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bonsai **Focus**

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Mauro Stemberger



Recommended by Master Masahiko Kimura and Kinbon Magazine

"As a bonsai resercher I also recommend this product"

Kaoru Koizumi

This tree won the Minister of Education Award at the 28th Taikan-ten



"Genyo" Juniperus rigida,
owned by Kaoru Koizumi.
Pot: Shuzan rectangular

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Translations:

Peter Warren



Tokonomas at the Ginkgo Show, 2007

Aiming for Gold

The time of the Ginkgo Awards was one of the most exciting. Six editions of amazing shows run by initiator Danny Use pushed the level of bonsai to amazing heights. Every two years from 1997 the show was held at his nursery, and every edition had bonsai reaching an even higher level. Leafing through the books of the 'Best of Bonsai in Europe', you are struck by many milestone bonsai. Some of these winning trees changed hands and popped up at shows throughout Europe. Sometimes the trees had changed, for better or worse, but still stunning and, as in Japan, could well be recognised as Important Bonsai Masterpieces.

A show like that today, with all those trees to exhibit, seems like a dream. Yet that must have been the trigger for Danny Use to organise a reunion show and reunite all those bonsai from the halcyon days of the Ginkgo Awards. This is just what happened last May. Although only to last for one day, the effort put into organising the show and making all the trees on display shine was amazing. Of course I was there to witness this special show and took as many photos as I could. It was a really relaxed day with lots of old friends and good memories.

The trees of Serge Clémence could be easily added to this grand collection of

masterpieces. His trees, all collected and styled by Serge himself, reveal a unique quality. They not only impress by their massive size, but also show great maturity. He has been out of the picture for a while but, luckily for us, he was convinced by one of his bonsai friends to style a yamadori for Bonsai Focus.

One of the most used tools in bonsai other than shears, is without doubt the concave pliers. They now serve as the symbol for our photo contest, simply called 'The Golden Concave Award'. This is a special prize to encourage all of our readers to join in. A team of judges, consisting of Ryan Neil, Taiga Urushibata and Peter Warren, will pre-select the best bonsai from all submitted photos and let you, our reader, make the final choice of which tree will win the first edition of the Golden Concave Award. Read more about this exciting contest further in the magazine.

Farrand Bloch
Chief editor



Our Icons



Beginner

Video available
bonsaifocus.com

Advanced

Scan the code
with your phone

Expert

On the cover

Ligustrum
grown from a garden plant
by John Hanby.

Photo: Bonsai Focus Studio



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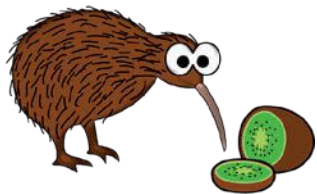
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A selection of the best bonsai from the Ginkgo reunion





Young Kiwis to show off their bonsai

Bonsai in New Zealand has been experiencing an upturn in popularity among younger members and we're trying to showcase this by using some of our rising talent as demonstrators during our show and convention in Auckland. Peter Warren will be our lead demonstrator — it's exciting to anticipate what great expertise he will bring with him. From the 4th-6th November the Auckland Bonsai Society, in conjunction with the New Zealand Bonsai Association, will be hosting the New Zealand National Bonsai Show and Convention at the Auckland Botanic Gardens. Check out the websites: www.bonsaiconvention.net.nz or nzbonsaiconvention@gmail.com.

KAZARI

'Kazari' is a book by Edoardo Rossi totally devoted to the art of displaying bonsai. It's exceptional because no book before has given such in-depth information on this subject. Kazari is Japanese for the preparations carried out to make things look beautiful. The Japanese have a very high standard of aesthetics and so it is with the display of bonsai, too.

Edoardo Rossi got into bonsai in 1985 and studied with several Masters within and outside of Japan. He became interested in many aspects of Japanese culture, like calligraphy and suiseki. All aspects and elements of the display are covered by Edoardo: Suiseki, accent plants, tables and jita, scrolls and tenpai. The book was commissioned by Kunio Kobayashi who asked Edoardo to write an extensive book on this subject. With the help of no lesser notables than Tomio Yamada, Susumu Sudo and of Kunio Kobayashi, the project began in 2010. Then in 2015, after their approval, 'Kazari' was finally published.

'Kazari', the art of displaying bonsai and suiseki. In English and Italian. Hard cover, 24 x 33 cm format, 256 pages, full colour, €49.50 order at:



'The Tokonoma serves as a reading tool'

Tomio Yamada



September 24-25: French National Show of mame and shohin

A special show dedicated to mame and shohin bonsai. Where: Centre Culturel, Couzeix (87), France



Oct. 12-13:

Burrs Workshop

The tenth anniversary of Burrs Workshop will be featuring Enrico Savini, Pavel Slovák, David Prescott, Terry Foster and Tony Tickle. Where: Burrs Country Park, 10 Woodhill Road, Bury, UK BL8 1DA. Info: 07802 837739 or tonytickle@gmail.com

September. 20-25: 36th FELAB 2016:

XII Congreso Latinoamericano

Where: MM Grand Hotel in Puebla, Mexico. Featuring Kinio Kobayashi, Marc Nöelenders, Bjorn Bjorholm, Sean Smith, Juan Andrade, Pedro Morales, Sergio Luciani. Info: jcordero@hotmail.com or 045-222-186-3978

Oct. 15-16: 4th European Bonsai-San Show 2016

Where: Saulieu, France. Demos by Masayuki Fujikawa, Marco Invernizzi, Taiga Urishibata, Hiroaki Suzuki. Info: www.european-bonsai-san-show.com or info@bonsai-san.com

Nov. 4-6: New Zealand National Bonsai Convention and Show

Where: The Auckland Botanic Gardens. Peter Warren is the main demonstrator. Info: www.bonsaiconvention.net.nz



Nov. 21-24: 36th Taikan-ten

200 displays, sales area. Admission 900 yen. Biggest bonsai exhibition. Where: Kansai area Miyakomesse, Kyoto (9-1 Okazaki Seisyoji-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto)



December 6-9 Bonsai without Borders Global Convention

The First 'Black Scissors' Global Bonsai Creators (Artists) Convention. Where: Nanxun District Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, China.

Info: Su Fang 1440372565@qq.com.

WWW.BONSAIFOCUS.COM



Italia Bonsai Museum's grand opening

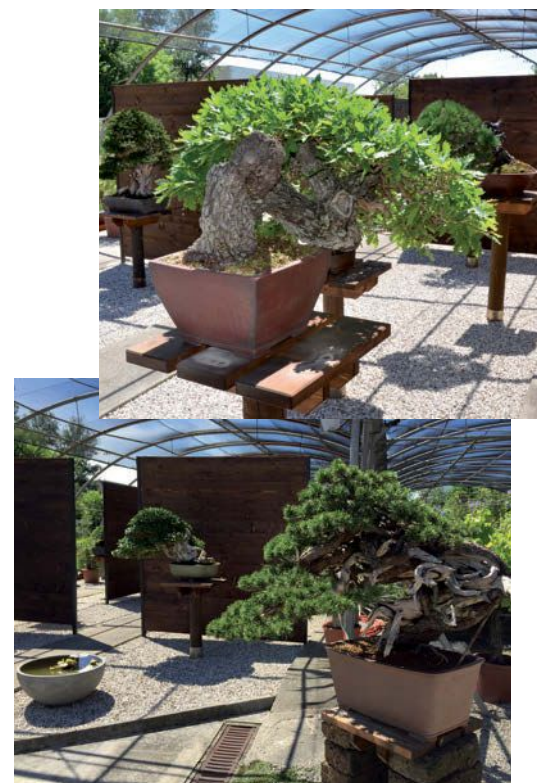
Italia Bonsai Museum opened on 16th July in the presence of the UBI President Mr Luciano Granato and the Mayors of Marostica and Pianezze. The museum is a permanent exhibition space right in front of the Garden Verde Nursery, where Mauro Stemberger's Italian Bonsai Dream School and Amici del Bonsai Marostica Association are hosted. The project, promoted by Mauro Stemberger and the Pavin family (owner of the nursery), Amici

del Bonsai and the UBI, represents a goal attained — an exhibition venue to present for everyone's benefit, the best creations of our bonsai activity. It is our mission to attract more and more people to our bonsai passion. The two-day opening event was embellished by the presence of Master Luis Vila, who entertained visitors with a demo on a fantastic *Juniperus sabina* on Saturday afternoon. He then managed the Sunday bonsai workshop, too.

This museum is highly important to us as it displays 23 bonsai masterpieces, some of which belong to the private collection of Master Stemberger, plus other bonsai prepared during the Italian Bonsai Dream School workshops over the years.

We will be glad to welcome you to the museum. For any information contact us at: info@amicidelbonsaimarostica.it

Italia Bonsai Museum, c/o Vivai Garden Verde, Via dell'industria 32. I-36060 Pianezze (VI)



Delft, the bonsai town

By Eric ter Lingen

Delft, the city where the famous painter Johannes Vermeer painted 'Girl with a Pearl Earring', became for the 10th time, Bonsai Town on 4 and 5 May. The Bonsai van het Westen show aims to promote bonsai to a larger audience by combining various Asian cultural activities alongside a themed bonsai exhibition. All held in the Botanical Garden, Delft.

To celebrate this anniversary year there was an extra show arranged by Bonsai Plaza. The visitors were first guided along the display of Japanese top bonsai at this special exhibition.

This year's theme, Friendship, was expressed successfully by participating clubs and studios. The theme was used even in the demonstration by Teunis Jan Klein with a group of friends. Together they made an enormous yew kabudachi style bonsai. On Sunday, Filip Haesen



worked on a juniper.

A so-called 'friendship forest' was later donated to the Botanical Garden, Delft to symbolise the long cooperation between organisers of the event and the Botanical Garden. Near to the exhibitions you could enjoy workshops, demonstrations with Taichi and Kendo. Ikebana arrangements were shown as well. You could enjoy a massage or tea ceremony to get into the real Zen mood.

Guided tours explained the bonsai shown. While the many trade stands were able to offer you that perfect pot, or your future exhibition tree. Even the weather was just fantastic.



Revival of Ginkgo...

The amazing Ginkgo Show comes back to life

The best bonsai were always shown at the Ginkgo Awards. A decade of impressive shows that started in 1997 made bonsai in Europe develop with a spectacular leap forward. Bonsai history was made. A reunion show on 28th May brought back good memories



Acer palmatum 'Shishigashira'
Bruno VDP. Kei Bonsai Kai †



The main hall leading you along the large bonsai display and, at the end, were the tokonomas

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio

Old times came back to life. The Ginkgo Bonsai Center held a big reunion show for just one day last May. Many of the trees which could once be admired at one of the six Ginkgo Bonsai Awards were back on display again. It was as though things hadn't changed since the last Ginkgo Show was held in 2007. This time, though, there were some great new experimental displays initiated by Danny Use. For this special occasion, trees were set before large photo prints of assorted landscapes making the trees absorb the atmosphere of the photographs. A selection of the 'Kei Bonsai Kai' club's trees were used in Danny's inventive landscape creations that depicted mountainous and coastal scenes. All the trees and displays were very well set up. It was an amazing show and memories of those good old days lingered in your head. Hopefully, we can enjoy more of such shows at the Ginkgo Bonsai Center soon.

Bonsai were all from the collections of Hans van Meer, Carlos van der Vaart, T.J. Klein, John Hanby, Frédéric Chenal, Jean Paul Polmans, Christophe Richy, Peter Foele, and last, but not least, Danny Use himself. The members of the Kai Bonsai Kai club supported by giving their private time to build the display settings and they supplied their share of trees, too.

See more bonsai further in this issue.

Cydonia sinensis

Bruno VDP. Kei Bonsai Kai †



Bonsai were placed before photos of assorted landscapes



Ulmus procera

Ronny VN. Kei Bonsai Kai



Acer buergerianum

Luc VD. Kei Bonsai Kai



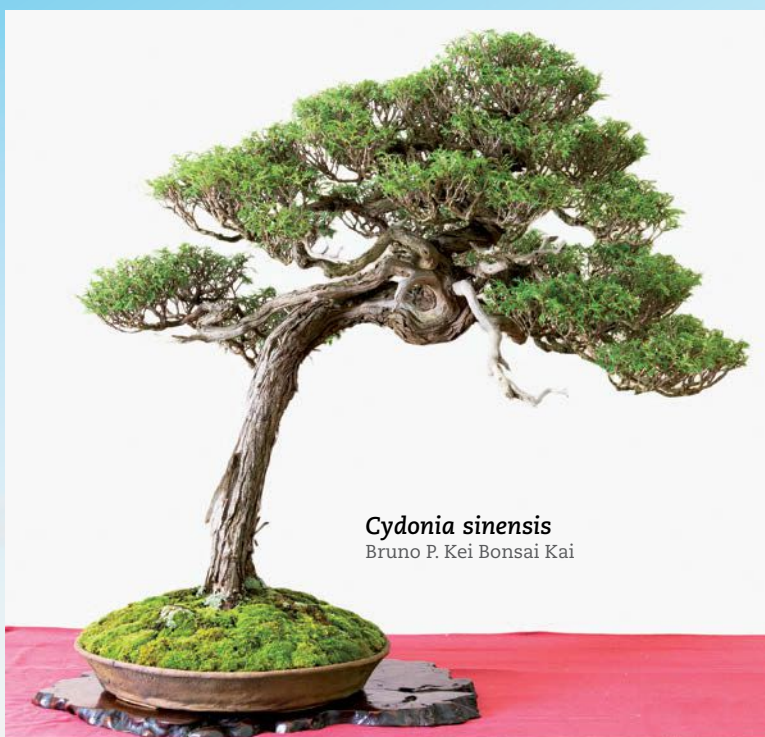
Photos: Bonsai Focus Studio



Acer palmatum. Deshojo
Luc VD. Kei Bonsai Kai



Juniperus chinensis
Frederic Chenal



Cydonia sinensis
Bruno P. Kei Bonsai Kai



Betula pendula
Jean Paul Polmans

No such thing as an average day

Andrew Sellman lives his bonsai passion at the garden of the Urushibata family, the Taisho-en

Text and photography: Andrew Sellman / Bonsai Focus Studio

It's a strange thing to some, even to myself at times, to travel halfway across the globe, leave your home, family and friends in the search of expanding your knowledge in the art of growing miniature trees in pots. This is tells of such a journey, to Taisho-en, Shizouka, Japan.

Advanced techniques

The nursery was originally known for its shohin, but now is one of the most diverse nurseries in Japan. This was evident the very moment I stepped into Taisho-en. I have been to Japan many times and been to numerous nurseries, but I have never seen such an array of species and sizes, from 10 cm / 4" up to ancient towering junipers. The nursery is run by Nobuichi Urushibata and his son Taiga. Nobuichi has been hard at work on bonsai for more than 40 years and specialises in shohin and highly advanced grafting techniques.

Over the years I have seen many articles of Urushibata-san doing unsurpassed work, from his grafting techniques, to the development of amazing shohin in an astonishingly short time. This is one of the main reasons I wanted to study at Taisho-en.



A white pine (Pinus parviflora) after some hours' work



Oyakata

From the moment I arrived I was put to work. I wired and unwired, pruned and defoliated due to the huge number of trees at Taisho-en. There is no choice but to work on trees of quality under the watchful eye of Oyakata as Nobuichi is called. He helps with your work while dealing with his customers, answering the phone and working on trees himself.

Being in such a restricted environment is an amazing way to really focus on bonsai. My particular room had no television and no internet, the only entertainment was a huge box full of Japanese bonsai magazines, so after spending 12 hours in the nursery I would come home with a takeaway Katsu curry and spend my nights researching what it is that truly makes great bonsai.



Overview of the shohin section, on the left are the workshops

Japanese education

There is no such thing as an average day at Taisho-en and bonsai is not your only job. As Oyakata informed me on the day that I arrived 'This is not just for your bonsai education, it also addresses moral Japanese education. A bonsai master is many things beyond a bonsai artist. He is builder, a labourer, a plumber.' During my stay I experienced this first hand, from moving wheelbarrows of soil to building polytunnels for winter storage. On top of these odd jobs, I worked on bonsai — a lot of bonsai.

Starting with the restyling of several run of the mill field-grown junipers, the work then shifted to the autumn chores of maples. Removing leaves, light pruning



At work in the studio late at night



Overview of the garden



Working on a black pine

and rewiring of many of the hundreds of maples to be found in the nursery. When surrounded by such inspiration and without everyday distractions, one could complete the work on the trees quite quickly.

The highlight of my stay

I had the opportunity to work on some great trees while studying at Taisho-en, but a certain Japanese black pine takes the biscuit. Towards the end of my stay, Oyakata gave me the great privilege of restyling a 39-year-old black pine, grown from seed. I unwired the tree, removed unwanted branches and shoots and then took on the painstaking job of rewiring every branch to its tips. After 20 hours of work (of which 16 hours was just wiring) the tree was complete. Then after a quick review of my work the tree was set out on the sales benches. To work on a tree of such quality was truly an honour and the highlight of my stay.

Hard work

Seeing Urushibata-san's hard work and what he has created, really proves that if you dedicate yourself to something and you truly devote your heart and soul to this art, the possibilities are endless.

Below: A shohin juniper before work. Below right: After work



This ethic is something I hope to take home and help to spread throughout the growing Australian bonsai community. Technique and knowledge are extremely important, but without the desire to really push yourself and your bonsai, never to settle for the results, always to look for ways to expand, grow and become better at what you do, that is just what I think is needed in the developing Australian bonsai scene.



I would come home with a takeaway curry and spend my nights studying what makes a great bonsai.



Master or Oyakata?

There are many stories or myths of bonsai Masters bullying their apprentices. But not at Taisho-en where things are a little different, especially as Nobuichi Urushibata-san is not referred to as Mr Urushibata or Urushibata-san or even Sensei, but Oyakata. But what does Oyakata mean? 'Oya' (親) means parent, 'Kata' (方) the way; if said together it means something like 'The way of the parent'. However, if you Google-search the origin of the word 'oyakata' the meaning is clearly 'master'.



Grafting a trident maple

At Taisho-En you can learn various advanced techniques. Here Nobuichi Urushibata gives us an example with trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*)



The pin holding the graft in place is removed



The right side was grafted in one year ago and has taken perfectly. The other branch will now be grafted in to assist callusing and to create a new branch in the ideal position



If you compare the thickness of the branch on either side of the graft you can ascertain the success of the union

Text, illustration and photos: Bonsai Focus Studio

The aim is always to create deciduous trees without any scars and to have a branch setting that is almost perfect. If a tree hasn't got the right branches in the right place approach graft techniques can be applied to get them there where you want them. To get large grafts to heal over

there must be vigorous growth. Grafting a vigorous branch across this part will help the callus close the wound. A young and energetic branch will do the job. Nobuichi Urushibata shows you in steps how an approach graft is carried out and how the large wound is treated as well.

Read more:

Moving mature branches
Issue: BF 3-2008



The Taisho-En Bonsai School

The school opened its door to foreign bonsai enthusiasts in 2005. Its location is in Shizuoka. Bonsai Master, Mr Nobuichi Urushibata, will instruct you on bonsai from A to Z. There is a limited number of students, no more than 3 are allowed to study in the class. Assistance in English is available and accommodation also is available in the nursery.

A normal course can take up to three months on a tourist visa. However, it is possible that the length of visa can be extended.

The garden is located in the city of Shizuoka, which is on the Shinkansen line between Kyoto and Tokyo. Address: 1872-2 Ikeda, Suruga Ward, Shizuoka City
For info: Yoshihiro Nakamizu of Bonsai Network Japan.



It is thicker here which means it is taking water from the graft union



The donor side is cut and removed.

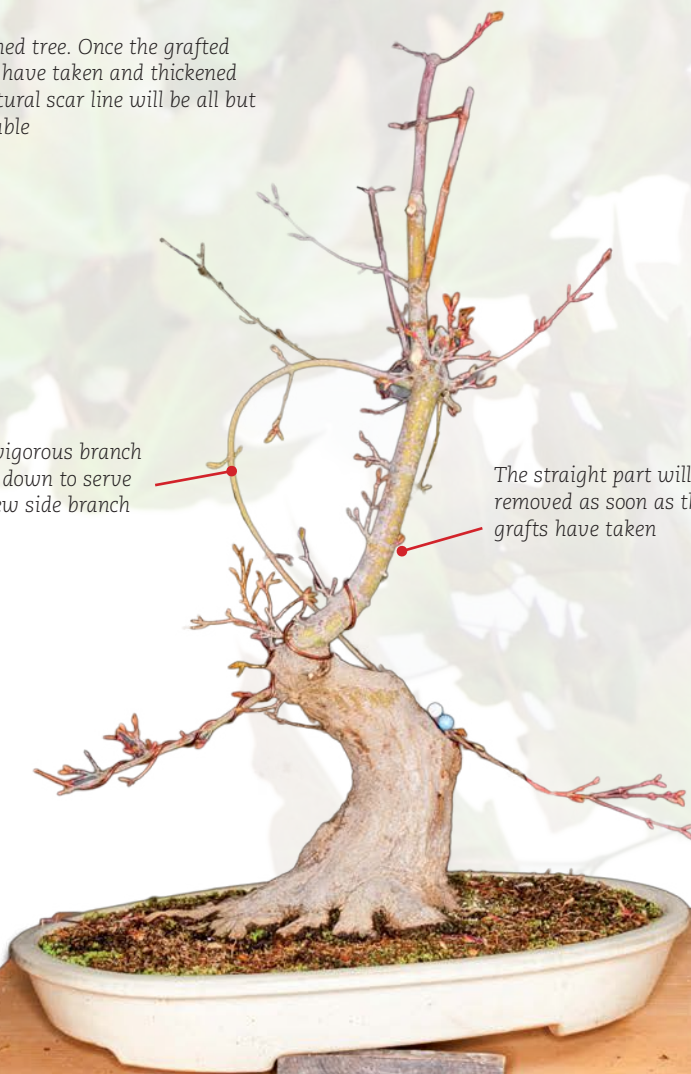


The second branch is prepared for grafting.

Mr Urushibata uses a hand saw to make the initial cut. The groove is cleaned later with a knife

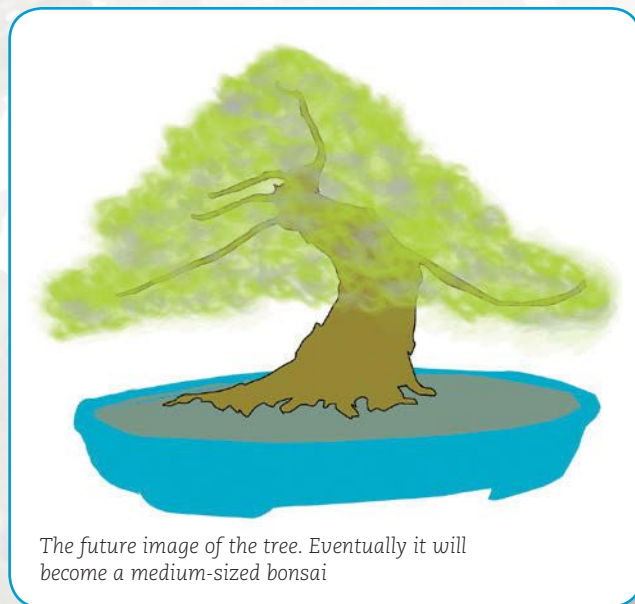


The finished tree. Once the grafted branches have taken and thickened the unnatural scar line will be all but unnoticeable



A very vigorous branch is bent down to serve as a new side branch

The straight part will be removed as soon as the grafts have taken



The future image of the tree. Eventually it will become a medium-sized bonsai

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Acer palmatum, China pot. € 795,00



Caragana chamagu Lam (kinjakuka)
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Hinoki Saka € 225,00



Pinus densiflora € 1.650,00



Pinus pentaphylla. € 125,00



Pinus parviflora. € 325,00



Rhododendron indicum, Kozan.
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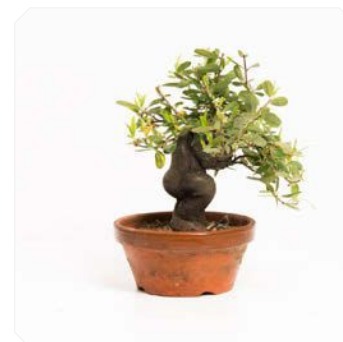
Akebia trifoliata. € 495,00



Stachyurus praecox. € 250,00



Trachelospermum asiaticum.
€ 795,00



Pyracantha. € 155,00



Bonsai veteran Serge Clémence rediscovers joy when working on a mountain pine

BACK ON TRACK

Text and photography: Stefan Gmür / Bonsai Focus Studio

Serge Clémence is a real bonsai veteran. His bonsai, all dug up by himself and carried on his back down the mountainside, have become iconic trees. We haven't heard or seen of him lately, but now he is back. He shows his master craft by styling an impressive mountain pine



Stefan: 'I knew of Serge Clémence from magazines, demos and large bonsai exhibitions. I had found a large beech in the mountains which was too large for me to lift, so I contacted Serge whom, I understood, specialized in large trees. I stirred his interest in the tree and later we lifted it together. Since then we have kept in contact through bonsai. Once I knew him a little better, it seemed to me that he slowly moved away from the bonsai scene. He didn't do demos, magazine articles, nor was he seen at exhibitions. I missed his bonsai. For the sympathetic veteran of the Swiss bonsai scene, life was heading in the wrong direction. He suffered a number of personal setbacks, be they disappointments or health problems. But, like the best yamadori, which can survive rock falls, avalanches, damage from animals and disease, setbacks can make a man stronger in life and this, luckily, is what happened for Serge.'

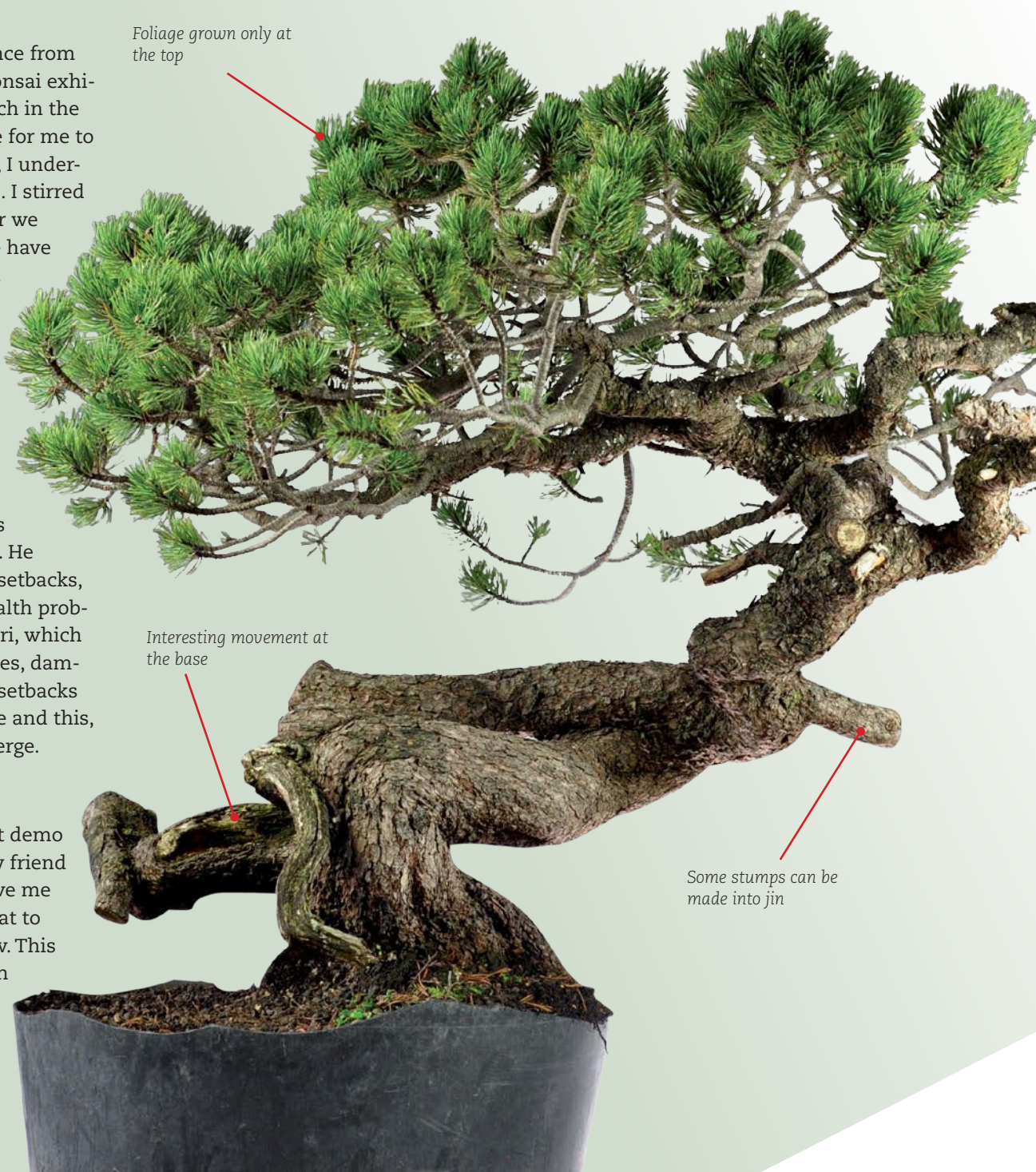
Moral support

It all started when I did my first demo at the club and asked Serge, my friend and mentor, to come over to give me some moral support. It was great to see him back enjoying the show. This probably triggered something in him and I was surprised when he asked me to come over to his house to do a photoshoot and write this article for him

Foliage grown only at the top

Interesting movement at the base

Some stumps can be made into jin





The back of the tree. Note the huge stump at the base (a) and the stump halfway along the trunk (b)



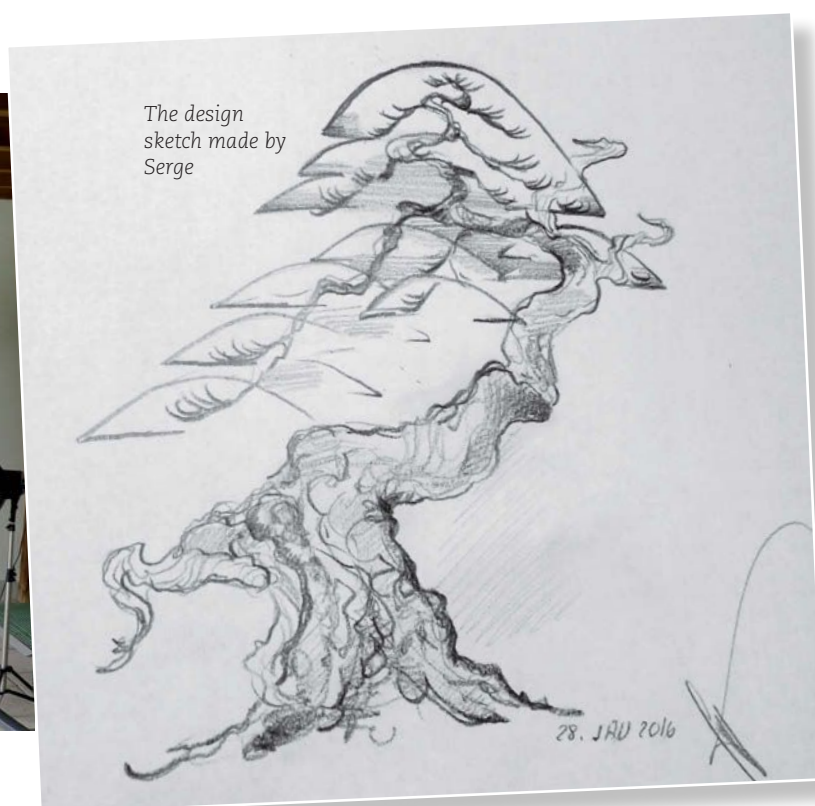
Seen from the right side



The left side shows a very zig-zagged trunk



The photo setup during the demo, the tree stands untouched



Detail of the top before work



Serge starts to remove the unnecessary branches

about a mountain pine (*Pinus mugo*), a yamadori tree which he had dug up two years earlier. I was looking forward to this and was happy when the time finally came. Serge welcomed me with his usual mischievous smile and said: 'Today we are going to start all over again.' After a short coffee break, we got down to action. Once my photo gear is set up Serge explains what he had in mind for the tree. He is a marvellous teacher and tells me his ideas and vision with much excitement and enthusiasm. After I took photos of all sides of the tree in its original state, nothing kept us away from the project in hand.

Mountain pine



At the right top a branch stump which works well as a jin

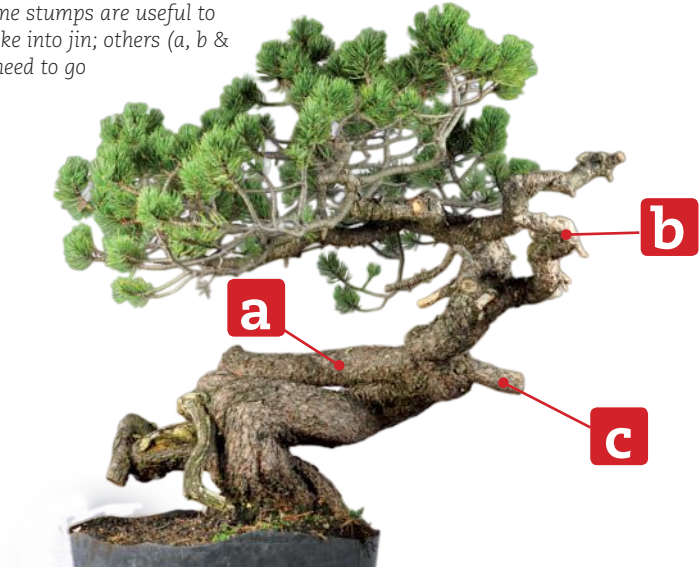


Before carving work, it has a rotten area on top of the large stump. The jin close to the base synchronises with the movement of the trunk



After carving work has been done. Note the hollowed trunk, which had a rotten section

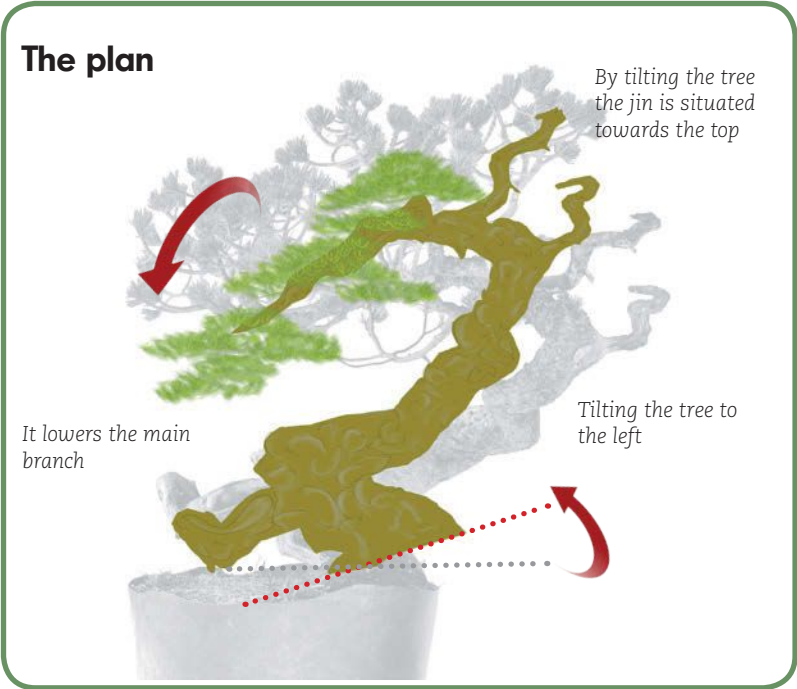
The tree just after removing the unnecessary branches. Some stumps are useful to make into jin; others (a, b & c) need to go



After removing the stumps close to the trunk's surface



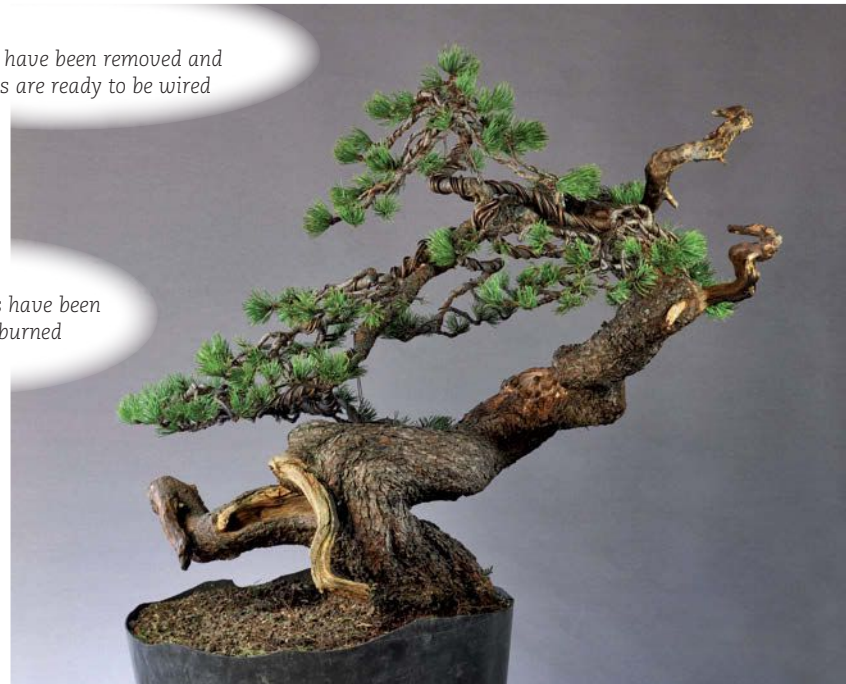
The wounds need to be carved too





Old needles have been removed and the branches are ready to be wired

The wounds have been carved and burned



The jin and wounds are carved to give a more rugged look that will synchronise with the appearance of the tree

The final result so far. The foliage needs to grow denser

The pine has many advantages, such as the elongated taper up to the crown, the many natural jin and shari, and the turns and movements of the trunk, the like of which can only be found in the high mountain range. Like most yamadori you need to deal with difficulties, too. All branches are located in the uppermost section of the tree. Serge now has to find the most appropriate way to style them without creating unsightly movements of the branches. Serge attaches a great deal of importance to ensure that his designs have clear, visible lines, that the tree has open spaces and that the important parts are emphasized such as the nebari, trunk line, shari and branch setting.



The tree in summer 2016

Serge's iconic trees



Juniperus communis Height: 65 cm / 25½"

These *communis* trees are difficult to create as bonsai. The movement of the deadwood is amazing.

Pinus uncinata
Height: 95 cm / 37¼"

Marvellous movement in the trunk in this very dramatic design.



In Serge's garden

Some time ago Walter Pall visited Serge's garden in Switzerland. Here are some of his trees, all of which he has collected himself. Some of them are projects in the making.

Photos: Walter Pall

Another massive mountain pine



Serge points out a huge larch

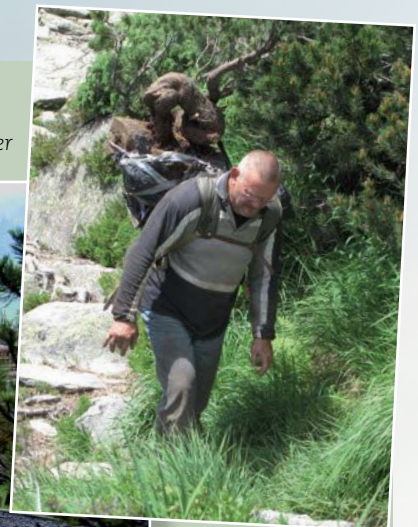




Pinus mugo, Height: 100 cm / 39¼". Very classically styled, a slanting pine with a dramatic sweeping branch to the left, counter balanced by the jin at the base to the right

Overview of his garden

Photo: Stefan Gmuer



The return of the jita

A jita is not just a wooden slate under your bonsai...



Japanese spruce (Picea glehnii)

Mr. Ota tells us "Getting hold of pieces this big will soon be very very difficult"

Text: Peter Warren Photography Kinbon Japan:



The Japanese have a deep respect and a very long tradition in fine wood works. Bonsai display is a discipline with very strict rules which tolerates only the best materials. All elements to accompany a bonsai are chosen with the greatest care. The so-called jita or wooden slate should have just the right shape finishing. Mr. Ota from Japan shows us around in his workshop where the jitas are being made.

The Chinese Quince wood for these jitas was imported from South East Asia into Japan many years ago and has been drying out for decades. In the past it was a relatively abundant material and easy to get hold of but recently it has become more and more scarce, with many countries placing a ban on the exportation.

tion.

Speaking to the timber merchants they tell us, "In the past we were able to get pieces 2 metres wide without a problem. Now such pieces are impossible to find. If it wasn't for the fact that we created a massive stockpile of material, it would be impos-

Although there is no question about the quality of the grain, some of the pieces have broken edges. The pieces used to make natural edged jitas all have unbroken edges in order to give them that interesting character.

The lacquer is applied in very thin coats using an airbrush to give an even finish. It will be applied 6 or 7 times to give a wonderful finish





After sanding down the bottom, it is flat and you can see the wood grain beautifully.



The mark of the craftsman "Mai" is applied to each and every piece.

sible to make these natural edges jiitas"

Most of the Jiitas are made from the burr wood, a rounded out-growth on the tree caused by insect or infestation damage. The burr is sliced through so that the natural, uneven edge is kept intact giving a ji-ita with a natural and interesting shaped edge. Cutting such large pieces with care and attention to detail requires a specialist timber yard with very specific equipment as well as an eye for interesting patterns within the wood. Once cut, the boards are smoothed and finished with varnish



Many thin coats of laquer are applied



The boards have been drying out for decades. Originally they were cut to a 20cm thickness with the understanding that they would change with drying and the top and bottoms would be cut during the process of creating a jiita.



This is all the material left! The Chinese Quince material ready to be made into ji-itas. It has been left to dry out for decades. Such material is becoming impossible to find and as such this small pile is very valuable.

Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) on a jiita with accentplant





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Cherry blossom treat

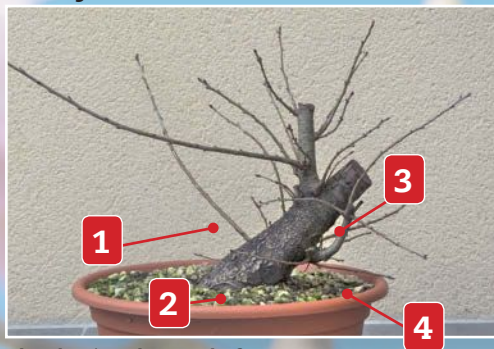


Have your bonsai or bonsai material judged on its qualities and future potential. Let François Jeker's honest and constructive comments ensure that you get the most from it.

The species *Prunus mahaleb* is an excellent choice for bonsai. It grows quickly, reacts well to severe pruning, can stand a total defoliation every year and its wood is perfect for carving hollow trunks. In the main these trees are trained by pruning. The best technique to use is the 'clip and grow' technique, it's then easy to develop curly branches with interesting movements and a good taper. It's possible to wire young shoots after defoliation.

François Jeker on Lionel Penvern's *Prunus mahaleb*

Analysis



The plan is to have only four branches



Future depth branch

Future first branch



This many back buds will allow very severe pruning

As it is today, this yamadori doesn't seem very interesting and is much too young. But after closer examination, I noticed that two severe cuts and a sabamiki have been made. It is possible to transform it into a quality bonsai in 6 or 7 years.

These two cuts were made to enhance the taper of the trunk. This is its first advantage.

This tree has a further advantage: two branches close to the base, visible on the profile photo. One of these branches can be transformed into a low first branch, the other into a depth branch.

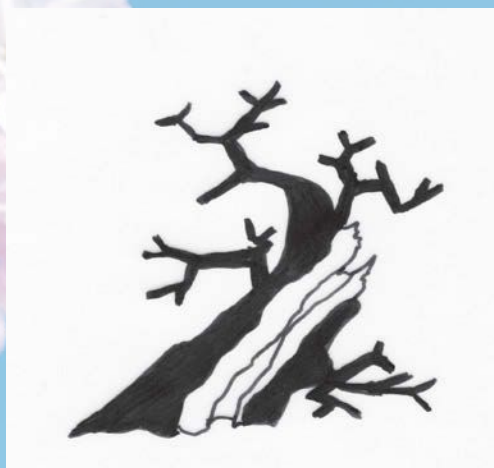
Details:

Species: *Prunus mahaleb*
Source: Yamadori
Owner: Lionel Penvern
Height: 19 cm / 7½"
Trunk circumference: 22 cm / 8¾"

The project



The severe pruning reveals a fine taper



After 3 years, the 'clip and grow' technique will provide a fine branching structure



Aesthetic choices

Even for a broadleaved tree, try to avoid symmetry and any 'helmet silhouette'. The tree is not symmetrical. Some branches and the apex are larger on the left. The general silhouette alternates between empty spaces and branches. For example on the left, there are two long branches and a short one. Please note also that the first right branch is shorter than the one located above. The goal here is to avoid the traditional triangular shape.

Work on the deadwood

First, with splitting pliers work on the veins that previously corresponded to the cut big branch on the right and reveal the fibres of the wood. Then work on the sabamiki with a small chisel.

Don't use a big chisel with a hammer as you could harm the roots. A small chisel allows you to work little by little following wood fibres.

The rough parts will be polished with a rotary metallic brush on a Dremel tool or something similar.

The hollowed area can be improved with a carving bit. Please don't use jin fluid!

Let nature do the work and it will give the wood natural cracks and colour.

Choice of pot

For this tree, you could choose an oval pot, rather shallow, glazed, very colourful and shiny. Try to match the tree especially during blooming season.

Want to send your bonsai picture, too?

If featured, you are rewarded with the signed original sketch by François Jeker.

Send via e-mail a jpeg (minimum size 1mb)

of your bonsai. Photographs should be taken against a light background and from all sides. Add in your e-mail a note of the age, height and the variety.

Bear in mind that publication can take a long time. Bonsai Focus has the right to make a choice without further notice. The submitted material will not be returned.

Send your e-mail and attached jpegs to:

editor@bonsaifocus.com

The Chicago Pine

Walter Pall works on
Chicago's most precious bonsai

Text: Walter Pall Photography: Walter Pall, Aaron Burke

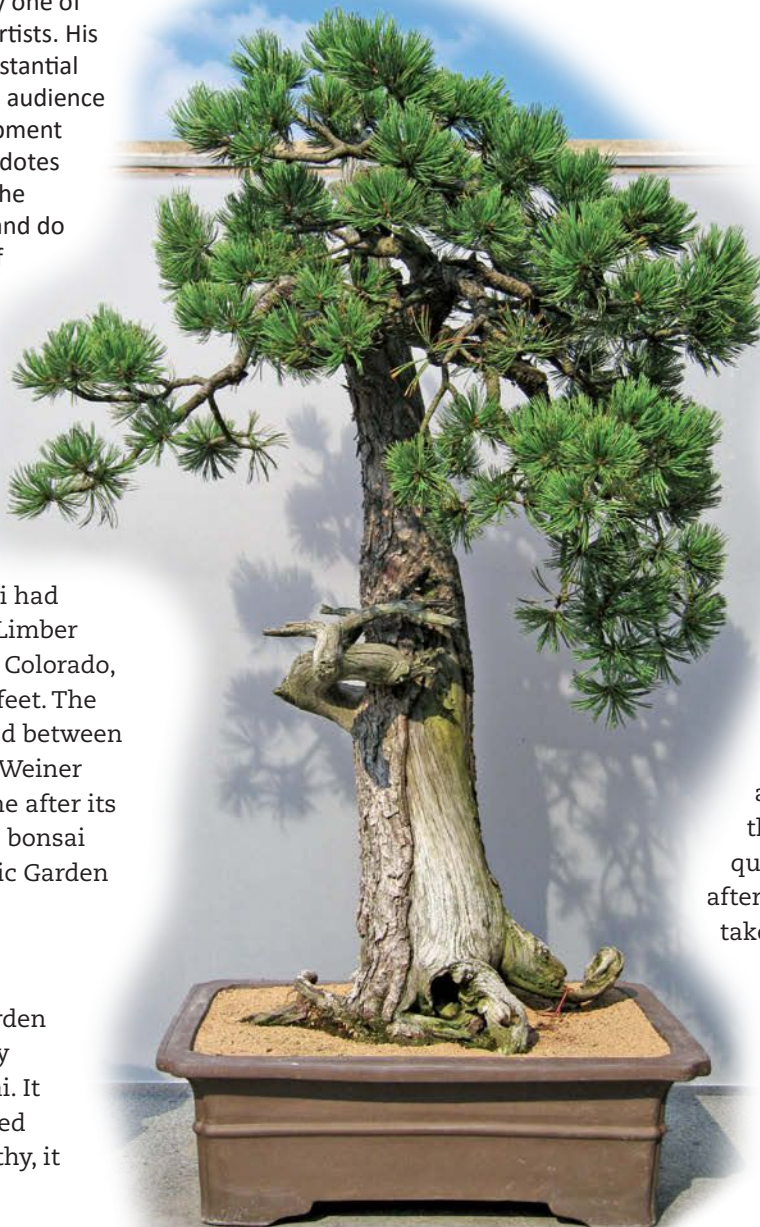
Walter Pall has performed on many an international stage and is probably one of the world's most popular bonsai artists. His lectures are a treat. He adds a substantial amount of explanation so that the audience can clearly understand his development process and he tells amusing anecdotes along the way. He was invited by the Chicago Botanic Garden to come and do a demonstration on what is one of their oldest and most precious trees.

In the early 1980s Harold Sazaki had the opportunity of collecting a Limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) in Estes Park, Colorado, at an elevation of about 10,000 feet. The age of the tree may be estimated between 500 and 1,000 years old. Gerald Weiner had previously acquired the pine after its collection and donated it to the bonsai collection of the Chicago Botanic Garden in 2007.

Landscape tree

On its arrival at the Botanic Garden this spectacular tree was clearly extremely challenging as bonsai. It was probably collected to be used as a landscape tree. While healthy, it

In August 2010 the foliage was already much denser.
Photo: Ross Beevers



In April 2016 the big day is here. The pine is moved to the demonstration hall

was obviously too big, seemed enormous and clearly too tall and stiff. At that time it didn't really offer to become a regular bonsai, with branches all at the very top and great deadwood, but without an obvious front. In 2007 Colin Lewis had the honour to be the first to style this great pine. It is unfortunate that there are no documents of this initial styling. However, Colin apparently did a great job to start the bonsai career of this tree. It is quite normal though that, many years after the first styling, a major remake takes place.

A long conversation

Through the notable efforts of Susumo Nakamura and Ivan Waters as well as current Chicago Botanic Garden Curator, Chris Baker the



Looking at the tree from the left side over the corner and by tilting it a little to the right makes a clear difference

tree was maintained. During a 2014 visit to the Garden, a long conversation with Chris took place in which we discussed many of the trees displayed in the current collection. The limber pine on display stood out as a tree that would possibly benefit from some changes to bring out its full quality. To my surprise and delight the Botanic Garden commissioned me to do exactly that in 2016.

Old and powerful

The tree appeared great, old and powerful while also a bit raw and untamed. Further it seemed too big, too tall, too massive even for a large exhibition area. Branches looked natural, but untamed. The crown at the top was too dense and hid the great deadwood along the trunk, thereby not allowing the viewer to see the structure of the branches. One portion of the trunk appeared at an abrupt unsightly right

angle. Additional challenges included the appearance of almost no movement in the trunk line and a crown that seemed too wide, dense and with little direction.

As a first approach the most important improvement would be to tilt the trunk to the right (seen from the original front) creating movement and reducing the stiff, straight look. At the same time making the crown much smaller and compact by cutting off the left part totally, creating a dramatic dropping branch on the right. This would reduce the optical weight of the crown and at the same time give a clear direction and movement. By making these changes the canopy no longer gives the impression of being too balanced and eliminates overall heaviness. And by cutting out some branches on top and plucking foliage overall the optical weight would be reduced further, pointing the



Walter Pall discusses the concept again with Chris Baker and Jennifer Price. The main branch will be pulled downwards almost vertically. It has to be tested whether the tree lets us do this easily. The foliage is heavy and needs pinching. Photo: Aaron Burke

viewer's eye to the trunk rather than the crown

A demonstration

In April 2016 a public demonstration took place at Chicago Botanic Garden where the tree's new transformation began. Chris Baker, curator of the collection and Jennifer Price, the assistant of Walter Pall, were ready for the big event. Transport of this monster tree had to be planned well. It was decided not to do any really drastic applications as they would endanger the tree and they were not necessary.

The three of us had a clear plan for the work, but we discussed this again for the public's benefit. First the crew pinched the old needles. In Japan plucking needles is done in October, but really pinching is possible from end of summer until the end of the following April. After the tree is plucked it already looked much better. Simply by taking off about 50 % of the green the optical weight of the crown was reduced considerably and the tree looked mightier, but no longer too big. Next the removal of the left part of the crown was

considered. Several possible fronts were discussed, but it was decided to work around the tree making it a 360-degree bonsai. The pine was then tilted to the right looking at it from the original front. Instantly it appeared more alive, not so stiff — even elegant.

Vertical position

The rest was simply a lot of wiring by Chris and Jennifer. The main branch was pulled down into a near vertical position using guy wires. The foliage now began just slightly below the 50% of the height



The aim should be to create the feeling of an ancient tree that stands on the edge of a cliff



After pinching, the crown already looks much lighter. Now we test a new position by tilting the tree to the right and lowering the main branch considerably with guy wire. The top left of the crown is hidden as it will have to be removed



Chris and Jennifer wire everything from the bottom up. When one branch is finished it is placed into position, if necessary with the help of guy wires

line. Thus the pine looked less massive, but still very powerful. The intention was to make the tree look nicer, but certainly not too nice. The wildness of this old piece needed to be contained. We did not want to make a house swine of a wild boar, meaning that we absolutely wanted to avoid those standard almost plastic looking bonsai branches for this tree. This is absolutely not the plan. Typical bonsai branches would make this tree look much younger. There is no need for any more ramification than the tree already has, although the pads can grow denser. The age should be reflected in the branches and not only in the trunk. It is extremely important for the top to stay transparent in order to always see the structure of the crown.

A fixed front

After the restyling it has become clear that the original front was only one of many good options. To work around the

tree instead of towards a fixed front as we were taught opens many possibilities. A bonsai has a clear front a tree does not. At least three views of the pine now look very good. To have many excellent fronts and to find it difficult to choose which one to use is the kind of problem we want. Placing it so that the tree can be viewed from all sides is probably the best solution, thereby allowing the viewer and not the artist to decide.

Two virtual images show the possible choice for a new container. The most spectacular being able to mount the pine on a natural stone slab. This can happen in spring or autumn 2017. I look forward to, hopefully, being a part of this final move.



The left part of the crown was removed

Jennifer has created a good jin where a thick branch was before.

Now the top is being wired. The top can be placed more to the left or to the right. It is crucial to do it so the direction of the tree is underlined

The top has too many branches. Which ones exactly have to go is decided when the lower part is already set. A larger branch will be removed from up there to be able to look into the crown





The old front, but what a difference! Now the tree looks more elegant, still a bit stiff, but not as much as before



After only three hours the job is done. The crew looks happy as it seems the aims were reached and the tree is on a good path. As foreseen, the pine now appears 'right'. Thank you Chris and Jennifer, great job!

Another possible front. If you like a strong green top you would prefer this side. The deadwood here is not quite as impressive. The sharp rectangle at the top of the trunk has disappeared

The most interesting result of restyling was to see the original back in a different light. It is possibly the best front. The trunk even has a bit of movement now and no longer looks as stiff; it has even become elegant. The deadwood is much better from this side



A computer image. While spectacular, it is definitely possible: all that's necessary is finding the right stone. The transplanting could already take place in 2017. A naturalistic pine on a natural stone can combine to make a great composition



A computer image: It could well be planted into a round container to be viewed from all sides. The great piece of deadwood in the middle mimics the movement of the top of the trunk



The Bonsai of the Chicago Botanic Garden

The Chicago Botanic Garden's collection of nearly 200 bonsai includes gifts from the Midwest Bonsai Society and from Japanese bonsai Master, Susumu Nakamura. Among the trees donated by Nakamura was a Japanese white pine that has been trained for at least 100 years.

1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL 60022. USA. Info: www.chicagobotanic.org





Juniperus

Dominique Bosch works on a Blaauw juniper

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio Skills: Dominique Bosch

It's almost needless to say that junipers are the most popular material for bonsai. They can withstand lots of work done in a short period of time. Available at most nurseries in all kinds of varieties and sizes. They are almost ready to work on and instant satisfaction is yours. We show you what you can do with a simple Blaauw juniper



Analysing the tree

We have chosen to work on this Blaauw juniper, strong and vertically growing with small scaly leaves. These are quite easily obtainable in nurseries because they are popular as garden shrubs. Fresh junipers arrive in spring and you can pick and choose the best one. A downside of the Blaauw is that it has a very stalky trunk which is sometimes rather too straight, so we went down on our knees to look for a trunk with a slight curve.



Top section is very strong and needs to go

Long branches with plenty of small, scale-like leaves

Lots of flexible branches to choose from

Slight curve in the trunk



PLAY VIDEO

2

Removing the branches

The middle part of the trunk is quite straight, but by tilting the tree to the left the movement is improved, creating a more slanting style and using the branches at the upper part. This means that the thicker lower branches have to be removed because in this new position they would face upright.

A more slanting style is suitable for this tree using its upper branches to create the major, side and top branches.



Dominique checks if the lower thick branch at the base is of any use in the design



'This part is very straight'

'We need to solve the problem of the dull part in the trunk,' Dominique says



Tilting the tree towards the left will improve the movement of the trunk



After removing the thicker branches at the base and shortening the top



This can be made into an interesting jin

A slanting style will be the best option

JUNIPER - HUSBANDRY**Propagate:**

With cuttings, or air layer

**Placement:**

Junipers don't really like shade. It causes foliage to elongate and turn dark green. The sun is what they love so position in full sun except for weaker trees, or if the summer sun is too harsh

**Pruning:**

Allow new growth to elongate, then cut the central stem of the most vigorous shoot. Do this only when you see lighter green foliage at the tips. Junipers are tolerant to dramatic removal of branches

**Repotting:**

Unlike deciduous trees, don't repot too often. They prefer a bit of dry soil so use a mix of Akadama and Kiryu or volcanic grit in a 50-50 mix, for a perfect drainage

**Watering:**

Junipers are very drought tolerant, but keep the soil moist for a healthier tree. There is a balance you need to find between watering too much and letting the soil dry out a little.

Wiring:

Wire with aluminium or copper wire. Juniper and wire are sort of 'friends' so if done cautiously it is very tolerant — even to wire the smallest branches. Helped by raffia heavy branches can be bent, or even partially split.



3

Making jin and shari

Jin and shari are features that very much belong to a juniper. In mountainous regions you will encounter junipers with deadwood caused by falling rocks or by the weight of snow. Wind, sand and sun shape soft deadwood leaving only the harder core wood. It's a very dramatic effect

which we can easily mimic in juniper bonsai. A young tree can become far more interesting and a sense of age is added instantly. In the Blaauw juniper especially, you can use some deadwood to add more interest and disguise the stalky trunk.



The stumps are made into jin using concave pliers to circle cut the bark and peel it off



'I use a small sharp knife to cut through the bark and then peel it off'



Using jin pliers to pull splints of wood



Carefully peeling off splints of wood to create a more rugged surface



With the concave pliers you can make a cut into the wood and peel off a part



Juvenile needle-like leaves on the left. Adult scale leaves on the right

JUNIPERUS - SPECIES**Common name:**

Juniper

Genus:

Juniperus

Higher taxon:

Cupressaceae

Species:

J. communis, *J. rigida*, *J. chinensis*, *J. chinensis media* 'Blaauw'

Skill level:

Beginner to advanced

Soil type:

Medium rich, well draining, with 50% fine gravel added to the mix.

Flowers:

Male yellow, female small and purple/green in small clusters at the tips of the shoots.

Fruit: A berry-like glaucous cone.

Foliage:

Scale-like, very small with blunt tips in irregular, aromatic sprays.

Bark:

Red brown, peeling in long flakes.



The result after making the stumps into jin

With a sharp knife I make a v-shaped incision to incorporate the jin with a small shari. This makes it look as if the top was torn off by a storm or falling rocks

Concave pliers are very handy tools to create a jin

4

Wiring the tree

Wiring junipers is easy, they are very forgiving and are flexible. Try to combine branches with a single wire letting the wire start at the top, or so-called 'branch shoulder' so that it starts at the outside of the curve. Blaauw junipers are somewhat more brittle than the normal chinensis variety, so I use aluminium wire. Some branches at the top need a small layer of wet raffia for protection. Wire always in the direction the branch is bent.



One wire is combining two branches; here the first branch below is wired with the one back branch



Anchor the wire around the trunk and then wire the next branch



This branch will be bent in a curve. So, to give extra protection, I have wrapped it in raffia, using the jin as the anchoring point



The two ends of the raffia come together at the tip of the branch and are tied together



Then the branch which will serve as the top is wired



Using the top jin as an anchoring point for stability



The main branch is positioned



I wire and bend the top branch then take a look to see if it still needs further bending



To create a fine 'swing' in the top part of the tree the branch needed more bending



Once the main shape is set I continue with the detail wiring. The smaller side branches are wired.

JUNIPER - STYLES



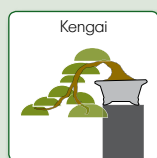
Sharimiki



Bankan



Shakan



Kengai

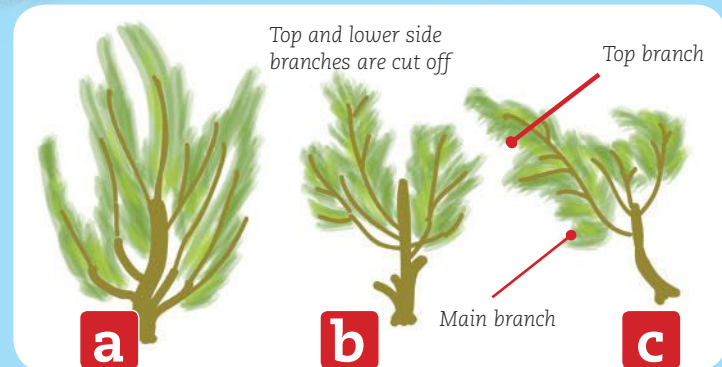


Ishitsuki



Carefully wiring the very small side branches at the top. These need to grow into dense foliage pads

From shrub to bonsai



Just a shrub, only with long branches



Small side branches will create foliage pads

A computer image showing the tree planted in its future pot

5

The result so far

With junipers you can receive an almost instant result, very rewarding. However, this little tree still needs time to grow dense foliage pads, which will make it look more mature. In the spring of next year it can be repotted safely. The wires must be monitored in autumn; if some start to become a rather tight they may be removed.



Main branch enhances the movement to the left

Jins and shari add age



Photos: Bonsai Focus Studio

Ligustrum John Hanby

A limited edition collectors' pot

Exclusive for Bonsai Focus subscribers!

For the fourth time, Walsall Studio Ceramics have created a limited edition handcrafted decorated pot exclusively for Bonsai Focus. This time the theme is a dragonfly resting on a stem of Typha. Every pot is numbered and stamped with the initials of the artist and the Bonsai Focus logo



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Rectangular shaped pot: 11.5 x 9 x 4 cm / 5 x 4 x 1½"

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Handcrafted

Walsall Studio Ceramics has been in full-time production of high quality hand-made bonsai pots for more than 21 years. David Jones and Mark Jones work together in their Walsall studio near Birmingham,

UK. They take great pride in all their work and you can just feel their attention to detail and finish. Over the years they have continued to improve and refine their pots and they have increased the range. All pots are reduction-fired in a gas kiln to a temperature of 1260°C making them fully frost proof; this also adds to their distinctive colour and texture, which makes each pot unique.

The pots are hand built in a method similar to the one used by potters in Japan; this involves more than 25 different processes from forming the basic shape at the start to the final glazing and firing at the end.





Mauro Stemberger styles a sabina juniper using a sandblaster

It's a blast!

Text and photography: Farrand Bloch

It was early spring and time again for a demo with Mauro Stemberger. A sabina had been waiting for styling, but this time things would go somewhat differently. Sandblasting is a technique receiving ever more attention, what's more, it gives amazing results that a carving machine never can. When I arrived at Marostica, in Northern Italy, close to where the Alps begin, I was taken directly to the special studio used for sandblasting and there it all began.

How it all started

The sabina (*Juniperus sabina*) was dug out a couple of years ago and originated from the north of Spain close to the Pyrenées. It has a wonderful curving, twisting trunk and a very fine set of branches with dense foliage. Its shape and compactness already make it a perfect bonsai just as it is in its raw form. It only needs an artist's hands to unlock its hidden beauty, those hands are Mauro's. He had shown me the tree some months previously suggesting it would make an interesting candidate for a photo demo. It was going to be even more interesting, though, because Mauro suggested that he would be using the sandblast technique, which will perform magic on the deadwood.

And so we arranged a date early in spring. I would come over and do the photo shoot with Mauro and his team at the garden of Enrico Pavin in Marostica, Northern Italy.



The tree before work. It has some great curves and amazing deadwood



On one side it has a very long root, the reason why it is planted into a very long box. New roots grow closer to the base so in spring next year the long root can be shortened



Mauro holds up the foliage to show the inside of the tree.

Sandblasting as a carving tool

Sandblasting is, perhaps, one of the best methods of carving deadwood. It is what is done in nature over many years, condensed into just an hour's work. Of course, results will be different according to species. In this case we already have a tree with natural, good quality deadwood, but by sandblasting, its beauty will be further enhanced, because it will remove the softer wood and show the really old wood without the marks of a traditional carving method.

Sandblasting is carried out with an air compressor connected to a sand carving pressure pot, which contains sand mixed with crystals. High pressure air is blasted through the 'pot' which has a hose with an adjustable nozzle.

Sand and crystals

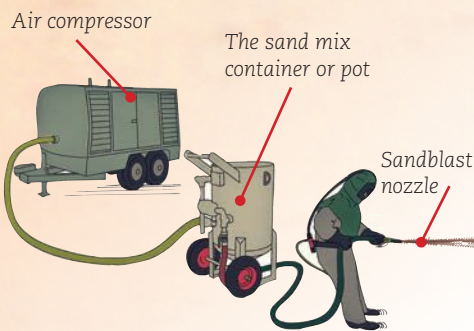
The air compressor blasts the mix of sand and crystals through the hose. With the nozzle you can adjust the strength or width of the sand spray. The pressure is about 6 atmospheres, depending on the hardness of the wood, because it is vital to have the right pressure in order that the tree is not damaged, nor all of its deadwood blasted off. You will need about 25 kilos of sand mix to blast a tree of this size, shown here. The sand can be reused. Breathing in the crystals is not healthy for your lungs, so you need a very good mask and eye protection.

It is important to prepare everything before starting work with a pressure hose. The foliage should be entirely wrapped in cloth or thick plastic and the live vein should be completely covered in tape to protect it. Soft parts of the deadwood are best removed with a sharp knife before starting work.

Massimo works with the sandblasting nozzle in the special cabin. In the foreground the 'pot' with the sand mix is connected to the air compressor

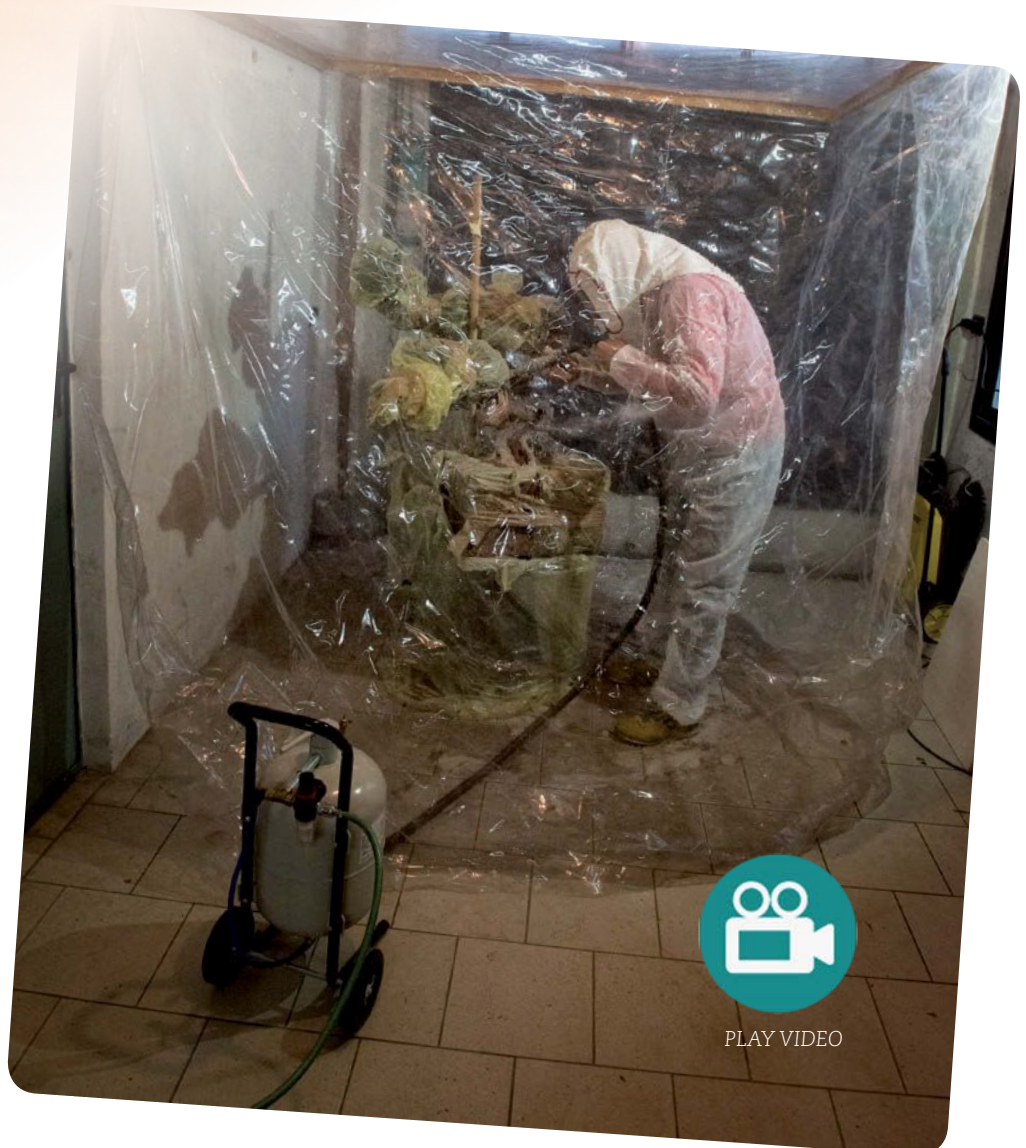
Sandblasting

How the set-up works



Dust everywhere

A special cabin, created by Massimo, was pulled over the juniper. It would contain the dust. Massimo wears a mask, which completely covers his head and a dust protection suit. He then steps into the cabin, opens up the nozzle and starts to sandblast. The whole operation makes a lot of noise and despite the protective plastic, dust is everywhere. After just five minutes of sandblasting, the results are already stunning and worth all the dust. In almost an hour the whole tree has been sandblasted, after which the air compressor blows off the residue of sand and crystals. All the fresh deadwood is then painted with jin fluid. The deadwood was left to dry until the next morning.





Massimo uses large plastic bags to cover the foliage of the juniper



The live veins are completely covered with tape

Preparative work

The sandblasting was carried out in Massimo's garage, close to the garden of Enrico Pavin. Massimo is a man of many talents. Besides having some great bonsai himself, he has good technical skills that came into use for this sandblasting project.



Mauro puts extra tape around the plastic bags to protect the foliage and so the bags won't be blown off when sandblasting



The branches are attached to a bamboo stick to keep them fixed in place during the whole blasting process



Above: Mauro marks a part of the live vein that can be removed and made into shari. as well
Below: Even more tape is used to cover the bark



Almost ready to blast . . .



The special 'cabin' is set up. The tree will be put in this while being sandblasted



Before entering the cabin Massimo tests his gear



Then Massimo switches on the nozzle; slowly the deadwood is transformed by the sandblasting



Above: The lower part has already been sandblasted.

Below: The same area after all the sandblasting is done. It has resulted in an amazingly detailed and fine structure of the wood



With all the foliage wrapped still in plastic it gives you a perfect view of the shape of the trunk and its deadwood

Job is done, Massimo sweeps the sand on to a heap to re-use for a later project





After a thorough dust the deadwood is painted with jin fluid



The tree after painting the deadwood

The styling

Back in the studio of Enrico. It's the second day and the 'normal' work begins. That means that the branches need to be cleaned out; those which are too thin and weak are cut off, others are shortened a bit. Halfway through, Mauro wants to adjust the shari a little, one part is just a bit too flat and thick. By doing so the trunk will look even more slender and elegant.

The foliage needs to be cleaned out

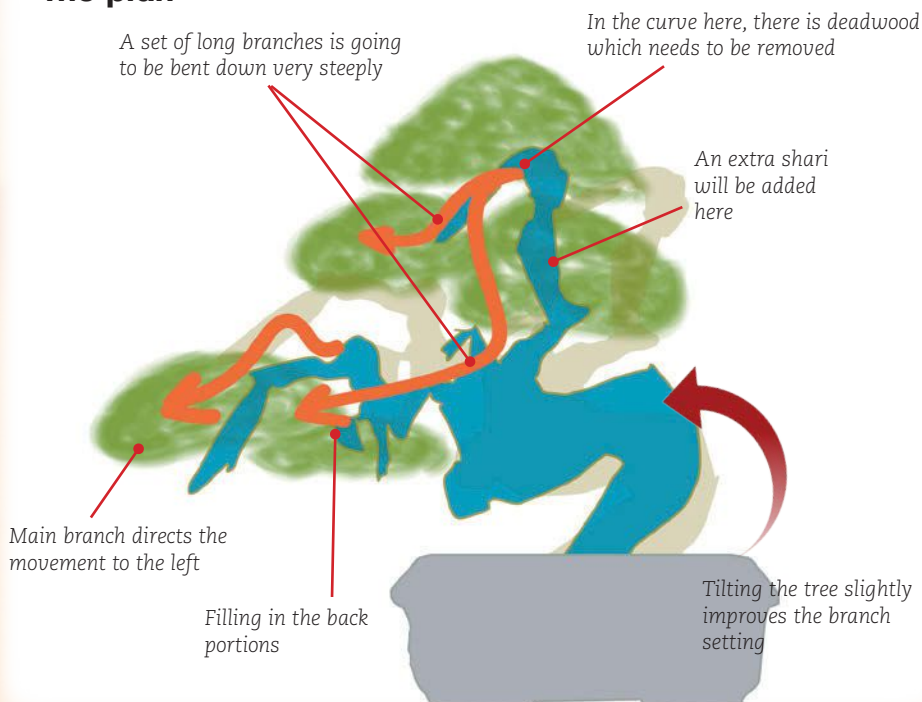
A cluster of branches needs removing in order to bend the top towards the left

A thick part of the live vein needs to be adjusted

The guy wires are in the way so they need to go



The plan



Marking with a pen which part of the bark to remove to make the shari



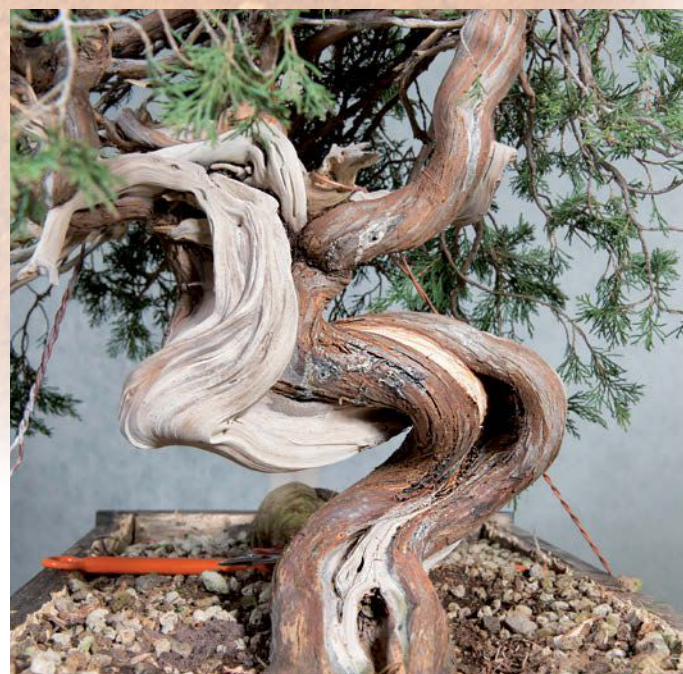
A very sharp carving tool cuts into the thick bark and then it can be peeled off



A clean sharp cut is made along the marks



A specially designed carver removes the soft layer of wood.



The result: The live vein is split into two parts making it less bulky



Luca's lower hand holds a set of branches which are blocking those above. That cluster has to go



After removing the cluster. So that it blends in with the other deadwood the fresh wood is being burnt with a torch



Then jin fluid is applied to that spot

Wiring the branches

The branches of the tree are long and flexible. Some of them, however, need to come down to create the lower foliage pads and must be wrapped in raffia as a precaution. The raffia has been prepared by letting it soak up water to make it smooth. The raffia will wrap around the branch like a second skin. When it dries

it will shrink tight so it won't come loose when bending. Helped by the extra pair of hands of Luca Giaretta the long hours of wiring begin. Meantime Mauro coaches and adjusts where necessary.



Two important branches at the top grow from one point. They are wrapped in raffia



Then a layer of rubber tape is fixed over it



Another branch has already been wired; its wire is anchored around the jin below



It's clearly visible that there is more space here for those branches to come down



Seen from below, many long branches are wired, then when all is done they are set into place by Mauro



While Luca (left) and Massimo (right) wire almost nonstop, Mauro creates an extra shari in the top part of the trunk



The extra shari synchronises with those below and makes the top appear less massive

In the curve there is some deadwood which Mauro removes with a branch splitter. It will make it possible for a more dramatic bending



After splitting: An opening between the live vein and deadwood which now can be removed



The so-called wire tower has all the sizes pre-cut in length ready for use; easier than those coils of wire which always mess up when you need a specific length. A neat design by Mauro and made by Massimo.





Action time, now the top part of the trunk is being bent further. Guy wires will help to keep it in position. Luca (behind) pulls and turns the guy wire that's attached to the box. Massimo supports the lower part of the trunk



This section (a) was removed to make the trunk thinner and so easier to take the extra bending



The branch has come down to fill in the lower part



You can see clearly how the branch has now been brought down



With the help of a guy wire Mauro adjust the main branch, giving it a steeper incline



Slowly the styling of the tree reaches its finale



The team: Mauro assisted by Luca and Massimo did a great job in two days



The photo montage shows the tree in a future pot



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Ryan Neil



Bjorn Bjorholm

Imagine Ryan and Bjorn working their magic side by side on the same stage. We have two spectacular Sierra Junipers gathered from high in the mountains. Kathy Shaner will provide her insightful commentary. Register for the convention and be one of the lucky ones to get a ticket to this Thursday evening special event and you won't need to use your imagination. These two bonsai will be auctioned at the conclusion of the event to someone who has purchased a ticket to attend. The material available throughout the convention is remarkable for its age, character and beauty. Ryan and Bjorn will be performing each day and will be available for conversation and advice as well as working to improve your material. There are over a dozen other artists of outstanding talent and experience that will be ready to work with you and share their knowledge. The 2016 GSBF Convention will truly be memorable. See you there.



GSBF39

Headliners Ryan Neil and Bjorn Bjorholm with Kathy Shaner
David Nguy Peter Tea

Yuko Carson: Sumi-e, Pauline Muth: Shohin, Ron Anderson: Juniper, Steven Price: Trident Maple
Darren Wong: Azalea, Tom Elias: Viewing Stone, Sam Adina: Olive, Tak Shimazu: Itoigawa Shimpaku
Ted Matson: Procumbens Juniper, Frank Mihalic: Silver Pendant, Kenji Miyata: Japanese Black Pine,
Mel Ikeda: Tomodachi, Gay Lynne Goetzke: Bonsai Basics, Hideko Metaxas: Ikebana
Lucy Sakaishi-Judd: Kusamono, Jonas Dupuich : JBP seedlings, Bob Shimon: Coastal Redwood,
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Peter Warren



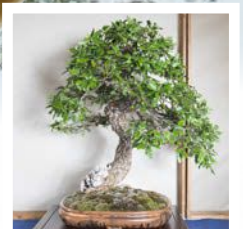
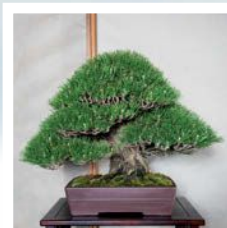
Ryan Neil



Taiga Urushibata

The judges

A team of judges, consisting of Ryan Neil, Taiga Urushibata, Peter Warren, will pre-select the best bonsai from all the submitted photos and then let you, our readers, decide which tree will win the first edition of the Golden Concave Award.



and win a 9-day trip to Japan

The concave plier is a typical and unique bonsai tool. It symbolises the creativity of bonsai

Golden Concave Award

How to participate

- Take a photo of your best bonsai (max. 3 bonsai per participant). You have the best chances with a high quality photo taken against a plain background.
- All styles, sized or varieties of bonsai are welcome. The focus is on the bonsai, not on the way it is displayed.
- Upload your picture(s) to: www.bonsaifocus.com and choose 'Award' in the menu.
- Registration: €10 per participant. Free for Bonsai Focus subscribers.
- Closing date 15 November 2016





Acer palmatum
Thijs VDB Kei Bonsai Kai



Rhododendron indicum
Etienne P Kei Bonsai Kai





Fagus
Teunis Jan Klein



Acer palmatum Luc VD. Kei Bonsai Kai



Pinus mugo Louis K. Kei Bonsai Kai



Larix Hans van Meer. Kei Bonsai Kai



Buxus Johan L. Kei Bonsai Kai





Acer palmatum
Frédéric Chenal





On the road to recovery

Acer *palmatum*

Text and photography Kinbon magazine

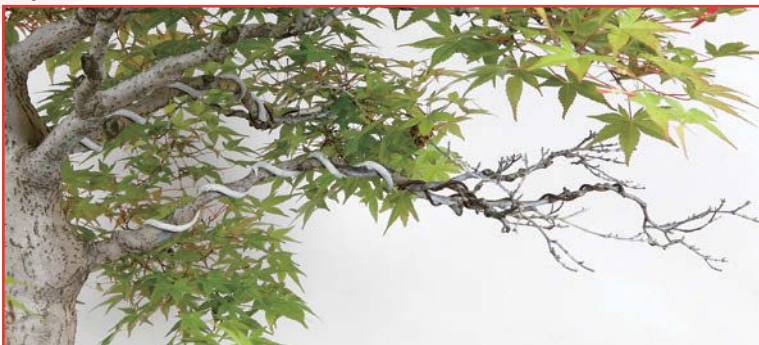
Skills: Mr Haruyoshi Ishii (Ueharu-en)

This maple was suffering from weakness and dying branches due to being pot bound and unable to absorb water. A 'dam' was created around the pot rim in order to stop water from rolling off the surface. Here we see the results of that technique and monitor the rejuvenation of the tree.



This can be
dangerous

This branch has died completely and is removed from the base. If you notice branches on the back or interior of the tree starting to die off or become weak, lack of water is often the most common cause





Removing all the moss and weeds from the soil surface. Just doing this will make a big difference to the water penetration into the soil



A 'dam' is built around the edge of the pot with a hemp rope. Water will be able to collect here and slowly permeate into the soil rather than wash off immediately



Now a second rope is added and in between the two, fertiliser cakes are placed. Water will collect and help to dissolve the fertiliser, aiding the recovery of the tree



The number of leaves has been reduced to balance the roots with the amount of transpiration. In this situation, in the height of summer, it is not possible to transplant the tree and this emergency measure is the best course to take



Nine months after the previous work, transplanting season has arrived

6th March 2012

The dam put in place last June was a stopgap measure until the traditional time for transplanting. Close inspection of the roots shows no major signs of root rot, rather a number of thick roots which have raced around the pot. In the centre of this we can see some fine, white new roots.

The effectiveness of the dam can be seen in this result. Water was able to reach the roots whereas previously it had not done so, causing the branches to die. When a tree becomes pot bound and roots are so dense, it is essential to make sure that water penetrates the centre of the pot.

The work begins by inserting the root saw



Beneath the roots. Unexpectedly they show no nasty signs of root rot, there are several strong racing roots and some thick roots. There are a small number of white tipped thin roots which will have developed after last year's work. The tree is on the road to recovery





The outer circumference is broken down a little and the main soil is removed



This time there will be a complete refreshing of the soil, washing the roots clean



Using a jet spray to remove the old soil



The result after cleaning the roots.



There are many unnecessary roots growing from underneath the trunk making it unclear just how long it has been since it was last transplanted. Of these roots those that are not too thick can be pruned off with roots scissors

The hemp rope of the dam has already started to decay.



The root ball

From the bottom of the thick and entwined root ball we see that a number of fine roots are emerging. This is not what we want to happen; we would prefer to have lateral roots emerging from higher up the tree. In order to stop roots from growing under the trunk and root ball, it will be cut back as aggressively as possible. It's the next step on the road to recovery.

Dealing with the roots

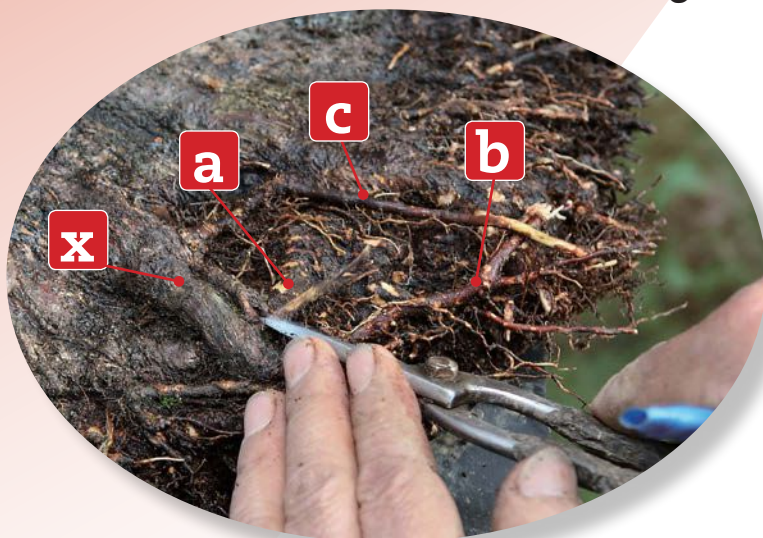


The downward growing roots are always to be cut back, in this case using concave cutters



A thick, heavy root is removed close to the outer edge using cutters

Dealing with the surface roots

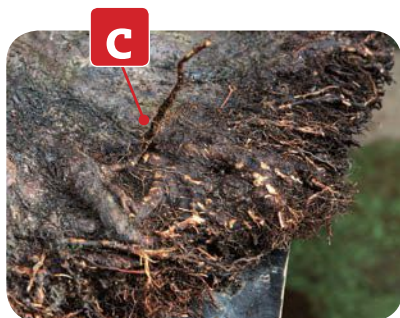


There are three secondary roots growing from the thick root X. A is dead and is removed



B is a fairly thick root with some thinner roots emerging halfway along it

C is a very thick and strong root. If the tree had been worked on more regularly, roots such as this would not have developed



C is removed from the base of the root. Strong straight roots like this should always be removed

Using bamboo sticks the nebari is corrected and roots inserted in different directions. Floating roots are pushed down, sparse areas are filled in with other roots



After dealing with the roots. Plenty of fine roots have been left around the edge. All the strong and long roots have been removed and you can see just how compact the root ball has become

Beneath the root ball after the work is finished. It may seem like severe work has been carried out, but it has organised the roots so the tree will recover



Even more severe work

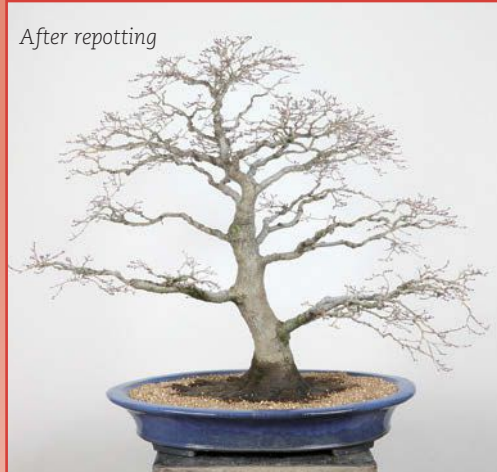


The base of the branches at repotting time. We can see a new adventitious bud at the base of the leggy branch. The effectiveness of the dam and fertiliser is obvious



At the base of a scar created by a previously removed branch we can see a new bud forming

After repotting



After cutting the branches



A number of heavy branches have been cut back, creating wounds. They should be covered with wound sealant



No structure

Looking at the structure once again during repotting, Mr Ishii says, 'It isn't going to work . . .' The entire structure of the tree has been damaged so much that carrying on as it is would be inadvisable. Branches have become leggy or too thick, large wounds created and there's an entire lack of internal branches.

Mr Ishii cuts many branches halfway along in a bold and daring move. It may seem very severe, but he was confident due to the strong signs of recovery when repotting. Once a tree starts to recover, its resurrection can be unexpectedly rapid.

July 2013

It's the year following the drastic work and the regeneration work continues. Each branch is full of energy and vigour, brimming with new buds. The wounds are healing well.

Along with the rejuvenation, approach grafts have been made at the base of branches in order to create secondary branching closer to the trunk.



The tree one year and four months after repotting and cutting back



An approach graft has been performed at the base of the branch.

Dieback

After the last repotting, one section of the nebari started to dieback. When the health of a tree deteriorates and the roots become damaged, this can often be the cause. A large wound, 7cm long, 5cm wide has formed and a part of it has started to rot. It will be cleaned up and resealed in order to aid the healing process.



6th June 2014: Recovery in full swing

It is often said that it is more difficult to resuscitate a weak tree than to create a new one. If the cause of the damage cannot be discovered and treated quickly then it may be too late to recover. Mr Ishii spotted the cause of the problem early, saying 'Water cannot reach the branches' as he built the dam as a stopgap measure which worked perfectly.

The danger has passed for this tree and

the recovery is in full swing. In order to create the branching suitable for a tree with such an impressive nebari, it will take several more year's work. However, the day when it will be finished is not too far in the future.

After the shoot pruning and leaf reduction. Although the focus is still on recovery, the shape is starting to form very quickly



A further year on, the tree is still going well and the branch development is progressing

The approach graft at the base of the branch. A relatively thick branch has been grafted in. This means that the structure can be built quickly



Looking at the top soil, the roots have filled the pot evenly and strongly. Water can penetrate easily, the tree is growing well and so there is no longer any concern for the tree





Photo: Manfred Pollert

Martin Englert

An emotional experience

Text: Bonsai Focus Studio Photography: Martin Englert,
www.englert-keramik.de

Can you tell us how you got into bonsai pottery?

I began with bonsai about 15 years ago, but soon the commercial, industrially manufactured pots no longer related to my ideas. Fortunately, I had a chance to make a bonsai pot myself. It was the start of it all, although I cannot say that the result has been what I had in mind.

Who was your teacher and what was the most important thing you learned?

First I learned about Monika Herbst, a ceramist from Osnabrück who'd studied ceramics at the

Kunsthochschule in Kassel. There she made her name with the technique of wood and salt firing. After studying in Kassel she went to Japan for a year, where she worked with a Japanese Master with large Anagama kilns. (An anagama or 'cave kiln', consists of a firing chamber with a firebox at one end and a flue at the other.) She has taught me much about the Japanese pottery, including Japanese aesthetics in general, but above all she allowed me to assist her with many firings in her wood fired kiln. My first participation in such a 40-

hour firing was really a key experience and my desire to explore this

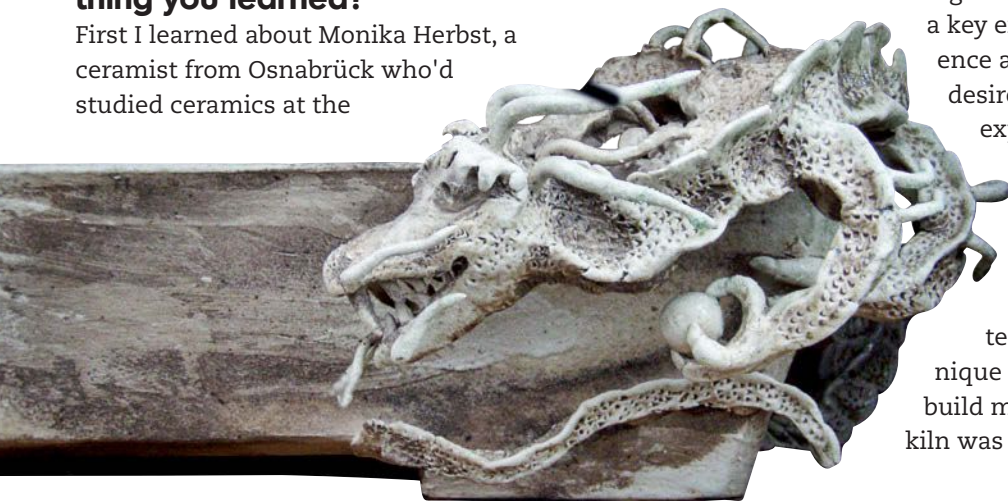
burning technique and build my own kiln was born.

Why ceramic? What do you find fascinating about it?

The wood fire in particular. There is something archaic about it. In principle, you create with very simple materials, namely with clay and fire: a new stone. The difficulties are of course in the detail. How to reach the required temperatures of up to 1300°C? How to build the oven? How to deal with 'no pot tears'? It is a struggle sometimes against the elements. To understand the varying results of fire and yet never quite able to control it, makes the confrontation so exceptionally exciting.

Tell us what is your philosophy of bonsai ceramics.

As an artist, I create single pieces, I'm not drawn to repetitive manufacturing. I chose the two techniques that, of their nature, only allow individually made pieces. On the one hand, I like the rough, origins of a wood fire with natural colour spectrums, but am also fascinated by the elegance and purity of porcelain. To make





and to paint porcelain pots individually is a challenge for me that requires an intense interest in the subject.

Do you make your own glazes?

My glazes (also the unglazed surfaces) emerge via the draught of the wood fire with its ashes, the reduction of oxygen in the fire and the optional addition of salt and soda during the firing and finally the fire itself. In addition, the appearance is influenced by the selection of a clay mass and slipware. Sometimes I also use Shino or ash glazes that I produce myself.

You use a kiln fired with wood only. Did you ever work with kilns using gas or electricity?

I also use an electric kiln for the biscuit firing and of course for my porcelain works. Additionally I also use it for unglazed pots with very dark clay, because these don't survive the high temperatures of the wood fire.

What do you think of Japanese glazes, tones and shapes?

Classic Japanese pots are examples that cannot be ignored. I especially like the simple pots and also the quality of the surfaces of unglazed Japanese pots.

Do you think handmade pots are appreciated and valued by the bonsai enthusiast?

If you have created and maintained a bonsai over many years, it's obvious to look for a custom pot for it. Once a tree reaches a certain level of maturity, I think

most bonsai lovers prefer a handmade or antique pot.

What do you like about bonsai and making pots for bonsai?

Viewing a good bonsai is an emotional experience for me, just as it is for an especially impressive tree in the wild. We make a bonsai and so giving it a worthy framework to support its expressiveness is a task which gives me great pleasure.

Can you tell us a little about how you make your pots?



With the exception of some azalea pots and the round porcelain pots that I turn on the wheel, I build my pots without moulds. This way I create the required types and sizes without having to rely on pre-defined shapes. Each pot is unique in shape and despite the higher expenditure in time, I find the more personalized results worthwhile.

Can you make a living out of bonsai pottery?

I have been a musician and producer for 37 years and I operate my own recording studio. But more recently the ceramic work has developed into a second business.



Photo: Manfred Pollert





What was the most difficult, time-consuming pot you have ever made?

One of my dragon pots was very complex, constructed by hand and fired in a wood fired kiln. And then there was the square porcelain pot, cut and biscuit fired, glazed, fired up and entirely decorated with a Japanese wave pattern and again fired. The painting alone took me four days and two bottles of red wine!

Are you not afraid that the pot becomes too dominant and therefore more important than the bonsai itself?

What makes wood firing so special is that it's both very expressive yet restrained, simple surfaces occur, with very natural colours as well.

One can perhaps compare these with the colours of the stones in a river bed, which appear infinitely varied, but never leave the confines of the natural colours. Such surfaces in conjunction with simple, reduced forms and good proportions are likely to support a tree, without becoming over dominant.

What is the charm of working with porcelain?

It was a challenge for me to understand the technical side at first. How much porcelain mass? Which glaze and colours? Under glaze? Glaze painting? I'm now in a fortunate position. I can focus on the shape of the pots and the designs of its paintings. The design of my motives and its execution requires high concentration and patience, but is very contemplative and satisfying. A beautiful work when the weather for the wood fire kiln does not want to cooperate.

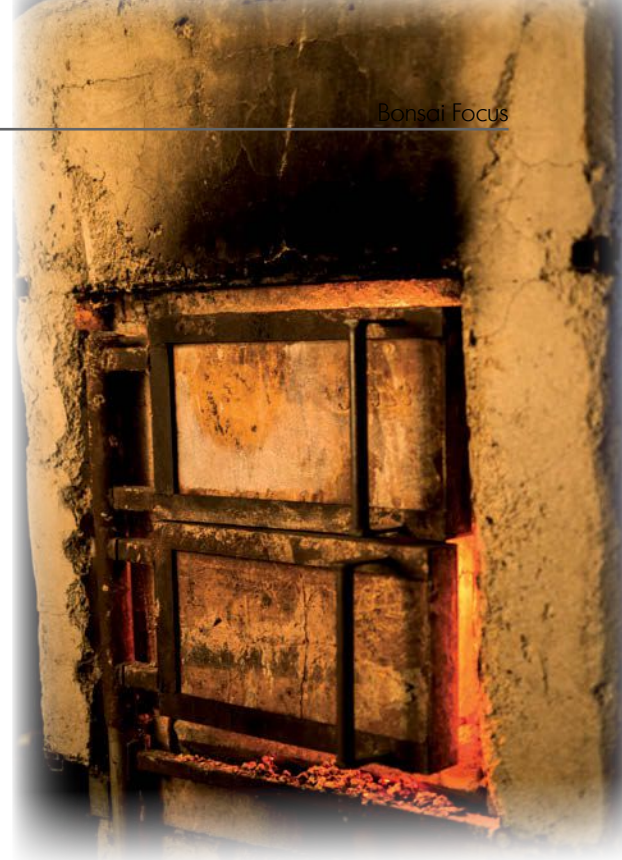


Photo: Manfred Pollert



Celebrate the Maverick

By Tony Tickle

The Americans have a name for it: 'cookie cutter bonsai' and it's considered an insult. Cookie cutter bonsai are those trees that look just like every other bonsai in that form, there being no individual character and nothing that makes them stand out on the show bench. There are plenty around — sometimes because they are the ones that have been created that way in China or Korea and exported to our garden centres and hardware stores; sometimes because a bonsai enthusiast wants to emulate a tree he or she has seen at a show. The former leads to a plethora of, let's be honest, almost universally boring trees. The latter, while it can be flattering to the artist who created the original tree, can also lead to a lack of originality among all but a handful of bonsai practitioners. Some would even say that this factor is what separates the 'practitioner' from the true bonsai 'artist'. On the other hand, if you stray too far from conventional bonsai you are considered a maverick, even a tiny bit crazy.

Bonsai mavericks do not break the rules, but bend them a little. In general they are nonconformists rather than outright rebels. They display features that don't really belong together. The contradictory qualities dominating the personality and behaviour of the artist are the outcome of a certain fluidity of character and ego boundaries; they are not afraid to take risks and certainly not afraid of failure or of being pilloried by the supposed bonsai 'establishment'.

Many years ago I read that when Masahiko Kimura was young he was never taken seriously by the bonsai establishment in Japan; they considered him 'a nail that stuck out in a plank', never following the norm and breaking with convention. Yet it's safe to say that today Mr Kimura is the most famous bonsai artist of all time, so why was he so criticised in those early years?

I think that, for Mr Kimura, being unconventional is made more obvious because he was kicking against the rigid established form that the rest of the Japanese bonsai community followed. Mr Kimura is successful simply because his determination to stay true to his principles and rule-breaking personality.

To stay within the norm, or perhaps I should say 'traditional', is safe, acceptable and even recognised as authentic bonsai. Play by the rules and you'll be acknowledged. While ordinary people

are paralysed by the fear of failure, the maverick saddles up and rides anyway. To them, failure is a word with no meaning. This ability to seemingly disregard the fear of failure is exactly why the maverick is more likely to create something outstanding.

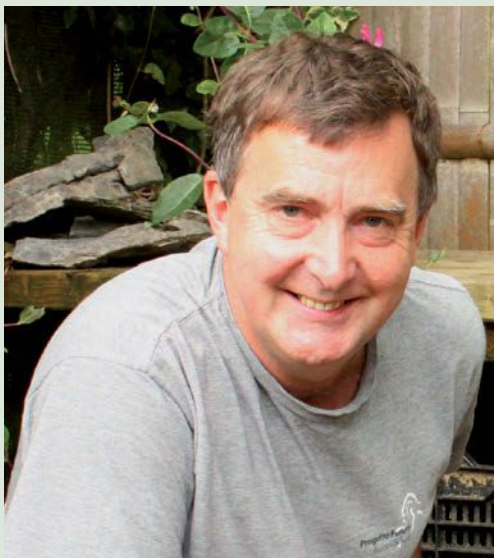
Deviating from convention or stepping out of your comfort zone isn't always easy, especially if you have spent your whole bonsai life following rules. However, mavericks understand that while rules are important, they can be limiting. What rules in bonsai do you accept as unbreakable? Why do you follow them? If the answer is 'that's the way it's always been' you will probably never accomplish anything extraordinary. It is this ability to question traditional bonsai without disrespect that makes the maverick more likely to be fruitful.

A couple of years ago a 'wild and unkempt' hawthorn was displayed at the Kokufu exhibition in Japan, the biggest and most respected bonsai show in the world. This hawthorn did not conform to any 'rules' yet when shown around the world on social media it commanded the most attention. I can only imagine because it was so different that it had a 'stand out' quality compared to the regiment of pines and junipers.

In the previous issue of Bonsai Focus we saw Bonsai Mirai and the amazing work that Ryan Neil is doing. Ryan firmly believes that bonsai is an art form and by expressing that in the dynamic way the trees are presented, furthers that belief. The guys from The Pacific Bonsai Museum have custom graffiti art on skateboards in

place of the hanging scrolls — a very exciting concept and one guaranteed to have both purists and rule-followers screaming 'Heresy!' to the rafters.

In much the same way, the meteoric rise of the Black Scissors Bonsai creators' group will further the vibrant creation of bonsai across the world. But the key point is surely this: whatever you choose to do the quality of the bonsai, the craftsmanship and the health of the tree are paramount. Don't dismiss what the maverick bonsai artists are doing now; the same was said about David Bowie, Van Gogh, Banksy — all creative mavericks. Bonsai practitioners have tended to be rule-followers, obsessed by doing things the 'right' way. But in all walks of life, not just in bonsai, the people prepared to swim against the tide and shake their heads while all others nod in sycophantic agreement are the ones who become true beacons of success and ingenuity.



Sowing the seeds...7

Trident maple: The challenge is to create a finished tree starting from zero

Text: Kinbon. Illustrations: Kiyosuke Gun

Working from seed or from cutting is a challenge in the first place, but we are going to take that to another level and look at working with more unusual species with an illustrated guide to help you navigate from raw material to the finished tree. Here we see how to grow a trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) forest planting, from seed

1st Year Harvesting seeds

End of October

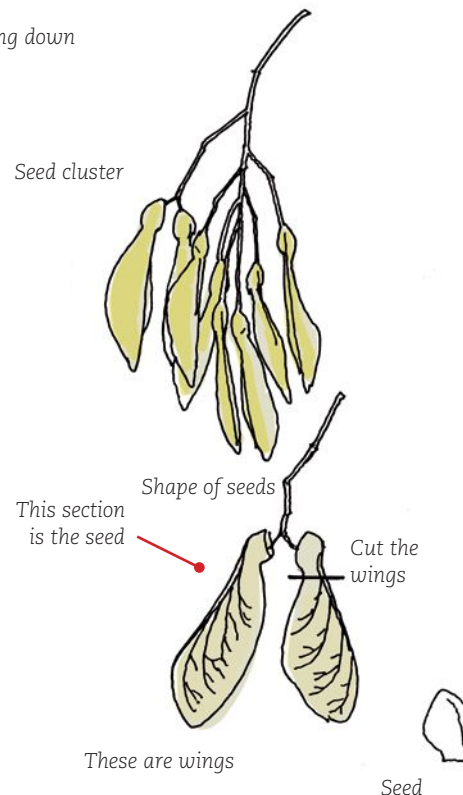
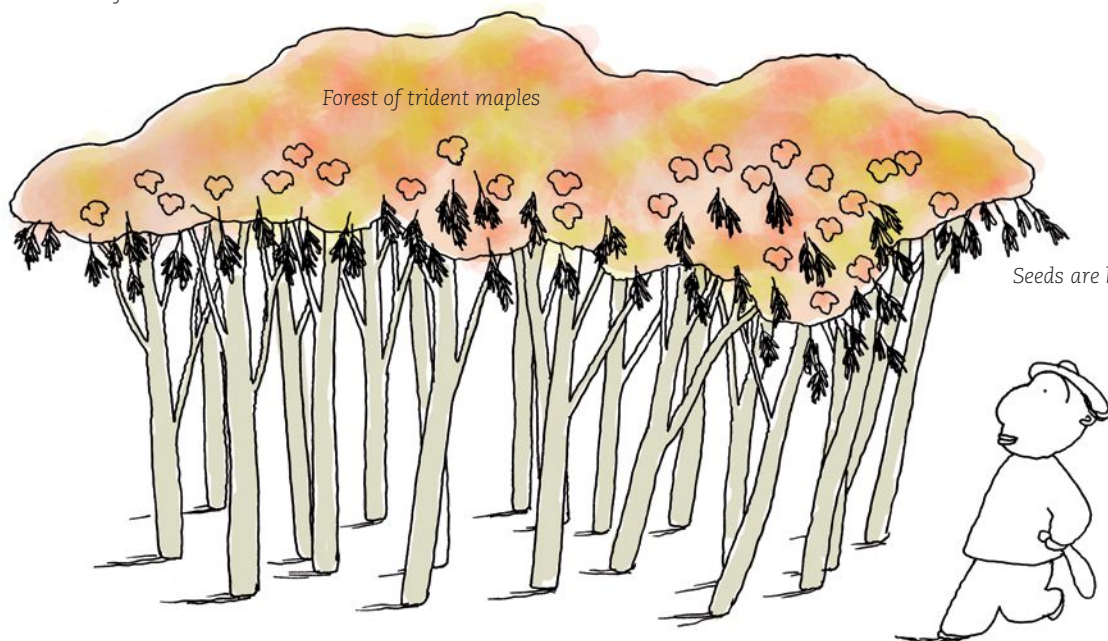


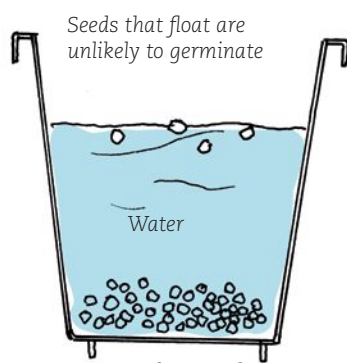
Photo: Bonsai Plaza
Acer buergerianum forest



Vigorous species

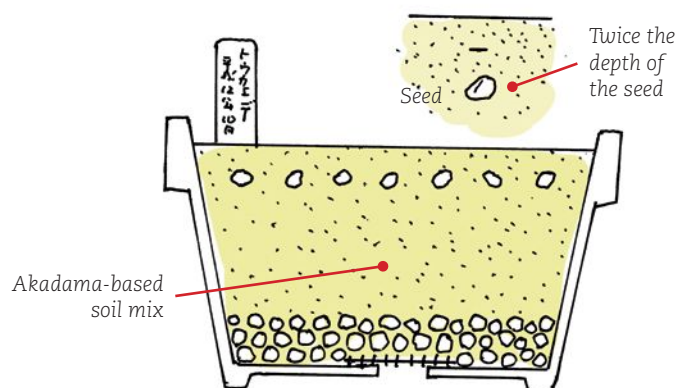
Trident maples that were used for bonsai were first introduced into Japan from China in the Edo Period (1603-1868). A vigorous species that responds well to pruning and being cut back, it is possible to create it into a number of styles. As roots mature and fuse together, the base of the trunk forms a powerful nebari. It is possible to create a very fine and well ramified branch structure which can be extremely delicate. Propagation of trident maples can be from seed and cuttings. Collect seeds in the autumn to produce a large number of seedling from which group style bonsai can be created.

Screening of seed



Soak the seeds for 24 hours. Sow or keep the seeds that sink.

Sowing the seeds: Bury the seeds in soil



Process of germination

End of March



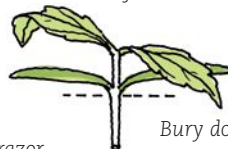
Cotyledon begins to open

The first leaves appear



In order to create a beautiful nebari and a compact trunk, it is essential to take a cutting of the seedling.

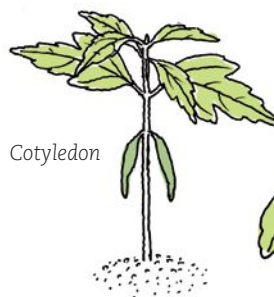
Taking cuttings of the seedlings



With a razor blade cut cleanly 1 cm below the cotyledon

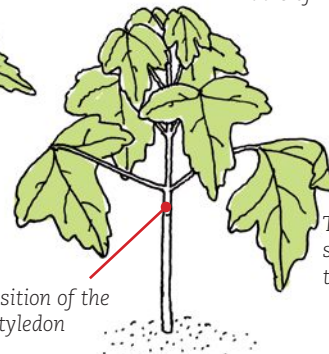
Bury down to here

April



Cotyledon

Middle of May



Position of the cotyledon

Trident-like leaves start to develop at this time

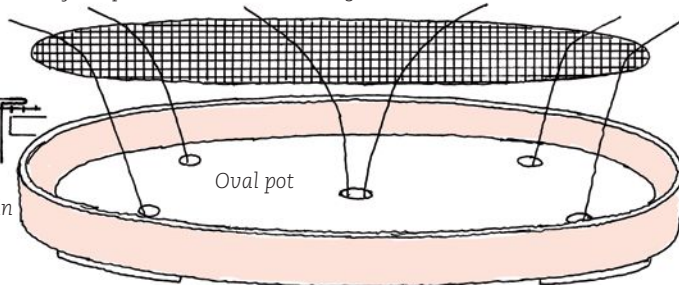
Protecting the seeds

Dry out the seeds well and place in a jar or paper bag. Keep in a refrigerator or a cool, dark place until spring.



Cut mesh to the size of the pot. Wire will come through the mesh

Wire staples to hold the mesh in place. Bend the legs



Oval pot

Preparing the pot

30 cm / 11 3/4" pot (approx same width as the height of the tree)

Placement of the trees

Arrange in roughly three groups

Secondary group, 7 to 9 average sized trees

Accent Group, 9 to 11 smaller trees

Pot

Main tree group, 5 to 7 larger trees

Front

3rd year

Planting as a group

Early spring

Average-sized tree

2nd Year. Height: 20 cm / 7 3/4"

Use in the accent group

Smaller tree

2nd year Height: 10 cm / 4"

1st year

Use in the secondary group

1st year

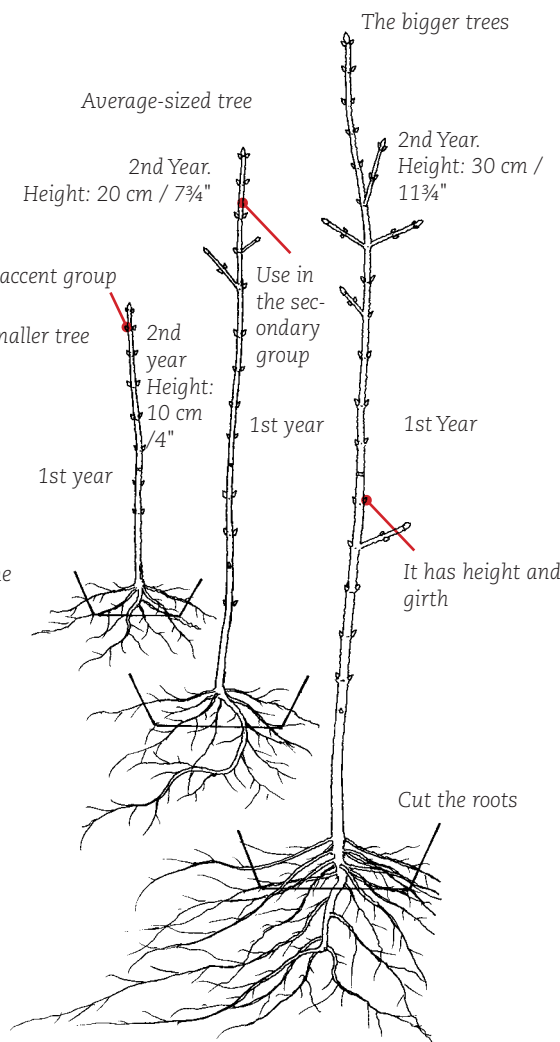
The bigger trees

2nd Year. Height: 30 cm / 11 3/4"

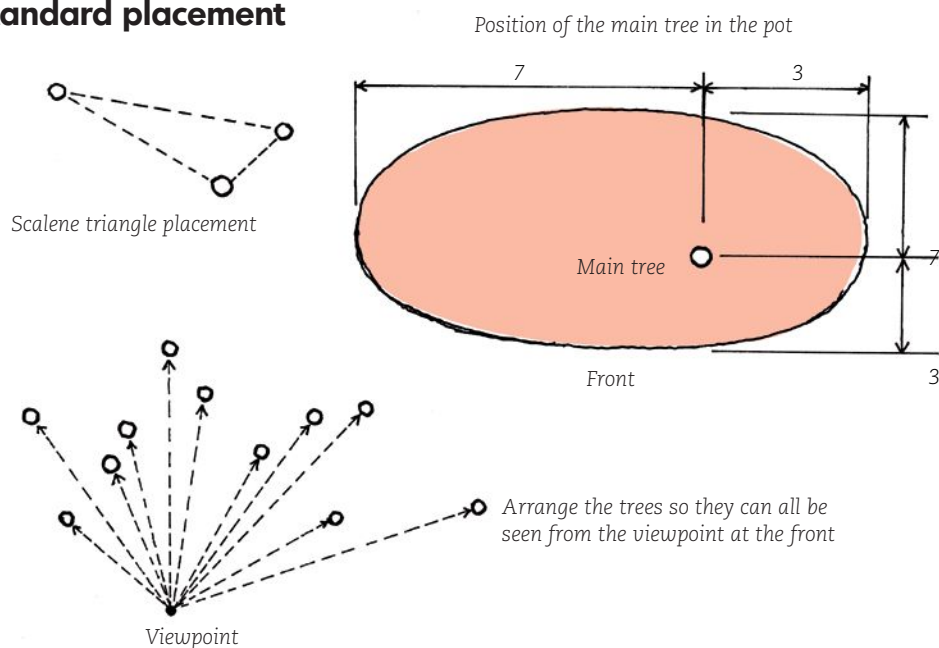
1st Year

It has height and girth

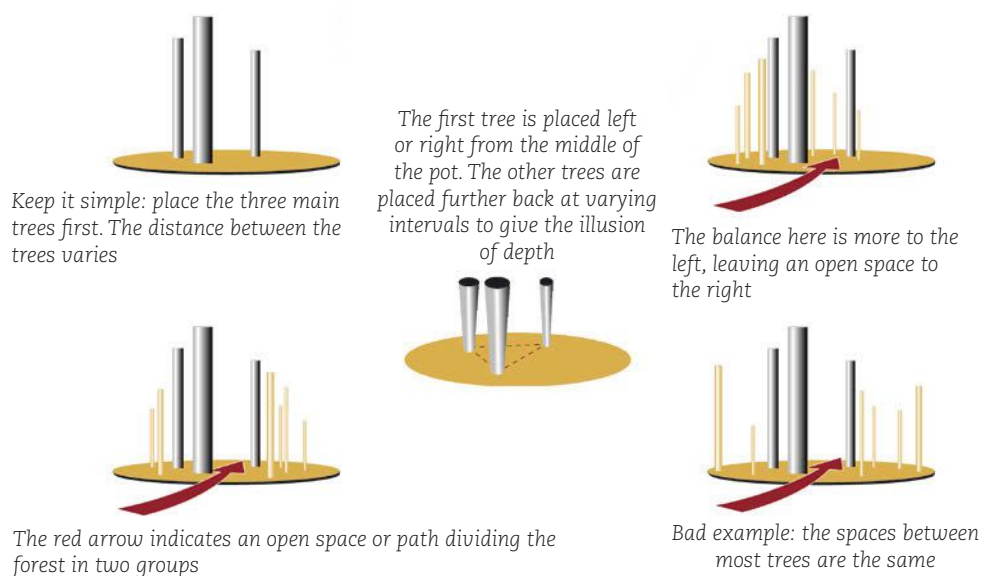
Cut the roots



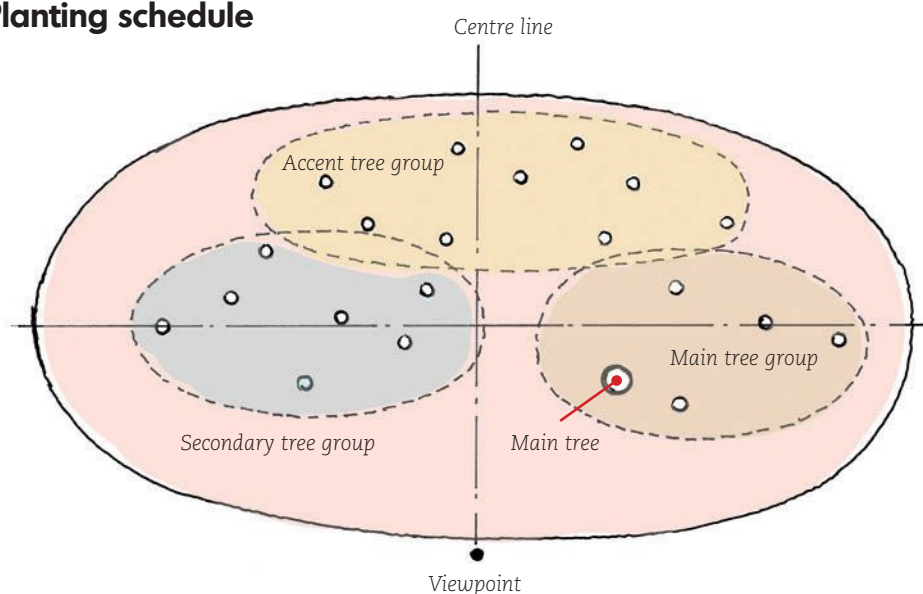
Standard placement



Examples of forest planting



Planting schedule



Standard placement of trunks when creating a group

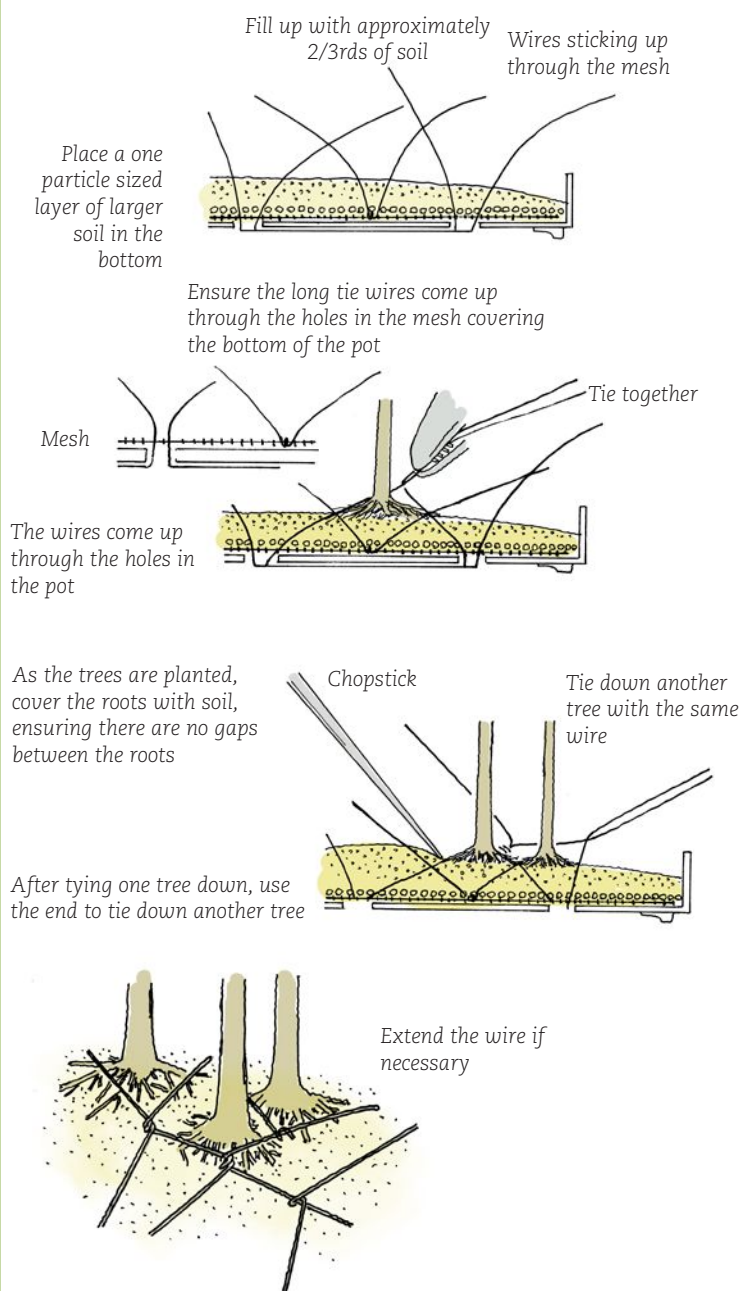
It is important to have a large number of seedlings to hand when trying to create a group and there is always difficulty in finding the perfect combinations in terms of thickness, height and branch position. Start from the main tree and prepare a pot that is approximately as wide as the main tree is tall. From the thickness and height of the main tree, the number of secondary and accent trees to have in the composition can then be decided.

The distribution should show asymmetry, the ability to see each tree from the main viewpoint, depth and an overall direction. While technique is an important part of creating a group, the main thing is having a clear idea of the image that you want to create.

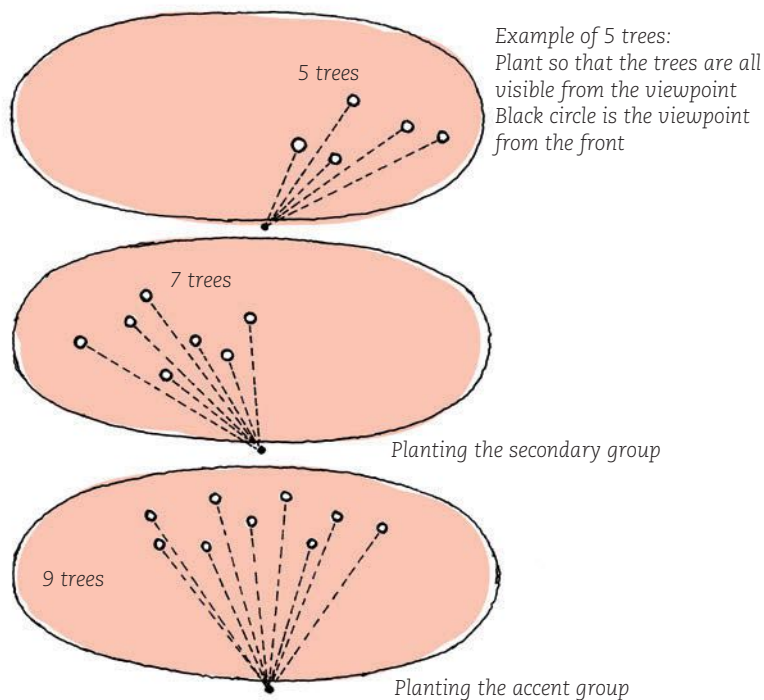


Photo: Bonsai Plaza
Acer buergerianum, two-trunk style

Anchoring the trees

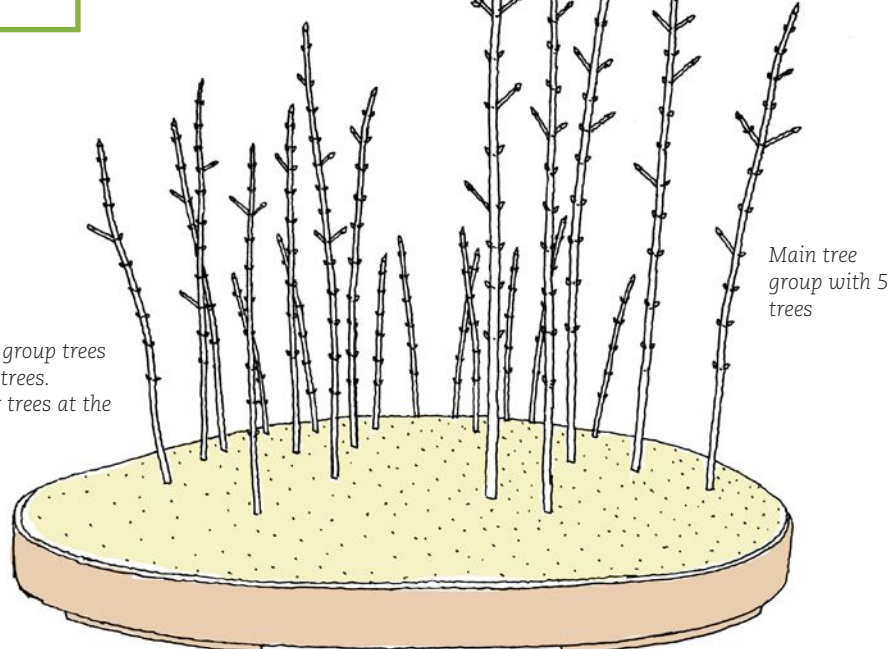
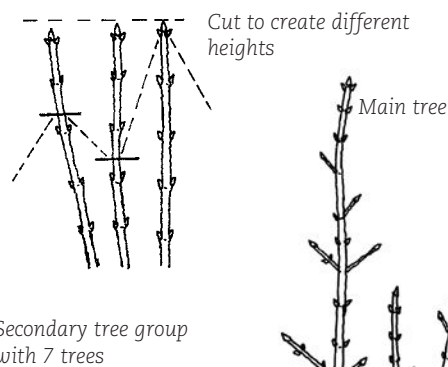


The main group planting



After planting

The tallest trees in the main group along with the mid-sized trees in the secondary group and the smallest in the accent group should all show signs of variance in height.



Keep trees in position

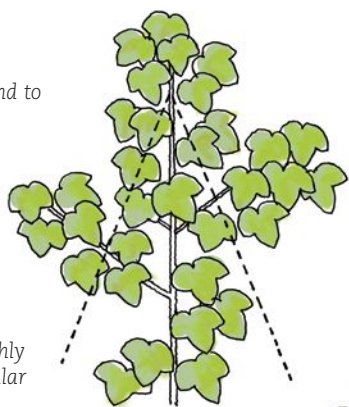
One of the key points with creating a group style is the distribution of trees and trying to keep them in position. As shown in the illustration, use a long piece of wire passed through holes in the pot to tie down several trees. Other techniques include using a piece of bamboo as a raft to hold them in position. How it happens is not as important as the distribution of the trees and that they grow without moving.

4th and 5th year

Pruning from May

The top sections tend to grow very leggy

Cut back to roughly a scalene triangular shape



Branch pruning
Cut back to one node

Dealing with nodes that have multiple shoots

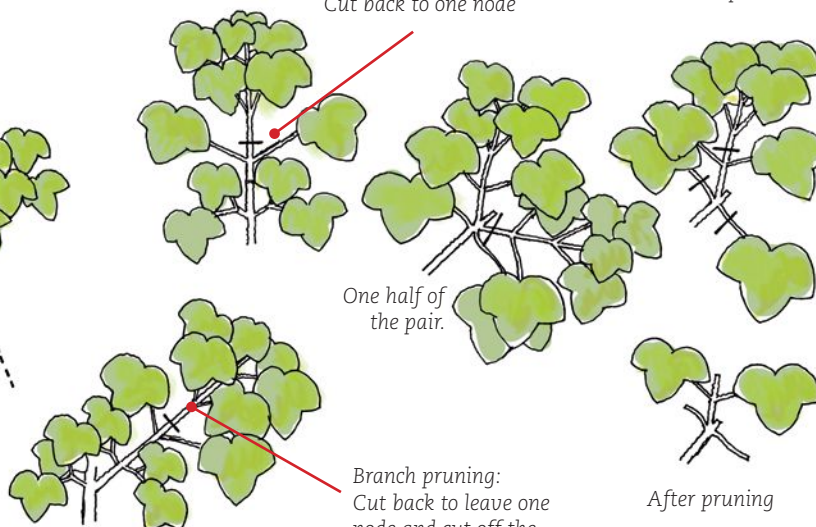
Cut back to one node

Remove old leaves

One half of the pair.

Branch pruning:
Cut back to leave one node and cut off the downward growth

After pruning

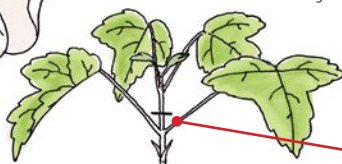


Pinching new growth

April to May

Pinch back after the third pair of leaves has opened

Pinch with
finger tips



Pinch back to the first node

In the case of it being a little late

When it is difficult to do it by hand, use scissors

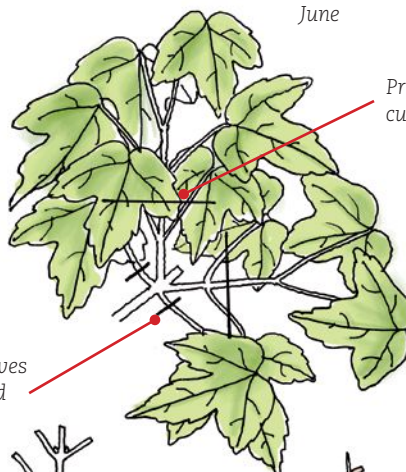


Use scissors to cut back to one node

Defoliation and Pruning

June

Prune back to one node and cut off the leaves

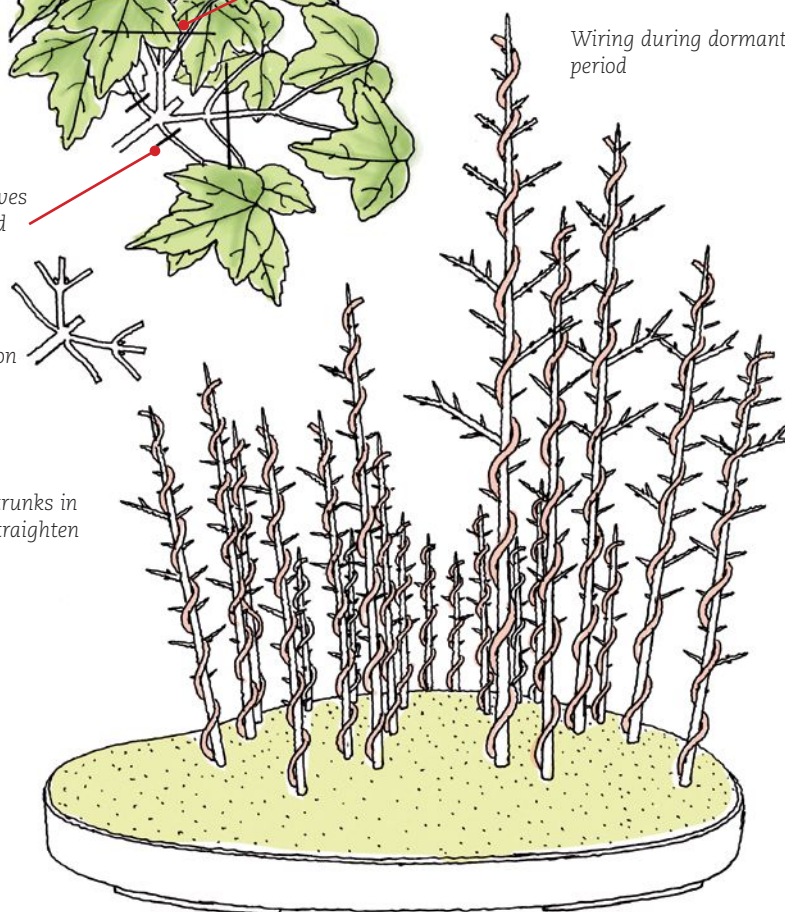


Cut off the leaves when hardened

After defoliation and pruning

Wiring during dormant period

Wire the trunks in order to straighten them out

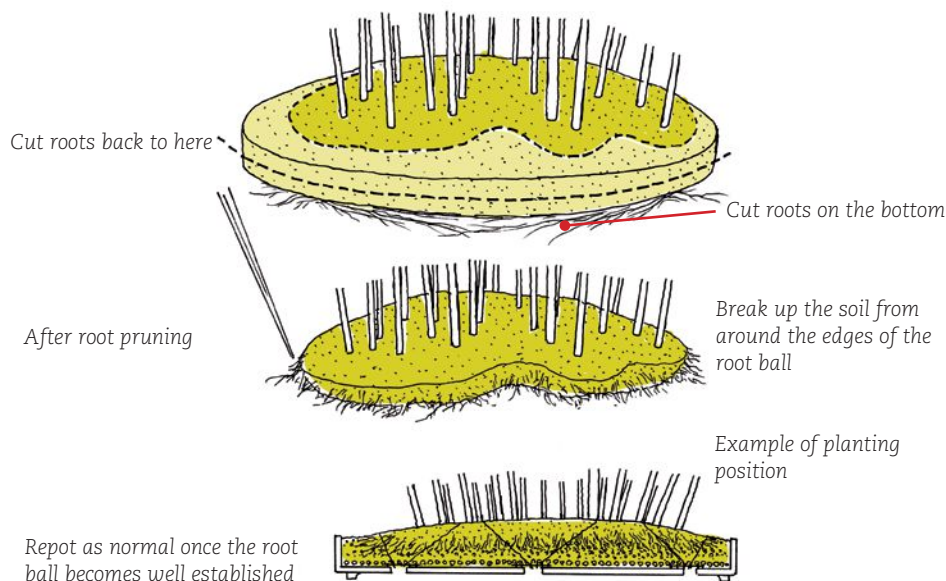


Branch creation on trident maples

You can defoliate and prune back at the same time with trident maples. It is important to get balanced growth throughout the tree once it has entered the stage of building up compact ramification. It is possible to defoliate for the first time from end of April to middle of May when the largest external leaves only should be removed. This is done to help the internal growth get a little more light. The second time defoliation can be done is around the middle of June when all but the weakest shoots should have their leaves removed. The third time in the year should be at the end of July, start of August when any large external leaves can be removed once again. Defoliation puts a strain on the tree so make sure that it is well fertilised in advance.

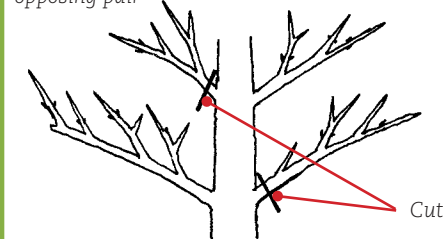
6th and 7th Year

Transplant in March

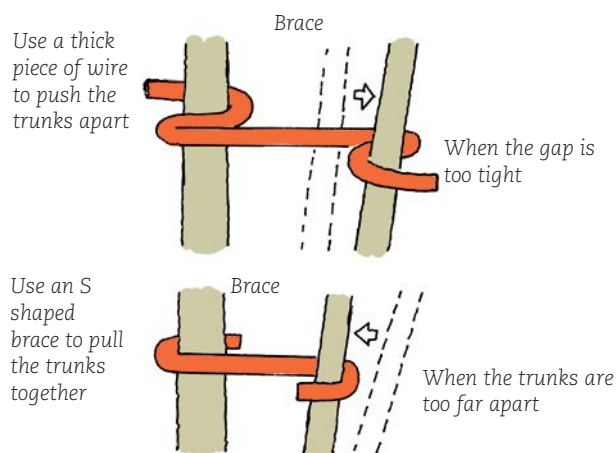


Pruning the branches
Opposing to alternating

Cut off one side of an
opposing pair



Using a brace to change trunk separation



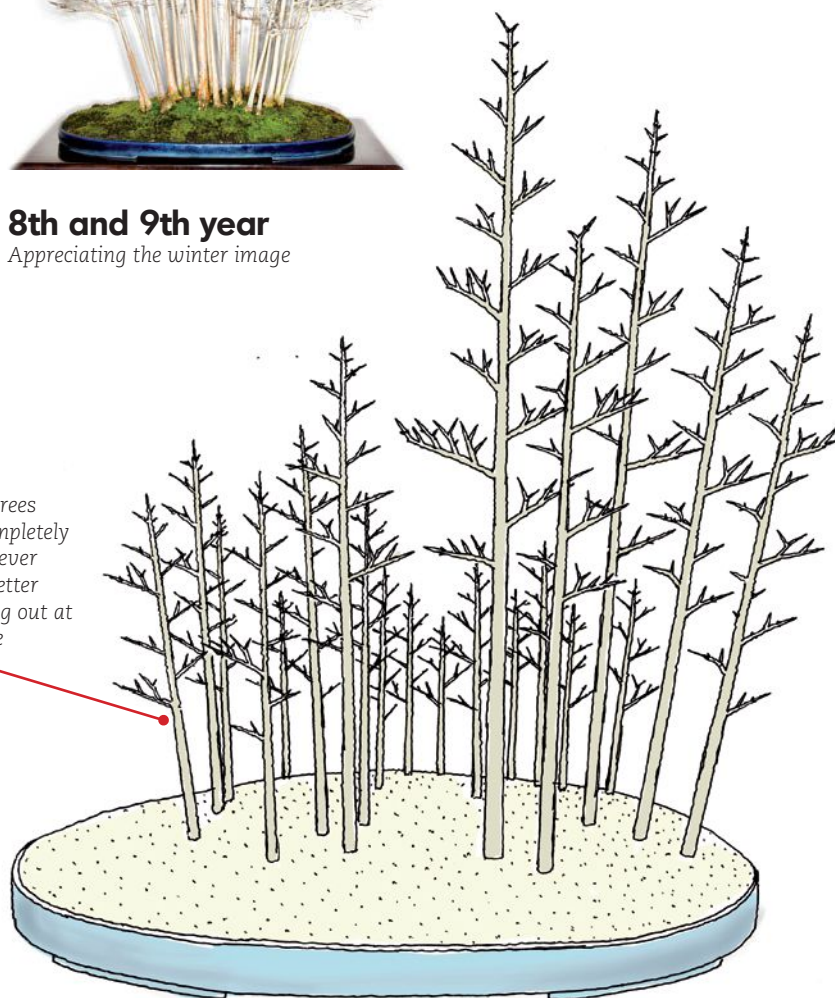
Forest planting of trident maples
seen at the Kokufu.
Photo: Bonsai Focus

8th and 9th year
Appreciating the winter image

Transplanting and trunk correction

Trident maples should be repotted in the spring before the buds start to break. With younger trees it is advisable to repot once every two years in order to start to build up an even-growing root ball that will begin to solidify. It is possible to repot immediately after defoliation when the demand for water is much reduced. Along with transplanting and building up a solid root ball to develop mochi-komi, trunk correction should also be performed regularly. Eventually it will become impossible to wire the trunks to correct them, but they can be pulled and pushed in the necessary directions using a thick wire brace, string or pieces of bamboo to create the ideal trunk separation.

Some of the trees
should be completely
vertical, however
others look better
when growing out at
a slight angle



Bonsai in autumn

Summer comes to an end, growth slows down and leaves start to show their colours

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio

What happens with your tree in autumn?

There are lots of processes going on in your tree at the end of summer. It all depends in which climate you live, but in moderate climates there is a so called second spring. What then happens is that the tree completes its growth. Its roots are still active especially those of conifers. The tree starts to store a maximum of reserves. Its wood thickens in size, causing wire to bite into the trunk and branches. September can be just as hot as in August. In October autumn arrives slowly and more care is to be taken when the tree goes dormant. No pinching at this time, nor defoliating.



Garage or glasshouse?

Although our winters have proved a bit of a sissy lately, with barely any frosts, it is still important to protect our bonsai from long wet days. Pines don't like wet feet, especially white pines, so they should be sheltered under roofing at least. It's best to spray trees with insecticide before bringing them into the shelter.

A glasshouse or polytunnel is best, but not necessary. Use your benches as a frame for covering with a plastic sheet at night or during frosty periods. Ventilation is essential for healthy trees, the more so in the winter shelter. Nasty fungus just loves those damp spaces.



Another option is to bring your trees into the shed or garage during the frosty nights. It's not really a problem provided it is for just a short stay. The downside is that you have to drag the trees in and out. This is more of an emergency option when frosts suddenly occur, such as in the early spring when days can be hot with temperatures dropping dramatically during the night.

Pure growth

After the summer heat has gone a new growth cycle starts, so if you have been a bit hesitant about cutting back your deciduous trees in August, the time has come to get it done now, because the tree still has time to repair itself and close small wounds before winter hits. So run through your trees and deal with any small imperfections in order to improve the shape of your tree.

This goes for trees in pots, but leave those still in the field or large growing boxes, because the strong growth strengthens further in autumn giving benefit from extra power in spring. The aim is not yet refinement, but pure growth.



Fertilise in autumn as well

It may not be so common, but bonsai need feeding in autumn, too. There are lots of special fertilisers that focus on the needs of the tree during that period. Most trees have now completed growth and the last shoot has formed, so even nitrogen cannot stimulate your tree to initiate further growth. Depending on the weather though, a higher dose of nitrogen might well postpone the transition to the autumn leaf colours. Nutrients that are now absorbed will be stored by the plant as a reserve and then activated again in spring. Deciduous trees are often given a nitrogen free fertiliser in late summer (Matsu PK 0-10-10 is a mineral fertiliser without nitrogen). When the plant is given an autumn fertiliser at the end of September, the nitrogen content can be raised again. Conifers can be given a stronger autumn fertilisation with a standard fertiliser like Biogold, without risking the needles becoming too large.



Keep it clean

Rotting material like old leaves and needles lying on the pot's surface can be a very comfortable place for disease and pests. So remove them and keep the surface clean. Remove any old needles and leaves between the branches. Some deciduous trees have a build-up of algae if the summer was very wet; remove that as well with a soft brush.

No need for nitrogen in the autumn. Why?

It is used in large amounts for the development of plant elements such as new leaves. Chlorophyll and other photosynthetic active pigmentation receive large amounts of nitrogen. Neither is produced by deciduous trees in winter, so that's why there is no need for nitrogen during this time of the year. In spring, however, the stored nitrogen can be activated to develop new leaves. Leaves developed only from the reserves of nitrogen are smaller than those developed from fertiliser during the same time period.

Potassium:

Regulates the salt content of the plants and consequently has a major influence on frost resistance.

Phosphate:

It's essential for the plant's energy system and is especially important for building energy reserves in autumn. Stated simply, the more energy reserves stored, the thicker the trunk.

An adequate supply of phosphate and potassium can promote the thickness of growth, frost resistance and stored nitrogen. This in turn assures healthy leaves that are not too large in spring



Crataegus

By Michael Hagedorn

www.crataegus.com

Worth following is the Crataegus Bonsai Blog by Michael Hagedorn, with really useful information and well written. Here is an excerpt from a post:

Flowers on pine candles: Leave alone or remove them?

The first. Best to leave them alone. It's true that flowering weakens a tree a bit. But pine candles are also quite delicate when growing, and sometimes the shoots that flower can be smaller, and smaller means weaker. Taking the flower buds off can really damage the



shoots. Any damage we do is therefore a double drag; first with the energy needed to make the flower, and then in repairing the damage caused when removing it. Pines will flower more in some years than in others. Not much to do about that; trees often seem to come to an agreement about which years they will flower. So the answer is easy. Leave them alone. Better than a lot of work, by far, and there are quite a few other tasks we should be doing instead.





Ligustrum
John Hanby



Pinus mugo
Danny Use

Pinus parviflora
Jean Paul Polmans





Carpinus turczaninowii
Joachim DC. Kei Bonsai Kai



Pinus pentaphylla
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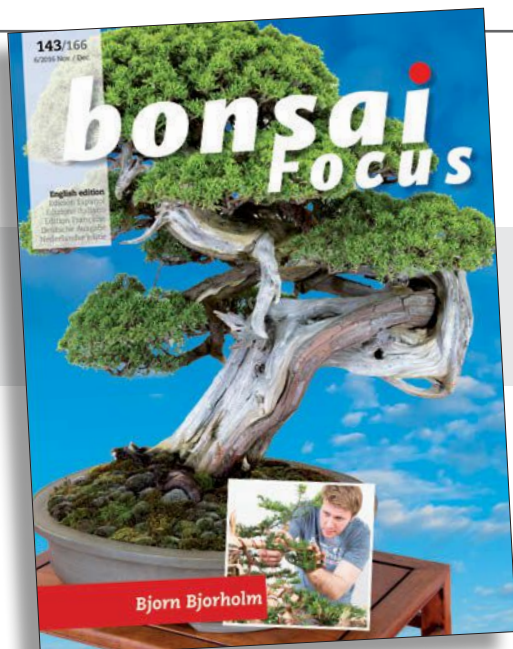
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Issue 143 November / December



Not Omiya?

No, because there is another garden near Tokyo, too. Visit the Showa Kinen Park, with more than 60 donated bonsai.



Can you stick it back on?

Not really, but you can learn how to deal with the bright and dark sides of a *Euonymus shohin*.

Yew again . . .

It's Bjorn with another yew, but totally different tree this time. Donated to Bjorn Bjorholm by Bonsai Plaza for styling, we see what can be done with this material.



Impossible to bend?

It's still possible to bend old deadwood by heating it and then cooling it down again. See how it's done.



David Benavente
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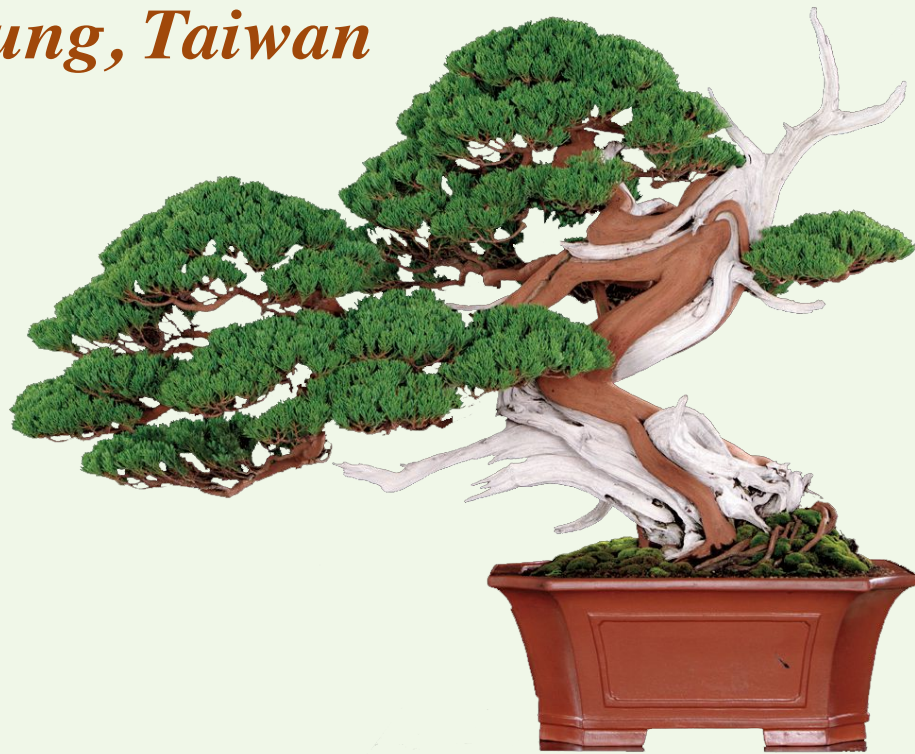
Explore the Beauty & Culture of Taiwan



The Taiwan Bonsai Association invites you to the
Bonsai Clubs International Convention 2017
and the 14th Asia-Pacific Bonsai and
Viewing Stone Convention & Exhibition



4 – 7 November 2017
Changhua & Taichung, Taiwan



Contact us:

Address: No. 68, Sec. 4, Chungshan Rd., Xizhou, Changhua, Taiwan. 524

Information: Sean SC Huang

E-mail: bci2017aspac14@gmail.com or seanschuang@yahoo.com.tw

Registrations:

How to Register: The detail for all Bonsai Convention Information and Registration Forms, please visit this convention website:

www.bcibonsai2017.com and register online.

(Online registration activated from January 2017)

If you have questions please contact Mr. Sean SC Huang:

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