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# bcj

# Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2015  
Q1



Grand Indonesian Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition

Continuum:  
A Year in the Japanese  
Bonsai World, Directed by  
Bjorn BJORHOLM and the  
Bonsai Art of Bjorn BJORHOLM

2015 BCI Convention:  
Guangzhou, China

Creating a bonsai forest  
with the Genotti method

Mojave Desert and Gobi  
Desert Viewing Stones

François Jeker: a  
multifaceted artist

National Bonsai and Suiseki  
Exhibition in Germany

Winter Silhouette Bonsai  
Expo, North Carolina, USA



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## President's Message

January is the time that many of us living in temperate climates are preparing for the activities of the coming spring. This is a time of preparing a list of trees soon to be repotted, acquiring new tools and supplies and cleaning and preparing for the coming season. Our members in the southern Hemisphere are in mid-summer and busy protecting some of their trees from the sun and heat. Other members fortunate enough to live in tropical regions of the world, blessed with year-round growing conditions with rapid growth, are keeping trees pruned to the intended shape and style. We are fortunate in the pursuit of bonsai because no matter where we live, there are trees that are adapted to those areas. Learning about each of these trees, their growth and maintenance requirements, and how they respond to the range of styling techniques, provides opportunities for us to continuing learning throughout our lives while enjoying beautiful trees.

This is also the time that we are busy planning our schedule of activities at the beginning of this year. We are determining where we will be going to collect new trees or stones, what private collections do we want to see, and what major meetings we want to attend. Of course, this depends upon our financial resources and how much we can devote to the hobby of bonsai and stone appreciation. There is one fantastic bargain that is available to bonsai enthusiasts and stone connoisseurs this year—the BCI annual convention in Guangzhou, China. The planning committee has developed a wonderful program for bonsai hobbyists as well as for those interested in stone appreciation at a very reasonable price. This may be one of the most affordable conventions that is available to you this year.

The 2015 convention will be held at the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall and adjacent Guangdong Science Center in downtown Guangzhou. This city is known as the “Pearl of Southern China” and has been an international trade center since ancient times. It is a visitor friendly metropolitan area with easy access to major capitals around the world. Hundreds of outstanding trees will be on display in the large courtyard of the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall. Two large vending areas are also located in this courtyard. I am informed that there will be an international shipping company available on site to assist you in packing and sending your purchases back home. The exhibit of stones from China and the winning photographs of bonsai and stones from our current photo contest will be displayed in the Science Center. This is also where the bonsai styling demonstrations and lectures on stone appreciation will be held. Plan to arrive on September 17th or earlier, if you want to explore Guangzhou, and participate in the opening reception that evening.

The first two days of the convention, September 18 and 19, will be devoted to bonsai styling demonstrations and illustrated lectures on stone appreciation. Demonstrations will be conducted by recognized Chinese Master penjing artists Zhao Qing Quan and Ng Shing Fat. Taiwan will be represented by Chen Jian Liang, Japan will send the talented bonsai artist Mitsuo Matsuda. François Jeker of France will demonstrate his refined techniques in deadwood styling and



The full registration cost of the BCI 2015 Convention is only \$290 if you register before March 30, 2015. This full registration fee includes all activities, two banquets, and your choice of the two field trips. It includes the hotel cost in Yingde city for the stone tour. This is an incredible bargain. Register early and save. Go to [www.gzbc.com](http://www.gzbc.com) now and plan to attend this event. See p 46 for the schedule.

John Wang, an extremely talented bonsai artist from southern California, will represent North America.

Stone appreciation activities at this convention will be greatly expanded from previous conventions by scheduling five lectures by leading stone experts from China, Japan, Europe and North America. Mr. Zhou Guo Xin, Chairman of the Guangdong Viewing Stone Association and Dr. Qiu Zhili, Professor of Earth Sciences at Sun Yat-Sen University, will present illustrated lectures about Chinese viewing stones. Mr. Kunio Kobayashi, Chairman of the Nippon Suiseki Association, will lecture on Japanese stones, while Dr. Michal Sebo will speak on stones from Europe. BCI president Tom Elias will make a presentation on North American stone appreciation.

Attendees to the convention will have two excellent two-day tours to choose from—one tree related tour to several of the largest private collections in southern China and a stone tour to Yingde, the source of the famous Ying stones. The bonsai tour will first visit the renowned Tracy Garden in Shenzhen, then travel to three other Lingnan style bonsai gardens. This will be a rare opportunity to see many of the finest examples of Lingnan style bonsai in the world. The stone related tour will be by bus to the city of Yingde North of Guangzhou. We will visit several stone shops in Yingde including the Viewing Stone Street in Zhenyang Fang Town. Participants of this tour will stay overnight in Yingde. The next day, the tour will travel a short distance to Ying Stone Park, a large display of indoor and outdoor Ying stones. Both tours will return to Guangzhou on Monday evening, September 21 for the presentation of awards and the closing ceremony. 🌳

Tom Elias, President  
BCI

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

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!  
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*Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!*

For more information contact:

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

**T**his first issue of 2015 has an additional eight pages to accommodate the interesting and varied articles that were submitted by BCI Directors, contributing editors, members, and other authors. There are great bonsai and stone events all over the world and at BCI, we are fortunate our Directors are an active and energetic group that attends and organizes these events and then documents them for our readers to enjoy.

BCI President Tom Elias and BCI Director Budi Sulistyو participated in a major exhibition in Indonesia that featured a who's who of demonstrators and instructors, as well as exceptional trees and stones. BCI Director Gudrun Benz report on an exhibition in Mannheim, Germany and acknowledges the importance of volunteers and group cooperation in organizing a show. Owen Reich from Tennessee reports on the Winter Silhouette Bonsai Expo in North Carolina and the inherent beauty of bare branches in winter. Many thanks to Joseph Noga and his excellent photos, which he contributed to this article. Malcolm Hughes reports on the Hua Fong Bonsai Exhibition in Taipei, Taiwan, and the renowned and impressive Taiwanese junipers being trained there as bonsai. BCI Director IS Ng participated in the Orchid and Bonsai Competition & Exhibition in Malaysia where prizes are awarded according to size and species—an effective way to reward excellence in many categories.

Danilo Scursatone uses one of his beautiful forest creations to illustrate the Genotti method for creating the bonsai forest style. I like this method for its simplicity and versatility and will try it this spring.

In their comparison of desert viewing stones from the Mojave Desert and the Gobi Desert, Tom Elias and Hanne Povlsen present some very beautiful stones and a wealth of information to inspire stone collectors everywhere.

During Bjorn Bjorholm's six-year bonsai apprenticeship in Japan, he documented his experiences there and the result is a wonderful film, *Continuum A Year in the Japanese Bonsai World*, spanning four seasons and featuring Keiichi Fujikawa and the team of apprentices at Kouka-en bonsai nursery in Osaka, Japan. I hope you find the interview with Bjorn and the gallery of his work as interesting as I did.

We also introduce you to another bonsai professional and a man of many talents, François Jeker. Past BCI president Solita Rosade gives us a brief look at this artist from France who is one of the headliners at BCI 2015.

Every bonsai professional I have met has an intimate understating of Botany. If this is an area where you would like to improve your knowledge, be sure to read Lew Buller's book review of *Botany for Gardeners*.

Entries to the Best of BCI 2015 Photo Competition are coming in. It's easy to enter using our online form that prompts you for all the necessary information and allows you to attach your photos. Go to [www.bonsai-bci.com](http://www.bonsai-bci.com) and click on the photo competition banner at the top of the page. We look forward to receiving your entries before the April 30 deadline. 🌱

—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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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
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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**ON OUR COVER:** On exhibit at the Grand Indonesian Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition and winner of the BCI Excellence Award, Wacang is the local name of “Sancang” or *Premna mycrophylla* grafted to “Wahong” or *Premna salicifolia*. The size of this bonsai is around 82 cm, the owner is Inneke from Ponorogo, East Java. Photo by Tom Elias, USA

# Grand Indonesian Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition

## Bounty in the Tropics

By Tom Elias, USA

Photos by Budi Sulisty, Indonesia and Tom Elias, USA



**T**ropical regions of the world have a decided advantage over temperate regions when developing bonsai. Trees with large trunks and branches can be grown from seedlings within a few years. Trees dug from the wild are quick to respond and starting growing again. Plus, the range of potential species to be crafted into bonsai is very broad. This was evident in the recent Grand Indonesian Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition 2014 that was held in October, 2014. Approximately 1,000 medium- and large-sized trees were displayed between the two venues for this event. It was a beautiful display of outstanding trees developed by a wide range of highly skilled artists belonging to the Indonesian Bonsai Society. This grand event was staged to celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this large and active society.

Since bonsai started in temperate and warm temperate climates, many of us don't realize how advanced the art of bonsai has developed in the Southeast Asian countries, especially in Indonesia. My immediate reaction to learning that this event would be held in two locations was puzzling. That is, until I discovered that Indonesia consist of over 17,000 islands and stretches over an East to West area equivalent to the breath of the United States. The first segment of this impressive exhibition was held in Bandung near Jakarta from October 11-19, while the second component was held on the more eastern island of Bali.

*Top right;* Opening ceremony, from left Mr Fukuda Jiro, Mr Tom Elias, Mr M Paiman, Mr Soeroso Soemopawiro, Mr Sung Bum Yung, The Governor of West Java representative, Mr Saptodarsono, Budi Sulistyo

*Middle;* Stone exhibit

*Bottom;* Bonsai exhibit area





**Demonstrations;**

Huang Jiu Wei, China created a land/water penjing with two species; *Ulmus parviflora* and *Serissa foetida*



Jose Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rico radically pruned and reoriented this *Podocarpus* as a semi-cascade







Kunio Kobayashi, Japan created dead wood effects on this large *Juniperus chinensis*. Before photos are at the bottom of preceding page.



Min Hsuan Lo, Taiwan styled a dramatically shaped *Juniperus chinensis*.  
Bottom right; From left: Mrs Soeroso Soemopawiro, Mr Soeroso Soemopawiro, Mr Min Hsuan Lo, and Mr Willy Wihana.



Ng Shing Fat, China completely defoliated this *Ficus glomerata* and refined its branch structure



Another fine *Juniperus chinensis* specimen was styled by Shinichi Nakajima, Japan

The site of the Bandung was held at the Bale Pare, Kota Baru Parahyangan, an attractive park-like setting. The first three days consisted of an opening ceremony followed by series of demonstrations and lectures by Indonesian and invited guests from other countries. The first day, Mr. Kunio Kobayashi, Japan and Mr. Huang Jiu Wei, China, gave splendid bonsai styling demonstrations; while Mak Paiman, Indonesia, presented a lecture on stone appreciation. The following day, Min Hsuan Lo, Taiwan, Mr. Ng Shing Fat, China, Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rico, and Mr. Shinichi Nakajima performed additional bonsai styling demonstrations; while I gave an illustrated lecture on Asian stone appreciation. The third day featured various local Indonesian bonsai artists. There were 600 trees displayed out of doors and 198 viewing stones in an indoor exhibition at this site. A large vendor's area was adjacent to the display of trees. It was difficult to walk past hundreds of excellent tropical and subtropical bonsai for sale at reasonable prices because I knew that I would not be allowed to bring them back to my home state of California in the U.S.

The range of large, beautiful styled trees was composed of several species of *Serissa foetida*, *Carmona mycophylla*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, *Celtis chinensis*, several *Ficus* species, *Flacourtia indica*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Pemphis acidula*, *Diospyros montana*, *Premna microphylla*, *Hibicus tilaceaus*, *Juniperus chinensis*, *Triphasia trifolia*, *Malphigia glabra*, *Podocarpus* species, *Acacia* species, *Streblus asper*, *Wrightia religiosa*, and several other species. The vast majority of the stones on display were natural native Indonesian ones with just a few from China. Indonesia has many beautiful



Indonesia's geology makes it a prime location for finding high quality stones. All the viewing stones on this page are prize winning stones, all native to Indonesia. Some of the finest dark black, well-worn, water pool stones, probably from basaltic rocks, come from this country.



Top left; *Tamarindus indica*,  
height 115 cm

Top right; *Bougainvillea glabra*,  
height 97 cm

Bottom; *Premna microphylla*,  
height 69 cm



stones because of the geological history of the country. It is part of the famous “ring of fire” arch that stretches from southeastern Asia northward and over to the west coast of North and South America. Earthquakes and volcanos are prevalent along this arch, and Indonesia has some of the more violent ones. As a result, it is a prime location for finding high quality stones. Some of the finest dark black, well-worn water pool stones, probably from basaltic rocks, come from this country. Sumatra, Java, and Papua are producing excellent stones. Three stones on exhibit were presented with BCI Medals of Excellence.

This 35th anniversary exhibition was organized by a committee of leaders including the Chairman of the Indonesian Bonsai Society, Mr. Sapto Darsono, the head of the local Bandung chapter, Mr. Tedi Supriatna, the chair of the organizing committee, Mr. Soeroso Soemopawiro and others. Budi Sulisty, BCI board member, served as the Chief of Operations for the organizing committee. (Continued)



Top; *Ficus microcarpa*, height 37 cm  
Bottom; *Podocarpus neerifolius*,  
height 74 cm





Top left; *Juniperus chinensis*,  
height 77 cm  
Top right; *Wrightia religiosa*,  
height 58 cm  
Bottom left; *Casuarina equisetifolia*,  
height 82 cm  
Bottom right; *Pemphis acidula*,  
height 57 cm





Above; *Pemphis acidula*, height 83 cm



Above; *Pemphis acidula*, height 92 cm  
Below; *Casuarina equisetifolia*, height 97 cm





Top left; *Juniperus chinensis*,  
height 81 cm

Top right; *Pemphis acidula*,  
height 97 cm

Bottom; *Ficus ampelas*, 82 cm







Bonsai and stone appreciation is thriving in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. The abundance of excellent material and the influences of various bonsai artists from other countries who have been teaching in Indonesia for many years has led to the establishment of strong and vibrant communities of artists and collectors. 🌳



Top left; *Podocarpus neriifolius*  
Top right; *Ficus ampelas*,  
height 79 cm  
Bottom; *Pemphis acidula*,  
height 73 cm

This full-length documentary chronicles a year in the Japanese bonsai world through the experiences of Keiichi Fujikawa and his team of apprentices at Kouka-en nursery in Osaka, Japan. It's a behind-the-scenes look at the life of bonsai apprentices that follows the Kouka-en crew as they prepare for Japan's top bonsai exhibitions.



**Continuum—A Year in the Japanese Bonsai World**

DVD, Runtime: 50 minutes

Language: English

Directed, Filmed and Edited by Bjorn BJORHOLM

Starring Keiichi Fujikawa

Produced by Keiichi Fujikawa

Available from [www.fujikawabonsai.com](http://www.fujikawabonsai.com)

Look for the Trailer on Youtube.

# CONTINUUM

## A Year in the Japanese Bonsai World

Directed by Bjorn BJORHOLM

Interview by Joe Grande, Canada

Photos courtesy Bjorn BJORHOLM

A unique part of membership in BCI, is the exposure we get to bonsai practices around the world. This magazine has covered bonsai appreciation on every continent where bonsai artists, growers and collectors are creating excellent specimens for both local, national and international exhibits. Regardless of the location or species, we are all connected by the name *bonsai*, an art form with historical roots in China, further developed and refined in Japan and exported throughout the world by Japanese emigrants and Westerners who experienced bonsai first-hand in Japan. In the early days of bonsai in the West, even one month of bonsai study in Japan was enough to elevate an individual to expert status on their return home. Today, modern communications and affordable travel make it possible to learn bonsai in almost any region in the world, studying with teachers in many countries and in many languages. However, for a new generation of bonsai artists, Japan remains the destination of choice for those seeking a profession in bonsai.

**Bjorn BJORHOLM**, an American from Tennessee, is one of these young bonsai professionals who have recently experienced a traditional bonsai apprenticeship in the land of the rising sun. Apart from his apparent excellent work with bonsai, what makes Bjorn unique, are his skills in film and music, which he employed with expertise to document his bonsai journey during his studies. I marvel at his documentary efforts—most people would have their hands full with the primary objective of learning bonsai.

Since 2011, he has been filming and producing the online series, *The Bonsai Art of Japan* for Youtube, receiving positive responses from people all over the world. In that time, the global audience has skyrocketed to more than 10,000 subscribers and millions of views online. These videos focus on the many technical aspects of bonsai culture and design—a free-flow of information for the betterment of the bonsai community as a whole.

Encouraged by the success of his online series, he began filming the documentary, *Continuum - A Year in the Japanese Bonsai World*, in 2013. Bjorn says this particular film attempts to satisfy the curiosity surrounding a formal apprenticeship in Japan. He has witnessed a growing interest amongst younger people wanting to potentially take on bonsai professionally, so *Continuum* focuses on the not-often-seen aspects



of bonsai apprentices and professionals in Japan. The documentary follows the daily activities of the **Kouka-en** bonsai nursery in Osaka, where Bjorn served a six-year apprenticeship with **Keiichi Fujikawa**, nursery owner, and producer of this film.

In *Continuum*, the subject is bonsai but the focus is on the people who cultivate them; anticipating the needs of the bonsai in their care and carrying out the work dictated by the weather and the season, to keep them healthy and to improve their artistic expression. The interactions between Keiichi Fujikawa and students gives us many glimpses into the mindful and hands-on teaching process. The film's easy-going pace is relaxed and engaging.

Presented in four seasons: the documentary is instructive, enlightening and punctuated with dramatic highlights, such as the "cloud of death" sequence that focuses on the well-orchestrated application of fungicides and pesticides, or the long hours of intense work preceding a major exhibition. The sound track

is lively and supports the action well. The production values are excellent.

Our local club has featured a few episodes of *The Bonsai Art of Japan* in the context of a discussion, presentation or workshop, so when club member Bob Shewchuk alerted us to the release of the documentary, *Continuum - A Year in the Japanese Bonsai World*, we ordered the DVD and screened it at a club meeting. It was a well-attended first meeting of the season and *Continuum* was an inspirational start to a year of bonsai activities. The reaction was very positive, and judging by comments and discussions after the show, it was a stimulating experience for many there. The discussions also prompted some questions, both bonsai-related and general interest. Bjorn was right, there is much interest and curiosity surrounding the traditional Japanese bonsai apprenticeship and how it is adapting to a new generation of professionals. I caught up with Bjorn by e-mail while he was on a non-stop three-week tour in eastern USA and I asked

*Top*; View of Kouka-en bonsai nursery in Osaka, Japan.

*Bottom left*; Bjorn Bjorholm, Kouka-en's first apprentice, during his first year in 2008. Photo by Chris Malcolm.

*Bottom center*; owner of Kouka-en, Keiichi Fujikawa who served a five-year apprenticeship at Mansei-en Nursery in Omya Bonsai Village under the late Saburo Kato in the late '80s.

*Bottom right*; Keiichi's father, Minoru Fujikawa, who started Kouka-en in 1958.



Top; Naoki Maeoka from Japan was the second apprentice to join Kouka-en in 2010.

Middle; David Martinez from Mexico cleans trees in the winter season with a small brush.

Bottom; Keiichi explains the work that must be accomplished with this maple.

him some of these questions which he answered in the following interview, an interview that I hope will augment your viewing experience of *Continuum* when you show it to your club.

**BCI:** Not only did you film this documentary, you also are the narrator and composed some of the music. Tell me a little about your interest in film, music and music composition.

**Bjorn Bjorholm:** Before coming to Japan, I had played guitar in a rock band and had recorded and produced albums for a handful of other groups in the US. After starting my apprenticeship, though, I didn't really have any free time to play, so I shifted my attention

to video production (which allowed me to combine work with bonsai and an alternative artistic outlet). I began filming, editing, and producing *The Bonsai Art of Japan* video series on Youtube in 2011, and it's since expanded to include more than 50 videos, 11,000 subscribers, and 2 million views.

**How did you become interested in bonsai and what led you to the traditional path of apprenticeship?**

I was first exposed to bonsai at the age of 12 when I saw the *Karate Kid* movies, and I received my first tree for my 13th birthday. As with many people, it quickly became an all-consuming obsession and the rest is history as they say. After graduating from university, I wasn't interested in jumping into the larger workforce, and I felt that the opportunity was ripe for undertaking a formal bonsai apprenticeship in Japan. Looking back on that decision, I have to say it seems a bit crazy to have made, but I couldn't be happier that I did.

**How does Keiichi Fujikawa evaluate a potential apprentice?**

When I arrived in Japan in 2008, as Fujikawa-san's first apprentice, he offered me a three-month trial period before accepting me to a full apprenticeship. This seems to be the normal procedure at most nurseries around the country, both for foreign and Japanese national apprentices. Many of our current apprentices at Kouka-en went through the same type of probation process; however, most of them first came as short-term students to the Fujikawa School before becoming apprentices at a later date. The school has proven to be a great way for Fujikawa-san to get to know the students on a somewhat friendlier level before discussing the possibility of apprenticeship. Because the apprentices work day-in and day-out in close quarters, Fujikawa-san really looks for individuals with personalities that mesh well with his own and with the other apprentices in the nursery. Strong work ethic and an open desire to learn are also characteristics that are essential to a successful apprenticeship, so Fujikawa-san is always searching for individuals with these traits.

**What were some of your earliest challenges when you first started your apprenticeship? Was there a separate focus on learning the language?**

I would say the language barrier was perhaps the most difficult obstacle to overcome when I first arrived as an apprentice. Before beginning my apprenticeship, I had studied Japanese language at university; however, my studies were almost exclusively reading and writing based, so I had little or no experience speaking the language. After arriving at Kouka-en nursery, though, I was able to quickly pick up the necessary phrases to get by, and I've since developed a decent level of language proficiency. I would also say that adjusting to the work-life of an apprentice was a very difficult process. Bonsai are living objects and require daily care, which means we operate seven days per week. Time off is scarce (in most cases 2 days per month, sometimes less depending on how busy our schedule

is at any given time). This was difficult to adjust to at first, but now if I have a day off from working, I don't really know what to do with myself.

**The nursery switched to bonsai when they became popular in the seventies. Do you know what caused bonsai's popularity at that time?**

Following World War II, Japan's economy was in shambles, having been decimated by years of war and a limited focus on domestic economic growth. In the years following WWII, however, the Japanese economy began to rebound, and by the 1980s Japan had shot to number two on the global economic scale, just behind the US. It was this period of rapid expansion and wide open markets in the years between WWII and the late 1980s that produced an environment conducive to the boom and success of bonsai art. In the 1960s, there was huge growth in the use of Satsuki Azaleas for bonsai-like culture across Japan. This was due, in large part, to the availability of new roads and infrastructure that made it possible to move old, large Satsuki material from southern Kyushu to the Kansai (Osaka) and Kanto (Tokyo) areas with relative ease. As the azalea market became saturated in 1970s, many nurseries shifted focus to developing bonsai. This move to bonsai was really, very simply, economically motivated. Not only were prices of azaleas declining rapidly in the '70s, but the average disposable income in Japan was also increasing at the time, and nurserymen saw an opportunity to become successful in the niche bonsai market. This economic motivation is also why we see a rapid increase in the quality of bonsai (i.e. product differentiation) during the '70s and '80s.

**The majority of the apprentices in the film are not Japanese nationals. Is this typical or unique to this nursery?**

*Continuum* was filmed at Kouka-en nursery, which has a rather large number of foreign apprentices and students. When I first arrived as an apprentice at Kouka-en in 2008, I was in fact the only student at the nursery. It wasn't until 2010 that a second apprentice arrived (Naoki Maeoka from Japan). In the years since, we have had apprentices from the US (Owen Reich), Mexico (David Martinez), Switzerland (Dario Mader), and Japan (Yuri Hayama). Additionally, Fujikawa-san and I cofounded the Fujikawa International School of Bonsai in 2011, which provides short-term programs to foreign students. In the past three years, we've had students from all over the world attend programs of various lengths and focus. I would say, though, that the model of Kouka-en is rapidly becoming the "norm" in Japan, as most nurseries seem to have at least a few foreign apprentices. This is not only great for international publicity for those nurseries that host foreign students, but it's also great for the apprentices, as we have an international ready-made network of friends to bounce ideas off of and get support from in adjusting to life in Japan.



**What created the need for additional apprentices?**

When Fujikawa-san took over Kouka-en from his father in the early '90s, he ran the nursery completely on his own (which absolutely amazes me, as it seems like there's never a shortage of work, even with our current line-up of 4 apprentices to manage all of the tasks!). In the '90s, Fujikawa-san focused mainly on boarding and developing high-end client-owned material. This was a lucrative model at the time, because clients were regularly spending five and six figures on material that required professional maintenance. Today, however, with the poor state of the economy, folks are buying cheaper bonsai that they feel comfortable caring for

*Top;* Nursery stock is evaluated and prepared for sale at Kokufu-ten, Japan's National Bonsai Exhibition.

*Middle;* Trees in the cascade style are secured for transport to Kokufu-ten.

*Bottom;* The Ueno Green Club Vendor area at Kokufu-ten.



*Top*; repotting is one of the major activities in spring.

*Middle*; Keiichi Fujikawa applies pesticide and fungicide three to four times during the summer.

*Bottom*; Keiichi evaluating a potential purchase at one of the bonsai auctions he attends regularly.

themselves. As a result, Kouka-en's business model has shifted more towards rapid turnover of material, which means higher volume is rolling through the shop throughout the year. This has been the real motivating factor behind Fujikawa-san adding more apprentices to the team as of late. This isn't to suggest that the nursery has become a cookie-cutter bonsai factory—we simply have a higher volume of material that requires professional styling for public consumption.

**How would you describe the current state of Bonsai in Japan?**

I often hear from folks around the world that their overall perception of Japanese bonsai is that it is on

It never ceases to surprise me how many young Japanese folks are, at the very least, intrigued by bonsai, but also how many do still decide to pursue apprenticeships at nurseries around the country, despite the potential economic risks.

the decline, that no young Japanese people are really interested in pursuing bonsai as a career these days (the implication being that there is little or no interest in traditional Japanese art amongst young folks). I have to say, to me, this doesn't seem to be the case at all. There's certainly no doubt that during the economic bubble period of the 1980s, bonsai was a seriously lucrative career choice, and, as such, nurseries across the country had a constant influx of apprentices seeking success in the industry. But the seeming lack of interest in bonsai as a career choice today in Japan is not due to an overall shift away from traditional arts by young Japanese. Rather, it's almost exclusively economically motivated. Japan has been in a period of economic stagnation since the early '90s, and disposable income has decreased during this period as well—many companies no longer offer the bi-annual bonuses they used to, particularly after the huge recession in 2008. This means that it is becoming harder and harder to make a living as a bonsai professional in Japan today. However, it never ceases to surprise me how many young Japanese folks are, at the very least, intrigued by bonsai, but also how many do still decide to pursue apprenticeships at nurseries around the country, despite the potential economic risks.

**Where do Japanese bonsaists look for inspiration? What is energizing bonsai in Japan today?**

In recent years, there has been a huge increase in young foreigners coming to Japan to undertake apprenticeships in bonsai, and I think this is playing a huge role in shifting the perception of bonsai in Japan as an "old man's hobby" to that of an internationally recognized art form. I would venture to say, in fact, that the number of foreign apprentices in Japan now either matches or has surpassed that of Japanese apprentices—and I think that is really exciting!

**The auction process shown in your film is interesting. What compels Keiichi Fujikawa to bid on a tree?**

Beyond the basic profit motive, Fujikawa-san is constantly on the lookout for material that might fit the tastes of a particular client. In other words, Kouka-en has a number of regular clients that have specific preferences, and Fujikawa-san tries to source material that might potentially peak the interest of those

individuals. Beyond that, Fujikawa-san looks for material that he personally finds interesting, but that could still provide a positive margin once sold. On occasion, he will actually purchase a tree for himself to keep and develop at the nursery—it all depends on the quality and variety at any given auction. In most cases, though, Fujikawa-san looks for material that is healthy, though slightly unkempt, as these trees tend to be overlooked by other bidders who aren't willing or able to put in the work to get them back to peak condition.

**If the same trees show up in auctions again and again, do they reflect a continual refinement?**

Sometimes, we do see the same material resurface time and again at auctions. Often, these trees either have defects and are difficult to sell, or the bids don't go high enough to satisfy the seller.

**Mention was made of specimens grown from pencil-thin stock at the nursery. Others are acquired at auctions and some come from growers. Are bonsai still collected from the wild in Japan? Are any imported?**

This can be a touchy subject in Japan, particularly regarding imported material. Collecting in most areas in Japan is now illegal—with the exception of privately owned land—so it's rather rare to see new native yamadori material flowing into the market, especially Shimpaku Junipers. The demand is still there, though, for high quality yamadori, especially for *Juniperus* species. Many nurseries have begun legally importing collected Junipers from Taiwan and subsequently grafting them with native Juniper foliage (i.e. mostly using *Itoigawa* foliage). I'm not sure what the motivation is—perhaps a sense of national pride—but there seems to be very little or no mention after-the-fact that these trees were imported. Most nurserymen simply refer to them as grafted yamadori Shimpaku. In any case, there is a seemingly never-ending supply of high-quality material entering the Japanese bonsai market, which is one thing that makes working here so exciting.

**How does a client of Kouka-en decide when to put a tree into shows like Kokufu-ten or Taikan-ten?**

The Kokufu-ten, or National Exhibition, is the premier show in Japan, and all entries go through a pre-judging process—more than 50% are weeded out prior to the exhibition. In contrast, the Taikan-ten does not require trees to be pre-judged by a larger committee. When a client decides to put a tree in either of these shows, they nearly always consult a professional nursery to assess the likelihood that the tree will be accepted—as in the case of the Kokufu—or will hold up to the standards of the exhibition—as in the case of the Taikan-ten. Once the decision has been made to exhibit a tree in one of these exhibitions, professional nurseries then take the trees into their care and transport them to the events on behalf of the clients. This is mainly done to avoid having too many people swarming the event halls on set-up day.



**Is there a monetary incentive to win at a show or is it about status?**

There are no monetary awards given to Kokufu-ten or Taikan-ten winners—it's status that drives most individuals to display their trees in these shows.

**I think you and your young colleagues have successfully altered the perception that bonsai is for old people. What is your next big challenge?**

My next biggest challenge is to complete my apprenticeship, receive certification from the Japanese Bonsai Association and continue to expand global understanding of bonsai art. My schedule is jam-packed for the next few years, but I'm hoping to establish a larger

*Top*; apprentice Yuri Hamaya prepares trees for the Taikan-ten exhibition held in November.

*Middle*; it takes two people to move most of the large trees that will be exhibited or sold at Taikan-ten.

*Bottom*; apprentices work late into the night to ensure their trees are meticulously groomed for the Taikan-ten exhibition.



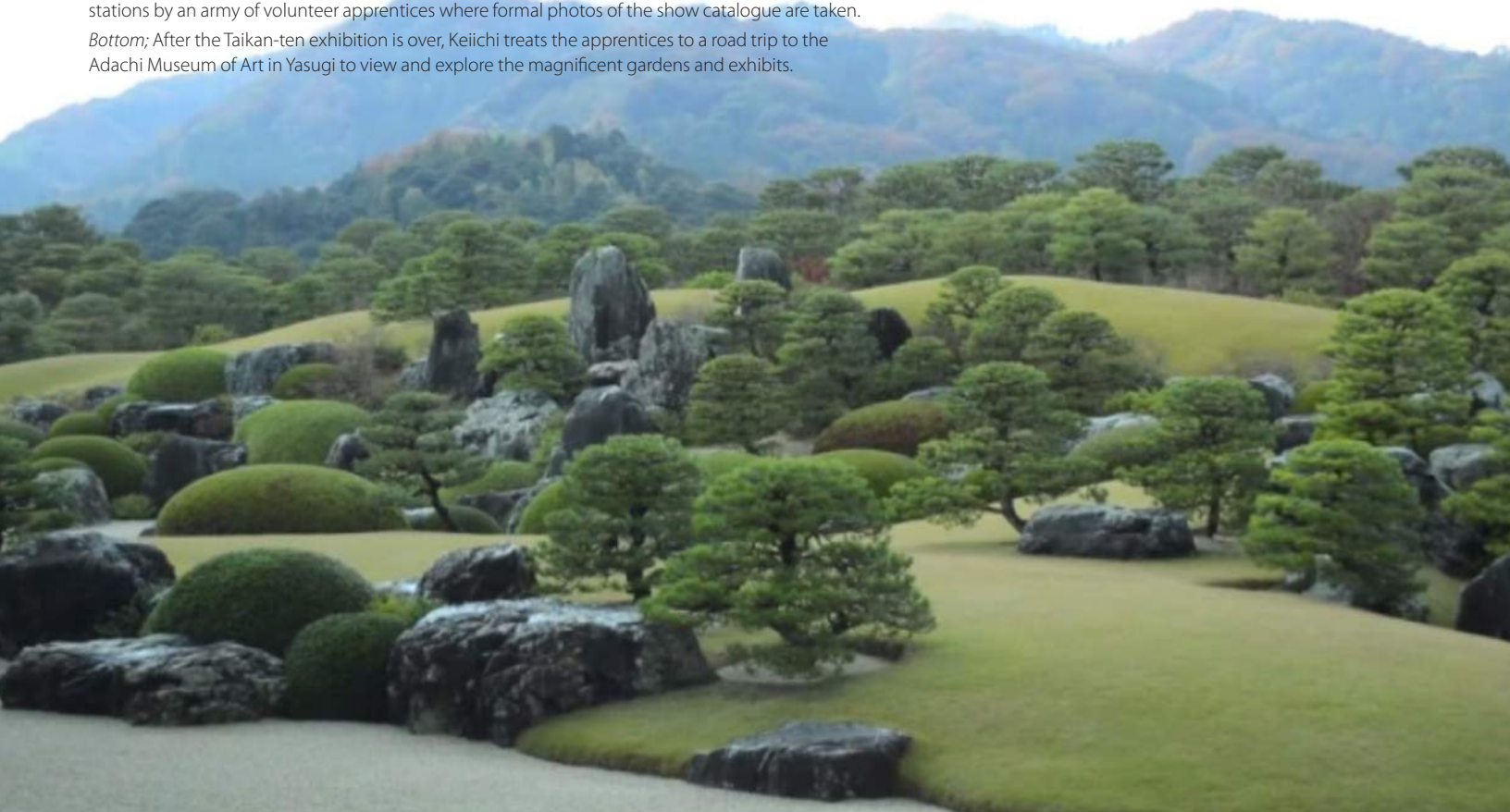
*Top;* Kouka-en apprentices preparing the exhibit space at Taikan-ten under Keiichi's supervision.  
*Middle;* after the show is closed to the public, all exhibits are moved to one or four photography stations by an army of volunteer apprentices where formal photos of the show catalogue are taken.  
*Bottom;* After the Taikan-ten exhibition is over, Keiichi treats the apprentices to a road trip to the Adachi Museum of Art in Yasugi to view and explore the magnificent gardens and exhibits.

presence in the US and around the world, and to show that there need not be a trade-off between knowledge and having a good time doing what we all love. We all initially begin bonsai because it's fun and brings a certain level of joy to our lives—I hope to continue to share in this collective experience with those in the larger bonsai community around the world.

**When will you accept apprentices or will this model work in the US?**

I think the traditional Japanese apprenticeship model will translate very well to the US, with a few modifications of course to adjust for cultural differences. But in general, the principle of a 5-year formal apprenticeship will translate well in the US. I am currently finishing up work on my side-project PhD in Business at Osaka University, so once that is complete I plan to return to the US—most likely in the Southeast—to open a bonsai school and nursery, at which time I would like to accept an apprentice or two. While there isn't an overarching certifying institution like the Japanese Bonsai Association in the US, I think individual nurseries can operate in the US to provide formal, long-term education to apprentices who wish to undertake such a task. In my opinion, this type of formal education is one of the best ways to truly promote professionalism in bonsai art and to increase the quality level of western bonsai. 🌲

A gallery of Bjorn's work follows.





# Bonsai Art of Bjorn Bjorholm



*Before and after:*  
*Top; Literati shimpaku featured in Kinbon Magazine.*  
*Bottom; Shohin field-grown shimpaku, styled for a client in Osaka.*





*Top Left;* cascade shimpaku wired for a client.

*Top Right;* field-grown shimpaku, grown by a client for several decades in Osaka.

*Bottom;* large needle juniper purchased at an auction and styled for resale.





*Top;* Yamadori procumbens grafted with Itoigawa shim-paku foliage. Styled for the 2013 Taikan-ten where it won the Taikan-ten Award

*Bottom;* Japanese White Pine styled for the 2011 Taikan-ten where it won the top Ishitsuki (rock planting) Award.



*Top*; chuuhin procumbens  
*Bottom*; Japanese white pine  
literati owned by a client in  
Himeji.





*Top*; large Hinoki Cypress styled for the 2013 Kokufu-ten. This is one of Kouka-en's most famous trees.

*Bottom*; large shimpaku styled for a Taiwanese client.



*Top;* Japanese white pine purchased at a Tokyo auction and styled in 2010.

*Bottom;* giant Japanese Yew purchased from a private collection and styled in 2013.



# Our Fascination with Forests

## Creating a bonsai forest with the Genotti method

By Danilo Scursatone, Italy

Translation by Danilo Scursatone and Joe Grande

**S**urely among bonsai compositions, the forest style provides greater understanding and visual impact for the viewer, even for those unfamiliar with bonsai. Immediately, the forest in miniature is able to bring to mind an environment in which at least once in your life you have experienced. You may also recall particular feelings that sometimes conflict: protection or fear, refreshing shade or bitter cold, joy or melancholy... and much more.

The forest can consist of deciduous or coniferous trees of the same species or different species, but with similar biological needs: soil, light, humidity, and all that is indispensable for the life of those species and that which the area, colonized with its macro and micro environment, offers. More often we encounter forests composed of the same species.

*Carpinus orientalis* forest  
in 2013.



Master Genotti, Danilo Scursatone and the completed forest grouping of *Pinus sylvestris* at the World Congress BCI - IBS held in Saint Vincent (Aosta, Italy): "Art and teaching on the top of Europe" in 2008.

To assemble a forest that is credible and able to provide the sensations described, it is useful for bonsai artist to visit the wild forest that he or she intends to copy or from which to draw inspiration. The views of the forest as seen from a distance and then upon entering, are important to consider in recreating the forest in miniature. As you immerse yourself in the forest, make note of all the little details typical to the environment and keep them in your mind, in order to have them at hand when styling your forest. Take photos make notes or drawings.

My teacher Giovanni Genotti, based on studies carried out on the forest style, observing them in the wild

and in practice, creating many bonsai forests, and who certainly is among the best in the world, proposes a method that is of interest, because mistakes in perspective can be avoided resulting in a forest composition with natural character.

Following is a summary of the presentation offered to participants during the demonstration held at the World Congress BCI - IBS held in Saint Vincent (Aosta, Italy): "Art and teaching on the top of Europe."

Here we will go through the steps for styling a forest of hornbeams that I made, inspired by the regions typical of Marche, an Italian province with a coast on the Adriatic Sea, that are colonized by small forests of *Carpinus orientalis*.

### The forest according to the method of master Genotti

The trees that form the forest are almost always of the same species, and in odd number, and if arranged in groups, the groups are also in odd number.

In the forest, the focal points are different from those of a single bonsai, they are not arranged on a vertical plane (base, trunk, branches, apex) but on a horizontal plane that corresponds to the ground. The focal points and the essential perspective of depth, play a fundamental role.

The base (or nebari) of the trees must be placed in sight, even placing them at the top of small mounds of soil as in Figure 1.

By undulating the surface of the soil in a pot or slab which holds the forest, hills and valleys are created to enhance the perspective, favor the area for watering, and attract the eye to the raised areas from which emerge the base of the trees.

The "reading" of the forest is not made from the bottom to top but from left to right and results fundamentally in three points that are located in the scalene triangle shown in Figure 2.

Draw lines that divide the container, usually a very shallow oval tray or a stone slab, into four quadrants.

Choose one of the two rear quadrants, generally to the left, as point A, more or less close to the vertical center line and from it, make two non-symmetrical, converging lines from points A to B, and A to C, to each of the two front quadrants.

So doing will form the scalene triangle, ABC. Choose the area near point B, internally or externally to the scalene triangle ABC, to place the most interesting plants as the foundation of the composition, and repeat at point C. The area at point A of the scalene triangle is fixed and there, place small trees with branches directed mostly outwards.

Point A, the perspective connecting focal points B and C, is the beginning and end of the forest.

The model described above can be repeated several times. The other trees are positioned in an alternating manner along the lines forming the sides of the triangle so that the distances between them are unequal.

Position branches to provide unrestricted sight lines through the trees, not hiding or crossing other trunks.



Figure 1

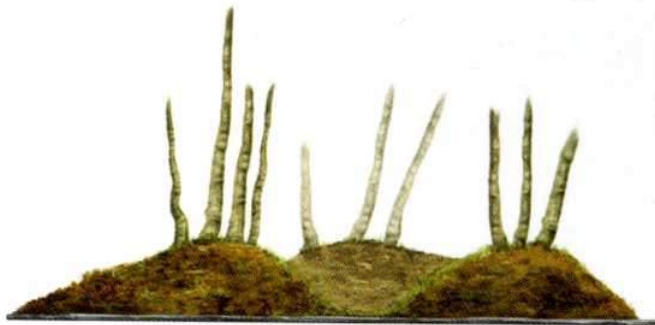


Figure 2

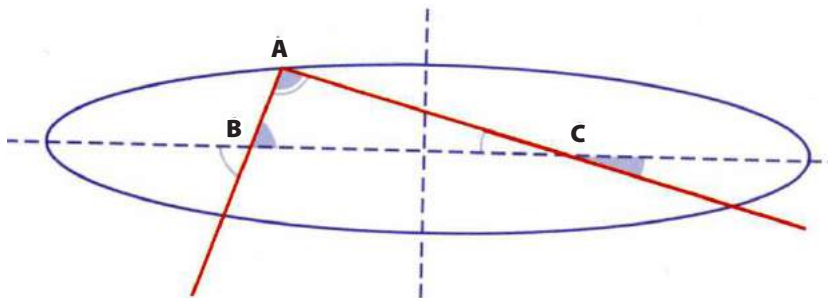
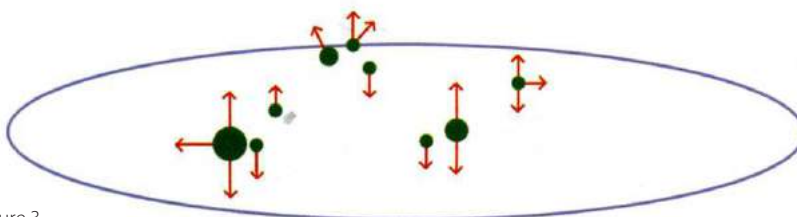


Figure 3







Branches are directed towards the front, the rear and sides (see direction of the arrows in Figure 3) to create an unobstructed view of the forest inside.

Following this simple plan, as described above, avoids serious mistakes in the construction of a forest. However, there are endless possibilities to adapt this approach, keeping in mind a forest can be "open" or "closed", seen from a distance or up close, and depict either a young forest or an old one.

A "closed" forest means that the miniature bonsai provide no image other than what we actually see.

An "open" forest, instead, planted on soil or stones with mounds and depressions, with moss or sandy areas, with or without plants in the understory, and branches and trunks properly placed, allow the viewer to imagine rivers, lakes, cliffs, moraines... which, although not present are emphasized and evoked by the composition.



We must also consider that the forest expresses a personal feeling and is an interpretation of nature, and therefore, there are infinitely many aspects in its construction that appeal to the sensitivity of the bonsai artist and are not possible to list.

*Top;* The first step was to find the material suitable for the styling. The plants are well matched for size and quantity.

*Middle;* A natural sandstone slab was worked a little to improve its profile, visible in the photo as the lighter parts of the stone.

*Bottom;* After removing trees from growing pots I arranged and rearranged them over and over again on the slab, until I saw the solution that was close to what I had in mind.





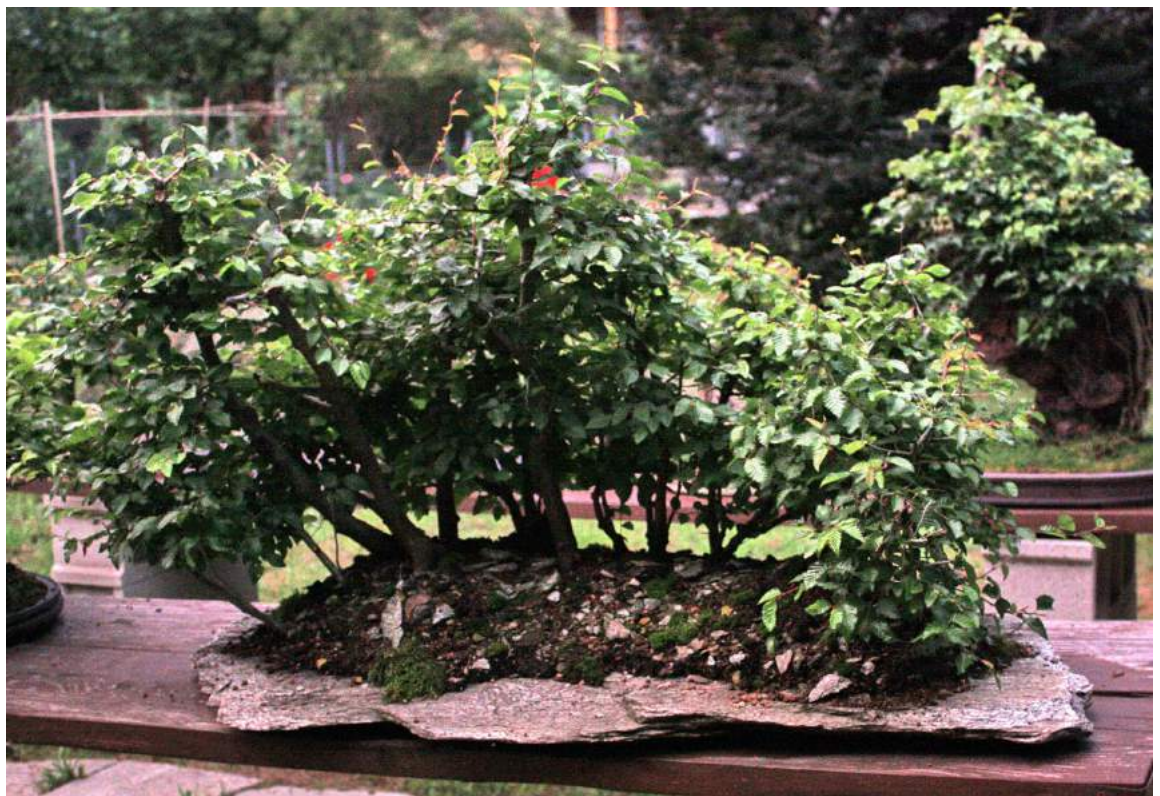
A forest of windswept trees can evoke a storm. In a serene setting, with trees of different trunk sizes, it can represent a family where children born from their seeds surround the dominant father and mother trees. The parent may also be represented by a single tree. Additionally, the three focal points may feature the most significant trees that symbolize father, mother and eldest child that are the foundation of a household.

### **Creating a forest of *Carpinus orientalis***

A few years ago I visited the mountains of Marche, Italy, and saw forests of *Carpinus orientalis* that had colonized some hilly areas, spreading by natural means. The idea of creating the forest was a result of that visit, during which a small forest that looked like an amphitheater particularly struck me. Radiant with low afternoon light, the soft grey color of the hornbeam trunks was emphasized and offered a special invitation to enter; passing through areas of sun and shade to discover the details there.

*Top;* Soil is placed on the slab, the trees are carefully positioned, then covered with more moist soil mixed with wet "Keto" that will help "glue" them to the slab until the roots start growing.

*Bottom;* The first foliage after the planting emerges.



The first step was to find the material suitable for the styling. The plants were provided by a friend who paid attention to every detail of my request, choosing the *Carpinus orientalis*, well matched for size and quantity.

To add a natural feeling to the forest composition, I decided not to use a pot but a stone slab that would fit well with this species of tree. After a long search, I found a slab of sandstone suitable for the material and size, (120 cm x 55 cm). However, some adjustments were needed to the profile of the slab. With a technique learned from friends—stonemasons who work stones used in roofs—and two hammers, I made the necessary corrections, visible in the photo as the lighter parts of the stone.

The material for the construction, suitable soil: akadama, professional potting soil, Keto (or marsh mud) and moss, were ready at this point.

It was then time to focus on the idea and implement it practically, assembling the sets of trees in accordance with the vision of the forest that inspired me. After removing trees from growing pots I arranged and rearranged them over and over again on the slab, until I saw the solution that was close to what I had in mind.

Next, I placed some soil on the slab corresponding to where the trees were to be planted, carefully positioned the trees and then covered them with more moist soil mixed with wet “Keto” that helps “glue” them to the slab until the roots start growing. The undergrowth was covered with moss and stones in

order to make the assembly as natural as possible. The canopy was pruned as observed in the wild forest and the planting was finished, ready to evolve as a whole.

Slow and progressive evolution with the passing of the seasons and the years, combined with the necessary refinements that are required until the forest is stabilized, will in a natural way, lessen the need for human intervention over time.

After a few years the forest was mature enough to be seen by the public and convey, at least in part, my experience in the little forest in the Marche hills.

Maturing over time, the forest will express more and more that naturalness and show less and less the hand of man, a necessary characteristic for every bonsai to be credible and, hopefully, will give the observers a moment of intense multi-sensory dialogue that immediately connects us to nature and reminds us clearly that we are part of it. 🌲



A few seasons later, the *Carpinus orientalis* forest in fall color and in winter silhouette.



# A Comparison of Mojave Desert and Gobi Desert Viewing Stones

By Tom Elias & Hanne Povlsen, USA

Photos by Tom Elias

A dark gray stone from the western Gobi Desert that has been formed over many years by strong winds laden with sand. Tiny grains of sand can be seen in the crevices of this stone. It is 8 cm wide at the base, 16 cm high, and 5 cm deep. (3.1 x 6.3 x 2 inches)  
*Below; Gobi Desert*



The combination of quartz and limestone with a strong overhang on the right side makes a strong statement despite that the size is small, just 5 cm wide, 8.9 cm high, and 7.6 cm deep. (2 x 3.5 x 3 inches)  
Collected in the Mojave Desert.  
*Below: Mojave Desert*



© Stephane Lescoules

©Trey Ratcliff

# Not ...*black, smooth and shiny*



**T**he collection and appreciation of unusual natural stones is ancient, dating back over 1,000 years in China and later in other Asian countries. Many of the earlier stones that were valued, such as Lingbi, Ying, and Taihu, were varying forms of ancient marine limestone or metamorphic rocks from carbonate based materials. These were found in exposed or shallow land-based deposits, mountain ranges, while others came for lakes or ancient lake beds. These are well documented in many of the Imperial Chinese dynasties. Many other stones were taken from rivers, stream and the beds than line waterways. It is only in recent times that stones originating from desert regions were being collected and used as viewing stones. This article will illustrate and compare desert stones from the huge Gobi Desert in northern China with the Mojave Desert of the American Southwest. Most of the American stones are from the personal collection of Hanne Povlsen, except for two stones from the collection of Ann Horton. The Gobi stones are from the collection of Tom Elias and Hiromi Nakaaji.

Gobi Desert stones are unlike most rocks collected and admired during Imperial China—the Lingbi, Taihu, Ying, Kunshan and others—except Yellow Wax stones. The Lingbi, Ying, and other stones were mainly ones composed of softer carbonate materials that were shaped mostly by water. They tend to be varying shades of gray and black along with the white mineral formations of the Kun stones. In contrast,



Grape agates are rare and in great demand within China, especially multicolored specimens. This stone with numerous, small, grape-like clusters is 15 cm wide, 24 cm high, and 11.5 cm deep (5.9 x 9.4 x 4.5 inches) including the hand carved base. The base stone underneath the grape-like clusters has a distinct lavender color.

*Bottom;* Small stones are abundant in the Gobi Desert. This small, turtle, figure stone is 5.5 cm wide, 2.8 cm high and 3.5 cm deep (2.2 x 1.1 x 1.4 inches) and is composed of quartz and chalcedony.





An extremely hard, dark reddish-brown piece of chalcedony with a network of quartz gives this small stones a striking appearance. It is 10.5 cm wide, 6.5 cm high, and 5 cm deep (4.1 x 2.6 x 2 inches).



The alternating layers of reddish and gray on this strongly weathered stone create a dramatic piece with many interesting features. It rests on a small table-style hand-made wood base. Both the stone with base measures 20 cm wide, 14.5 cm high, and 9 cm deep (15.7 x 5.7 x 3.5 inches).



A beautiful, dark brown piece of petrified wood from Xinjiang Province that shows the direction and growth of the former wood. A master wood carver made this base from the roots of a small trees. It is 12 cm wide, 13 cm high, and 10 cm deep (4.7 x 5.1 x 3.9 inches) including the base.



This is a fascinating round-layered stone, probably a concentration that is strongly siliceous with bits of quartz. Iron oxides give it color. Sizes range from small ones like this, to ones that measure nearly a meter high. They are often seen fractured or broken, probably due to long-term freezing and thawing. It is 9 cm wide, 12.5 cm high, and 6 cm deep (3.5 x 4.9 x 2.4 inches).



A strikingly beautiful, layered jasper that has been shaped by many years of blowing sand-laden winds. This stone is 21 cm wide, 8 cm high, and 9 cm deep (8.3 x 3.1 x 3.5 inches). The distinct layers are suggestive of movement.

*Top right;* This sharply angled, lustrous chalcedony stone is transformed into a figure when stood on end in the classic style hand carved base. It is a bird? The stone and base is 15 cm wide, 19.8 cm high, and 7 cm deep (5.9 x 7.8 x 2.8 inches).

the harder, siliceous Gobi stones were often varying shades of reds, browns, and lighter colors than the more southern rocks. These stones with their deep, rich, sometimes-lustrous appearance quickly became more popular in China than the traditional stones of earlier times. They are many forms of chalcedony stones that are found in the Gobi Desert. These too, are primarily composed of silica or some form of silica. Chalcedony, a catchall category for stones formed from cryptocrystalline forms of silica, are stones that appear waxy, lustrous, sometimes semi-transparent, and they occur in a variety of colors. This article illustrated several types of chalcedony stones from the Gobi Desert.

Desert stones of the American Southwest are often lighter in color and more brightly colored than the black and greenish-black stones pulled from the Eel River in northern California. North American and much of Europe were more strongly influenced by Japanese stone appreciation concepts; thus, early stone enthusiasts tended to look for stones in America and Europe that closely emulated those found in Japan. It was obvious that the American desert stones did not fit into the Japanese *suiseki* concepts. Japan does not have any desert regions to compare with these two vast desert areas. The desert stones are often composed of different materials, formed by different forces, and should be considered independent of Japanese stones. In the America Mojave Desert, many excellent collected stones are composed of rhyolite. Rhyolite is formed by rapidly cooling magna. The quick cooling prevents the formation of well-defined crystals. These stones are mostly quartz and feldspar with minor elements that contribute to the light colors of these stones that typically range from white to pink. There are several fine examples of beautiful, light-colored rhyolite stones illustrated in this article. These and other desert stones best fit into the newly emerging North American concepts for stone appreciation.

The Gobi is much larger than the Mojave Desert and runs southwest to northeast for roughly 1,600 km (1,000) miles in northern and northwestern China and is up to 800 km (500 miles) wide. It is a cold desert and semi-desert region on a raised plateau ranging from 910 to 1,500 meters (2,900 to nearly 5,000 feet) in elevation. The landscape is primarily rocky with some sand dunes in different regions and with some mountain ranges and dry, ancient lake beds. In comparison, the Mojave Desert occupies an area of about 64,750 square kilometers (22,000 square miles) in an irregular shaped region of southeastern and central California, southern Nevada, southwestern Nevada



*Bottom;* This irregular piece of cream-white chalcedony was first illustrated in the Chinese language book *Desert Rare Stone Museum Treasures* in 2008. It is 12 cm wide, 21 cm high and 11.5 cm deep (4.7 x 8.3 x 4.5 inches) including the hand-carved wood base.





This highly irregular shape of this hard siliceous stone was formed by sand-laden winds in the western Gobi Desert. The intricate hand-carved base attempts to match the shape of the stone. Together, they form a portal to another world. It is 12 cm wide, 12.5 cm high, 8 cm deep (4.7 x 4.9 x 3.1 inches). This is a true *fengli* or “wind blown” stone. Not all Gobi Desert stones are *fengli* stones.

This yellowish layer stone is rhyolite from the Mojave Desert. The layering nature of this stone was created by the softer stone wearing away leaving the harder rhyolite. This stone is 14 cm wide, 12.7 cm high and 10.2 cm deep (5.5 x 5 x 4 inches).



*Facing page: Top left;* This rugged mountain stone has three small plateaus due to the presence of hard quartz which slows the weathering process. 26.7 cm wide, 11.4 cm high, and 11.4 cm deep (10.5 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches).

*Middle left;* The multi-colored Mojave Desert rhyolite with quartz stone forms a very rugged mountain. This stone and base is 25.4 cm wide, 12.7 cm high, and 17.8 cm deep (10 x 5 x 7 inches).

*Top right;* This strongly eroded, rugged, mountain-shaped stone illustrates the effects of many years of weathering by wind and sand. It is a combination of limestone and quartz and measures 28 cm wide, 12.7 cm high, and 15.2 cm deep (11 x 5 x 6 inches).

*Middle right;* An overhanging ledge is formed on the upper part of this highly eroded piece of rhyolite stone from the Mojave Desert. It resembles a bluff facing the strong winds. Most rhyolite stones are light-colored and make excellent rugged landscape scenes. It is 38 cm wide, 12.7 cm high, and 28 cm deep (15 x 5 x 11 inches).

and northeastern Arizona. It is commonly divided into the high desert—regions above 635 meters (2,000 feet) elevation—and the low desert—regions below 635 meters (2,000 feet) elevation. The high desert regions experience freezing temperature in the winter months while the low desert has the highest summer temperatures measured in North America. This occurs in Death Valley—the lowest elevation at nearly 90 meters (282 feet) below sea level—where summer temperatures can reach 45° to 49° C (to 120° F).

Even though stone appreciation originated in China long ago, rock connoisseurs began collecting stones in regions of the Mojave Desert such as Death Valley in the 1950s and 1960s. This part of the Mojave Desert was a wonderful place for stone collectors for nearly 25 years up until Death Valley was made into a National Park on October 31, 1991. Since that time, stone collection is not allowed. Thus, the stones that were collected prior to this date have become more prized. In contrast, it wasn't until the mid to late 1990s that viewing stone collectors realized the vast wealth of suitable stone to be found in the Gobi desert. The early Gobi Desert collectors sought out dry lake beds, fault lines, ancient volcanic cones, and other sites for fantastic stones. The lake beds especially yielded a vast trove of stones with a wonderful variety of shapes and colors. The popularity of Gobi Desert stones spread rapidly throughout China and soon the rush was on for Gobi stones. Large market places developed in Urumuqi (western Gobi) and in Alashan and Yinchuan in the south-central and southeastern Gobi. Gobi stones have become some of the most sought after stones in the vast Chinese stone appreciation circles, and as a result, some of the most expensive viewing stones in China today.

The two widely separated geographically desert regions share some of the environmental factors that helped form the fascinating stones collectors seek. They both occur in geologically active regions that have undergone dramatic changes. Some parts of these regions were once vast shallow seas but now are arid. They are situated where former volcanic activity and earthquakes have helped shape the current topography. They both experience a wide range in





This stone resembles an ancient, rugged mountain range with a single small plateau on one quartz covered peak. An impressive Mojave Desert stones that measures 38 cm wide, 8.9 cm high, and 7.6 cm deep (15 x 4 x 3.8 inches).



Top; A tall narrow peak dividing two lower ones creates an almost surrealistic effect to this mountain-shaped stone. This small stone measures 20 cm wide, 15.2 cm high, and 12.7 cm deep (8 x 6 x 5 inches including base)

Bottom; An impressive mountain with two flat tops at different levels and a stream cascading over rocks. This Mojave Desert stone is approximately 30 cm wide, 8 cm high, and 7 cm wide (11.8 x 3.1 x 2.8 inches).

temperatures, particularly the more continental Gobi Desert. Thousands of years of freezing and thawing resulted in a gradual breakdown or degradation of stones. Both desert regions experience strong blowing winds laden with sand. These steadily wear away the softer portions of stone leaving extraordinary shapes from the remaining harder stone. These “wind blown” stones are some of the best known of the desert stones. The Chinese word *fengli* is defined “wind blown.” Only stones that have been formed by this action should be called *fengli*. It is not a term to be applied to all Gobi Desert stones.

Not all desert stones are *fengli* or wind shaped stones. Petrifications are also found in both desert regions. These are often mineral deposits that have replaced all of the organic material in tree trunks and branches to the point that they are totally stone—nearly identical to the wood and bark they replaced. Another type of desert stones are mineral deposits that are found in cavities often associated with fault lines. These are agates and other forms of chalcedony stones. The Gobi Desert is famous for its large, one to multi-colored grape agates. The single mine producing grape agates in the Gobi cannot meet the domestic demand for these stones. Thus, they have become extremely expensive—the large, grape-shaped, multi-colored agates commanding the greatest prices.

Regardless of the desert, the winds and sand can take a stone and delicately carved it into a magnificent shape over time. The stone may be tiny to fit with the palm of a hand or much larger, weighing over 100 kg (220 pounds). Most are rugged and reminiscent of young mountain chains, while others may be abstract, and only occasionally have a resemblance to a figure. A dry lake bed or ancient streambed in desert areas may yield beautiful agates and other stones shaped by long lost, flowing waters. Even though the land in what is now Death Valley National Park is definitely off limits to collectors, there are many other areas in the cold desert regions of North America where choice stones can be found. Areas with regular high winds are also likely locations for stones shaped by wind and sand. Collecting desert stones is challenging and rewarding. Excellent stones don't have to be black, smooth, and shiny. 🌄



# Botany for Gardeners

Third Edition written and illustrated by Brian Capon

By Lew Buller, USA

**W**ant to improve the quality of your bonsai? Then learn something about Botany. Brian Capon's *Botany for Gardeners* is the single most useful non-bonsai book that a bonsai enthusiast like me ever read. Now in its 3rd edition, the book is available online.

The topics in Chapter II will grab you immediately. A quick run-down:

## Root Systems

### Root Growth

### Root Hairs and Branches

(Do you know what a root hair is? How long it lives?)

### Primary Growth in Stems

### Development of a Woody Twig

### Features of a Woody Twig

### Leaves

(Is the foliage on a juniper a leaf? In its juvenile form? Or mature form?)

You probably know that plants take in oxygen through their leaves and give off carbon dioxide. Did you know that they take in oxygen through their roots and give off carbon dioxide? What bearing does this have on your soil and your watering schedule?

Plentiful color photos and black-and-white diagrams—sometimes two or three on a page—make clear many of the topics written about in this book. Dr. Capon discusses *xylem* and *phloem* and the plumbing system of plants. If you have done so or want to try air layering, this material will help you understand why it works.

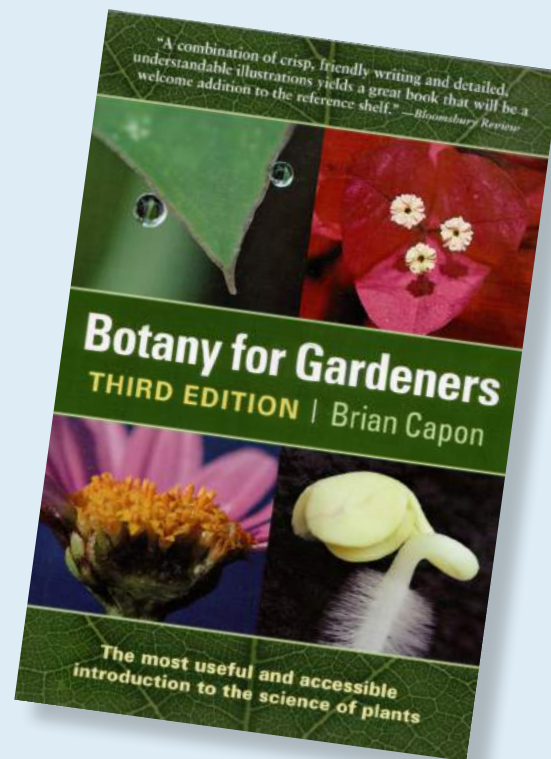
Some of the information is eye-opening. For example, privet leaves and berries are poisonous. Not that I plan to eat any, but privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*) is one of my favorite bonsai. Likewise, with azaleas, often used in bonsai, the entire plant is poisonous.

He says “Five different hormones have been identified in plants...” They control the growth and development of plants. That number is pretty close to the six major hormones in humans that also control growth and development. *Auxin*, a plant hormone, is a workhorse, affecting many aspects of plant growth. *Auxin* is responsible for the fact that if you pinch the tip of a plant, new branches will develop lower down. *Auxin* helps form roots when you air-layer.

In Chapter Eight “The Uptake and Use of Water, Minerals, and Light” Dr. Capon gets serious about the flow of water in a plant. He also discusses the macronutrients and micronutrients needed by plants. “Each element plays specific biochemical roles.” Make sure your bonsai get all of these. You need to make your soils with different elements that need to be matched to the needs of the plants.

*Botany for Gardeners* does not have to be read all at one sitting. Nor does everything in the book have direct applicability to bonsai. Some parts I read just for fun, or to help my wife, who loves flowers. 🌸

“The language is straightforward, the concepts well presented, and the information proffered in terms that will make sense to hands-on gardeners.” —*Horticulture*



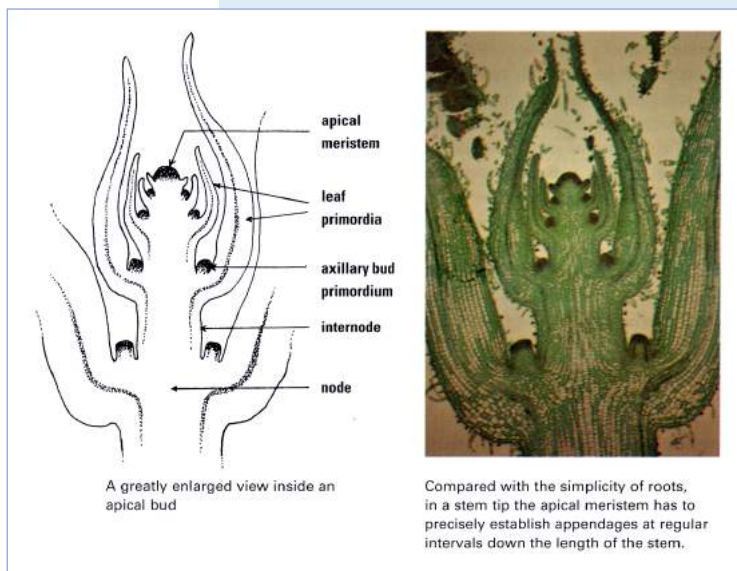
Brian Capon 2013.

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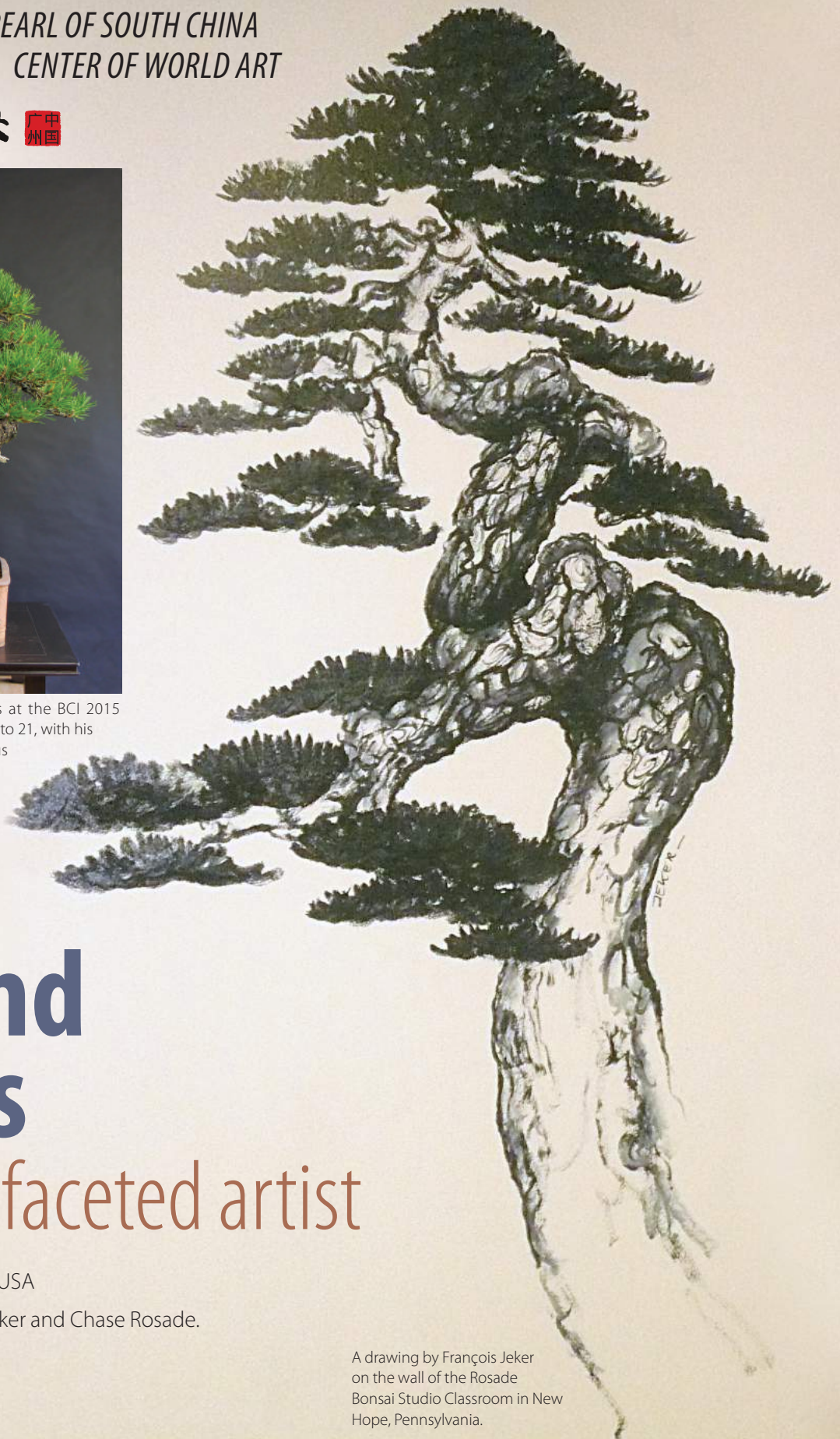
\$19.95 USD/£14.99



南国明珠  
PEARL OF SOUTH CHINA  
CENTER OF WORLD ART  
艺融四海



François Jeker, one of the featured instructors at the BCI 2015 Convention in Guangzhou, China, September 18 to 21, with his heavily carved, large Mugo pine collected by Pius Notter and given to François in 2001. The first branch to the left was the original apex of the yamadori. Pius was a key person in François' determination to become a bonsai collector with a passion for yamadori.



# my friend François

## a multifaceted artist

By Solita D.T. Rosade, USA

Photos by François Jeker and Chase Rosade.

A drawing by François Jeker on the wall of the Rosade Bonsai Studio Classroom in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

**F**rançois Jeker is a man for all seasons. He is a man who enjoys every day life. He combines the arts and culture into his bonsai displays. A wonderful example is the display that he created for 'Bonsai Euro Top 30,' the most important bonsai exhibition in Europe. I would even dare to say that his display of 2010 is the most beautiful display I have seen.

I have seen many exhibits in many countries, all fabulous in their own way, but this one was special. In a darkened space, he presented winning trees from top exhibits in Europe, each in a dark alcove illuminated with ever-changing lights. Each alcove contained six lights to create dramatic environmental effects set to music. I spent long time in front of each tree seeing the beginning of the day with the sun rising, to the end of the day and complete darkness. The feeling of actually going through dawn to dusk with the trees, the shadows, the lights on leaves, branches, twigs, the details in the trunk—it had a tremendous impact on me. I was in awe. I had never observed a tree so much and in such detail.

I met François during my second term as President of BCI in 2001. A large group of BCI members took part in a post IV World Bonsai Convention tour from Munich, Germany. He had impressed us all during his demonstration at the World



Top; Imported from Japan, this *Taxus cuspidata* was originally two meters tall and just as wide. For years now he has been restyling this taxus which now measures no more than 80 cm. The work on the deadwood is totally François's careful technique of carving in a very natural form.



Left to right; In his Land'Art series, François adds 23 karat gold leaf to distinct places on a rock landscape before photographing the composition. He doesn't take the rocks, they always remain in place, including the gold leaf, which he leaves behind. This photo was taken in the South of France, in Col des Garcinets, very close to the French Riviera.

One of the ten canvases that François did together with Denise Lach, renowned calligrapher and teacher at the Fine Arts School in Basel, Switzerland. These works are enriched with 23 karat gold leaf, a poem written by François, and calligraphy by Denise.

This ceramic sculpture, sits on top of a 200 plus year old oak bean found near the remains of an old barn in France. This sculpture is a permanent outside exhibit exposed to the elements that give, both the oxides in sculpture and the weathered bean, a feeling of Wabi-Sabi.



Above: *Picea abies* forest. All the trees for this forest were collected in the Swiss Alps near his home, between 1984 and 1985. Two years later, he used them to create this spruce forest that measures over a meter and a half wide. He added two dead trees to the composition to honor the memory of his teacher, the late Saburo Kato.

Below: François' beautifully manicured garden and impeccable bonsai trees in Alsace. Its design was inspired by the small Kyoto Zen gardens.



Convention. François continued to impress when we had the opportunity to visit his home and garden and his impeccable bonsai collection in Mulhouse, France.

François studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Mulhouse, where he majored in illustration, photography and advertising. His work continues to earn him the deserved adjective of a multifaceted artist. His paintings are superb and have even been exhibited in Kyoto, Japan. His sculptures and ceramics are unique reflecting his respect for the creative work of nature and his new Land'art using gold leaf on rocks is remarkable. His books on aesthetics and techniques of bonsai have been translated into several languages. His most recent book on bonsai deadwood and contributions to bonsai magazines around the world are essential for the bonsai lover. There seems to be no limit to his artistic creativity!

We have spent hours together remembering our great bonsai master, John Naka. We talk about John's continuing influence in our lives.

François's bonsai design, his shaping techniques, his work on dead wood and his mild way of teaching have shaped his renowned mastery since he discovered bonsai back in the early '80s.

My husband Chase and I are lucky to have expanded our own bonsai horizons with François and his wife Betty. What a privilege and pleasure it is to observe his work on bonsai and to actually work with him.

Undoubtedly next September's BCI 2015 Convention in Guangzhou, China, will be an enormous success. The presence of François demonstrating is simply an added bonus for us all! 🌲

# 南国明珠 艺融四海

PEARL OF SOUTH CHINA  
CENTER OF WORLD ART



**2015 BCI Convention and  
the 12th Asia-Pacific Bonsai and Viewing Stone  
Convention and Exhibition**  
Guangzhou, China  
September 18–21



**2015国际盆景大会暨亚太盆景赏石大会**

2015 Bonsai Clubs International Convention and Asia-Pacific Bonsai and Viewing Stone Convention & Exhibition



[www.gzbci2015.com](http://www.gzbci2015.com)



## Bonsai Clubs International Convention 2015

### & ASPAC Bonsai & Viewing Stone Exhibition, Guangzhou, China

### *The Infinity of Bonsai & Viewing Stones: a Cultural Voyage from Canton to the World*

# Convention Program 17-21 September 2015

#### Thursday 17 September

8:30 am - 4:00 pm	BCI Board Meeting: Third Floor, West River Meeting Room, Guangdong Hotel
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	ASPAC Board Meeting: Third Floor, West River Meeting room, Guangdong Hotel
2:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Convention Registration: First Floor, Guangdong Hotel
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Welcome Reception: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel

#### Friday 18 September *Bonsai Demonstration & Viewing Stone Lecture are held at the same time, guests can choose to participate in one.*

9:30 am - 10:30 am	Opening Ceremony: Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall
10:30 am - 11:50 am	Visiting Bonsai Show: Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall
10:30 am - 11:50 am	Visiting Viewing Stone Show: Guangdong Science Hall
12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Bonsai Demonstration by Ng Shing Fat/Zhao Qing quan/Mitsuo Matsuda: Auditorium, First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Viewing Stone Lecture with Tom Elias on Viewing Stones of North America: Amphitheater at First Floor or Auditorium at Fourth Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Afternoon Tea: First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Bonsai Demonstration by Ng Shing Fat/Zhao Qing quan/Mitsuo Matsuda: Auditorium, First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Viewing Stone Lecture with Mr. Zhou Guo Xin on Guangdong Ying Stones: Amphitheater at First Floor or Auditorium at Fourth Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Dinner: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel

#### Saturday 19 September *Bonsai Demonstration & Viewing Stone Lecture are held at the same time, guests can choose to participate in one.*

7:30 am - 8:30 am	BCI Annual General Meeting: Meeting room, Guangdong Hotel
7:30 am - 8:30 am	ASPAC Annual General Meeting: Meeting room, Guangdong Hotel
8:30 am - 10:00 am	Bonsai Demonstration by Chen Jian Liang/John Wang/François Jeker: Auditorium, First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
8:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Viewing Stone Lecture with Dr. Michal Sebo on European Viewing Stones: Amphitheater at First Floor or Auditorium at Fourth Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Tea Time: First floor of Guangdong Science Hall
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Judgment of Viewing Stone Display with Tom Elias - Guangdong Science Hall
10:30 am - 12:00 am	Bonsai Demonstration by Chen Jian Liang/John Wang/François Jeker: Auditorium, First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Bonsai Styling Demonstration by Ladies from Hong Kong, Interaction of Students and Bonsai Amateurs: East Square of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall or Auditorium at First Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Viewing Stone Lecture with Kunio Kobayashi on Japanese Viewing Stones: Amphitheater at First Floor or Auditorium at Fourth Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Afternoon Tea: First Floor, Guangdong Science Hall
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Viewing Stone Lecture with Dr. Qiu Zhili on Lingnan Wax Stones: Amphitheater at First Floor or Auditorium at Fourth Floor of Guangdong Science Hall
5:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Award/Banquet/International Night - Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel





Shenzhen Tracy Garden, with more than 3000 antique pots and hundreds of beautiful bonsai trees, is part of the Bonsai Tour included with the convention registration costs. This garden uses the of the Lingnan methods to style their trees.



The optional Viewing Stone Tour to Yingde, Guangdong, home of Ying Stones will acquaint participants to many exquisite stones in markets, museums, and parks in this two-day adventure.

**Sightseeing Tours of bonsai & viewing stone will be arranged by the convention. The convention will be responsible for food, accommodation and transportation. Two options for your choice:**

<b>Option 1      Bonsai Tour</b>	
<b>Sunday 20 September</b>	
8:00 am - 12:00 noon	Visiting & Interaction of Lingnan Bonsai Garden 1: Shenzhen Tracy Garden: more than 3000 pcs of antique pots and many nice Bonsai trees
12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch - Shenzhen
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Visiting & Interaction of Lingnan Bonsai Garden 2: Panyu Chu Kong Pipe Co. Ltd. Bonsai Garden
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner - Panyu
7:00 pm	Back to Guangdong Hotel
<b>Monday 21 September</b>	
8:00 am - 12:00 noon	Visiting & Interaction of Lingnan Bonsai Garden 3: Shunde Pinsongqiu Pine Garden
12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch - Shunde
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Back to Guangzhou from Shunde
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Visiting & Interaction of Lingnan Bonsai Garden 4: Home of Lingnan Style Bonsai, Liu Hua West Park in Guangzhou
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	BCI2016 Presentation/Closing Ceremony: Guangdong Hotel
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel

<b>Option 2      Viewing Stone Tour</b>	
<i>Guests with this option need to stay one night at Hotel in Yingde on Sept. 20. Hotel will be paid by the convention. Room in Guangdong Hotel will be still kept for guests, so bring simple baggage with you for this tour.</i>	
<b>Sunday 20 September</b>	
8:00 am: 12:00 noon	Home of Ying Stone: Stone Market in Guangdong Yingde, Viewing Stone Street in Zhenyang Fang Town, Yingde
12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch: Zhenyang Fang Town, Yingde
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Downtown in Yingde, visiting of Viewing Stone Museum
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner - Yingde
7:00 pm	Stay in Yingde Hotel
<b>Monday 21 September</b>	
8:00 am: 12:00 noon	Visit of Ying Stone Gallery in Wangbu Town in Yingde, Visit of Ying Stone Park (a small forum will be arranged here)
12:00 noon - 1:00 pm	Lunch: Ying Stone Park in Yingde
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Back Guangzhou from Yingde, and a visit to a Private Stone Market along the way
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	BCI2016 Presentation/Closing Ceremony: Guangdong Hotel
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner: Second Floor, Guangdong Hotel

**Venue:** Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall; Guangdong Science Hall  
**Organizers:** Bonsai Clubs International, The People's Government of Guangzhou Municipality.

**Sponsors:** Administration of Forestry and Gardening of Guangzhou Municipality, Guangdong Society of Landscape Architecture, Guangdong Provincial Viewing Stone Association, Guangzhou Penjing Association, and China Regional Committee of Bonsai Clubs International  
**www.gzbci2015.com for more information**



# National Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition 2014 in Germany

## Strength in numbers

Text and photos by Gudrun Benz, Germany

A joint event, the annual general meetings and exhibition of the Bonsai Club Germany and the German Suiseki Society, was held in Mannheim on October 18 and 19, 2014. The host of the event was the Regional-Verband Rhein-Main, an umbrella-organization of five bonsai work groups in the South-West of Germany. Each year another regional bonsai organization organizes the annual exhibition of the national bonsai and suiseki clubs. It would be too hard for a local club (work group) to organize the event, set-up the exhibition and to carry out the convention alone. Since the exhibition is open to the general public it should be supervised during opening hours. At the entrance a fee (this year of 4 Euro) is collected from all who are not exhibitors or involved in the organization. At a welcome desk, interested people and bonsai newcomers can get information about the club, bonsai care etc. Therefore a lot of volunteers are needed to fulfil all tasks.

About 90 bonsai and 11 Suiseki were on display. The bonsai exhibited were mostly indigenous specimens with a few trees imported from Japan, China and Indonesia. Most bonsai were labelled without the name of the owner because several thefts of bonsai



Top; *Crataegus sp.*

Middle left; Overview of the exhibition



Bottom left; *Taxus sp.*

Bottom right; *Juniperus chinensis*





Top; *Pinus sylvestris*  
Bottom; *Carpinus betulus*

occurred lately so bonsai lovers are afraid to indicate their names on the labels so it would be difficult to find out their home address.

The exhibitors had the possibility to get their bonsai judged by a committee the members who have attended several seminars and passed an exam organized by the national bonsai club in order to receive the certificate as a qualified bonsai judge. Criteria of evaluation are horticultural and aesthetic aspects. The three best judged bonsai of each category (mame/shohin, medium sized and large bonsai) are always awarded with a certificate respectively a medal. In addition, there are three special awards for outstanding bonsai: the award of the Bonsai Club Germany, the Willi-Benz-Memorial Award and the Certificate of Merit of EBA (European Bonsai Association).

A dozen Suiseki were integrated into the bonsai exhibition. It is a way to popularize Suiseki because only a very small percentage of the population in Germany know about it.

Bonsai demonstrations were presented by Andrea Melloni, Hartmut Münchenbach, Udo Wollenhaupt, Michael Wilhelm, Stefan Steininger and a lecture on Suiseki by Gudrun Benz. Demonstrators were from Germany with the exception of Mr. Steininger from Austria. This way, it was possible to keep costs low to the benefit of the club.





Top left; *Larix decidua*  
 Top right; *Pinus mugo*  
 Bottom; *Pinus mugo*

The weather was marvellous as well as the venues, a hall within a large public garden in Mannheim, a city on the Rhin River. About 2000 people came to see the exhibition in the well-lit hall that further enhanced the bright autumn color of some trees.

Vendors offered all kinds of bonsai related items such as bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, tools, display accessories and much more. 🌲





Top left; *Chamaecyparis obtusa*  
Top right; *Acer buergerianum*  
Middle right; "Bird," collection of Gudrun Benz, place of origin: South China  
Bottom left; *Acer palmatum* "Shishigashira"  
Bottom right; Mountain stone, collection of Dr. Alwin Dietmair, place of origin: Germany



Top left; *Pinus mugo*

Top right; Mountain stone,  
collection of Andrea Melloni,  
place of origin: Liguria, Italy

Middle right; Azalea

Bottom left; *Acer palmatum*  
"Shishigashira"

Bottom right; "Of ancient times",  
animal-shaped stone, collection  
of Wolfgang Schlensker, place of  
origin: Sumatra





Top left; Waterpool stone, collection of Ramona Lehner, place of origin: Japan  
 Top right; a Shohin display  
 Middle left; *Acer palmatum*  
 Middle right; *Larix decidua*, forest planting  
 Bottom; Forest planting of *Acer palmatum*

# 2nd Annual Winter Silhouette Bonsai Expo

## Structural Elegance

By Owen Reich, USA

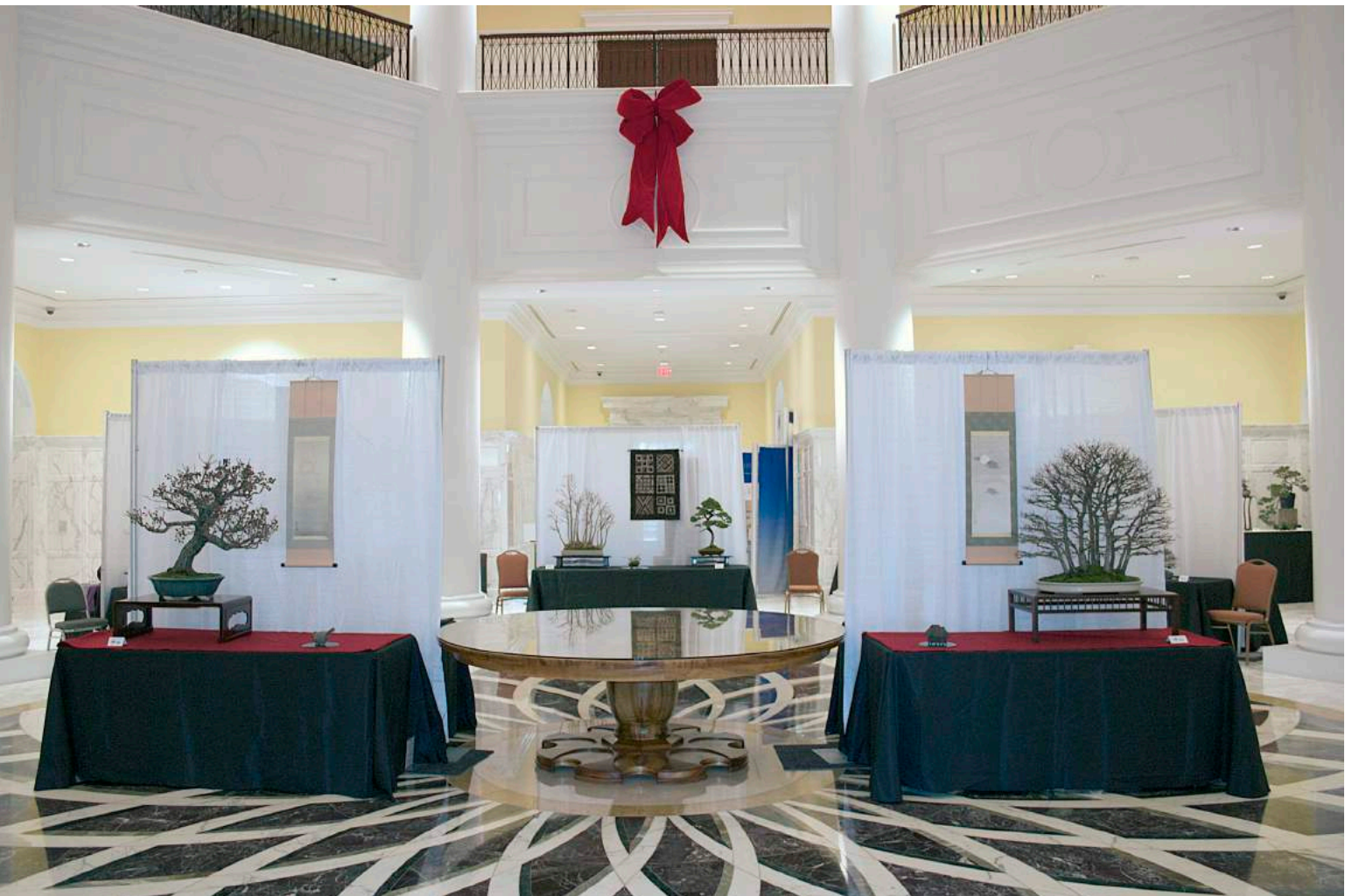
Venue Photos by Owen Reich, Bonsai Photos courtesy Joseph Noga, USA

**W**hile winter exhibitions in the United States are not common, this show and hopefully others, will fill a much needed gap in the bonsai calendar. Deciduous trees and shrubs used for bonsai are often shrouded in foliage; leaving the subtle elegance and structure hidden. Winter is a time of year when the usual stimuli from the natural world leaves

something to be desired. A lull if you will, one which a beautifully designed bonsai can fill. Exfoliating bark and intricate ramification of branches can be just as beautiful as new foliage or flowers in Spring.

The best thing about winter bonsai events is that truly excellent deciduous bonsai can be seen in all their structural perfection. There is no moving of foliage pads or creative branch maneuvers here. Presence

The event is held at the David H. Murdock Center, a space bathed in natural light.







of cut marks, wire scars, and shoddy branch taper are now glaringly obvious. True craftsmanship reaching back to the infancy of a bonsai can be traced.

The two largest bonsai exhibitions in Japan are held at the end of November and beginning of February. There is an inherent risk to bringing high quality bonsai into a heated, low humidity space for two weeks like at the Kokufu-ten, but it's also a great lift to the spirit for those who appreciate Nature's beauty.

While this exhibition in Kannapolis, North Carolina, has a short track-record, it sets a precedent for other organizations to pursue. The experience for me was enlightening. An exhibition of bonsai in such a beautiful space added to much to the experience.



There was a sense of formality that made the bonsai on display that much more regal.

The event is the brainchild of Steven Ziesel; Director of The Nutrition Research Institute for The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and seasoned bonsai practitioner. As a scientist and professor, Steven felt that bonsai would be a great creative outlet. The Winter Bonsai Silhouette Expo was conceived to

*Top left and right; William N. Valavanis conducted a demonstration and a critique of the exhibition.*

*Bottom; John Geanangel's Ulmus parvifolia 'Yatsubusa' raft style with base accentuated well by the long, narrow stone.*





Top left; *Carpinus caroliniana* showing the musculature and expansive canopy indicative of older wild trees.

Bottom left; *Euonymus alatus* by Ken Duncan.

Bottom right; Witchhazel, *Hamamelis* spp. from the Asheville Arboretum in container by Mark Isenberg.

Facing Page:

Top left; *Acer palmatum* by Ed Lauer; winner of "Best Winter Silhouette"

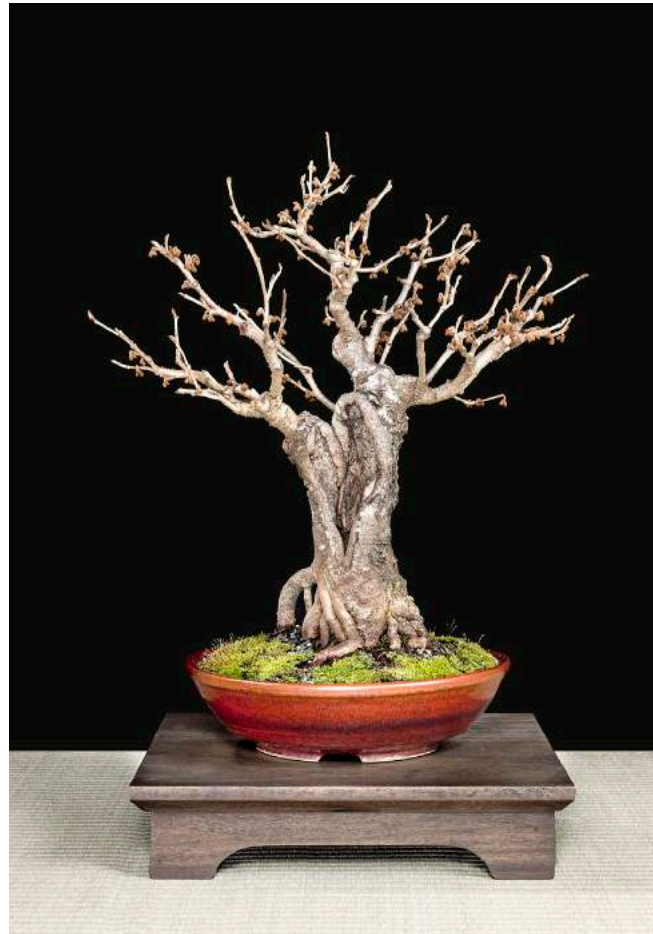
Top right; William N. Valavanis' *Larix laricina*

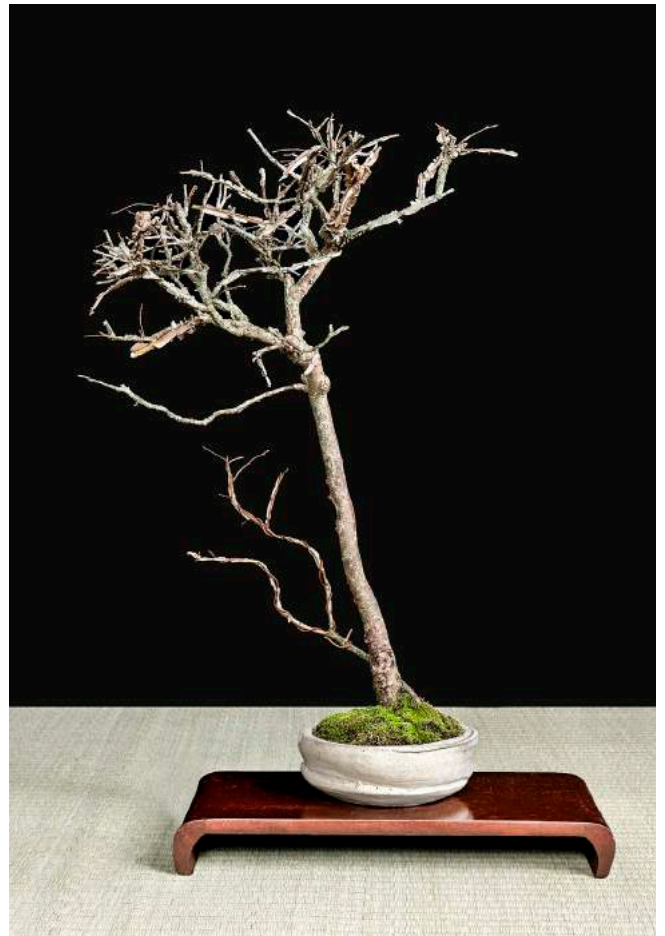
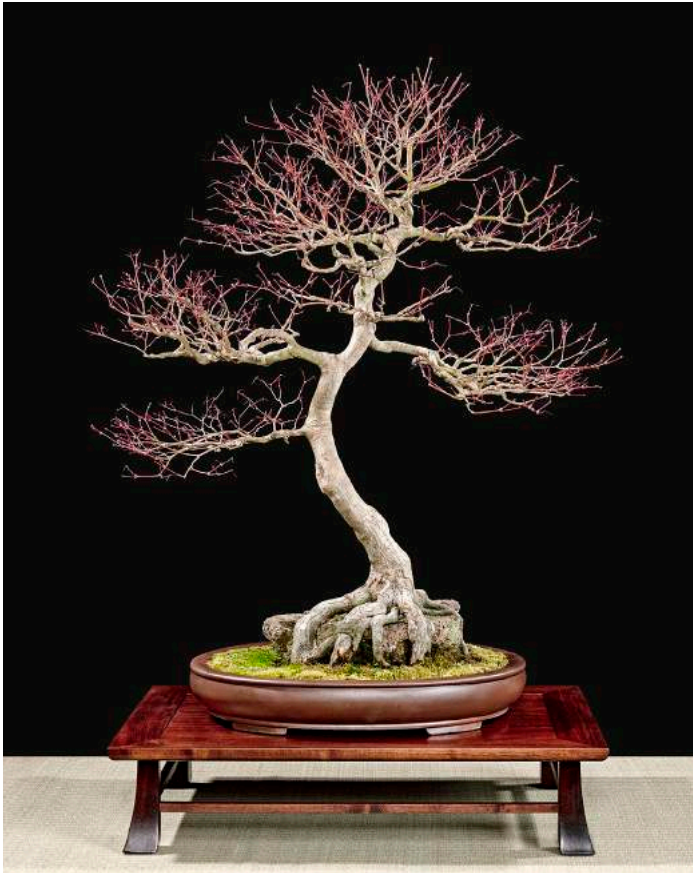
Bottom left; *Taxodium distichum* by Ken Duncan

Bottom right; *Ulmus alata* by Rob Kempinski

fill a gap in the period of down-time common to the bonsai scene in the Southeastern region of America. William N. Valavanis, Joseph Noga, and Owen Reich volunteered their services to make the event a success. Mr. Valavanis provided a comprehensive demonstration on Chinese Quince (*Pseudocydonia sinensis*) as well as a critique of the exhibition displays. Joseph Noga provided the high-quality formal bonsai photos published in this article. Owen Reich conducted a styling demonstration on a Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*). The whole event was free to exhibitors, vendors, and attendees.

Castle and Cooke Corporation has been kind enough to make the David H. Murdock Center available each year. The actual exhibition space is on the bottom floor of a four story building that has walls, floor and pillars made of Italian Carrara marble; the





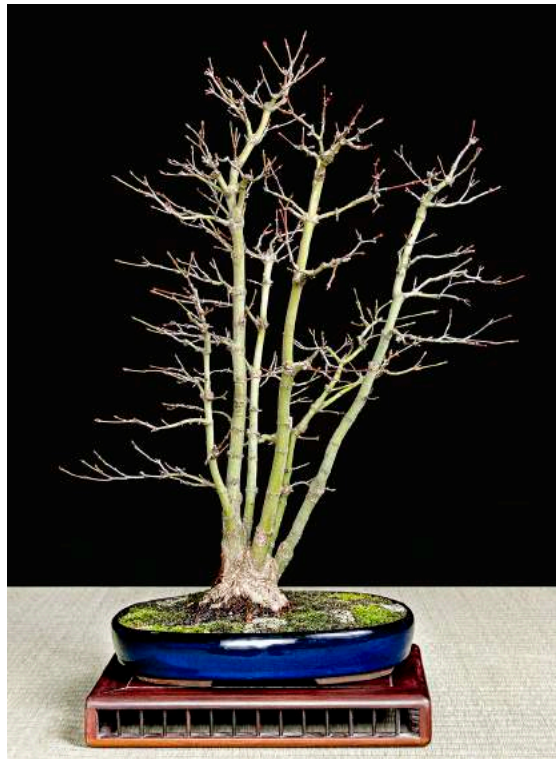
Top left; Troy Schmidt's  
*Stewartia monadelph*

Top right; Gary Andes'  
*Chaenomeles japonica*,

Bottom left; Joseph Noga's  
*Ulmus parvifolia*

Bottom right; Rob Kempinski's  
Southern Hackberry, *Celtis  
laevigata*

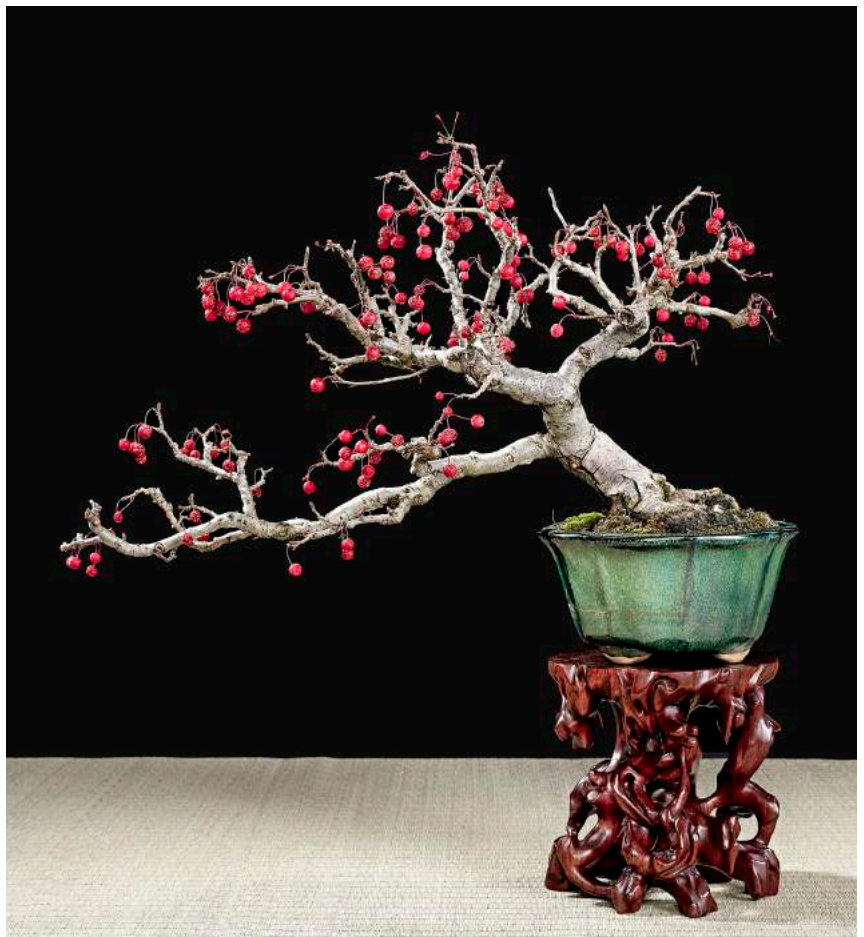




Top left; Ed Lauer's *Carpinus caroliniana*  
 Top right; Fused trunk *Acer palmatum* by Ken Duncan  
 Bottom left; The Bonsai Learning Center's *Celtis occidentalis*  
 Bottom right; Ed Lauer's *Malus floribunda*

same used by Michelangelo for his sculpture, *David*.  
 The third annual event will occur December fifth and sixth, 2015 at the same venue. Each year, the event continues to grow in popularity and next year's event promises to be even better. Exhibitors and attendees

came from Illinois, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, and New York. Two videos of the 2014 exhibition are available for viewing at: <http://stevenzeisel.wix.com/winterbonsai#!gallery/clyws> courtesy of Steven Ziesel and John Geanangel.





Above; William N. Valavanis' *Pseudocydonia sinensis*  
Below; *Ficus benjamina* by Steve Zeisel. Defoliated, it looks much like a maple grove.



Above; Gary Andes's *Morus alba* 'Issai'  
Below; Ken Duncan's *Ulmus alatus*





The exhibition was not exclusively deciduous trees; a handful of conifers and tropicals helped balance the exhibition space like this *Pinus parviflora* from the Bonsai Learning Center (left). The Austrian Pine below is a work in progress. As many will identify, owner Don Kimball could not wait to share his excitement with others after the synthesis of his pine group with a custom container by Erik Křižovenský. The public also shared in the excitement by awarding it “People’s Choice Award”





Of the forty displays at the exhibition, four received awards. Ed Lauer won “Best Winter Silhouette,” Brian Mercer and Brad Russell won “Best Conifer,” Joseph Noga won “Best Fruiting Bonsai,” and Don Kimball won “People’s Choice Award.” 🌲

The exhibition had a number of excellent seedling-grown *Pseudocydonia sinensis*. While it takes far longer to attain flowers/fruit on seed-grown quince, the finer branching and smaller foliage makes designs like these possible.

Top left; Gary Andes’ *Pseudocydonia sinensis*

Bottom left; Troy Schmidt’s *Pseudocydonia sinensis*

Bottom right; Gary Andes’ collected *Potentilla fruticosa* from Northern Canada.



Facing page;

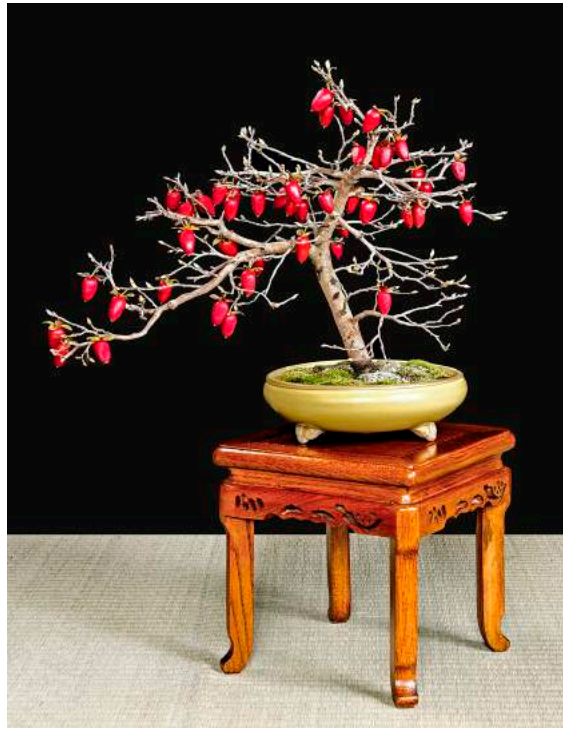
Top Right: *Diospyros rhombifolia*; winner of “Best Fruiting Bonsai” by Joseph Noga

Top Left; *Pyrus calleryana* ‘Robinson’ by William N. Valavanis

Bottom left; Martin Sweeney’s *Acer palmatum*

Bottom right; William N. Valavanis’ Chinese elm forest







## HUA FONG BONSAI EXHIBITION, TAIPEI, TAIWAN, November 2015.

By Malcolm Hughes, UK

It was a very unexpected pleasure—my visit to Taiwan to see this amazing exhibition.

I was unable to accept an invitation back in September to attend an event in China as the guest

of the Shanghai Botanical Gardens and the Shohin Bonsai Group since I had scarcely returned from attending the Bonsai Clubs International Convention in Australia. Shortly after, I was both surprised and delighted to be invited as a guest at the Hua Fong Bonsai Exhibition in Taipei and participate in the official opening ceremony.

It was an extraordinary experience over a five-day period; the hotels, the hospitality and the bonsai were all of an exceptional standard. From the very first moment of arriving, nothing was overlooked, the comfort absolute and every need attended to with thoroughness and care.

Initially, I had expected to be the only European but was delighted to find two others present, namely



Left column, top to bottom;  
Front entrance of the Grand Hotel in Taipei  
Part of the exhibition  
Professor Amy Liang presents a special award to Kunio Kobayashi  
Polished stone - height 46 cm,  
Viewing stone with accent  
Right column;  
Ficus - height 1 m 5 cm.  
*Juniperus chinensis*



Herbert Obermayer, editor of the German magazine “Bonsai” and Kestutis Ptakauskas, President of the Lithuanian Bonsai Association.

The first hotel, the Grand Hotel in Taipei, with its red columns and golden roof tiling, was once the palace-inspired residence of Chiang Kai-shek. This was just the beginning of the hospitality afforded by our host Chen Tsang Shing, owner of Wann Yiing Art Garden and Chairman of the Taiwan Plant Conservation Foundation.

The evening involved a welcome dinner, hosted by Professor Amy Liang with members of the various Taiwanese bonsai associations including the Taiwan Bonsai & Suiseki Association, as well as representatives from the Malaysia Bonsai & Suiseki Society, the Vietnam Bonsai City Association, the Philippines Bonsai Association, together with guests from Japan, Korea, Europe and China, including Mr. Feng Shucheng, Director of the Shanghai Botanical Garden.

The following day included a visit to Bo Tai Yuan, a private bonsai collection in Taipei, followed by a lunch with Mr. Jecy Lu, Honorary President of the World Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce, before moving on to the Taipei Expo Park to attend the



Middle left; *Pinus morrisonicola* (Taiwanese white pine)

Top right and middle right; *Ficus*, close-up view of root structure and overall view.

Bottom left; Red pine.

Bottom right; *Juniperus chinensis* - height 1 m 12 cm.





*Carmona Retusa*, Fukien tea tree



*Celtis formosana* - height 78 cm



*Premna obtusifolia*



Large Chinese juniper - height 1 m 21 cm



Bottom left; *Murraya paniculata*, Orange jasmine



Bottom right; Semi-cascade *Murraya*



opening ceremony of the 19th Hua Fong National Bonsai Exhibition. Impressive not only for the colorful opening ceremony itself, but also for the number of top quality bonsai and suiseki exhibits on display. It could only be summarized, without exaggeration, as Taiwan's highest level of bonsai.

Thereafter over the next few days, those of us who were guests of our Taiwanese hosts, had the pleasure of visiting a some of Taiwan's prestigious private collections and nurseries, including Taichung Bonsai Village and nurseries specializing in red and white pines, as well as the famous Taiwanese junipers. On the final day, the trip culminated with time spent at Mr. Chen's Wann Yiing Garden with its extensive grounds, lakes, bonsai and impressive museum containing a diverse and considerable number of rare

Oriental artefacts. Words cannot adequately describe all that was there to behold; one can only express our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Chen for his generous hospitality together with those from the Taiwanese associations who provided us visitors with the opportunity of viewing Taiwan's bonsai and suiseki at its unsurpassed best. 🌲

*Top left; Viewing stone*  
*Top right; Juniperus chinensis - height 1 m 28 cm.*  
*Middle left and right; Collected Taiwanese juniper - early styling and example of unstyled collected juniper*  
*Bottom; Collected and partially styled junipers.*



## 2014 Orchid and Bonsai Competition & Exhibition Di Taman Botani Perdana, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Organized by Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur and Bonsai n Stone Academy, 23 May – 1 June 2014

By IS Ng, BCI Director, Malaysia



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Orchid and Bonsai Show 2014 was held recently at the Perdana Botanical Garden, Kuala Lumpur from May 21 to June 2, 2014. The first show was previously held in the same venue in 2012.

The show was a joint effort by The Kuala Lumpur City Hall (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur or DBKL) and the Bonsai & Stone Academy.

There were one hundred and seventy six (176) bonsai entries for this year's show. Species represented included the *Wrightia religiosa* (水梅), a very popular local bonsai species), *Premna obtusifolia* (寿娘子),

*Top; Ficus microcarpa*, winner of Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur prize and trophy.

*Middle insets left to right; Y.B. Tan Sri Hj. Muhyiddin presented the Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur prize and trophy to Mr. Ng Tien Sun for his *Ficus microcarpa*; the BCI prize and trophy to Mr. Low Ah Seng for his *Wrightia religiosa*, and the Queen of Flowers prize and trophy to Mr. Lim Kian Meng for his *Wrightia religiosa*.*

*Bottom; Entrance to the Perdana Botanical Garden, venue for the exhibit.*





Top left; Tan Sri Dato' Hj Muhyiddin Hj Mohd Yassin (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education) officiated the opening of the Orchid and Bonsai Show 2014.

Top right; *Wrightia religiosa*, winner of the BCI prize and trophy

Middle left; *Wrightia religiosa*, winner of the Queen of Flowers prize and trophy.

Middle right; *Wrightia religiosa*, Gold: Medium Size

Bottom right; *Wrightia religiosa*, Gold: Small Size

*Diospyros ebenum* (象牙树), *Juniperus chinensis* (真柏), *Ficus microcarpa* (榕树), *Beackea frutescens* (香松) and others. The bonsai categories were divided into *Wrightia Religiosa* (水梅), Island (海岛树), *Juniperus Chinensis/Ficus* (真柏 / 榕树), *Beackea Frutescens* (香松), and Assorted (其他杂木) for all sizes of bonsai (from small to big). Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes were awarded for each of these categories. The Grand prizes were the Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, the BCI Excellence Award and the Queen of Flowers.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y.B. Tan Sri Hj. Muhyiddin Hj. Mohd Yassin officiated the opening of the Orchid and Bonsai Show 2014 in the evening of May 23, 2014, which was attended by about 1,000 guests. Y.B. Tan Sri Hj. Muhyiddin presented the Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur prize of RM1,000 and trophy to Mr. Ng Tien Sun (黄丁山先生) for his *Ficus microcarpa*, the BCI prize of RM500 and trophy to Mr. Low Ah Seng (刘啟胜先生) for his *Wrightia religiosa*, and the Queen of Flowers prize of RM300 and trophy to Mr. Lim Kian Meng (林健民先生) for his *Wrightia religiosa*. After the prize giving ceremony and candle light dinner, Y.B. Tan Sri Hj. Muhyiddin accompanied by Mr. IS Ng (黄荣鑽先生) together with other guests spent some time in viewing the bonsai.

There was no entry fee for bonsai this time. According to Mr. IS Ng (黄荣鑽先生), President of the Bonsai & Stone Academy and a Director of BCI, the purpose of a no entry fee was to encourage more bonsai hobbyists to participate in this bonsai show.

He also shared the common objective of the Kuala Lumpur City Hall to promote bonsai in Malaysia and to promote the Perdana Botanical Garden by hosting various activities so as to attract more local and





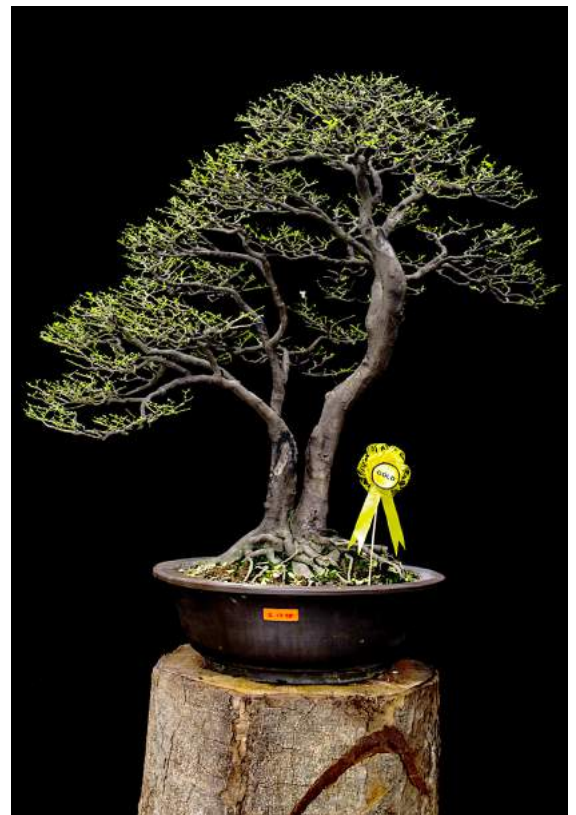
Top left; Juniper, Gold: Medium Size

Top right; *Beackea frutescens*, Bronze: Small Size

Middle left; *Wrightia religiosa*, Silver: Small Size

Middle right; Assorted, Gold: Large Size

Bottom left; Island, Gold: Medium Size



foreign visitors. The Perdana Botanical Garden was formerly known as Lake Garden, and it was built in 1888 by the late A.R. Venning <<http://www.klbotanicalgarden.gov.my/guide-amenities.php>>. Both the prizes and venues were sponsored by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

During the period of the bonsai show, it was estimated that over 5,000 visitors visited the bonsai exhibition. Mr. Bohori Che Moktar, bonsai master, gave bonsai demonstrations and talks about the *Beackea frutescens* to the public in a few occasions. *Beackea frutescens* is popular bonsai species in Kelantan and Terengganu (Northeast of West Malaysia).

He also has a vision to work with the Kuala Lumpur City Hall to develop a Bonsai Park in the future. 🌲



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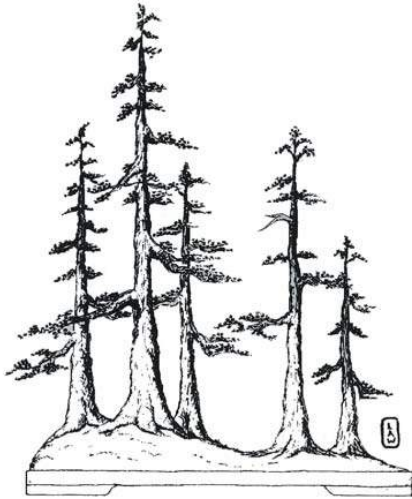
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Our members have an opportunity to showcase their best trees and stones. Prints of this cross-section of viewing stones and bonsai trees from all over the world, will be debuted at the grand BCI Convention in Guangzhou, China in 2015. Spread the word in your local club, help us acknowledge the treasures in the BCI world and promote international friendships.

### **Eligibility:**

- Participant must be an Individual Member of BCI. For this competition, BCI directors are eligible as are member clubs.
- Member or member club representative may submit two photos of trees or two photos of stones or one of each (2 photos in total). A shohin display on a stand may be submitted as a single entry. A group display of small stones may be submitted as a single entry.
- Photos are assigned numbers to assure impartial judging, then they are sent to our judges to vote on their favorite trees and stones. The finalists will be published in a hard cover BCI publication and prints will be exhibited at the BCI Convention in Guangzhou, China in September 2015.
- Photo must be taken within the last three years
- Trees and stones published in *Best of BCI, 50 Stones, 50 Trees, 50 Years* are not eligible.

### **Formats:**

The photo(s) must be in full color, the subject composed on a square aspect ratio at 3000 x 3000 pixels or larger. File format can be JPG or TIF.

- Make sure your photos are clear, well-lit without harsh shadows so that the judges can appreciate the quality and details of your trees and stones.
- Tips from photographers for taking good photos of your stones and trees are available on the BCI website. [www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015](http://www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015)
- An official entry form must accompany entries. Entry forms and instructions are available at [www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015](http://www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015) or by request from Competition Committee Chair: Budi Sulisty; [budisulisty22@gmail.com](mailto:budisulisty22@gmail.com)
- The file name on the form must match the file name of the electronic files.
- Entries can be uploaded to the BCI website at: [www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015](http://www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015).
- Entries that do not meet all criteria will be eliminated from the competition.
- Deadline for submission is April 30, 2015. No entries will be accepted after this date.

**Entry forms are available on the BCI website**  
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**Entry  
Deadline  
April 30  
2015**

**No Computer?** For BCI members who do not have access to a computer or the Internet, please contact the Competition Committee Chair, Budi Sulisty, to make arrangements for your entries.

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