings in Jintan in Jiangsu Province, China. The new bonsai museum is one part of a huge development featuring five new museums in Baosheng Garden located on a beautiful, 2,000 acre (809 hectares) wooded valley.

The bonsai garden as well as the entire Baosheng Garden was planned and designed by Mr. Xin Changbao, President of the Changzhou Sentar Group. Mr. Xin had developed the plans for Baosheng Garden when he and officials of the Jintan government and the Chinese Bonsai Association presented their bid at the 2009 World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF) convention in Puerto Rico to host the 2013 WBFF convention. Mr. Xin

**This is now one of the largest museums in China devoted to bonsai.**

travelled throughout Japan, North America, Europe, India, and Australia to see and learn about existing bonsai facilities. He assembled this information along with his ideas and designed the new Bonsai Museum of Baosheng Garden. This is now one of the largest museums in China devoted to this art form.

The museum features both indoor and outdoor exhibits in a beautifully designed and landscaped setting. One of the two buildings introduces the well-known bonsai masters of China. The interior walls are lined with professional designed illustrated information panels to help educate visitors. Foreign visitors will recognize some like Zhao Qingquan and Hu Leguo while learning about earlier generation master artists. This is a fitting tribute to those who have fostered and maintained the art form, especially in the more difficult earlier years. The second large building is devoted largely to the history and development of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation. Large photographs and informational panels trace the beginning of the WBFF in Japan in 1989. The major conventions of the WBFF, held every four years, are carefully documented photographically. This building has a step-down portion that contains several tokonoma for the display of bonsai with scrolls and accessory items. Both buildings have well lit areas for the display of living trees.

A large glasshouse near the two buildings was constructed to house and display the museum's collection of tropical and subtropical trees. The museum displays approximately 100 trees in this facility. The fourth major component of this museum is a large outdoor facility for the display of temperate trees. This light, airy, maze-like building covers several acres and can display 300 trees. The walled



*Top;* Entrance to building that contain information and interpretive materials that introduce the leading bonsai masters in China and where changing displays of bonsai will be held throughout the year.

*Middle;* An arbor connecting the two buildings leads visitors to displays about the history of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation and to see exhibits of trees in tokonoma and other settings.

*Bottom;* Interior of building showing some of the privately owned trees on display during the World Bonsai Friendship Federation 2013 convention.



*Top and Middle;* Two interior views of the new outdoor display area and some of the permanent collection of trees owned by Baosheng Garden.



**Mr. Xin travelled throughout Japan, North America, Europe, India, and Australia to see and learn about existing bonsai facilities.**

but roofless facility is designed to display trees against a white background. A paved path leads visitors through this facility.

These tropical and subtropical trees were assembled from southern China and Taiwan over the last six years. Xin also actively sought out excellent examples of penjing in other regions of China. He visited Japan and Taiwan several times to learn about bonsai and to purchase fine bonsai for his collection. He formed a close friendship with the late Iwasaki Diazo, the owner of Takasago-en in Niihama, Japan. Iwasaki and Xin often consulted on the development of the planned new bonsai garden in Baosheng Garden. Sadly, Iwasaki didn't live to see the completed facility.

One of his staff members, Mrs. Chen Wenjuan was given the responsibility for maintaining the trees. She has not only mastered this but has proceeded to become an excellent bonsai artist. She demonstrated her skills at the 6th WBFF convention in Puerto Rico, the 2010 Guangzhou International Bonsai Invitational Exhibition, and a workshop at the 2012 All India Bonsai Convention. She will be a featured artist at the 2014 BCI convention on the Gold Coast, Australia.

The new Bonsai Museum of Baosheng Garden is located in a largely rural area near Jintan and about an hour's drive from Changzhou, the closest large city. The Baosheng Garden may well develop into an important center for the arts in China. In addition to the bonsai museum, the garden houses an impressive new art museum and housing facilities for artists to live and





*Top;* This beautiful Bougainvillea specimen has been designated as a Chinese national treasure. It is owned by Ng Shing Fat's Tracy Penjing Garden in Guangdong Province. It was brought to Jjintan for display at the WBFF convention.

*Bottom;* This excellent water and land penjing features turtle pattern stones with Ilex (holly) and Serissa plants. This penjing is owned by Zhang Xianwen of Shangdong Province and was displayed during the WBFF convention.





*Top left;* A striking wind swept *Fraxinus hupehensis* from the Baojia Huayuan in Huangshan City in Anhui Province set in front of a moon-shaped door.

*Top right;* This innovative approach to displaying a climbing fig tree is the creation of Mr. Han Xuenian from Foshan City in Guangdong Province. This tree was on loan for the WBFF convention.

*Bottom;* Seven miniature trees displayed on a traditional Chinese stand was exhibited by the Hongkong Lingnan Artstone Penjing Society for the WBFF convention.



work. If a synergy develops between the museums and various artists in Baosheng Garden, this facility will become known for its contributions to the arts and culture of China. The art of penjing and bonsai will be part of that movement.

The world bonsai community should be grateful to Mr. Xin Changbao for his leadership, vision and willingness to invest in the future of bonsai and penjing. It was Xin who led the effort to bring the first ever WBFF meeting in China and it was Xin's vision and commitment that resulted in this impressive new facility for everyone to enjoy. I had the pleasure to visit Baosheng Garden many times during the last six year including my first visit in 2009 when it was just a wooded valley with tea plantations on the lower slopes. Each year, I would revisit this site and see the road being constructed, the development of the foundation pads for the major buildings, and then to see the facilities rise during the last three years. It continues to amaze me at how much major development can be accomplished in a short time. While Xin is not a bonsai artist himself, his contribution to bonsai is enormous. 🌳



# BCI Tour Australia 2014

August 25 – September 2



#### CAIRNS HIGHLIGHTS:

Catamaran cruise to the Great Barrier Reef including morning & afternoon teas and lunch.

Kuranda Scenic Railway and return via Skyrail Rainforest Cableway

#### AYRES ROCK HIGHLIGHTS:

Uluru Sunrise Tour

Kata Tjuta Valley of The Winds Tour

#### SYDNEY AREA HIGHLIGHTS:

Blue Mountains and Australian Wildlife Tour

Join us for the BCI 2014 Post Convention Tour of Australia.

Spend 9 days touring Cairns & the fabulous Barrier Reef, Ayres Rock at the Red Centre and exciting Sydney.



To register for the tour now, please fill out the online Registration Form at [www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com). You do not pay any money now.



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## ITINERARY

### Day 1. Mon 25 Aug. Gold Coast > Cairns

Depart BCI Convention, Gold Coast. Early morning transfer to Brisbane Airport for flight to Cairns in Far North Queensland. Transfer to Pacific International Hotel, or similar, for 3 nights. Rest of day at leisure.

### Day 2. Tue 26 Aug. Cairns

All-day fast catamaran cruise to the Great Barrier Reef. Snorkelling equipment available. Semi-submersible coral reef viewing tour and Underwater Observatory. Includes lunch and morning & afternoon teas.

### Day 3. Wed 27 Aug. Cairns

Take the Kuranda Scenic Railway to Kuranda on the Atherton Tableland. Spend free time in Kuranda visiting Heritage Markets. Return via Skyrail Rainforest Cableway.

### Day 4. Thu 28 Aug. Cairns > Ayres Rock (Uluru)

Transfer to Cairns Airport and catch flight to Uluru. Transfer to Voyages Desert Gardens Hotel, or similar, for 2 nights. Rest of day at leisure.

### Day 5. Fri 29 Aug. Uluru

Morning at leisure. In the afternoon your Guide will escort you on a 2 to 3 hour walk through the Kata Tjuta Domes to The Valley of The Winds lookout. After the walk, take in a magnificent Outback sunset over Kata Tjuta and refresh yourself with a glass of sparkling wine & nibbles.



Photo by David Hiff. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

### Day 6. Sat 30 Aug. Uluru > Sydney

Before breakfast, experience an Uluru Sunrise Tour. After lunch transfer to the airport for your flight to Sydney. Transfer to the Rendezvous Studio Hotel, or similar, for 3 nights. Rest of day at leisure. This hotel is adjacent to Darling Harbour entertainment and dining precinct and includes the Chinese Garden, Maritime Museum and Sydney Aquarium.

### Day 7. Sun 31 Aug. Sydney

Today is an all day tour to the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. Visit Featherdale Wildlife Park, The Three Sisters, Katoomba and Leura Village. At Featherdale Park you will have the opportunity to get up close and personal with a variety of Australian animals. Hand-feed a Kangaroo, wallaby or Emu and cuddle a Koala. A great Aussie experience!



### Day 8. Mon 1 Sep. Sydney

Today at leisure in Sydney for optional activities. You could catch a water taxi from Darling Harbour to the Opera House or go shopping in the Central Business District, a short walk from your hotel or take a Harbour Cruise.



### Day 9. Tue 2 Sep. Depart Sydney

Check out of hotel and spend the rest of day at leisure until your transfer to Sydney Airport for your flight home.



## FULL TOUR COSTS:

Share Twin AUD \$3,229

Single AUD \$4,249

Price includes air fares as per the Itinerary, accommodation, breakfasts, tours in Cairns, Uluru and Sydney as per the Itinerary, transfers.

Costs not included are National Park Entry fees at Uluru and expenses of a personal nature.

*Please read the Itinerary for details.*

### Convention web site:

[www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com)

### Tour Enquiries:

[mark.knight@flightcentre.com.au](mailto:mark.knight@flightcentre.com.au)

## REGISTER NOW! Nothing to Pay until 31 March, 2014!

Tour Registration  
by February 28, 2014.

Tour Deposit payable  
by March 31, 2014.

Full payment before June 25, 2014.

### Cost includes:

1. Internal airfares, breakfasts each day and other meals as specified in the Itinerary, accommodation, tours and transfers as specified in the Itinerary.

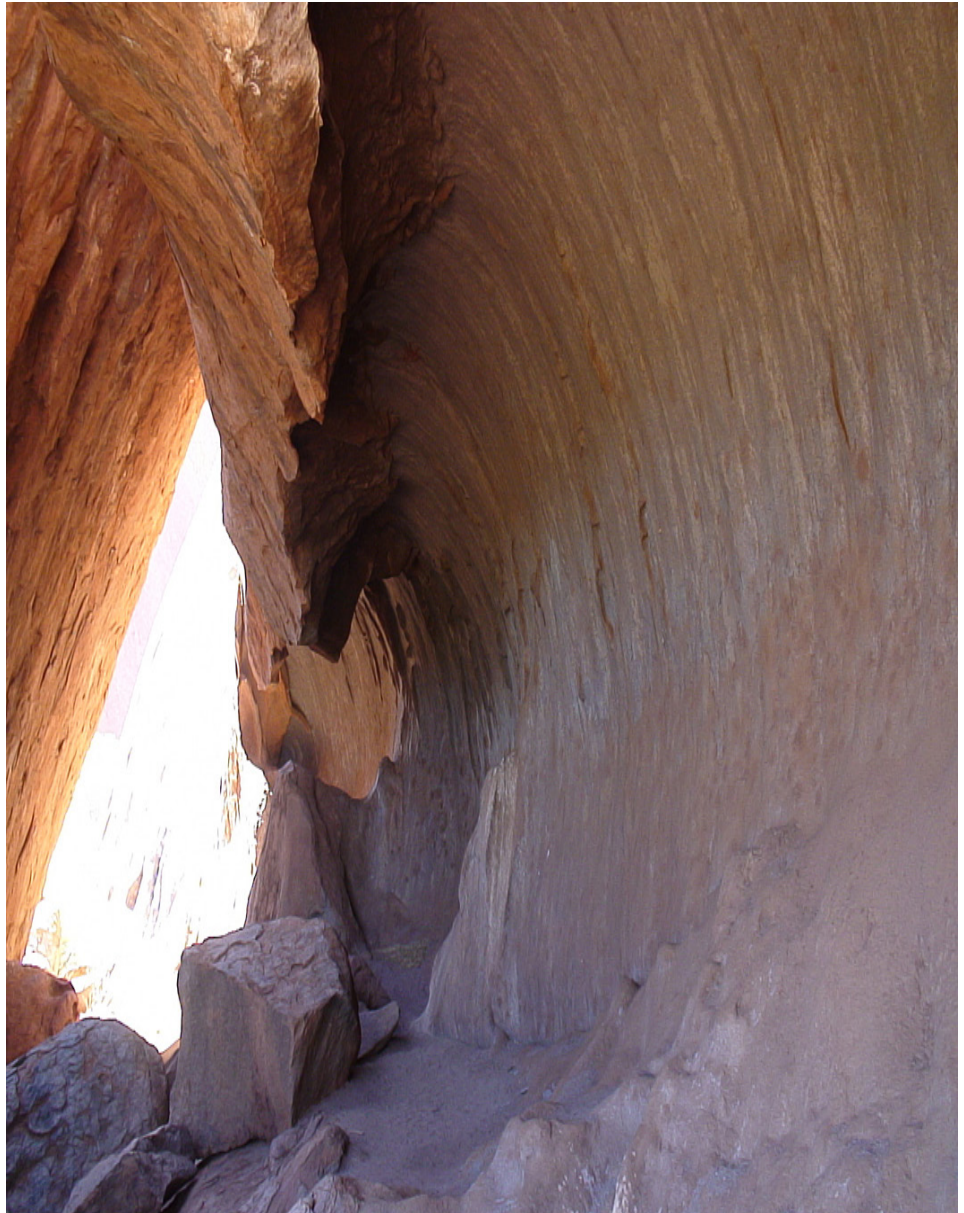
### Cost does not include:

1. International airfares
2. Spending of a personal nature
3. Optional activities.
4. Travel insurance
5. National Park Entry fees.

### Remarks:

To register for the tour now, please fill out the online Registration Form or the one on the right.

You do not pay any money now. We will email you the payment instructions.



### RESERVATION FORM *(online form at [www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com))*

Surname, exactly as written in Passport:

Given Name(s) exactly as  
written in Passport:

Nationality:

Passport / ID No.:

Passport Issue Date: y/m/d

Passport Expiry Date: y/m/d

Sex:      Male              Female

Date of Birth: y/m/d

Email Address:

Contact Number / Mobile Number:

- I require a single room  
 I require Twin Share, sharing with:

# Good, better, best!

## *Refining a Coastal Banksia.*

Text and photos by Grant Bowie, Australia

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** From 2007 to 2013, Grant Bowie was the founding Curator of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia, located in Australia's capital, Canberra. He helped launch the collection in 2007 and saw it successfully grow and move to its permanent location in 2013. He then retired from the curatorship of the collection at the tender age of 56 after having practised the art of Bonsai since he was 13 years old. He moved to Canberra in 2007 after having lived in Sydney's mild climate for many years.

Grant now spends his time on his private collection and teaching bonsai. He was recently a demonstrator in Jintan China. His collection includes many Australian native plants and he is leading research and techniques into many of these very varied species of plants for use in bonsai. He hopes to include more Penjing influences in his bonsai from now on after visiting and experiencing China and a diversity of Penjing styles.



**T**he Coastal Banksia, *Banksia integrifolia*, a tall upright tree (up to 30 meters or 100 ft in height), is native to Australia and found in mountains up to 1,000 metres (3,000 ft.) altitude where there is light snow in winter, or right near the beach, in coastal dunes, wrapped around rocky headlands battered by winds. It is also found near riverbanks as a large shrub or small tree. It grows in differing soil types and can tolerate very low nutrition soils. Because of this ability, it grows up and down the east coast of Australia for thousands of kilometers. Its leaf is variable in size and shape growing in alternate, opposite, whorls, or multiple buds within a short area. It is truly a variable tree, which can make it easy for experienced growers but confusing for beginners.

In nature, it has a yellow/green flower spike and a sort of cone but as a bonsai it is unlikely to ever flower due to the needs of pruning. Also due to trimming or pruning techniques, you usually only see small, serrated juvenile leaves instead of the long, narrow and smooth adult leaves that can grow up to 150 mm or 6 inches in length. The bark on this variety is thick and corky and would usually survive bush fires of moderate intensity.

This particular bonsai is about 30 years old and although it has won some awards in Australia, I believe that all trees should be looked at closely every so often to see if the tree can be improved. It is unlikely that a tree you styled early in your bonsai career will not need some restyling to bring out the best in the tree. I believe that it now needs a much less formal look to it and more movement will be given to it by tilting it to the right, shortening the branches on the left and growing the branches on the right.

This tree has fattened while in the pot with the use of many low, heavy branches that in effect acted as part of the design and as sacrifice branches. A number of branches were removed about 5 years ago and it is now time to go further and add some movement to the tree.

A new, deeper pot was chosen to allow the tree to keep most of its root ball intact but still be tilted slightly to the right.



Pot selected for new styling



Lifted out of existing pot



Very fine roots



Solid root mass



Roots teased out a little

*Top left;* In new pot, tilted slightly to the right

*Top right;* Lowest and third lowest heavy left branches removed

*Middle left;* Higher left hand branch removed

*Middle right;* More branches removed and trimmed lowest remaining left hand branch tied down

*Bottom;* Lowest right hand branch trimmed least of all



A number of branches on the left are removed; the apex is slightly lowered; the low heavy right-hand branch is trimmed minimally and will be allowed to elongate further to the right. The heavy, low back branch will probably be removed in about five years' time after the trunk has thickened even more.

As a bonsai, it is a thirsty plant in summer with its soft new growth; it is fertilized as per normal bonsai and can be pruned hard or light according to your likes. I tend to mostly grow it with Clip and Grow techniques rather than intense wiring. It is a quick growing tree and so is repotted every 2 or 3 years.

From now on the foliage will be kept sparser all over to give it a lighter and more natural feel. This species of banksia is very quick growing and will fill out with new growth in a matter of weeks as it is now just the start of summer in Australia. It is intended that this tree will be on display at the convention in Australia in 2014 so I invite you to come to Australia to view this tree after its restyle is completed. 🌳





*Top left;* A final trimming before the tree is allowed to rest and recover.



*Top right;* Just six weeks later, the Banksia responds with lush growth. In keeping with the Clip and Grow method, it gets another light pruning (*bottom*). The middle inset shows the corky bark and a major cut, sealed and starting to heal. The cascading branch (*bottom inset*), is not pruned so that it can elongate.



Strength  
&  
*Beauty*

# Black Pine

By Danilo Scursatone, Italy

Photos by Danilo Scursatone and Fabio Vigezzi

Translation by Danilo Scursatone and Joe Grande

**T**he black pine (*Pinus nigra*) is a species much loved and used in bonsai art, especially in Japan. Often starting material is sourced from Japan favoring the variety *thumbergii*, but other varieties can be used also. The species that are native or naturalized in Italy may be suitable to shaping into bonsai without any problems, keeping in mind that some subspecies have a long needles and difficult to reduce in length. The black pine is a species that ranges from lowland habitats to high altitudes up to about 2000 meters above sea level and it is, precisely for this reason, that its cultivation and maintenance are not very difficult even in lowland areas, as long as there is good air circulation.

Its bark presents with scales and fissures, even on relatively young specimens, that with the passage of time thickens and takes on a very ancient look. The black pine also has a very strong root system, useful as a rootstock for the vigorous and fast-growing *Pinus pentaphylla* that can be developed in a few years. Black pine foliage is made up of very sturdy, dark green needles that differ from all other types of conifers.

All these features combine to create a species with great beauty, especially its remarkable life force that expresses strength and power.

Creating a bonsai from a black pine presents some difficulties that must be taken into account. The first difficulty is that in nature, its needles reach a length of 10–15 cm/4–5 in, which is often maintained even when grown in containers. Precisely for this reason



it would be appropriate to plan a bonsai of medium to large size to provide better balance between the foliage, trunk and branches of our tree. We rarely see small-size black pine bonsai (shohin bonsai). For small bonsai, choose a subspecies that has short needles such as *Pinus thumbergii* “*chitosemaru*” or *Pinus thumbergii* “*sunsho*.”

Another difficulty is the reverse taper, a potential defect for this species, especially when collecting from the wild. This is when the diameter of the base of the tree at the soil level or nebari is smaller than the trunk above it. Choosing starting material may be difficult because it is not always possible to verify if the plant exhibits this problem.

It is also necessary to take into account that when the black pine is cultivated in low-lying areas without adequate air circulation, it suffers and tends to develop parasites. The cochineal (*Dactylopius coccus*) is the parasite that most sets in and colonizes this species.

### Applying Tambaho, “short leaf method”

To develop dense vegetation and short needles in black pine, a Japanese conifer pruning technique, called Tambaho, is used. It is necessary to eliminate the candles in June to encourage new buds in July. Tambaho means short leaf method and entails two pruning processes; Maykiri, the act of cutting the original candle or shoot, suitable for trees of great vigor; and Maykaki, removing excess shoots after decandling. After the candles are cut, five shoots emerge, but you leave only the two best ones. In October, you can remove the old needles. In the following year, you will notice new buds forming on branches previously devoid of vegetation. Tambaho favors the emergence of new buds, but at the same time will also support the reduction of the needles of the new buds. The new buds, being less vigorous than those that would otherwise have grown if the candles were not removed, will produce shorter needles.

This process puts the plant under considerable stress and must therefore be applied only if necessary and a minimum of two to three years from one intervention to the next.

This technique is applied in Japan in the months previously mentioned. In other countries, take into account the climatic conditions there and adapt the timing of the intervention to the place where your black pine lives.

### After care

Fundamental for the reduction of the needle and the health of the tree is also the horticultural care it receives: soil, fertilizing and watering. The soil mix must be very porous and free draining to allow complete drying of the pot. Although the soil mix is poor in nutrients, the fertilizer will provide these. The fertilizer should be a weak solution and not very rich in macro elements (NPK) for this species is undemanding and frugal. Use a balanced fertilizer (NPK) in slow release pellets in the right dose and apply twice a year in spring and at the end of summer. Water according to the season but during the day when the drying is slower and increases the time available for the tree to replenish its water reserves. It is essential to water only when the soil mix is completely dry since this species can tolerate periods of drought well, especially in summer. Excessive fertilizing and watering inevitably favor the lengthening of the needles and root rot.



Top; Example of starter material available in Italy.

Bottom; Same tree after wiring the branches and applying the Tambaho procedure where the candles have been heavily pruned.

When choosing starter material, as we have said, it is advisable to check that the black pine does not have a reverse taper in the trunk and is an adequate size as to harmonize with the length of the needle produced by the individual tree. Having made these considerations and applied the techniques suggested, we must remember to appreciate the natural character of the black pine and not focus too much on the length of the needles, considering its peculiarity a merit, not a defect.

Without applying extreme techniques that may result in the weakening the tree to the point of losing it, we must accept that this species produces slightly longer needles and attempts to obtain a needle size that clearly thwarts its nature will be difficult to sustain all the time.

The beauty of the black pine is its branch-trunk-foliage aspect that expresses a great strength and an

ability to overcome climatic events that over time can cause violent trauma. The black pine easily responds with a severity that is a prelude to a long life that will span centuries. Its great strength does not exclude beauty and harmony, evident in its powerful appearance without frills, but appears well defined and set in its intended style. For this reasons we need to maintain a right balance in the amount of greenery for a particular style because the black pine is very generous and the excessive vegetation produced by the passing of the seasons will have to be thinned out.

We can consider the black pine a silent companion, who with reassuring presence follows us on our bonsai journey, inviting us to overcome the difficulties of everyday life with the same strength of character. 🌲

*Pinus nigra* 2013, Photo by Fabio Vigezzi.



## IN MEMORY OF MARY HOLMES BLOOMER



Mary Holmes Bloomer passed away on October 28, 2013. She was born in Syracuse, New York in 1941 and grew up in a nearby community, Cazenovia. Mary attended Wells College in Aurora, New York, and after college she moved to Annapolis, Maryland. I first met Mary (then Mary Holmes) at an annual meeting of the Potomac Bonsai Association (PBA). She became involved with Bonsai in 1975 and quickly joined in on PBA activities. Mary

was on the staff of the Library of Congress for years where she showed deft organizational skills. She co-chaired the International Bonsai Convention in the District of Columbia in 1976. She served on PBA's board for many years and also as Vice President, President, and chairperson of two PBA annual symposia. She also edited the PBA newsletter.

In 1984, Mary co-chaired the American Bonsai Society (ABS) symposium in Maryland and in 1985 she organized and chaired the first National Bonsai Foundation (NBF) fundraiser. This event was crucial to early efforts for the John Y. Naka Pavilion for American Bonsai. Mary served on the Board of Directors for NBF. When Mary attended the BCI/ABS convention in Seattle, Washington in 1984, she met bonsai grower and professional photographer Peter Bloomer. They were married in 1985 while working on *Timeless Trees: the U.S. National Bonsai Collection*, 1986, Horizons West, now available through Stone Lantern, and introduced the full color album at IBC '86, the tenth anniversary of the NBF Collection. Mary moved to Peter's home in Flagstaff, Arizona and took a position at the Flagstaff Public Library.

Mary and Peter became more involved with viewing stones and in 1996, Mary and Peter co-produced and published the renowned Suiseki collector's book, *Suiseki and Viewing Stones: An American Perspective by Melba Tucker*, 1996, Horizons West, also available through Stone Lantern. Mary joined the BCI Board of Directors in 1988 and became 3rd Vice President in 1990. After a stint as 1st Vice President, Mary became BCI President in 1997. She has written numerous articles for BCI's magazine on Bonsai and on Suiseki. The last time I saw Mary was in Italy during the BCI-IBS meeting in 2008. She still had that infectious smile and large laugh. I was surprised then when Peter told me that she hadn't been well. She was in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. A few years later Peter called to tell me that Mary was moved to a hospice care facility since her health and well-being were in serious decline. It is so very difficult to imagine since Mary was always very bright and cheerful. She spent most years of her life doing what she loved and with people she loved. She and Peter traveled around the world attending bonsai and suiseki events and visiting friends and family. She has been missed these last several years. Our thoughts are with Peter. 🌳

By Donna Banting, USA



Top; Mary and Peter at home among the giant redwoods, *Sequoiadendron giganteu*, in northern California.

Center; Andrea Schenone, Donna Banting, Mirella Schenone, Mary Bloomer, Chiara Padrini and Peter Bloomer after a day of stone hunting in Italy.

Bottom right; Mary and the late Willi Benz at a convention in 2007.

# The Renaissance of an Old Pine



## When a Shakan



## Became a Han Kengai

Text and Photos by Mauro Stemberger, Italy  
([www.ItalianBonsaiDream.com](http://www.ItalianBonsaiDream.com))



**D**uring the summer of 2008, I made a trip to Switzerland with some of my friends to visit some bonsai gardens. Among them, there was one belonging to bonsai lover Peter Thali. (above)

I was immediately impressed by the quality of the trees in his collection, all of them were yamadori he had collected in the Swiss Alps, grown, pruned and styled with expertise.

There were lots of spruces, larches and mugo pines and I remember that one in particular struck me because of the lines of the trunk and its age.



1



2



3



4

He collected the tree in spring 2001, styled and cultivated it for many years. (1 & 2)

Recently one of my friends proposed we exchange trees. To my pleasant surprise, he had since purchased this very tree, and by exchanging one of my trees for it, this pine became part of my collection. (3 & 4).

The mugo was given the freedom to grow in my garden and not pruned so it would be full of vigor and ready for a new design.

In the following spring, I repotted the pine in a tokoname pot changing the tree's inclination to emphasize the movement of the long branch that until then was parallel to the rim of the pot, and in my opinion, didn't express the dramatic power of the material. (5).

5





The tree was again allowed to grow freely and it was fertilized copiously throughout the season to recover after the repotting as some of the roots had been bent to fit in the new position in the pot. It is now fall of 2013 and the pine is ready for a new style—all the old pine needles are cleaned thanks to Milan—and the branches are ready to be wired and set. (6).

6



7

8



Thinking about the final composition, some branches are eliminated that along the years had been left there to fill in voids. Removing some branches, however, underlines and accentuates the movement of the trunk and allows a play of shadows and light with the remaining branches. (7-10).



9

10





11



12



13



14

In the next intervention, the dead wood is removed from the very beautiful and natural hollow area of the nebari, the rotten wood is cleaned away and the cavity is protected by a suitable jin liquid, since this area is in contact with the damp. (11-14).

Now, the result before and after the use of the jin liquid is clear. Sometimes I use a torch to preserve the wood and burn its soft and rotten fibers but this time it wasn't necessary because the wood was dry and strong enough. (15 & 16).



15



16



17

To make the top more compact, some branches are bent using a screw-based clamp that tightens slowly and then they are held in place by a guy wire. In this case, I chose not to cover the branch with raffia because the bend was already pronounced and the gap in the bend had only to be closed a little. (17–19).



18



19

In the following step, all branches are wired in so they can be set into the desired position. Massimo pays close attention to the size of the wire used, so that it's suitable to the thickness of the branch. (20 & 21).

While Massimo finishes the wiring of the lower part, I start to style the crown. The branch tips are directed upwards and grouped to form dense pads. (22 & 23).

20



21



22



23



24



25



26

After some hours of hard and precise work, the resetting of this mugo pine is over. The tree with its distinct semi cascade and the two crowns that “speak” to each other as if they are dancing, is now well balanced and expresses my idea of creating a design that could express the severe land where these trees grow.

The final details show how the pads come out from the main line of the trunk, distributed in different directions creating a play of lines and spaces, avoiding monotony and creating dynamic rhythm with the movement of the trunk. (24–27). 🌲

27



Open to the public, the new facilities at the National Arboretum Canberra, 2013. Photo courtesy [www.valavanisbonsaiblog.com](http://www.valavanisbonsaiblog.com)



## The journey continues...

# National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia

By Leigh Taafe, Curator National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia

Since the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) opened, in temporary quarters, on 28 September 2008, it has travelled quite a journey. Its original home was the former caretaker's cottage at Commonwealth Park in central Canberra. Its permanent home was always to be at the new National Arboretum Canberra being built as part of Canberra's recovery from the disastrous forest fires in 2003. That fire destroyed some 500 homes and extensive areas of forest in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and New South Wales (NSW).

The photos on the facing page tell something of the story of the Collection's first home, Commonwealth Park, a beautiful location where locals and visitors stroll and commune with the mature trees, abundant bird life and open spaces. Here they can also sit to enjoy a picnic or listen to music on Stage 88, a bicentennial gift to Canberra, which is located adjacent to the caretaker's cottage.

Commonwealth Park is also home to Canberra's annual flower festival, Floriade. The visitors to Floriade flocked to the Collection in such numbers that sometimes they seemed to overwhelm the small display area: around 60,000 each year during the four week period in September.

For the remainder of the year, visitor numbers were much more modest: rarely above 30 per day. But for these people, a truly memorable experience was on offer. The enclosed courtyard of the caretaker's cottage separated the Collection from the outside world. A mature ornamental pear, under whose canopy the Collection nestled, re-connected it to its parkland setting: a setting in which the miniature trees on display provided a deep sense of tranquillity that many visitors commented on.

As the Government worked through its options for responding to those dreadful fires, it decided not to re-establish the pine forest on the western edge of Lake Burley Griffin that had been burnt out. It decided

instead to create an arboretum—what is now known as the National Arboretum Canberra, incorporating the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection.

At the core of the National Collection is the partnership of the Arboretum (the ACT Government) and the bonsai community across the nation. The community provides the trees, either as loans or as donations, and the Arboretum provides the infrastructure and the permanent staff. Without both sides of the partnership, there could be no ‘national collection’ of the quality that Australia now can be ever so proud. There is no other venue in Australia where the best trees being produced are on permanent public display to such a large and diverse audience.

This community-government partnership was perfectly symbolized at the official opening of the Collection when the ceremonial ribbon was jointly cut by the Chief Minister of the ACT, Mr. Jon Stanhope and the chairman of the Bonsai Management Committee, Dr. Roger Hnatiuk (see photograph bottom right).

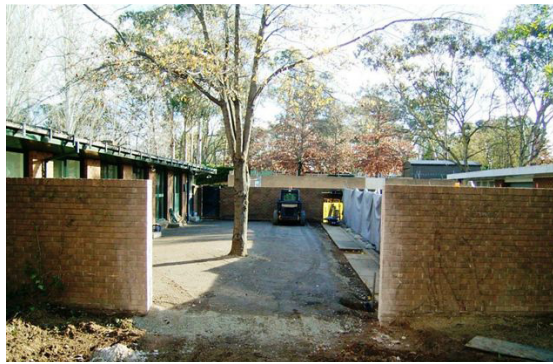
The National Arboretum Canberra is principally funded by the ACT Government, but this was supplemented with a gift from the Australian Government to mark Canberra’s centenary. On 2 February 2013, in Canberra’s centennial year, the Collection opened at its new and permanent home atop a hill with commanding views across Canberra and Lake Burley Griffin. Being adjacent to the Village Centre, it occupies a central and easily accessible space within the Arboretum. A new era in the Collection’s journey, and indeed for bonsai in Australia, was just beginning.

In the first nine months of operation, the Collection has welcomed over 400,000 visitors—close to 1,350 per day on average. The visitor numbers have placed a very welcome burden on the local bonsai community, with volunteers now needed to cover three shifts every day—one in the morning, one in the afternoon and a new one in the middle of the day overlapping the morning and afternoon shifts. This is in addition to the need for a suitably trained and experienced person to be on hand all day. Many of these all-day shifts are also filled by volunteers from the local bonsai community. In all, volunteers give the Collection around 95 hours of their time each week. Without that side of the partnership the Collection simply could not function.

Equally important as assisting the visitors, is the Collection’s educational role. This is clearly reflected in its goals:

The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia displays, for public enjoyment and education, a collection of high-quality bonsai and penjing representing the diversity of styles amongst Australian artists.

Based on comments made by the visitors, their experience in the new location is as fulfilling as it was in Commonwealth Park.



*Top to bottom;* The backyard of the caretaker’s cottage, Commonwealth Park, 2008  
The Koreshoff pines arrive, 2008  
Opening ceremony, 2008  
Visitors enjoying the Collection, 2008





Top; The site of the new National Arboretum Canberra showing the 90,000 litre water tank.

Middle; Main display area, seen from the back of house

Bottom; Main display area finished and open to the public.



The strategies that support this overall goal include providing the opportunity to build linkages between viewing full-size trees in the National Arboretum and their miniature equivalents in the Collection. Central to this strategy is the Arboretum in Miniature (AiM) project.

AiM is a collection of trees drawn from the stock used to plant the Arboretum. Many of these are trees species that have been used for bonsai and penjing for many years, but other species have never been trained as miniatures. The AiM project is also being used to expand knowledge of the types of trees that are suitable for bonsai and penjing, reflecting the research goals of the Arboretum.

All of the AiM trees are being tested and trained with a view to creating miniature versions of those trees planted in the Arboretum. Visitors in 50 years' time will have the wonderful experience of seeing mature specimens from the same stock growing both on the hillsides of the Arboretum and in pots. Already, some of the great beauty of the Arboretum's trees species can be seen in bark colors and textures, as well as seasonal changes in color of leaves. Trunks on some species of eucalypts are developing so well that bonsai enthusiasts would already cast an envious eye over them. The AiM Collection is something to look forward to!

As the NBPCA has become established and widely known, its reputation has been enhanced. It is extremely pleasing that many of Australia's best bonsai artists are willing to display their trees in the national capital and trust that they will be properly cared for. Grant Bowie, the interim curator of the Collection deserves much of the credit for this. The new Curator, Leigh Taafe, is ably carrying on in Grant's footsteps.

The greatly expanded facilities available at the new site have also provided opportunities to engage with visiting bonsai experts from within Australia and internationally. Bonsai experts such as Yusuke Uchida from Nagoya, Japan, have conducted workshops for local bonsai enthusiasts while they work on styling trees.

Looking after trees from across Australia has generated new knowledge. Anyone involved with bonsai understands the importance of feeding trees to keep them healthy and happy. But many bonsai enthusiasts will readily acknowledge that they do not follow a strict feeding regime. Here at the Collection it is followed strictly. Over a period of time, fertilizing routine has been refined with a view to keeping the trees in show condition all year round. Some interesting observations have been made too.

For instance, deciduous trees are holding their foliage longer than previously. This is true for Japanese maples, Chinese elms and the swamp cypress forest. While some of this can be attributed to the microclimate of the Collection enclosure, minus 6 degrees Celsius would normally have more impact on the deciduous trees that observed. A careful feeding regime has helped the trees in the Collection delay their winter 'shut-down'. Obviously, other maintenance such as regular re-potting also helps. There is more information on this on the NBPCA website, [www.nbpca.com.au](http://www.nbpca.com.au).

One important change with the move to the new site is the ability to look after and display trees that require frost protection. The Frost Free Area was not included in the original budget so donations were sought from visitors and sponsors, including many individuals and clubs in the bonsai community. Now there is a display area with a light weight, transparent but insulating roof and a hanging glass wall that can be closed at night and fully opened out during the day, as the weather requires. It does not create a temperature-controlled hot house for tropical plants but merely protects the non frost-tolerant species of bonsai.

In August 2013, the move from Commonwealth Park to the National Arboretum Canberra was completed with the relocation of the Koreshoff Pines. The trees, Japanese black pines, were germinated from seed imported in 1951 by Vita and Dorothy Koreshoff and were initially grown in sandy soil in a vegetable garden in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. They were lifted and moved to Castle Hill in 1965 and grown on as landscape-size bonsai, called *niwaki* in Japanese. In August 2008 they were donated to the NBPCA and were installed outside the entrance to the Collection's original site in Commonwealth Park (see photograph above).

With the Koreshoff Pines now planted opposite the entrance to the NBPCA, the transition to the new and permanent home is finished. The challenge now is to continue the Collection's journey by developing an ever-growing tradition of excellence. 🌲



Top; The innovative glass walls that can be closed when necessary to protect the bonsai and penjing from the elements. The roof is a clear, insulated glass.

Middle and bottom; trees from the Collection;

Bottle brush, *Callistemon spp.*, Fig, *Ficus microcarpa*, and Montezuma cypress, *Taxodium distichum*, also known as Swamp cypress or Bald cypress.

Photos on this page courtesy [www.valavanisbonsaiblog.com](http://www.valavanisbonsaiblog.com)



# 第33回日本盆栽大観展 Taikan-ten



## Impressions of The Grandview Bonsai Exhibition, Kyoto, Japan

By Owen Reich, USA

Photographs by Owen Reich, Thomas S. Elias,  
William N. Valavanis and Mark Cooper





Photo, Tom Elias

Host officials from the Japan Bonsai Taikan-ten organizing Committee, the City of Kyoto, the Kyoto Newspaper, and the KBS Kyoto Broadcasting Company join Nippon Bonsai Association President Fukuda Jiro in cutting the ribbon and formally opening the 2013 Taikan-ten.



Photo, Owen Reich

Bonsai considered for the Prime Minister's Award are grouped together for the second round of judging.



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Tom Elias

A special exhibit of a beautiful natural chrysanthemum stone from the collection of the Meiji Shrine, Tokyo.



Photo, Owen Reich

Many exhibits were accompanied by shitakusa and kusamono.

Every year during the last week of November, bonsai collectors and professionals converge on the city of Kyoto for the *Taikan-tenjikai* which translates to Grandview Bonsai Exhibition. The event has been running since 1980 and is considered the second best exhibition after the Kokufu-ten in Tokyo. There are a number of reasons I prefer this event over the National Exhibition. Many of these will be explained in detail below with a bit of “proof” in the form of photos.

While apprenticing in Japan at Fujikawa Kouken in Osaka, I’ve had the privilege to attend three Taikan-ten events. Each year, it’s a mad dash to prepare bonsai for the vendor area and during the event maintain the exhibits. While challenging, the experience is always worth the effort as the diversity of species and styles at this event never fails to impress. Unlike the Kokufu-ten which has the equivalent of breed standards like the



Photo, Mark Cooper



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Tom Elias

*Top left;* A part of the extensive vendor sales area that is directly adjacent to the indoor exhibit of trees and stones.

*Top right;* The second round of the judging process. .

*Middle;* Five trees with three point displays utilizing scrolls on display prior to opening to the public.

*Bottom;* Waves of patrons experiencing the exhibition. The Taikan-ten is a popular exhibit in Kyoto with approximately eight thousand people attending annually. This exhibit coincides with the peak of the autumn foliage displays in this ancient city.

Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, this event allows *avant-garde* displays with Shinto and Buddhist references and a much greater quantity of *suiseki* as well. *Suiseki* can be presented as the main display element and this is just now catching on with a concurrent event at the Kokufu-ten in 2014. Another major difference is that not every bonsai exhibited has to have a great feeling of power, regardless of the style, in order to create a greater feeling of

uniformity throughout the show. This lack of stringency also means there are many more species represented at the Taikan-ten. An elegant oak will be set up next to a *suiseki* display followed by formal upright white pine. This sounds eclectic, but fits together well with the more laid-back Kyoto atmosphere. Many of my personal favorites this year were taller *bunjin* or slant style pines. Displays to suit all tastes are present along with the award winners from the Kokufu-ten. Special exhibits are put together annually focusing on themes such as “The Four Kingdoms,” in 2012, and the late Daizo Iwasaki’s Collection, in 2011.

The Taikan-ten was started 35 years ago to increase the popularity and prominence of bonsai in the Kansai (*sai* means west) area. The Kokufu-ten is considered a Kanto (*to* means West) Regional event. The Grandview Exhibition has been a major success. It promotes local businesses and brings in a great number of visitors to experience the exhibition and potentially acquire bonsai related goods as well. Not every major collection owner comes to the Kokufu-ten every year, so this gives vendors a chance to appeal to the western Japanese market.

The vendor area at the Taikan-ten is almost worth the trip to Japan alone. Anything you may want is available and this year, foreigners made up a major percentage of the customer base. My Spanish, Japanese, and English language abilities sometimes all at once are often put to use helping customers ask questions and make purchases. This year, many of



Photo, Tom Elias



Photo, Tom Elias



Photo, Tom Elias

the best containers, suiseki, and stands in the vendor area went to Europe, western Asia, and America. This trend is both encouraging and discouraging: International popularity continues to rise as Japan's client base deflates. The Taikan-ten vendor area is completely indoors which makes this apprentice very happy as our Kokufu-ten vendor area, at the Ueno Green Club, is outside in the dead of Winter. Generally the same businesses have sales areas each year in Kyoto so long-term relationships are honored with repeated visits from abroad. My container addiction is not helped by the selection of older Chinese and Japanese ceramics available.

I would be remiss to leave out the importance of the after-hours events. On the second evening of the event, every display at the exhibition is professionally photographed by the Kinbon team along with about 25 bonsai professionals and apprentices. The two times I've participated were really eye-opening as the process is so fluid. About four hours are needed after the exhibition closes for the day. It can be really tense at times when carrying ancient bonsai and stands or moving a tree covered in mature fruit. Any exhibition entries submitted to the prime aisles are photographed with their corresponding scrolls and supporting elements which really makes the exhibition books worth having. The displays featuring fall color and fruit are really wonderful as the seasonal themes are so striking. In some cases, you can see the same deciduous trees in full fall color then completely leafless later in the exhibition.

Another really important activity is the after-the-show reunions of many bonsai professionals. This bond between professionals here translates in some cases, to continued cooperation and in others, requests for specialized services like sand-blasting and refinement work. In one instance, I was grilled about the American bonsai scene and the potential for growth there by the Japanese Bonsai Association President. One statement Ryan Neil made to me just before I started my apprenticeship was "Remember,



Photo, Tom Elias



Photo, Tom Elias

- Top left;* Fukuda Jiro was elected as President of the Nippon Bonsai Association in May, 2013.
- Top right;* A special exhibit of several antique pots from the collection of Keiun-an owned by Saito Akihisa. This pot is a Chinese mid Qing dynasty piece.
- Middle;* Many excellent stones such as this one are exhibited each year at the Taikan-ten.
- Bottom;* A beautiful Sajigawa stone owned by Fujikawa Hiroo.

Top; Ishitsuki (Tree planted on rock type). It requires decades to create and refine a first branch in this fashion. This exceptional Japanese white pine or *Goyo-matsu* was displayed by Matsumura Yoshinobu.

Bottom; This display featuring a literati style Japanese white pine, *Pinus parviflora*, *Goyo-matsu*. A sublime display entered by a client of Shinji Suzuki, Aizumi Tadao, and styled by American apprentice Tyler Sherrod. Some may want to remove the lowest branch to make this design more of a "bunjin style". However, it is this branch that raises this bonsai's level of natural character and individuality. One of my favorite displays at the exhibition.

Facing page, Top; Kokufu-ten prize winning *Pseudocypripedium sinensis*. Exhibitor unknown.



Photo, Tom Elias



Photo, Owen Reich

you're representing a lot more than just yourself over there." So true.

The event has almost always been at Miyako Messe except for the two years while the venue was being rebuilt. Miyako is an old descriptive term for Kyoto (once known as Heian-kyo) and Messe is a German word for exhibition place. Judging is as follows. First, three of the best displays for each major division are chosen.

The divisions are:

Evergreens: Large/Medium/Small

Deciduous: Large/Medium/Small

Ishitsuki: Rock planting/Root over-rock

Shohin Displays

Satsuki

All categories have three of the best representatives selected by a panel of ten bonsai professionals first. Then, five Taikan-ten honorary judges and five bonsai professionals vote to choose the award winners.

The Taikanten-sho Award is given to displays that are especially well made. Attention is paid to the harmony between the container, bonsai style, stand, and supporting elements. Mike and Amy Blanton's display in 2009 won this award. To my knowledge, each of these awards is sponsored by a company or organization.



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Mark Cooper



Photo, Mark Cooper

*Bottom and inset; Mark and Ritta Cooper have been keen on bonsai and koi for over 30 years. They are a rare team as there is no check or balance system when both love bonsai equally as much. This display at the Taikan-ten was a major goal of theirs that they have now accomplished. They've also won awards at Noelanders and many British exhibitions. After Naoki Maeoka, an apprentice at Kouka-en styled this *Pinus parviflora*, Mark prepared the bonsai for exhibition. Ritta, an expert in the art of kusamono, prepared the supporting element.*

Top left; *Pinus densiflora*

Top right; *Diospyros kaki*

Bottom; *Pinus thunbergii*. The elements for this display of a black pine and root-over-rock trident maple all complement each other to create a balanced display. Some of the best representatives of their species for displays of great power and perseverance without need of a heavy trunk.



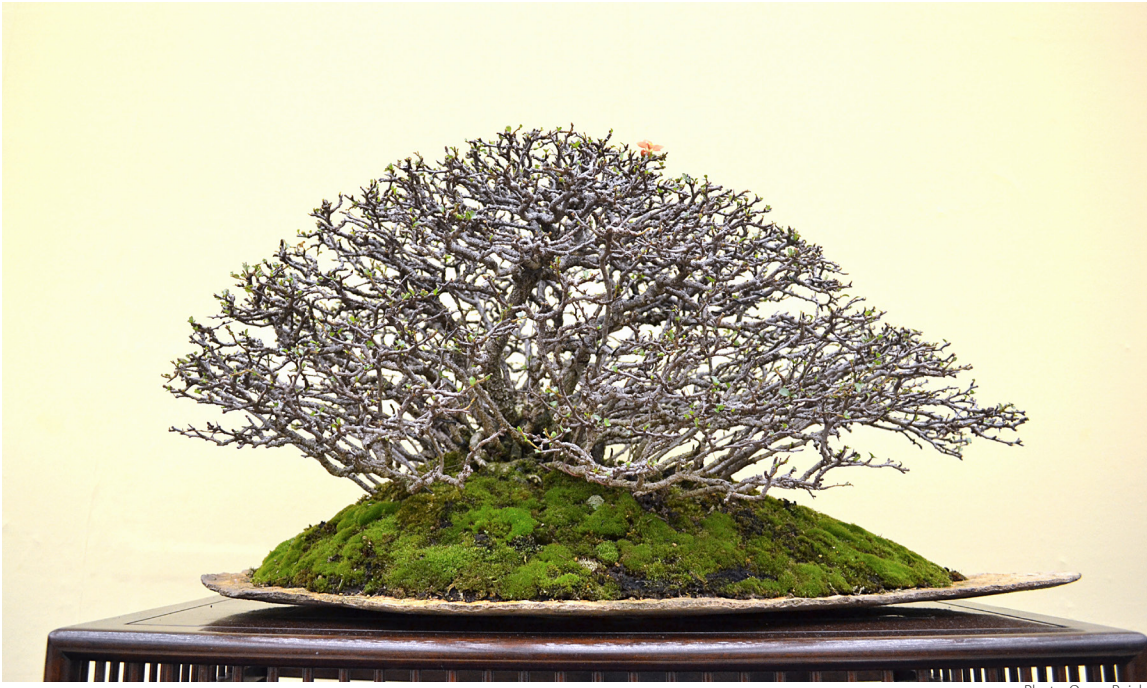
Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Top; *Chaenomeles japonica* 'Chojubai' entered by Mr. Kato.  
Bottom; A massive *Acer palmatum*. This bonsai was featured in a special display near the entrance.

Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich

Top; *Acer buergerianum*. Winner of Best Deciduous tree. The Taikan-ten occurs during peak Fall color in Kyoto so some deciduous bonsai can be seen fully clothed and in winter silhouette in a matter of days.

Middle; Kusamono made from pyrossia and star jasmine.

Bottom; Interesting display of *Stewartia monadelphica* planted on a rock slab.



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich





Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich

*Top left; Idesia polycarpa* supporting element. It's rare to find them with uniform taper and no scars.

*Top right; Pinus densiflora* bunjin.

*Middle; Well made display featuring an Acer palmatum "Shishigaishira"*

*Bottom; A complex and excellent shohin display. One of the most difficult layouts to achieve with all different species and container styles.*



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, [www.valavanibonsaiblog.com](http://www.valavanibonsaiblog.com)



Photo, [www.valavanibonsaiblog.com](http://www.valavanibonsaiblog.com)

Top left; Cascading *Prunus mume*

Top right; Grove Style *Chamaecyparis obtusa*

Middle left; Semi-cascade *Pinus thunbergii*

Middle right; Informal Upright *Pinus thunbergii*

Bottom; *Pinus parviflora* styled by Masahiko Kimura. Winner of the Prime Minister's Award for best large conifer.



Photo, [www.valavanibonsaiblog.com](http://www.valavanibonsaiblog.com)



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Top; *Pinus parviflora* Chuhin  
 Middle; *Juniperus chinensis*  
 var. *sargentii* 'Itoigawa' owned  
 by Mr. Endo. Styled by Bjorn  
 BJORHOLM of Kouka-en.  
 Bottom; *Juniperus chinensis* var.  
*sargentii* 'Itoigawa'

Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich

Left to right, top to bottom;  
Three bonsai that show a great  
feeling of age and refinement  
for their respective styles  
and species. *Pinus densiflora*.  
*Acer buergerianum*. *Punica  
granatum*.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

From an early age Owen Reich has been enchanted by the natural world around him where he lived in the South-eastern United States. While studying ornamental horticulture at the University of Georgia, a classmate introduced him to bonsai and the dream of having a bonsai nursery began. After graduating, Mr. Reich worked for five years as the manager at Samara Farms in Nashville, Tennessee. While there he refined his understanding of horticulture.

In order to further his bonsai training he traveled to Japan to apprentice with Keiichi Fujikawa in Osaka, Japan to gain experience with a wide variety of species. Also during the same time Bjorn Bjorholm was studying there and Mr. Reich assisted in the production of the popular Bonsai Art of Japan video series on You Tube.

Owen Reich's web site [BonsaiUearthed.com](http://BonsaiUearthed.com) contains many valuable articles and information which he has learned and experienced in Japan. He is now back in Tennessee and traveling as a bonsai instructor.



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich



Photo, Owen Reich

This annual event in Kyoto is not to be missed as the opportunity to experience Kyoto during peak Fall color and a major bonsai exhibition together is to me, ideal. Make sure you book hotel rooms or tours with experienced guides for the Kansai region like the Bill Valavanis/Kora Dalager team, a number of European guides, or me in 2014. My tour will focus on the Kansai Region and more so on the temples and gardens of Kyoto than traditional bonsai tours. My hope is that more people attend the Grandview

Bonsai Exhibition in the future and even submit entries like Michele and Charles Smith, Mike and Amy Blanton, and Mark and Ritta Cooper have in recent years through my sensei Fujikawa-san's garden Kouka-en. International clients with reasonable importation policies at home can exhibit a bonsai and if the species permits, have it back in their country fairly quickly with the proper documentation and quarantine processes. 🌲

# And now for something completely different....

A review of *Keshiki Bonsai: The Easy Modern Way to Create Miniature Landscapes* by Kenji Kobayashi

By Michael Collins-McIntyre, Canada

Recently, in the depth of a Winnipeg winter, Paul Collard gave a presentation to our local bonsai society on an innovative and engaging book that he had just discovered. Temperatures hovered in the -30s. There was not much to be done outside except to get inside as fast as possible. The book was *Keshiki Bonsai: The Easy Modern Way to Create Miniature Landscapes* by Kenji Kobayashi. Paul wasn't sure that it was really about bonsai in a conventional sense but was certain that it related to bonsai culture broadly and that it was visually engaging. The book also offered the prospect of projects that could be undertaken indoors, inexpensively, and by individuals who had very tight living quarters or were unable to undertake the more arduous aspects of collecting, growing and training larger bonsai. Paul had requested photos depicting some of the landscapes included in the book. These sparked lively discussion that moved quickly beyond definitional quibbles to recognition of the compelling aesthetic appeal of the work.

"Keshiki Bonsai" translates as "landscape bonsai." The author, Kenji Kobayashi, originally trained as a landscape architect in Japan and then studied with Toshio Kawamoto in Portland. Kawamoto's masterpiece: *Saikei: Living Landscapes in Miniature* is a classic in the bonsai literature. Formal training in landscape architecture, massaged by Kawamoto's influence, infuses Kobayashi's work. Kobayashi is also shaped by the hugely dense urban environment of Tokyo in which he works. He creates miniature landscapes that are evocative and often tell a story. They are sometimes simple, perhaps even austere. Other works evoke the peace, calm, and deep aesthetic appreciation of a bonsai or bonsai garden. Comparison of the simplicity of Figure 1 with the organic flow of Figure 2 illustrates how these miniature landscapes can evoke very different responses even while using similar material.

*Keshiki Bonsai* begins with introductory material on the basic knowledge of the materials and techniques needed for developing and maintaining miniature landscapes. The book is organized around thirty-seven projects the range of which is suggested by the cover photograph. Each of these depicts the creation of a landscape in richly illustrated detail. The individual projects are enriched with background on general principles of Japanese design and contain glimpses of the work of artists in other domains. For example, Figure 1 features a pot made by one of the profiled artists, Mito Yajima.



Cover depicting some of the miniature landscapes discussed in the text.

Kobayashi, Kenji  
*Keshiki Bonsai: The Easy Modern Way to Create Miniature Landscapes*  
 Paperback: 176 pages  
 Publisher: Timber Press (Oct. 2 2012)  
 Language: English  
 ISBN-10: 1604693592  
 ISBN-13: 978-1604693591

Figure 1 – "Stark angles are used to create a beguiling contrast for (this) keshiki bonsai." The result is a living contemporary sculpture of quiet elegance." Photo courtesy Timber Press.

Figure 2 – A peaceful, waterside scene is created in a large bowl. The composition uses wetland plants: cat-tails, goldenthread, azure bluet, and Japanese mountain moss. The top dressing of Fuji sand adds drama. Photo courtesy Timber Press.



The author, Kenji Kobayashi, at work in his studio. Photo courtesy Timber Press.

This project uses just cattails, moss and Yajima’s prepossessing container to synergistically convey “quiet elegance.” The artist profiles help the reader understand how a vision fits in with a larger design aesthetic.

Figure 3 presents a landscape that focuses attention on a Japanese Andromeda growing from a cluster of ground foliage (goldenthread, and Japanese mountain moss). Kobayashi remarks: “This bonsai has presence—you can sense a powerful life spirit.”

This remark is archetypal of the ethos of the book. It is intended to provide the means of bringing something spiritually akin to traditional bonsai into living environments. This objective may not appeal to the traditional bonsai artist but the landscapes presented do relate directly to possibilities for *kusamono* and *shitakusa*. The use of moss is masterful. It has, in fact, stimulated a personal interest in studying the cultivation of mosses in earnest.

I believe, though, that the greatest importance of *Keshiki Bonsai* is as a means of introducing bonsai culture to a wider public. In this regard, it is having impact and will continue to do so. It was one of a small handful of books that was identified by Dominique Browning of the *New York Times* as being amongst the most important horticultural books of 2012. A search of the Times archive showed that Jonathan Singer’s *Fine Bonsai* was the only other bonsai book to be mentioned in the *Times* in recent years. Browning states: “...bonsai by any name is a lovely, gracious, soul-enriching enterprise. The charm of Kobayashi’s work is its quick payoff: his plantings don’t take generations to mature, and they’re relatively easy to create.” The essence of the *Times* review is appreciation of the accessibility—accessibility for all ages, for those living in confined space or with mobility issues, for those with little discretionary income, and for those who simply want to take a fledging step into the bonsai aesthetic—promoted by the book.

*Keshiki Bonsai* certainly is a book that bonsai teachers will want to be aware of. It is welcoming to novices. Kobayashi writes with a joyfulness that is infectious. Browning was so won over that she remarks: “I’m ready to try my hand at one of the garden arts I had considered beyond my ability.” I think that those interested in promoting bonsai and its values can take notice of the fact that one of the most important horticultural writers in North America just might make a foray into doing bonsai because of this work. I also believe that there is increasing interest in the traditional bonsai community in *kusamono* and *shitakusa* in their own right and also as part of more formal displays—Danilo Scursatone’s writings in this publication are a case in point. *Keshiki Bonsai* may very well stimulate traditional bonsai artists to give consideration to these topics. The book also provides a motivation to think small which, in an aging population, is a form of thinking that many of us will have to consider. Since reading *Keshiki Bonsai*, I find myself visiting, for example, the online work of the potter and mame artist

Haryuosi <[www.facebook.com/pages/Haruyosi/382984108464574](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Haruyosi/382984108464574)>, the shohin of Morten Albeck <[www.facebook.com/pages/Morten-Albek-Shohin-bonsai-Europe-Albek-Bonsai-Studio/222792107788710](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Morten-Albek-Shohin-bonsai-Europe-Albek-Bonsai-Studio/222792107788710)>, and the pots and accent plantings of Dan Barton <<http://danbartonbonsaipots.wordpress.com/>> more frequently. The ability to invent and the ability to stimulate are both very good. My opinion is that *Keshiki Bonsai*, albeit not traditional, is a very good book indeed. 🌱



Figure 3 – Japanese Andromeda, goldenthread, and Japanese mountain moss are used in a landscape in which the Andromeda is front and center. Kobayashi remarks: “This bonsai has presence—you can sense a powerful life spirit.” Photo courtesy Timber Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael Collins-McIntyre is a Canadian professor, psychologist, and writer. He has recently become a Contributing Editor of *BCI Bonsai and Stone Appreciation*. His articles appear quite regularly.



## Bonsai Exhibition by Bonsai Study Group of The Indo-Japanese Association

By Nikunj and Jyoti Parekh, Directors: Bonsai Study Group of The Indo-Japanese Association, Mumbai, India.

From 15th to 17th November 2013, more than 6000 persons visited this event. There were hundreds of elementary to high school students that viewed the bonsai exhibits and watched five demonstrations by our team. During this event there was a painting competition to draw individual bonsai from the exhibits. More than 50 students of age groups 7–11 years, 11–15 years and 15–20 years participated. Winners were given prizes and all participants also got consolation prizes.

Our program, VISION 2014, was also launched at this event, a program to expose school children to the art of bonsai through our volunteer teams at Mumbai and all affiliated chapters across India. We have noticed that bonsai art here is practiced by an age group 50 to 70 years which does not hold future promise and hence our group wishes to train 2000 children in the coming year. The children will be encouraged to make bonsai from nursery grown plants because digging trees from the wild ultimately damages our green cover and environment. 🌱



Top to bottom, left to right; Bonsai Study group's exhibition with focal display viewed by school children.

Art competition for age group below 11 years in progress.

Students queued up to see exhibits early morning.

Above 15 years age group winner of bonsai drawing competition.

Winners of competition were given prizes

Bonsai demonstrations were tailor-made for school children.



Top left; San Jose Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* "San Jose" winner of the BCI Award of Excellence at the fall Toronto Bonsai Society Show.

Top right; Olive, *Olea europaea*, winner of the BCI Award of Excellence at the 2013 fall Toronto Bonsai Society Show. This olive was styled by Lilly Tsurulnikov.

Middle; Carlos Bras, receiving his BCI Award of Excellence from Joan Greenway, BCI Director.

Bottom; Carlos Bras' San Jose juniper in 2005.



## BCI Award of Excellence at the Toronto Bonsai Society's fall Bonsai Show at the Toronto Botanical Gardens

By Joan Greenway, BCI Director, Canada. Photographs by Brian Greenway

The Toronto Bonsai Society (TBS), Canada, held its fall Bonsai Show at the Toronto Botanical Gardens on October 19–20, 2013. At that show Carlos Bras and Lilly Tsurulnikov were given a BCI Excellence Award for their bonsai.

About his bonsai, Carlos said, "I rescued that tree from a condo development back in 2004. I had no clue what to do with it. I was a newbie to bonsai so I scooped it up because it was free material! The most difficult part was dealing with very straight trunk with no movement or taper. The tree initially had two branches that were no where near each other. It became apparent to me that it would be a one-branch design but which one, and could it possibly become a new apex? I introduced taper and movement by carving the dead wood one two thirds up the tree. I was happy with end results which made the other decisions on the final design easier."

Carlos joined TBS back in fall of 2002. He is now the president of the Toronto Bonsai Society.

Lilly Tsurulnikov has been a member of TBS since 2009, and previously a member of Israeli Bonsai Club between 2002 and 2008.

Lilly says, "This tree was imported from Israel four years ago. The original material was purchased from Israeli bonsai artist Moshe Emergui, who specializes, among other things, in layering and developing olive pre-bonsai. It was cultivated in a pot for two years before I purchased it, plus four years of my styling. The most difficult part of the design was keeping this tree alive and happy in Canada, balancing between keeping it outdoor as much as possible and organizing suitable indoor environment for winter months."

Congratulations to the Toronto Bonsai Club from BCI for a lovely October fall color Bonsai Show and best wishes to the Toronto Bonsai Club on its 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2014. 🌳



## Chicago Horticultural Society Seeking Curator of Bonsai to Develop, Maintain, Interpret and Exhibit a Pre-Eminent Collection of Bonsai.

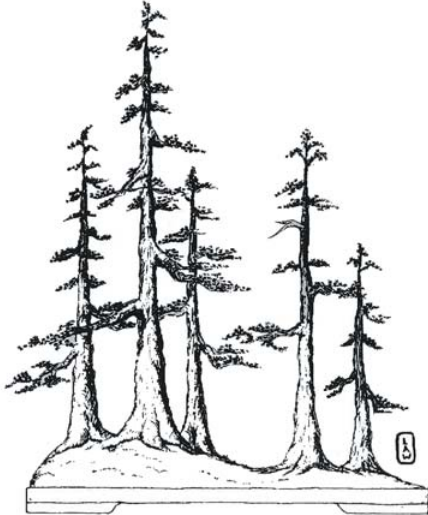
The Chicago Botanic Garden has one of the top public bonsai collections and displays in North America, and popular shows that are well-attended by the public. The Midwest Bonsai Society is an enthusiastic collaborator with the Garden. Be the person to expand the content, diversity, and beauty of this great collection.

The Curator of Bonsai will be responsible for maintaining the health and artistic integrity of the collection through pruning, watering, wiring, fertilizing, repotting, training and providing all aspects of

culture necessary for bonsai. Determine the styling of the bonsai in the collection in consultation with Susumu Nakamura, Bonsai Master. Work with Plant Health Care department to anticipate, prevent or control insect and disease problems for each individual bonsai. Manage curatorial activities of the collection including verification, procurement, de-accessioning and documentation. Implement the Chicago Botanic Garden Bonsai plan. Maintain complete inventory of all bonsai specimens. Keep detailed records on plant care. Set broad long-range objectives for collection



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programs and processes. Write articles and present lectures related to bonsai and their care. Lead tours of collection. Complete interviews for television, radio and newspapers. Provide information about Bonsai to other departments. Pursue opportunities for donation of plants to collection and funding to support development and maintenance of the collection. Work with Public Relations and Marketing to get local and national exposure for the bonsai collection. Serve on interdepartmental teams and work groups as requested.

Our ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture or commensurate experience. Ten years experience in developing and training bonsai. Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal. Ability to work occasional weekends and nights. Licensed driver insurable by the Chicago Horticultural Society.

For a complete description and other information, please visit the website for this job posting at: [http://www.chicagobotanic.org/jobs/curator\\_bonsai](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/jobs/curator_bonsai). 🌲

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| 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)<br>The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months<br><input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)  |  |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 13. Publication Title<br><b>Bonsai and Stone Appreciation Magazine</b>   | 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below<br><b>July/Aug/Sept</b> |   |
| 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation   | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months          | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
| a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)  | 1190  | 1015  |
| b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)   |   |   |
| (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)   | 553   | 507   |
| (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)  |   |   |
| (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®   |   | 7   |
| (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)  | 290   | 75  |
| c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))   | 843   | 589   |
| d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)  |   |   |
| (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541  |   |   |
| (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541   |   |   |
| (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)  | 85  | 24  |
| (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)   | 62  |   |
| e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))  | 147   | 24  |
| f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)   | 990   | 613   |
| g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))  | 200   | 90  |
| h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)  | 1190  | 703   |
| i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)   | 85%   | 96.8%   |
| 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet.   |   |   |
| 17. Publication of Statement of Ownership<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the <b>Jan/Feb/March</b> issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required. |   |   |
| 18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner<br><b>Carla A. Focke, BCI Business Manager</b>  |   | Date<br><b>9/27/13</b>                                      |

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

# Teach, inform, entertain and inspire!

A New Feature for the BCI website;

Tree of the Month/Stone of the Month



The BCI website will undergo an update soon. As part of this update, we plan to showcase a tree and stone from the BCI membership every month.

The photo will be accompanied by short story, about 150 words in length, describing some aspect of the subject; how the tree or stone was collected or acquired; who styled the tree or carved the base; a story about the pot and trays or the artist that created them; a short monograph on the species or geological material.

You can make the story as personal as you like, but try to make it interesting and informative. You can also add a link to your website, blog or Facebook page if you like.

Featured photos must be in color, in focus on a neutral background, about 1000 pixels wide. If appropriate or necessary, additional photos showing a process or a “before and after” can also be submitted.

Both the story and photo will be considered when selecting the finalists. Every member and club is eligible to participate. All levels of expertise are welcome whether you are a novice, an experienced hobbyist or a professional.

Trees and stones to be featured each month will be selected by the Website Editor.

You can start submitting your trees and stone right away so that we can have candidates selected for when we revamp the website.

**Send your photos and story or questions to  
[showcase@bonsai-bci.com](mailto:showcase@bonsai-bci.com)**

*This is a great opportunity to share your trees, stones and stories with your fellow club members around the world and inspire everyone who visits the website.*

# Sunrise on Australian Bonsai



**BCI 2014 GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA**  
**21 - 24 August**  
**QT Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia**

The Gold Coast in Queensland is Australia's premier holiday playground 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.

So that you can make the most of your visit, we are planning a post convention tour to other parts of Australia and to include a New Zealand add-on.

The convention will feature bonsai presenters Zhao Qinquan and Shinichi Nakajima with supporting performances from Chen Wenjuan, Budi Sulisty, Nikunj and Jyoti Parekh, viewing stone presenter Tom Elias, Master potter Gong Li Min and a team of Australian demonstrators.



All details for Online Registration,  
Hotel Booking and Program at  
[www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.goldcoast2014.bonsai-bci.com)  
Enquiries: [glen@bonsainursery.com.au](mailto:glen@bonsainursery.com.au)

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international friendship  
through bonsai

