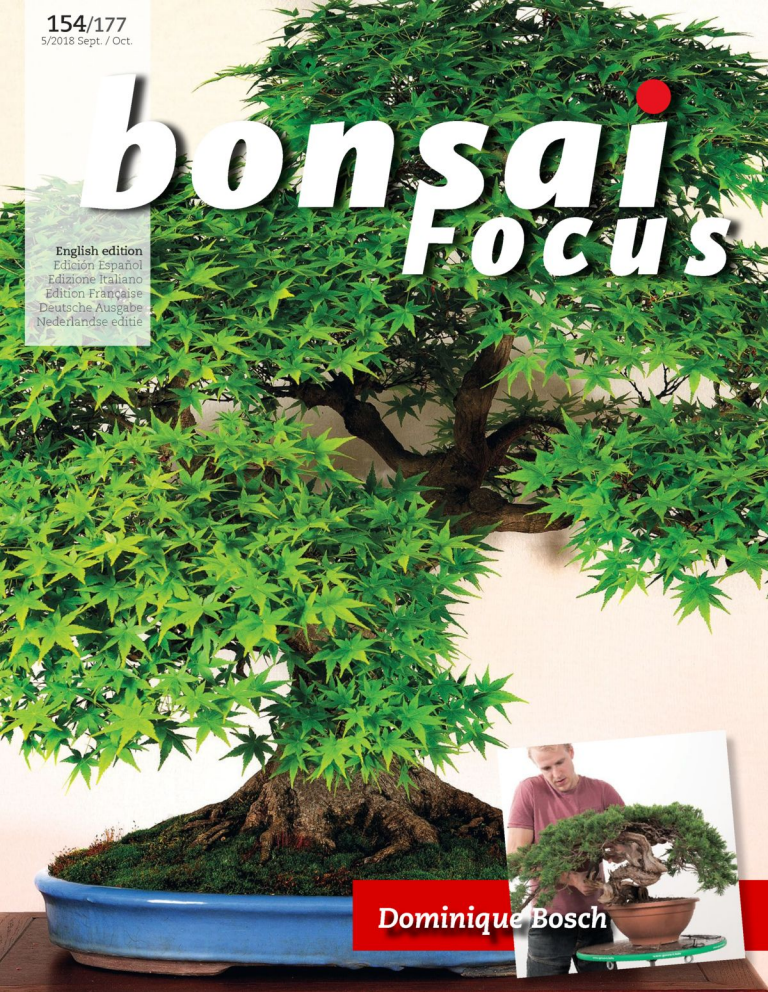


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Dominique Bosch

6th EUROPEAN BONSAI-SAN SHOW

OCTOBER 6th-7th
SAULIEU FRANCE 2018

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Peter Warren

KINBON



Summer heat

When writing the editorial for this issue, the temperatures were rising and water supplies reached almost their lowest level. Still, the trees had to be watered many times a day, but who cared? It was the first real summer for ages here in our normally very rainy and damp country. It almost felt like I lived on a Mediterranean island. Thanks to the iPad I could write this letter to you from a cool terrace, but rest of the work had to be done only behind the 'big machine', which is less than mobile, in a not so cool office.

Very cool is Dominique Bosch, who studied with Masters like Salvatore Liporace, and Taiga Urushibata in Japan. He takes things step by step, examines what the results are and then decides how to tackle the next problem. He's created a very balanced design as you can see further on in this issue.

Mosses are essential for bonsai when put on display, but did you know that there is a whole new world to explore where mosses

become the main subject and are appreciated like bonsai? This actually happens in Japan. And more surprising things happen there, the very small bonsai, mame, are treated with the very same respect as their larger counter parts. The big advantage is that, apart from

their price tag, everything that comes with them is tiny, too; like pots for instance.

Our man in Tokoname, Thor Holvila, tells us in the final episode, what he has gained from working as a potter in this famous pottery town.

Back to Europe, it is Harry

Harrington who explores the new possibilities of collecting from the field. It is traditional to do this in spring, but he found out it's better to collect in the autumn.

Enjoying our magazine is, however, best done in all seasons.



Farrand Bloch

Farrand Bloch
Chief editor

Our Icons



Video available
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Scan the code
with your phone



Beginner



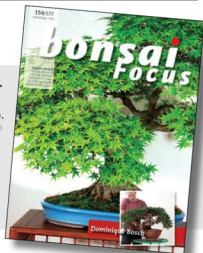
Advanced



Expert

On the cover

Acer palmatum, Bonsai Center Ginkgo.
Photo: Bonsai Focus Studio



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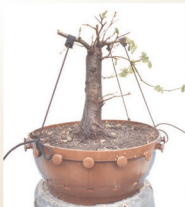
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Best of 20 Years Trophy

The Nøelanders Trophy, now known as The Trophy, will be held once again from 8-10 February at the same venue. The name of the event has changed slightly, but the show will continue at the same high standard. The organisation has announced that, besides headliners, Masajuki Fujikawa, Ryan Neil, Vaclav Novak and Gabriel Romero, a team of bonsai Masters are coming from South Korea to do demonstrations. Best of 20 Years Trophy, Limburghal, jaarbeurslaan 6, Genk, Belgium. Info: www.bonsaiassociation.be



The Tie-Pot

The optimal bonsai training pot
We present a new tool for bonsai designers: training pots with knobs on the side, which can be used for guy wires and a root-promoting air-pruning system. The new pot is initially presented in a 28 x 11 cm version (outside dimensions, measured minus the knobs) made of plastic, further sizes in preparation.

Two innovations

1: The knobs on the side of the pot

These can be used as anchor points for guy wires.

Anyone doing bonsai understands this feature at a glance and without explanation: the knobs are sturdy, load-bearing points that make it a far easier, faster and more precise way to anchor wires.

When using guy wires, pots no longer have to be drilled (which damages the pots), also auxiliary structures made of wire are no longer necessary. The anchor points can also be used for other purposes, such as to fix freshly planted bonsai on the trunk, to attach nets or to secure pots against wind.

2: Air pruning

For healthy roots and better growth

Air pruning (or air root pruning) prevents the formation of unfavourable circular growing roots. Instead, the plant gets a compact, finely branched and very powerful root system with many shoot tips and root hairs

Info: www.tiepot.com

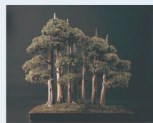
Jens Lindworsky <lindworsky@yahoo.de>



For more international shows and events visit our website: www.bonsaifocus.com > Events

October 6-7 October, the 6th European Bonsai-san Show 2018, France

The International Bonsai Expo featuring 100 exceptional trees from all over the continent. International artists, demonstrations, conferences and more than 50 traders will be present. Where: Saulieu, France
<http://www.european-bonsai-san-show.com/4/>,
Or chenaifrederic@wanadoo.fr



October 12-14 Bonsai World Convention, Mulhouse, France

BCI 2018, FFB, AFAS Convention, Bonsai Euro TOP 30, 240 bonsai and 100 suiseki. 19 international demonstrators and a very large market with 50 traders. Gala dinner in the famous automobile museum. Where: Mulhouse, France.
Info: www.world-bonsai-mulhouse.fr
Or www.parceexpo.fr

October 21st Heathrow Bonsai Show

Where: Harlington Sports Centre, Pinkwell Lane, Harlington, Middlesex. UB3 1PB
Info: markmoreland@live.co.uk
Website: www.heathrowbonsai.weekly.com



October 28th Autumn Show

British Bonsai Traders Association
Where: Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger Way, Doncaster, DN2 6AY
Info: Corin.Tomlinson@bonsai.co.uk

May 10 - 12, 2019 EBA congress

Bonsai Club de l'Albigeois will present next year the FFB congress and the EBA. Where: Parc des Expositions d'Albi, France
Info: baibigeois@gmail.com.



Art of Nature

This year the 12th edition of Bonsai van het West was held again in the Botanical Garden of Delft University of Technology.

With a record number of visitors and perfect weather we were given two days to enjoy the beautiful trees of associations Rijnmond, Koya, South Holland, Studio Deshima and The Bonsai Factory. From Belgium, the bonsai clubs Shinpaku and Miyagi were represented. Bonsai Plaza and Edokoi had filled in the remaining spaces. This year a number of bonsai enthusiasts had registered individually to show their trees to the public. This all happened with this year's theme, 'Art of Nature'. The still-flowering azaleas gave an extra colourful touch to the show. On the market, (pre-) bonsai, pots, suiseki, scrolls and other bonsai-related materials changed hands. Meanwhile, workshops were held for the bonsai enthusiast and one could join Taichi, Do-in and Qigong, take a rest moment at the massage tent or grab a bite at the Indonesian 'Toko', the 'Sushiman' or take an ice cream at our ice cream shop. The tea ceremony was well attended as usual and the demos on fantastic trees, sponsored by De Bonsaihut and Bonsai Plaza, were attended amid much enthusiasm. On Saturday we welcomed Ron de Roo, who gave a yew its first styling. On Sunday we were happy to meet Marc Nöelenders, sponsored by a bonsai friend from the West. Marc restyled a beautiful white pine. Lottery tickets were sold in no time. Our bonsai theme was completed this year by the artist Ben Jansen, who paid tribute to 'Art of Nature' with his naturally sculpted metal sculptures.

We can look back on a beautiful show. Now it's on to the 13th edition!



Good on all sides

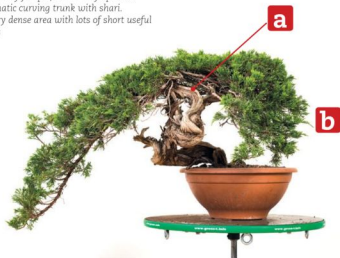
Dominique Bosch styles a sabina juniper

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio | Bonsai: Bonsai Center Ginkgo

Dominique Bosch, an upcoming Dutch bonsai artist, has been studying under Masters like Hotsumi Terakawa, Salvatore Liporace and Taiga Urushibata of the Taisho-En in Japan. In 2017 he was one of the demonstrating guests of the 4th Zhongguo Penjing Exhibition in China

A very bushy juniper, with many options:

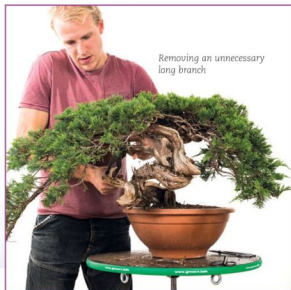
- (a) Dramatic curving trunk with shari.
(b) A very dense area with lots of short useful branches



- (a) Has two clusters from which many branches grow. (b) Amazing curving trunk with shari.
(c) Some branches are very long with sparse foliage



Dominique has been featured often in this magazine for our step-by-step series, but he is ready for the next challenge to show his refined skills. Thanks to Danny Use of Bonsai Center Ginkgo, we could find the right material, a sabina juniper (*Juniperus sabina*). These trees are much in demand because of their impressive trunks and deadwood; however, they can be more difficult than they look. Lots of options open to you when working with this kind of material, specially this one, which appears to look good from all sides. It demands trained eyes to make the right decisions, to be able to look into the future to see what is best for the tree and to gain the best result. Dominique took up the challenge



Cleaning the tree

Dominique: 'Underneath the old flaking bark the beauty of the sabina juniper is hidden.

The curves, live veins and its shari must be examined and therefore it needs to be cleaned first. I can then decide which options are the best for the tree.'



Carefully removing the old layer of bark to reveal the new brown red bark below



A Dremel with an aluminium brush bit helps to remove live veins that have died off. Veins that are still active are slightly thicker



A soft brush helps to clean the crevices between the shari and the live veins



A large section on the lower area of trunk had dried out. I carefully carve it away till I come to the live part



I also remove some of the rotten wood at the base of the trunk

Analysing the tree: What is the best front?

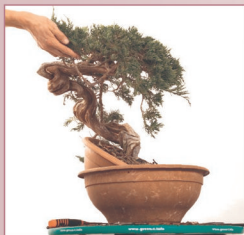
I tilted the tree to one side using another pot to keep it in position. Typical for sabina is its horizontal growth, so in most cases you need to bring it upward to show the very interesting curves.



Seen from this side the live line is clearly visible; however, the trunk line has a very edgy 90 degrees curve to the left. Note the very long branch on the right side



A most attractive side of the tree, it has many curves showing, but I would need to cut off that long branch, now on the left. The risk is that the tree will partially show the back of live veins. The cluster like growth of branches is typical of the sabina juniper. The thickening of the branch tip (a and b) has many branches growing from it



This side has a smoother appeal where it already bends and curves from the base to the top. The downside is the base, which has a reverse taper. This can be solved by planting the tree deeper in its future pot

The best option



Almost the same position as seen previously, but slightly turned to the right. It shows a fantastic curve at the top (a) and still has good movement in the rest of the trunk. The long branch is facing more to the back (with which I will deal later) and the branch with the very compact foliage faces more to the front

Wiring the branches



I start by wiring the right side, which I think can be used to create the whole tree



Manoeuvring the wire between the many small branches

Halfway through I become more confident that I can shape most of the foliage, including the apex, using the very dense right side



Removing some of the side branches to make space for those that remain



If you look from above, you can see most branches grow from a cluster. A side branch (a) grows alongside the cluster. It's quite thick and so I use it as the main branch



Above: I have already positioned the main branch (a).
Right: A very complex system of small branches



What to do with the long branch?

The second cluster of branches with the very long branch keeps me busy throughout the whole process of this project. Covering it up with a big plastic bag gives relief and finally the solution.



After wiring all the branches on the right side



After styling the right side, I covered the left side to see if it would be missed. It is an option maybe for the future. For now I think it is a bit too easy to use only the right side and so I consider another option for the left



The left side has virtues, too. I could use parts to create a top and a back branch giving the design more depth. And then maybe cut off the very long section



I start by wiring the shorter branches on the left side



I slowly manage to get all the branches where I want them. The result is becoming most satisfying



Confident now that using the left side works, I can cut off this very long branch, which will play no part in the design

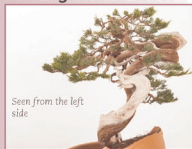


Seen from the right side, I am working on the many side branches, which grow from a cluster (a)

Up until now

The tree has its final shape; for now I am happy. Maybe in future the left side can be removed to improve its dynamic and dramatic appeal. For the time being the tree can benefit from the abundance of foliage in the healing process.

It looks good on all sides



Seen from the left side



The back



And the right side



The lower part of the live vein (a) could be made thinner later on. I will not touch the live veins of the eye catching twist halfway along the trunk (b). I positioned the main branch (c) with a zig-zagging twist to let it synchronise with the shape of the trunk. The tree is shown in a photo edited future pot

Tokoname

Thor Holvila explores the fascinating world of Japanese pottery

Text and photography: Thor Holvila

In 2017 Thor Holvila was invited to work for a month with Hidemi 'Shuho' Kataoka in Tokoname, Japan, along with other great Japanese bonsai potters. In this final episode he talks about what, as a potter, he gained from working in the traditional way of Tokoname



Just two hours after landing I found myself sitting in Hidemi's studio in Tokoname discussing and planning the four weeks we had before us

Arriving in Tokoname

Due to the time difference and 23-hour flight from Gothenburg-Heathrow-Hong Kong-Nagoya, I had hoped to have a rest before I met Hidemi Kataoka. But after just 2 hours a little Japanese van parked outside my room at Mike's airbnb with the motor running and Yukiko knocked on the door saying 'Kataoka-San is here!' Yukiko Kasai runs Yukimono, a small webshop that sells Tokoname pots. As I explained previously, I met her for the first time at the EBA convention in Poland and it was thanks to her that I was having this adventure. I couldn't communicate, as my Japanese consisted only of the greeting 'Hello, I am Thor', which I now put to use when introduced to Hidemi Kataoka, a man in round glasses, a worn out sweatshirt and a big smile. 'Hello Thor.' It was quiet in the car as we drove by canals and through narrow streets. Yukiko talked and Hidemi answered. She is from Tokyo and there turned out to be a big difference between the city people

and those living in rural Japan, especially in a small fishing and factory town like Tokoname. As you might expect they are extremely polite, silent and smiling. And besides that, there is no way of guessing what they are really thinking.

In the studio

We had a coffee, exchanged thoughts about the coming month and got to work. I just had to feel the clay. At first it seemed almost too sticky, but it dried fast and after just being pinched a few rounds it started to crack like a cookie. It's a clay extremely suitable for the fast worker. This clay cuts down the drying process by two weeks, even in this rather damp, cold building with only boards for walls. Hidemi gave me the task of building a small oval and he sat down on a chair next to me, silently watching me work. Now and then he said, 'Not like that' and passed me a tool. On that first evening I realized that what I do back home is pottery, this was bonsai pottery. These were techniques developed for hundreds

At work in the studio of Hidemi





Before glazing, all areas that will remain unglazed must be masked. Hidemi uses tape for this, wax is also common.

Into making pots yourself? Here are some words of wisdom

- Don't try to make the perfect pot, try to be perfect in your execution. In other words, if you were an archer, you don't aim to hit the target, but to make the perfect shot.
- Work slowly. A bonsai potter will never reach the goal, never be satisfied, will never rest. So work as if you were walking a path in the forest. Listen, learn, focus.
- Don't clean up your mistakes. A bonsai potter who believes that he will always get a second chance will not try hard enough to be better.
- Never cheat. There are many tricks that will fool the eye, but you will always remember your bad pots more than your best.
- Never focus on repeating, focus only on being better.
- Create your own tools and make them as an extension of your fingers.
- Accept your level of accomplishment. Skill comes with age.



Before final polishing and glazing the pots have to be flipped while drying



Talking bonsai: life around a table of food, beer and warm sake. From left to right Eimei, Carina, Thor, Yukiko, Juko and Hidemi



Traditional slab building at my work station. Tokoname clay is superb for this technique since it dries fast and is very sticky



Day one Hidemi asked me to build an oval pot from slabs so he could observe my technique and use of tools



Hidemi pats the clay slab with a cushion of raw rice to remove tension in the clay and to avoid warping

of years to keep up production. Hidemi is working to provide the market with pots on a regular basis. The sizes and styles are defined, the templates and the shapes are sorted in hundreds of different compartments. Each pot can be combined with a certain alternative range of feet.

For two weeks, every morning we walk to the studio. At 12 noon we have our lunch. Then we work till evening. Hidemi helped me to make my own tools from bamboo and old saw blades and I continue to work on my own line of pots. I am pushing my boundaries and try to stay innovative. Hidemi points out when I aim 'too high' with something. He doesn't stop me, but raises his finger and says 'Challenge!' I have seen and learned more about the history of bonsai pots and the context in which they have arisen. This taught me

where I am in my art, my development and the order of things. Instead of sticking to the techniques I'm comfortable and skilled in, I've learned to choose a technique according to what I want to accomplish — wheel throwing, press moulding are best for repeating accuracy. Slab building, pinch potting and coil will give more character and are especially suitable for original pieces.

Fast drying

One crucial knowledge I have gained is a whole new process of drying the pots. Unlike the general view in the West to let clay dry slowly, I have learned that it can dry quickly. It requires, of course, a special technique with constant presence and supervision.

Much is in the finish and polishing of the pot during all drying stages. This has resulted in each pot now taking almost double the time to manufacture. The devil is in the detail. The importance of glazing technique is crucial. What I previously left to 'the kiln gods', I now have greater control over. Depending on what I want to accomplish, I spray, dip, splash or brush on the glaze. Like Shuhou, I frequently use several techniques on the same pot. How to load the kiln could make a long chapter in itself, but here I have learned techniques that save many pots from bending, cracking or getting stuck on to the plates.

Hidemi patiently explains and shows me how he works. How he applies the glaze, but also what he adds to the glazes to prevent them from running. They are amazingly thick and creamy. He also masks very cleverly with tapes and glues. He explains how he places the pots in the kiln to avoid cracking — time consuming, but ingenious. When we finally close the



Hidemi mixes glue in his glazes in order to apply several layers. The consistency of the glaze is totally new to me

heavy door we remain behind to light the gas and watch over the kiln for the first critical eight hours.

Steady flow

Working beside a fifth-generation potter has given me the confidence, experience and insight; a steady flow in the making process. I still make my unique Thor pots, which I release monthly, but after time in Tokoname I have decided to have a fixed range, too; a line of classical styled pots with classic glazes to complement them and to honour the root of bonsai pots. I call this line of pots 'Kumatani', or Valley Bear, since it is also my second name as

Glazing around the feet and all the other details before dipping the pot and spraying it



Making a traditional low oval. Hidemi wanted to see my technique and flaws. Much to learn



Hidemi demonstrates how he puts the slides on a slab built pot



a potter. After a month it is with great sorrow in my heart I leave Tokoname and turn around for one last glance at the entrance to the Yoshimura kiln. This time Hidemi is not standing there with a shiny smile saying 'See you tomorrow'! Now he just waves back and follows us with his eyes. I have received so much from him and Tokoname. How can I ever give back in return? How can I pay them back, and Japan, for this great adventure of a lifetime?



One of my own pots in the place where their pots are spray glazed



Applying glaze on one of my pots by spraying. It guarantees that you get a really even, thick glaze on the piece



I came up with this design in Tokoname. It was much appreciated by Hidemi so I gave it to him and it stays behind in Tokoname. It combines Thor and Japan in a nice way I think



A unglazed pot in my 'Nidhogg dragon' design, Japanese version

Loading the kiln with the pots made in Tokoname



Inside the kiln this pot is fired in a box filled with coal to get a smoke effect. It really brings out the details of the carving





Hello Bonsai

The charm of the very, very small . . .

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan.

Bonsai can be small, shohin size, but these bonsai are even smaller. They are tiny trees, mame, which capture the spirit of full size trees in nature

Outside view of Bonciao gallery at Houjyu-en



A friendly family business, Mrs Naomi Hasumi with her younger brother, Mr Kentaro Shiino, the head of Houjyu-en garden

The Bonciao Gallery

In Hadano city, Kanagawa prefecture, we find the bonsai garden Houjyu-en, run by Mrs Hasumi's brother, Mr Kentaro Shiino, and where Naomi Hasumi (39) runs her mini bonsai gallery and studio. She also attends exhibitions and runs workshops, spreading the charm of mini bonsai.

'Even mini bonsai take 4 to 5 years from seed,' she explains. You may think that, at first glance, they can be created very quickly; however, we were surprised to hear that even some of the conifers took this long to grow from seed. Growing from cuttings or air layers will help to speed up the process a little, though many of Mrs Hasumi's trees are grown from seed.

Let us see how we can take a seed to a mini bonsai, ready for display.

Bonciao is a combination of 'bonsai' and 'ciao', so it is like saying 'Hello bonsai'. It is designed as a bonsai entry point for those who aren't able to look after larger trees. It is also an encouragement for people to create everything themselves from seed.

Mrs Hasumi comes from a bonsai family, having grown up seeing her father grow them as a hobby. Five years ago, she quit her office job to start growing material and running workshops. She now sells at the Green Club during Kokufu-ten, runs a successful business and gives workshops at a prestigious department store.



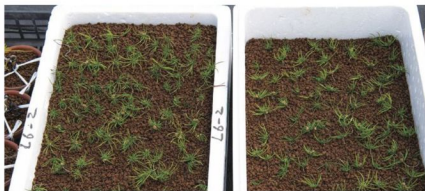
Juniper: Height 5 cm, Width 8 cm. A sense of severity can still be felt in the semi cascade



Japanese quince, Beni Komachi, at 4.5 cm tall, with its tiny flowers



Seedlings of black pine that have already been wired and shaped. Their path to becoming a mini bonsai has already begun



Around the back of Houjyu-en, we find many trays of seedlings such as these. Mrs Hasumi's father also helps with their care

Black pine, 4 years from seed

Height: 5.5 cm

Width: 4.7 cm

You can see that there is already definite movement in the trunk and even though it is a seedling, character has been introduced



Even mini bonsai take 4 to 5 years from seed



After combing out the roots. The tap root has been cut out. There are many side roots



The long roots are cut short until they can fit into a pot



After cutting the roots. The root ball is considerably more compact

Fairly large particle soil is poured in the base of a pot



Roots are pushed in the pot so the cutting can't move



Extra soil is added and worked in between the roots





Once the soil has filled the pot, submerge in water. This will help to settle the soil



Finish with a very thin layer of moss on the surface of the soil



Cut the moss into small pieces and place them on individually

After finishing. Height: 5 cm Width: 6 cm. Even though it is a mini bonsai, it has taken 4 years to reach this stage, yet it has the character and style of a conifer in the smallest of forms



Growing maple from seed

Mrs Hasumi also cultivates some other deciduous species from seed, including trident maple and flowering and fruiting species. Here we take a look at Japanese maple seedlings.

It is important to get movement into the trunks as early as possible and not to allow them to thicken. The maple we see here is planted into a pot after a year and has the movement introduced.

An important point to note is the strong movement.

Let us have a look at the work required to make such a tree using a one-year-old seedling.



Japanese maple seedlings growing in a shallow pot. If new seeds are sown every year, there will never be a shortage of material



An antique tobacco tray with a cherry bonsai used as an accent



This Cotoneaster is only 2 cm, yet has fruit



Spirea thunbergii as an accent planting. Height: 13 cm. Contrast between flowers and foliage is lively

Work on a first year seedling



A first year Japanese maple seedling is planted into a small pot, but the trunk has not yet had movement put into it. Height: 7 cm



Wire is passed up through the hole in the bottom of the pot in preparation for bending the trunk

The trunk is wired and shaped. Strong and decisive movement is placed into it



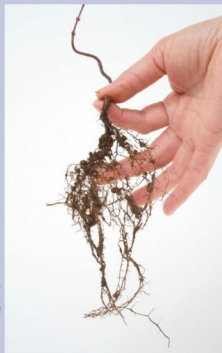
After bending, the height is now 3.5cm, half the original. This degree of movement is just about the correct amount

Work on a second year seedling



2nd year maple seedling. The bend in the trunk has been made and it is ready to be planted into a pot. Height: 8 cm Width: 3.5cm

Soil is removed from around the roots. The roots have already been cut once, so it is easy to remove them from the soil



After dealing with the roots. The long roots have been cut back to form a root ball



Larger particle soil is put at the bottom and the tree placed in the pot. It is fixed in place with wire



Soil is poured into the pot and worked in with a fine chopstick



Submerged into the water, the soil settles further. Moss is placed on the surface as with the black pine





Finished. Planted at a slight angle, the height is reduced to 7.5 cm. Once the buds start to swell: If the lowest node has buds, it can be reduced down to the line, lowering the height even further



Mrs Hasumi's favourite set of mini pots. The rectangle on the left is just 3 cm long



Elaeagnus: The fruit is well positioned on this 8 cm tall tree

What about watering?

For those who are wanting to start mini bonsai, but are worried about watering, Mrs Hasumi recommends creating a suiban, or water tray, with sand or gravel on which to sit the trees. Place it under the eaves of a roof, so it is sheltered from the wind and in semi shade.

It is still important to water thoroughly once a day, but such an environment will help keep the trees moist throughout the day. Rather than be paralyzed by fear, please have a go at it, it's not as difficult as you may think.



Mrs Hasumi's benches in a shady place underneath the eaves. If they are placed on a suiban with gravel, there is no need to worry about watering in the middle of the day even in the summer

A red pine literati tree is planted in an unusual rustic pot, with a yuki-no-shita accent plant in a suiban





Yuki-no-shita and Polygala chamaebuxus as a group planting. It is just 4.5 cm tall, with bright, vivid flowers



A mini juniper and accent grass displayed in front of a window; outside you can see larger bonsai



Zelkova: Height: 6 cm. It still has the broom style at this height



A decorative crab apple mini bonsai and accent plant on top of a chest

Juniper rock planting: Total height: 9 cm. The roots growing over the rock make it interesting



A red pine grown from seed is displayed on a piece of Japanese paper in a gallery space



Only moss

Moss is essential for bonsai, but you can enjoy it for itself, too

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

If you have a garden where nothing will grow, cultivating moss in pots is the solution. Enter the 'mossy' world of Junichi Tanoue

Moss is something that surrounds us and can be grown indoors, something many try, but fail to achieve. Moss is a very particular plant and is difficult to grow for a long period; there are many different species requiring completely different environments

and conditions. We will look at the benches of Mr Tanoue and ask him for advice on growing moss and its care



Mr Tanoue, Member of the Western Japan Moss Club, uses a sprayer to water. In the past Mr Tanoue used to run a garden centre and flower design company, as well as enjoying hiking and collecting mushrooms. He started to become interested in moss 6 or 7 years ago. 'Growing moss is 70 to 80% about the environment. This garden has little sunlight and poor airflow, which means other plants are impossible to grow. Only moss grows well here!' says Mr Tanoue with a laugh



Overview of the small moss garden



On the floor there is a spread of large grain gravel



The garden is west facing with the building to the south. Even at the height of midsummer, this is the most filtered sunlight that will ever reach the garden



The benches as seen from slightly above. On the upper left-hand side you can see how the hanging branches of a garden tree offer shade

The moss only garden

The main growing area is around six and a half square metres. In all honesty it is not a large space with small shelves and hooks hanging down from the fence. In this space, however, there are countless varieties of moss. Thanks to the concrete wall, very little wind passes through. On the floor there is a spread of large grain gravel, with pots placed directly on that. The benches have top, middle and lower levels offering different degrees of light.

Enjoying moss in a pot

The best place to grow moss is on the north or east side of your garden. The shaded places close to the ground where humidity is high is the ideal spot. If you have strong direct sunlight then look for shade under a deciduous tree, or create some with shade cloth. Reducing air flow through the area with a small fence is also advisable.

Moss growing above the ground

For each variety choose the growing medium that is appropriate to the natural location, these are:

- Gravel / Sand - Kiryu sand: Type A
- Akadama, Kanuma and Hyuuga (Pumice) mix: Type B
- Leaf mulch: Type C
- Field / rice paddy soil: Type D

When growing in pots that have holes in them, cover the holes with mesh and spread a thin layer of pumice in the

bottom. On top of this spread the main mixture, giving it a slight mound in the centre. Spread out the moss on top of this and water.

- Moss types growing in full sun. On the soil surface. Soil type B
- Moss types that grow in semi shade, by mountain streams. Type B
- Moss types that grow in fields in full sun. Type D
- Moss types that grow in shade under trees. Type B
- Moss types that grow in humid shady environments under trees. Type C or a

mixture of B and C.

- Moss types growing close to wetlands, near streams in semi shade. Type A. Plant in pots that have no holes, or on a plate. Wash off the dirt from the moss, place it on top of fresh soil and then moisten with fresh water.

Moss growing on rocks

Grow on the original natural rock where it was found, or on pieces of concrete block or old roof tiles. Watering the moss will cause it to grow and when new roots form, it can be separated and moved to a new environment.

Leucobryum neilgherrense, a type often seen in moss gardens. It's frequently found in the mountains under canopies of coniferous trees. Here it has grown on a rotten tree trunk



Moss growing on trunks or on rotting branches

On trees such as zelkova, where the bark can easily be peeled off, remove a piece of bark and grow the moss on that. Moss that is found growing on a rotting branch can be grown on such a branch. These types can potentially be grown on cedar bark, charcoal, old roof tiles, depending on local environment. The only care is to water in the morning and evening when it becomes dry. In the middle of summer some high mountain species, or those growing next to rivers, will suffer if the humidity is not high enough, so regular misting is advised in hot weather.



Rotting branches, pieces of cypress and cedar bark are used to grow different types of moss. If the pieces are laid flat they will weaken, so standing them up allows them to grow strongly. Even just a slight change in angle creates a difference in vigour and each variety has specific requirements. For people coming fresh into the hobby, it is a case of figuring it out through trial and error

Growing garden moss

Juniper haircap, *Polytrichum juniperinum*
One of the most common moss varieties used in Japanese gardening; the height varies between varieties, with some being very compact. It enjoys a spot with light and moisture. If it's looking dry, water thoroughly. In summer, water morning and evening and then once every two to three days during winter.

Hairy fringe, *Racomitrium canescens*

A bright green moss, which will open up into star shaped foliage when full of water. Likes a spot that is both moist and well lit. Very drought resistant. Water once the foliage starts to close up.

Leucobryum juniperoides

A beautiful, velvet-textured moss. Grows very well in semi or full shade. Drought

Diphyseium fulvifolium
growing on a flat rock. It has an interesting shape

Moss pieces growing in the garden



A large clump of *Porella perrottetiana* that has been growing on an old roof tile for more than six years



A European variety of *Polytrichum juniperinum* that was a gift from a friend. This has been growing for at least six years





Moss types such as this liverwort, *Conocephalum conicum*, would normally be seen as undesirable, but when grown by themselves in this situation they have a certain appeal



It is also being grown in a pot (see below). Knowledgeable enthusiasts will be amazed at the size of the clump



A mat of *Hypnum plumaeforme* Wilson on top of the bench, growing very well and in good health

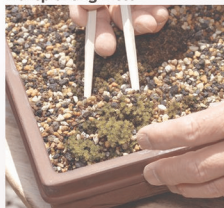
Right: *Pyrrhobryum spiniforme* (Hedw.) Mitt. var. *badakense* growing on cedar bark. Below: It is also being grown in a pot



Some varieties of epiphytic moss growing on a piece of tree bark. From the top, *Pyralisadelpha tenuirostris*, *Haplophymenium triste*, *Entodon challengerii* and others are growing together



Transplanting moss



Try to pick up the hairy fringe moss, *Racomitrium canescens*, with the utmost care so as not to destroy the soil underneath it. Take the whole section using chopsticks



Place on top of some lava rock in a pot and push down to ensure good contact



Submerge the pot carefully in water. This was done in May and so new shoots are yet to appear. It will start to grow in approximately one month, covering the whole pot surface

Moss spreading



To spread *Brachymerium exile* moss, cut up a piece into smaller sections with scissors



This is almost like creating moss 'seeds'. The cut pieces are then pushed into crevices on a rock



The finished rock has moss pushed into crevices where it will take root and start to grow. This moss can also be grated up using a soil sieve and sprinkled on soil or Musou

resistant. When it has dried out it has a whitish green appearance as opposed to a deep green when full of moisture. Water in the morning and evening in summer and once every two to three days in the winter.

Hypnum plumaforme Wilson

A moss with long thin foliage and a soft texture. A strong variety that will adapt

to different conditions, full sun, semi and full shade are all possible. Water when it starts to dry out.

Thuidium cymibifolium

Prefers being placed in semi or full shade. Suits a moist environment as it is weak in drought conditions. If the humidity is high and soil moist enough it will grow luxuriously.



Creating moss balls



Here are Musou, left and Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson, right. (Musou is a proprietary blend of Keto soil and peat moss)



Soak Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson and Musou in water and mix them together. Keep Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson long and fibrous to make it easier to form a ball



Select the chosen plant material together attractively and combine with the pre-mixed Musou and Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson. Fix with string or an elastic band, forming a ball in your hands and squeezing it tight



Tricolour canary reed grass, purple leaved honeysort and fringed orchid are used to create this moss ball

Keto soil and Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson



Mix together Akadama and sand to improve aeration and percolation of water. It can then be cultivated in a similar way to a plant in a pot



Wrap the Keto mixture around the roots of the plants, squeezing it into and around them

Then wrap a sheet of the Hypnum plumaeforme Wilson moss around the ball



Tie the whole thing together with a thread. The grass is a Hakonechloa variety

Tips for applying moss to trees

If a large amount of soil remains attached at the base, it will sit proud on the surface

Cut as close to the base of the moss as possible with scissors, making it as thin as possible



Using assorted varieties of moss will make it appear more natural and give the surface variations in texture and colour



Moss application is finished. The moss still sits proud around the edge of the pot

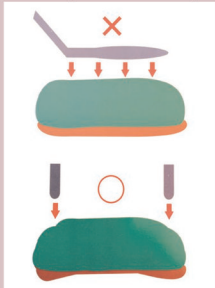


Using the edge of a small spatula, push down the moss around the edge



Work is finished. The line of the pot is clearly defined, giving it a more attractive appearance

The moss placement technique



Push down the moss from the edges of each block

The normal technique is to cut up the moss into small blocks and place them on the surface. Do not push them down flat, but rather just push the edges down with a spatula or similar, so that the middle of each block remains higher. This creates some natural looking height variations. It's not always necessary to cover the entire soil surface. You can leave some of the surface visible, while surrounding the trunk with moss to give a natural appearance

On the ground humidity is very high thanks to the gravel, so the humidity loving species such as those found next to mountain streams can be found here



An exhibition introduces moss to a wider audience

In recent years there have been a number of moss exhibitions where many varieties of moss are exhibited. The visitors are exposed to and can experience an incredible array of different ecosystems and natural environments.



The delicate and very popular moss, *Haplomitrium mnioides*, displayed on a shallow pot. The one below is from Mr Tanoue's garden and it maintains its beauty



Mr Tanoue answers many questions from visitors. The number of enthusiasts for moss is increasing



Twin trunk Taxus



Jan Culek sketches options for the yew of Igor Vengust

Taxus is one of most stunning trees for bonsai with small, deep green foliage and red-brown bark. Yew is similar to the juniper, very bendable and flexible so that you can create almost any style

Design 1

Jan: I would visualise the future styling of this *taxus* as a double trunk and use a maximum of the branches. Deadwood at the top and the right portion of the trunk may be used as a feature, to make the overall design more interesting. The trunks do not offer many special features: they're are very thin and cylindrical, so the main goal will be to divide the future foliage pads across the entire tree and create uneven spaces between the green mass. This can help to achieve more visual interest in the composition.

The oval unglazed pot would work well for this kind of tree, which feels almost feminine.

Design 2

In the second option I used just the single bigger trunk and visualised a design with the main branch pointing to the right side. The upper portion of the tree and apex should maintain the main flow to the right to achieve the visual unity of the design.

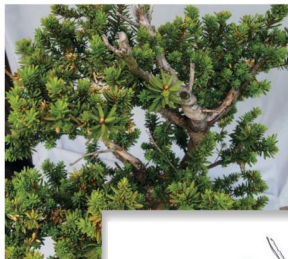
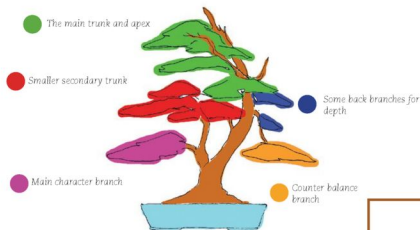
For the pot I would also use the unglazed oval.



Details

Taxus (*Taxus baccata*)
Owner: Igor Vengust (DE)
Origin: bonsai nursery
Height: 60 cm
Estimated age: 15 years

Design 1



This design option is my favourite

Design 2



Above: The Taxus seen from the side.
Left: The single trunk results in an elegant tree



Want to send your bonsai picture, too?

If featured, you are rewarded with the signed original sketch. 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 seed of Cuban bonsai

The bonsai passion of Jorge Luis Guerra Pensado

Text: Bonsai Focus Studio Photography: Jorge Luis Guerra Pensado

You may not realise it right now, but Cuba has a thriving bonsai community. Jorge Pensado is the passionate motor behind Cuban bonsai.



I have never had a bonsai teacher, but taught myself via Naka and Yoshimura's bonsai collection guides, the magazine 'Bonsai Actual' and sporadic internet searches. With only this amount of knowledge — may God forgive me — I began offering bonsai courses. Fourteen years later I founded Bonsai Habana, the root of Cuban bonsai.

Do you have plans to go to Japan to become an apprentice to some of the Masters?

Our Cuban economic situation does not allow me to do something like that, but it would be my dream to spend a year with Suzuki or Fujikawa.

What was your professional education?

During professional development I gained multiple experiences that helped me when I decided to take a competitive exam. After this I became a polygraph technician. Years later I enrolled in the Faculty of Social Communications and graduated in Journalism and Marketing.

How did it all start?

When I was about seven my much loved grandmother encouraged me to collect stamps and, among our collection, I found one of them depicting a Chinese bonsai. The possibility of creating small trees kept me spiritually imprisoned. By some miracle my friend gave me John Yoshio Naka's first book thirty-nine years later.

Who is your bonsai teacher, and what is the most important thing you have learned?

What is your philosophy of bonsai?

For me, bonsai represents an unique performance to be carried out on a living entity that we must accommodate, feed, protect, and

occasionally heal and shape in the best possible manner, much like a child. Is there any other artistic manifestation that can equal this in commitment and results?

Today many enthusiasts are asked about why they copy the Japanese style. But who hasn't followed his teacher during their formative process until they find their own path? Those who disagree with this should, perhaps, consider a closer look at Renaissance art.

Whether understood or not, the truth is that bonsai is a Chinese-Japanese four fold creation of incredible artistic, cultural and educational values transcending all boundaries and idiosyncrasies. Both Black Scissors and Bonsai Without Borders do a great job in safeguarding new styles of bonsai, but it will also occur as a result of



'Pied Grande',
Conocarpus erecta,
45 cm, 7 years training.



'La Joya Blanca',
Conocarpus erecta,
54 cm, 6 years in
training

the progress achieved through worldwide diversity, as well as each geographical peculiarity and local flora.

In my own personal situation and as a self-taught practitioner, I must say that in my first years, I followed the Japanese styles unconditionally as the only ones available to me. I then discovered bonsai by Taiwanese Masters using indigenous species similar to ours, but with their own unique styles and techniques.

Now, with my not so sound training, my designs are created based on what I feel that each tree needs and keep in mind its unique character. I'm not a fan of grafting, radical transformation, nor of extreme



'La Reverencia del Dragón', *Suriana maritima*, 58 cm, 3 years in training



Jorge Luis Guerra Pensado

Born in: Havana City

Married: No, I am single

Children: I have a 36 year old son

Education: Journalist and polygraph technologist

Profession: Bonsai cultivator

Into bonsai since: 1997

Favourite species: *Suriana maritima*, *Tabebuia*, *Bucida*.



**No one should think that I do bonsai just as a living . . .
I do bonsai to enjoy myself.**

interference. I prefer yamadori that will challenge me to make the most of them.

Which trees do you like to work on?

First the *Suriana*, very good for all styles: small spatulate leaves, it's feasible with dry wood and occasional victim of odium. I also enjoy all the *Tabebuia* species, our fast growing indigenous oak. With strong wood, it produces pink flowers twice a year.



What is your worst mistake?

To not have worked harder in seeking more knowledge of bonsai.

Do you favour the Japanese or Western bonsai style?

When I ponder on this I find differences between the work of Master Shinji Suzuki and the new generation represented by Bjorn Bjorholm, though both share Japanese training. Evolution in the art is more evident in Europe and the most advanced in the West. There enthusiasts



'El Viejo', *Ficus microcarpa*, 63 cm, 20 years in training



'Merique', *Ficus microcarpa*, 13 cm, 6 years in training



are distancing their approach from the Japanese minimalist concept. I believe that outside the China, Japan and Taiwan triangle — three schools that I recognize — other nations will find their own path and discover their unique style.

How is it for bonsai in Cuba?

Immersed in our reality as a developing country and submitted to an ongoing US blockade for nearly six decades, we have learned to meet most of our objectives even in the most difficult circumstances.



'La Maja', *Suriana maritima*, 74 cm, 4 years in training

With bonsai it is no different.

As I explained, we have been self-taught and in our national market there are no suppliers to provide us with essential materials. We must find our own way to import tools, rolls of wire, fungicide, wound sealant or a Dremel. These are available only to those who can afford such luxuries.

Even so, a group of us is still able to create genuine bonsai and achieve many other goals together with our fellow Cubans.



'Amaterasu', *Suriana maritima*, 73 cm, 10 years in training



'Kiso', *Tabebuia lithophila*, 83 cm, 8 years training



It pays to show

By Tony Tickle, with the assistance of Banquo

The letter has arrived. Anxiously you pick it up. The postmark tells you all you need to know about where it has come from. Your heart thumps. With trepidation you open the envelope. YES!

For anyone with a passion for bonsai, that day when your tree is accepted into a big show is exhilarating. You will have spent many years nurturing, watering and styling your tree. You may have spent a lot of money on the perfect pot, the ideal table. You will probably have created a beautiful accent plant to show your tree off to its best. All of that effort has its benefits when your tree is shown; the prestige, the recognition of your work and, if it's important to you, the value of the tree will increase as it has been acknowledged as an important specimen. It most certainly pays to show.

So you would expect your creation to be curated and presented in the best possible way at the show, wouldn't you? Sadly it is not always thus and the reason is quite simple:

Money.

National and international exhibitions cost a lot of money to stage. There are many costs associated with hosting such a bonsai exhibition, almost irrespective of its size. There is the hiring of the venue, hiring of tables, construction of display stands, security, promotional material, the insurance and advertising. All this is before a tree even enters the hall.

One solution is for organisers to seek sponsorship. Yet this is becoming increasingly difficult to secure. On occasion the organisers may not be sponsorship savvy — they are uncertain of how to identify and approach potential sponsors, or of what to offer them in return for their patronage. These days there are few who offer up sponsorship for nothing. Bonsai as an art form is also less in the public eye so an association with a bonsai exhibition does not necessarily offer sufficient exposure for the non-bonsai sponsor.

And so organisers generally fall back on the vendors/traders to cover the bulk of costs and, as shows get bigger, more traders are needed. Of course traders provide significant added value to the show and, for most people, they are a major attraction.

But there is a danger that just to keep costs to a minimum, the trader area may end up by being significantly larger than the exhibition itself. Increased choice for the visitors it undoubtedly is, but for the traders it creates a huge amount of competition for the money in the pockets of the visitor. The potential for diminished returns caused by too many traders at an event may leave some of them seriously considering whether attendance at the show is cost effective.

So is there an alternative? Well perhaps there is and it might be this: currently exhibiting a tree at many major bonsai shows incurs no cost to the exhibitor. There are, however, exceptions to that. At the US national show, for example, an entry fee of \$75 per bonsai or shohin composition is taken when your bonsai is accepted for the exhibition. At the Kokufu exhibition in Japan it costs the tree's owner the equivalent of about \$200 to have a single tree pre-judged. If the tree is then actually selected for the show, around another \$600 fee is required for its entry in the Kokufu-ten. Should we then consider charging for the pleasure of exhibiting?

I have discussed charging exhibitors a nominal fee with other organisers of the major shows and I received somewhat mixed opinions on whether this would be acceptable to the exhibitors. This is mostly because the 'free to exhibit' precedent had been set. Yet in any other national shows such as photography or painting, the participants pay to enter. In Belgium I had a conversation with a well-known artist from Spain. His view was that to attend the show, his costs exceed 1500 euros, and if paying to participate ensured that his work was curated to the highest level he

would have no problem in paying fees.

There are two sides to this to consider: on the one hand, as a contributing exhibitor you are providing your tree to enrich the show therefore why should you have to pay for the privilege? On the other, if exhibitions are to continue to improve, if visitors are not to be put off by inflated entry prices and if traders are not to be milked dry, then funding must come from somewhere. If sponsorship is not a viable option, then exhibitors may need to step up to the mark and contribute something. After all, if it pays to show, then perhaps exhibitors, too, may need to pay to show.

Addendum: In my column "Making sense of senseis" I singled out Italy as having a particular problem of participants believing that their qualification as a practitioner allows them to teach bonsai. In fact it's a problem across the western world.



Jubilee exhibition: 40 years Ginkgo

Showing trees from the collection of Bonsai Center Ginkgo of Danny Use. And trees from the collection of Jean-Paul Polmans & "Eda Uchi Kai", Carlos van der Vaart & "The Bonsaifactory", Hans van Meer & students, Frederic Chenal, Michael Tran, Teunis Jan Klein, Dominique Bosch, Edo De Groot, Olivier Melin and all the members of "Kei Bonsai Kai"



Shohin



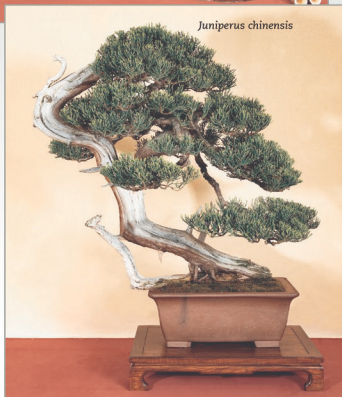
Chamaecyparis

Danny Use: 'Our goal was to make a show with a lot of different varieties, styles and different levels, so that also beginners could participate. With that concept of show we gave the possibility to all bonsai enthusiasts to taste from the art of displaying.'



Euonymus



Larix kaempferi*Juniperus chinensis*

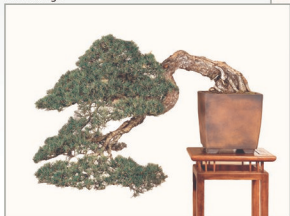


Pinus mugo



Quercus suber

Pinus mugo





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To mark our 40th year, we are extending our
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known for his Dazai carving and bonsai stands.
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Made in Germany

Bonsai Club Germany's great 40 year anniversary celebration in Augsburg

Text and photography: Jörg Derlien

This year the Bonsai Club Germany celebrated its 40th anniversary and therefore met in Augsburg at the event centre Kongress am Park. For this purpose, the club hosted a large, varied exhibition and international guests, as well as demonstrations from Japan and Germany

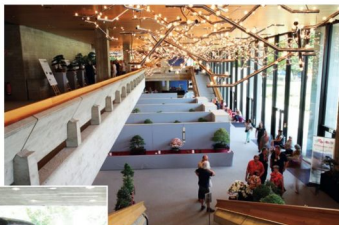


Taiko drummers at the opening ceremony

The congress centre in Augsburg offered the perfect location for this big event, with sufficient exhibition space for trees and dealers, as well as a large stage for the international designers. The jubilee celebration was organized by the study groups of Augsburg and Hofstetten under the direction of Harald Lehner. Due to his good contacts in Japan, he managed to bring a young team of professional bonsai designers to Germany. The 26 year old Hiroaki Suzuki, son of Shinji Suzuki, has studied with Masahiko Kimura for six years and also worked with juniper during his demonstrations. Since he was 15 years old Daisuke Katagiri has been working in the family business. There he is mainly responsible for the care of the customers' trees.

Elite designers

Of course also on stage were Germany's 'elite' designers such as Werner M. Busch,



Above: Overview of the exhibition.
Below: *Carpinus coreana*, by Ivo Drüge



Seen in the entrance area, this old timer carrying an impressive spruce forest



Exhibition of the suiseki





Antique Japanese woodblock prints with bonsai motifs were gracefully staged



At the opening ceremony Harald Lehner leads the guests of honour through the exhibition

Hartmut Münchenbach, Udo Fischer, Uwe Schulze-Zumhalsen and the German 'New Talent 2016', René Alber.

The participation in the New Talent Contest was also pleasing this year. Five candidates faced the challenge and finally Wolfgang Egbert, who belongs to the study group of Steinfurt, prevailed against the other entrants. Besides the 'normal' exhibition there were also some special exhibitions to admire. On the upper floor, the shohin were staged. Some of the best gold medal winners of the past 40 years were also presented together with the history of bonsai in Germany.



Werner Busch at work



Hiroaki Suzuki with Udo Fischer on the left



Daisuke Katagiri

German history

The history of the German bonsai scene was vividly exhibited on interesting display boards. An exhibition of suiseki was to be found and Gudrun Benz didn't hesitate in giving a most interesting and entertaining talk. The exhibition gave us the opportunity to meet Peter Krebs, an artist in creating pots, whom we hadn't seen for a long time at an exhibition. In addition to his ceramics he presented further historical pots and also gave a first class talk. Beautiful kusamono and antique Japanese woodblock prints with bonsai motifs were also gracefully staged.

Best shohin display of the exhibition designed by Peter Schwarzer





Exhibition of pots by Peter Krebs



The olive by this year's trophy winner, Christian Przybylski, was ranked third in the Oomono category

First class

The exhibition reached a quality never before seen in Germany. Harald Lehner had succeeded in acquiring owners of first class bonsai to exhibit their trees in Augsburg. Even the three Japanese guests had each displayed a tokonoma with one of their trees. Because of the quality of the impressive trees shown here, it was not surprising that, in addition to the first-placed winning bonsai, some 'Jury Awards' were also donated. Most trees were registered under the Oomono class (over 45 cm). This included the extremely impressive yew of Heinrich Hacker, which was awarded, without any doubt, the gold medal of the Bonsai Club Germany. The first prize in the category Chuchin (up to 45 cm) was given to Ivo Drüge. Peter Schwarzer convinced the jury with his shohin display.

Again this year a beautiful year book of the exhibition will be published. The slightly more comprehensive anniversary book will be sent free of charge to the members of the Bonsai Club Germany.



Winning tree in the category Oomono (more than 45 cm) was the *Taxus cuspidata* of Heinrich Hacker

A display by Yoshihiko Moriyama





Special exhibition of the gold medal winners from the last 40 years and the history of the Bonsai Club Germany



Second prize in the big trees' category, *Acer palmatum* by Claus Kimmig



The history of the Bonsai Club Germany.

A display in a tokonoma by Hiroaki Suzuki



A tokonoma display by Daisuke Katagiri





Master tricks

Grafting techniques taught by bonsai Masters to improve your bonsai

Text and photography: Kinbon, Japan

These techniques can all boost the quality of your bonsai. Grafting, approach grafting and some simple bending are just a few of the options available. Let these Masters inspire you to change the level of your trees

Transformation by air layer — a kifu size rock planting to shohin size masterpiece

Yukio Hirose: 'To be honest, this Chirimen kazura (*Trachelospermum asiaticum*) planted on a rock is by no means a bad tree as it is. However, I can see a way of increasing the quality even further, by air layering it away from the rock.'

1



Chirimen kazura before work. Height: 30 cm Width: 30 cm (including rock). The weakness of the roots on the rock is letting this tree down somewhat and so the idea is to air layer it and remove it from the rock



First the rock is removed from the entangled roots. Looking at the thickness of the trunk, it will make a superb shohin



Rings are cut through the cambium layer on all the roots as close to the base of the trunk as possible. No bark remains at the back and front



Chopped sphagnum moss that has been soaked in water is wrapped around the ring marked sections and overwrapped in plastic, which is tied in position

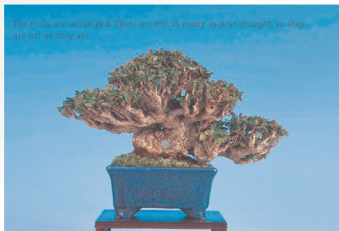


10 months after the air layer was started, the plastic is removed, and the roots are untangled. Plenty of roots have developed from the trunk



After the work has finished. Height: 13 cm Width: 20 cm. Pot: Tofukuji rectangle

A masterpiece shohin has been created from what was simply a good kifu size rock planting



The roots are untangled. There are not as many as first thought, so they are left as they are.

Compacting a tree to bring out the severe character of the roots

Masamitsu Kubota: 'This is by no means poor quality material, but it needs something doing to it in order to bring out its full potential.'

2

White pine, front before work Height: 40 cm Width: 79 cm. It has already been pulled together once, it will be difficult to compact the roots even further.



Using a jack to pull in the top section. Carefully listening for sounds of cracking, the foliage is brought closer to the roots



Once compaction is complete, the volume of foliage in the top section is noticeably too much and so it is to be reduced



After branch removal. The apex, back branch and a character branch can all be created from what remains



Final shape. The foliage pads have been spread out and widened. This creates a wider image, but allows light and airflow into the interior of the tree

After work has finished. Height: 40 cm Width: 58 cm
Pot: Japanese round
During the repotting process, the roots were compacted even further. As the tree is yet to be considered finished, it is planted into a larger pot



Approach graft on a maple

Maitani Youhe: 'This trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) has been allowed to deteriorate, but we can make use of the aged root base (nebari) and trunk and redesign the tree, first removing all the branches that you think are unnecessary. Trident maple will very easily send out new buds on old wood, but not always exactly where you want them. Because of this, grafting is a good technique to get branches into the correct positions.'



End of February: While remodelling the top section of the tree we'll change the leaf type for one with better characteristics. The unnecessary lower branches have already been cut. To aid healing the wounds and in preparation for grafting, the remaining branches have been allowed to grow for one season.

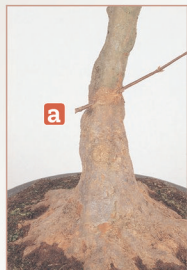


Place the approach branch into the notch and check that the two cambial layers fit together snugly



Use grafting tape that has some elasticity to hold the approach branch into the notch

The approach graft is finished. Before performing the graft, tie both pots to one plank of wood. This makes transportation easy



You can cut the branch below the graft (a) if you are certain that it has healed. If you are uncertain, wait until the leaves have dropped before cutting



After fixing: The approach branch is angled so that the shoot that will be used appears natural

End of November, after the leaves have dropped and the graft has joined



This example shows how grafted branches develop, the top is used as a sacrifice branch and will be cut off later



Showing another example, the new side branches have developed strongly enough



Getting rid of a boring trunk line

Tomonari Nishikawa: 'I can show you how to improve a dull juniper by implementing air layering techniques.'

4



Juniper before work. Height: 78 cm Width: 80 cm. There is plenty of foliage and branches and looking at the shari in the lower trunk, it seems as though a good tree can be made as it stands



After removing some unnecessary branches, the straight, uninteresting trunk is revealed



An air layer is applied by removing cambium layers around the trunk. Root hormone powder is applied to the live vein from where roots are to be created



A plastic pot is set in position and the soil is poured into it



15 months after the air layer was performed. The presence of new roots is verified and top section is removed



The bottom section looks as though a good tree can be created from it. Height: 49 cm Width: 63 cm



The top section after separation. A splendid bonsai can be created from what many would have discarded. Height: 58 cm Width: 72 cm

The bottom section after styling. Although there are not yet enough branches on the tree, the character of the material has been accentuated



Top section after styling. Height: 40 cm Width: 55 cm Pot: Antique Chinese. A splendid looking tree has been created from what was unpromising material.





Pinus mugo

Piotr Czerniachowski works on a mugo pine

Text: Piotr Czerniachowski Photography: Milan Karpisek

In Poland bonsai is thriving, Piotr Czerniachowski (46) is among the most active. His passion for bonsai reaches back to his childhood and now he has become a huge inspiration for new Polish bonsai talent



Piotr: A great opportunity to work with an old precious yamadori is for any bonsai artist a very important and exciting event. I feel the same about this magnificent, most interesting *Pinus mugo*.

This tree comes from the Alps and has been in a training container long enough (the 4th season) to start the first styling. This species often grows in dynamic and twisted forms. It is the result of huge masses of snow, which press down the flexible branches and trunk for most of the year, shaping these fantastic shapes. The material presented here also has important and precious features for a bonsai.

The natural deadwood jin and shari are covered with patina. They will be better exposed by changing the planting angle at the front of the tree.

The main challenge was to find the right

proportions of the whole composition by compacting the crown and selecting the branches. It was important to form the crown in such a way as to create space around the foliage pads, necessary to eventually provide better light to the so called 'sleeping buds'.

For making more dramatic corrections to the branches, an elastic bandage was useful. As well as the innate flexibility of mugo pine, it also provided an excellent final effect and a promising future. I had no damage or branch decay after styling the tree, so all branches are thriving well.

Examining the tree; this is a horizontal growing pine

Seen from this side it shows the great curving deadwood





The part remaining after cutting off the branch is to become a jin

Tree analysis

Minus:

- The foliage is too far from the trunk
- The horizontal position of the trunk is uninteresting
- Wrong proportions

Plus:

- Old and precious deadwood elements of the jin and shari
- After changing the planting angle, the trunk shows interesting movement
- Old bark

Some deadwood areas, which need to look more natural



Without damaging the live vein I carefully remove parts of the dead bark to reveal the shari



Piotr Czerniachowski

Born in: Wałbrzych, Poland

Married to: My beautiful and amazing wife, Małgorzata

Children: Maja (17) and Bartek (7)

Education: Higher economic education

Profession: Bonsai artist

Into bonsai since: I was a teenager, so it's been in my life for around 30 years.

Favourite species: *Larix* and *Pinus*

Working on the deadwood



I only use manual tools where possible, so here I am using a chisel to split the wood



A special curette can be very helpful



The result after the work



The natural, deadwood is most beautiful and valuable. I'm very careful; I don't want to damage it



Now I'm looking for the best front view

Wiring the tree



Precise wiring is the guarantee of a good final result. I still have the tree in the original position, but the idea is to create a cascade style



Viewing it from the side. The pine needs to be cleaned before wiring to get rid of the old needles. A thick branch will serve as the top, so it will need to be bent upwards when I position the tree at the desired angle



I use rubber tape instead of raffia. It is wrapped very tightly around the branch. This is very effective and easy to apply



It works very easily. I start by winding the tape round a few times to anchor it



Then, very slowly, I wrap the whole branch with the rubber tape



This is how it looks after the wrapping is complete



I start the wiring process using the thickest wire



Seen from the right side, wiring the same branch



The back view reveals the beautiful and natural deadwood areas

Seen from the other side, wiring the main branches





Milan Karpisek, who took most of the photos, also helps with the wiring



Positioning the tree: this is the future front of the bonsai



You can see the main branches, which are wrapped in rubber tape. Next step is to position them



Gradually the shape of the tree is revealed. A branch at the top (a) seems to have become less necessary



So, I remove the branch at the top leaving the stump to make a jin



A small struggle with the branch, which will become the top of the cascade



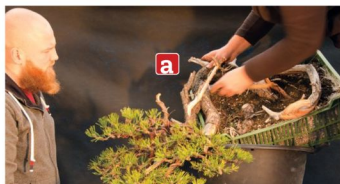
A good tree crown has its branches growing in every direction



Positioning the branches in the top



The top of the tree is gradually completing the composition



Bartek Syczewski assists and also keeps me company. Meanwhile, I give it a final touch by making the stump of this branch (a) into a jin



The final look of the first styling. I'm glad to see the result, which show a beautiful, natural-looking tree. Inset: Photomontage of the tree planted in a future cascade pot



Straight and fine

Kai Sperling just makes pots. As he says himself, he's a potter for bonsai

Text and photography: Bonsai Focus Studio

After losing his job Kai Sperling started creating ceramics as a hobby and became fascinated by it. Now he is a full-time bonsai potter



How did it all start?

My teacher in bonsai was Mr Armbruster in Mössingen, Germany. He still makes small and accent pots for bonsai. When I asked him for a custom made pot for me, he suggested that I buy some clay and try making one myself. Years later, after finishing my studies in Forestry at the University of Applied Sciences, I went back to Nord Rhein Westphalen (NRW, Germany) and moved to Wesel. I worked there in forestry for a year, using my country-specific education. After that I was unemployed, because there were not enough jobs in forestry. So I remember

the words of Mr Armbruster and started to work with clay as a hobby.

What's the most important thing you learned?

There was a small ceramic studio next to my home. I bought clay and glazes and they fired it. I tried to make some accent pots and I became better. So I began to learn more about ceramics and bought a potter's wheel and books about glazes and techniques. It is very difficult to start working on the wheel, with only a book and photographs. So I visited two weekend workshops that were given by a professional potter. After that I practised every day to train my hands and about two months later, I made my first teapots...

I think the most important thing is to learn all the basics, like throwing on the potter's wheel or the chemistry of glazes. And don't give up. At the beginning it is very frustrating and it needs lots of time to learn and train your hands.

What's so fascinating about ceramics?

You can work with them without the need for expensive investments.

The clay comes out of the earth and you just need to form and fire it. I have practised it for a long time now, but it's always fascinating when you start with a block of clay and end by opening the kiln to find a beautiful finished pot. It's as exciting as the first time you opened the kiln, years ago.



There is no end. Even when you have finished a difficult pot, it's just as hard to make the same pot bigger, unglazed or with polished surface and so on. You have to learn again and again. There is no end to learning... And after all, when you do a good job, the pot can exist for a long time. Even longer than a lifetime.

What is your philosophy of bonsai ceramics?

I prefer straight, fine pots, without any distraction for the eye. In pot making, I am not an artist, I am simply a potter of bonsai ceramics. The pots I make are for use with bonsai, not for the pot in itself.

Do you make your own glazes?

When you want to make good pots for bonsai, you have to make your own glazes



and colours. You can buy many different glazes, but only a few colour numbers are suitable for bonsai. The other potters can use them, too.

When I was younger, I was interested in chemistry. That helps a bit in the world of glazes. I started with raku glazes because they are easy to make; you quickly gain experience with oxides and colours. You can also fire many each day, but it's not right for ceramic use.

Stoneware glazes need much more energy and time. So it's very expensive to make new glazes.

For me, it's important to replicate the results. I do a lot of order work and my customers know what they want. So I have to control many factors, from the ingredients to the correct temperature and the position in the kiln.

Do you use gas, electricity or wood-fired kilns?

I use both the gas and electric kilns. The electric kiln is easy to use and control, but it doesn't give the same dramatic results as the gas kiln. I find that when I use gas it gives me more colour variation in the glazes and clay.



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

The Japanese potters are unmatched in quality and perfection. They have a very long tradition in working with clay and even porcelain. The colours and shapes they use are long-time tested and they fit perfectly with the trees. So, what can we do better? If we understand their work and concept of living art, we can apply our own interpretation to our European trees. I think this is what I try to do.

Do you wish to visit Japan to learn from Japanese potters?

Of course, I wish, but I've never heard of a European potter who has learned how



I prefer straight, fine pots, without any distraction for the eye



Kai Sperling

Born in: Bottrop, Germany

Married to: Nadine Sperling

Children: Moritz Sperling, male, 12 years

Education: Forestry engineer

Profession: Bonsai potter

Into bonsai since: 1998 and into ceramics from 2003

to make bonsai pots from a Japanese potter, but that's just my opinion. I do know some potters who were taught about teapots and bowls, or the harmony and theory of colour and form. I don't really believe Japanese potters show you how they make handmade pots. It's just the same as the big secret we keep here in Europe. When you want to make pots, you have to carry out your own research. Today, of course, you have YouTube and other internet sites showing videos and tutorials. It is now much easier to source information, but the whole process isn't really revealed.



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

Yes, they are increasingly appreciated today. Years ago it was more difficult for bonsai potters, until potters like Peter Krebs contributed much for German and European handmade bonsai pots to become more valued. Today in Europe, we have many bonsai masterpieces and this means the pots become more important for the enthusiast.

Do you have any other interests or hobbies?

Bonsai is my hobby and pottery is my core job. But as well as this, I go running about three times a week and I like to fish when I have time to do so.



What or who inspires you?

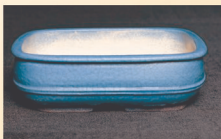
Peter Krebs and Petra Engelke inspire me greatly. They have shown that we can produce handmade pots to the Japanese quality.

Bonsai is a part of my life. I travel often and visit many exhibitions. Sometimes I see a tree that seems to reach directly into my heart. So I keep open eyes and the will to learn more and I know that, perhaps under such a tree, the pot is one of mine.

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

Bonsai is a fascinating, living kind of art. You have a miniature piece of nature at home and can work with it. Over the years our trees grow older, become more expressive and mature, but only when we do a good job and take care of them. When we make a little mistake, it can cost us years of work, or perhaps even the tree itself.

It is much the same when making pots. Every little step is important and just one bad day or less attention while you work can destroy everything you've put into it. At least when it comes out of the kiln in one piece you don't need to water it every day!



Can you make a living out of bonsai pottery?

In 2005 the owner of a small ceramic studio asked me if I wanted to take over the shop, as he wanted to retire. So during the first few years, I sold clay and glazes and had time to expand my knowledge. But then the pottery market in Germany collapsed really quickly, though I still needed time to learn how to make pots and how the market works. So I had really hard times. I often thought about quitting and doing something else. Today, though, that small ceramic studio is changed into a bonsai pottery and I can make a living from my pots.



Jubilee exhibition: 40 years Ginkgo



Pinus mugo



Rhododendron indicum

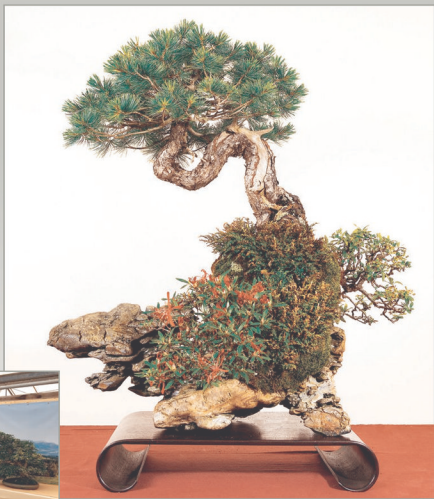


Juniperus chinensis, ishi-tsuke



*Cryptomeria*

Photo: Bonsai Focus Studio

*Pinus parviflora**Pinus parviflora*



Buxus



Pinus parviflora



Quercus robur

Autumn is the new spring

Harry Harrington on collecting deciduous trees in autumn

Text and photography: Harry Harrington

Here Harry considers the best time to collect native trees in the wild

Roots of deciduous trees are very active in the late summer and throughout autumn. Having spent the growing season, a tree will have been involved in the heavy production of sugars through its leaves. As a result, the sugars (as starch) then need to be stored within the trunk and roots in preparation for leaf-fall and the cold winter months. To store much of these life-giving sugars, the above-ground growth will slow to a standstill leaving the tree to concentrate on the production of new roots.

Collecting deciduous trees in September through to the beginning of December will take full advantage of this strong growth under the surface of the soil, when temperatures are cooling and transpiration (loss of moisture) from the leaves is greatly reduced. The earliest start to this collecting season depends on your local climate. By September in the UK, night temperatures have dropped to the low double figures, typically the ground will no longer be dry and the first autumn colours will be seen on some trees by October. These signs indicate that I can safely go and collect!



Crataegus mongyna (hawthorn) prepared in the ground for two years prior to collection in November 2003. Image taken from my book 'bonsai inspirations 1' that traces the development of this yamadori



The hawthorn bonsai out of leaf in December 2016

It is important when using this timing not to wait until the tree has become too dormant. Because the tree is still in leaf there may exist the fear of failure. Although some deciduous species, and individual specimens, can be collected successfully throughout dormancy, these autumn months will often yield the best results and survival rate. Having spent

the past 3 years collecting yew, elm, pyracantha, field maple, hawthorn, birch, beech, blackthorn and dogwood from early October onwards. Along with my apprentice Sean Stop, we have been able to identify that there is a reduction in our success rate from early-December (typically 4-6 weeks after leaf fall).

The fact that Sean and I have now collected a large number of trees from the same locality and use very similar methods to revive them

in gardens just about a mile apart, has allowed us to compare notes and draw conclusions as to the best times to collect and maintain aftercare. These findings were then followed in New Zealand by fellow enthusiast Samuel Brierley who has confirmed that autumn collecting is as good as, if not better than, collecting in spring as is traditional.

One major caveat with collecting in autumn is that the tree needs collecting with leaves, as many as possible, to fuel new root growth before the tree has fully entered dormancy. It is not recommended to chop a trunk, therefore, at the same time as collecting in autumn. Forward thinking and planning is required; trees that have been marked for collecting are better chopped during winter before, or at least, during summer before collection. This allows them to respond with new growth that will remain on the tree when





Base of a very old (100+ years) hawthorn growing in a shallow layer of moss and leaf-mould. Deadwood and life veins on the trunk have been created by decades of damage caused by the local deer and rabbit populations



The same hawthorn 2½ years after collection in October 2015. Height: 80 cm

it is removed from the ground. I would strongly recommend scouting out trees in the year, or years, prior to collection. Chop them in preparation as necessary, feed them, make sure they are vigorous and also try to mark them on map software so they can be found again during the cold dark months of dormancy!

A legal and moral responsibility

It should go without saying that we, as bonsai enthusiasts, have a legal and moral responsibility to collecting. Whether tree collecting is applied to trees in domestic hedges or gardens, or the wild, simple respect for the law and nature should be applied. Ensure that you have legal permission to walk and collect on the land. Make sure that the tree has the strength to survive collection and is given the best possible chance of survival with appropriate aftercare. We have been 'lucky' enough to find a location

where many very old trees will be removed by the landowners over the coming decade. However, when you look for material for yourself, please consider the possibility that you may be endangering the life of an old tree as well as removing it from the wild for your own personal use. Consider the fact that collecting yamadori successfully is not easy, requires a high level of aftercare and the tree may not be workable for 2-3 years, if at all.



Above: The same hawthorn, shown left, 15 years later, in June 2018. Height: 83 cm with a 30 cm wide nebari.
Right: In a pot by Victor Harris, a yew (*Taxus baccata*) dug out from the fields





Beech yamadori collected in autumn. Having grown in a shallow, but wet, layer of leaf-mould and moss on top of solid bedrock, these trees have very shallow and well ramified roots. The old organic soil is removed by hand prior to potting up, but the roots are not washed to keep some mycorrhizae intact.



Fagus sylvatica growing wild in the Chiltern Hills that run around my home. These have been chewed repeatedly by deer so that despite their 90-100 years, they are still small and well-ramified.



In the hills around the South-East of the UK there is a lot of chalk grassland, perfect for hawthorn and blackthorn.



This huge beech yamadori was found growing down the side of a ditch.

Beech collected in autumn 2015 . . .

. . . And after styling in autumn 2017



Specific species

Note that these details are intended for removing trees from the wild or domestic situations and does not indicate when it's best to repot a bonsai of the same species.

Fagus sylvatica (European beech)

European beech have a reputation for failing when collected in early spring and by the time they are ready to burst into leaf in late spring, temperatures can be too high, the ground too dry. However, we have had very good results collecting (and repotting bonsai) beech in autumn as soon as the leaves begin to change colour (late September) through till all of the leaves have turned brown, typically late October in the UK.

I would without hesitation recommend collecting in autumn rather than spring.

Crataegus monogyna (common hawthorn)

Best results have been early October, through to early December around 4 weeks after leaf-fall. Trees collected from December through to the beginning of February, when the ground isn't frozen, will survive but our success rates fell. The 'traditional' collecting time for hawthorn is early February onwards until leaf-break. Our survival rates were only marginally less than in the autumn. However the Autumn-collected trees have typically been stronger in the following year.

Betula (Birch) species

Great care has to be taken to only prune birch while they are active, or they are suffering from dieback of branches and/or the trunk itself. When collected while fully dormant, individual heavy roots can fail and lead to dieback up the trunk. Birch can be collected successfully in early autumn (September onwards) till leaves start changing colour mid-October.

Taxus (yew), *Ulmus* (elm), *Acer campestre* (field maple), *Cornus* (Dogwood), *Pyracantha* species

These are all species we have collected during the autumn months. Although there appears to be little difference between collecting them in autumn or spring after the buds start to swell from February onwards.

Aftercare

Over the years I have had experience of reviving trees outside without any protection and also with a heated (to +7-+8C) polytunnel with success. But by far the best results have been using an open, unheated polytunnel with plenty of light until the buds start to move in early spring. Then using light shade and plenty of humidity as the new shoots extend. Hawthorn and blackthorn are notorious for extending new shoots from stored energy in their trunk and roots, and then the new leaves and shoots failing as the temperatures rise in early summer. This is an indication that there has, in fact, been



no new corresponding root growth. For this reason, it is important to take great care not to bring newly collected trees out of their protective environments too early.

An inorganic soil with good structure is essential for newly collected deciduous species. Hawthorn and blackthorn prefer a very large-grained open mix such as large-grain pumice and bark.

Frost protection is preferred (although some enthusiasts, and my experience, report that this is not essential in a UK winter that rarely drops below -10C). However, protection from the wet is an important advantage as the continual rain we can have during the cold winter months in the UK may well reduce the possibility of survival. Many enthusiasts who revive their trees outside will place the entire tree (including the pot) into a large black plastic bag in early spring. This greatly increases humidity around the tree; warmth and protection from the drying effects of the wind is increased and it also helps control how wet the soil remains while new roots are developing.



Above: Beech in autumn 2015 when collected, with the green leaves turning to autumn colour.
Below: In winter and spring 2018 having been styled, but still in a temporary bonsai pot



This hawthorn was collected in late November 2015 growing in the shelter of a much bigger tree. Age-old bark and haunting characteristics of the trunk caught the eye of US potter Roy Minarai who asked if he could build a pot for this tree



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BONSAI ASSOCIATION BELGIUM



Bjorn's approach

Bjorn Bjorholm shows how to graft on to a juniper bonsai

Text and photography: Bjorn Bjorholm and Bonsai Empire. Edited by Bonsai Focus Studio

In this article, we discuss grafting techniques for juniper bonsai. It is part of Bonsai Empire's 'Advanced Bonsai Course' with Bjorn Bjorholm. Specifically, we look at scion grafting for foliage replacement. Other forms of grafting, such as approach and root grafting are also covered in their online course. All of these forms of grafting, though, are applicable across most juniper species and, if applied correctly, can serve several purposes

First, the most common purpose is to change the foliage type of the subject plant. Quite often, the natural foliage of a given Juniper will not be ideal for use in bonsai culture. It is too coarse, perhaps leggy, unkempt, or weak.

Therefore, it may be necessary to graft stronger, less coarse, or more compact foliage to replace the original growth. This can be accomplished by scion grafting or

by approach grafting.

A second application of grafting is to change the root structure or the position of the root mass on the plant. Quite often, collected yamadori junipers lack a strong nebari (surface root spread) or tachiagari (lower portion of the trunk just above the soil line) due to snow-induced rot, insect damage, or other environmental factors.

Additionally, some juniper species or individual plants lack a vigorous natural root system. In both cases, roots can be grafted at any position on the trunk to remedy any of these problems.

This particular article will cover only scion grafting, which is limited to the first purpose of replacing bad foliage.





The tree we use in this example has not really ideal foliage. It was provided by Bonsai Sense in Mallorca, Spain



Detail of the rather open texture or type of the foliage



Itoigawa junipers have very dense foliage, which can be grafted on to those junipers with poor looking foliage

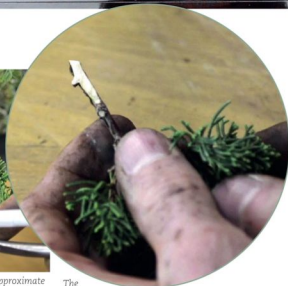
Scion grafting

This grafting involves removing a small shoot or branch from a donor plant and inserting it into the receiving plant. This technique requires patience, precision, and long-term dedication, as it often requires five to ten years to fully develop a bonsai using this technique. The main benefit of scion grafting, however, is that if it is done properly, the graft sites will eventually become nearly invisible, giving the bonsai a more natural appearance as it develops.

Make sure that both the donor plant and the receiving plant are in good health. Fertilize both the plants well during the growing season prior to grafting, which will take place in late winter or early spring. Also, keep both the donor and receiving plant under slight cover during the winter months before grafting. The trees should be allowed to go dormant,



An itoigawa juniper scion features the approximate foliar density required for a successful scion graft. Any less foliage and the shoot will not have enough photosynthetic surface for energy production; any more foliage and the shoot will desiccate



The first cut will be one that is long and gradually sloping

but avoid harsh frosts during that period. In Japan, the most commonly used scion donor foliage is the cultivated *Juniperus itoigawa shimpaku*. This growth is vigorous, yet delicate, it develops nicely and is easy to maintain.

Donor plant

In late winter or the early spring, you will begin the process by identifying terminal shoot growth on the donor plant. Ideally, shoots should be woody at the base and about 6.5 - 10 cm long. Cut off the shoot flat and remove any foliage near its base. Immediately after removing the scion from the donor plant, use a sharp, sterile grafting knife to make 2 cuts at its base. The knife can be sterilized with alcohol. The first cut will be long and gradually sloping, made by holding the scion in one hand, placing the knife against the scion then gently pulling the scion towards oneself, while gently pushing the knife away. Flip the scion over and make a slightly shorter, sharper angled cut on the opposite side. The length of this second cut will be about half to two thirds the length of the first. Try to avoid touching the freshly cut areas of the scion, as this can cause damage or infection.



An itoigawa scion. Flip the scion over and make a slightly shorter, sharper angled cut on the opposite side



Stretch a pre-cut piece of grafting tape along its entire length



Grafting tape

Use both hands to stretch a pre-cut piece of grafting tape along its entire length. Stretching it will provide a better seal when it is applied to the scion. Then, take the stretched grafting tape and



At the end of the scion, twist the tape completely

begin wrapping the scion from the base of the foliage, overlapping the tape by about half on each turn. Do not pull the tape too tightly, as this will crush the foliage, but be sure it is tight enough to keep water from seeping in or out. At the end of the scion, twist the tape completely closed



Graft on to the receiving plant, either on the live portion of the trunk or branch and use a grafting knife to slowly make a cut, which should be long enough to fit the entire end of the scion



Slowly insert the cut end of the scion into the flap on the receiving tree

Receiving plant

Identify where the scion will be grafted on to the receiving plant, either on a live portion of the trunk or branch and use a grafting knife to slowly make a cut in the precise position. The cut should be long enough to fit the entire end of the scion that was previous cut, and it should be deep enough to cut through the cambium layer, down to the hardwood beneath. Try not to wiggle, damage or lift the cut flap.

Insert the cut end of the scion into the flap on the receiving tree. Support the scion at the base with your fingers, so as to avoid damaging it during insertion. Make sure, too, that the longer cut surface is against the trunk or branch and that the shorter cut surface is facing outward. Make sure you align the cambium layer on the donor scion to the cambium layer on the receiving plant.

Pre-stretch another length of grafting tape and begin wrapping it around the insertion point of the graft. Carefully wrap several times, again overlapping by about half on each turn. No water should be allowed to penetrate beneath the tape, as this can cause rot and the scion graft will likely fail.

Protect

Following the grafting process, protect the tree from frosts for the remainder of the cold season. Also, place the tree in partial shade.

During the first growing season, if the grafts are taking successfully, the shoots will begin pushing at the wrapped end of the grafting tape. As this occurs, begin to



Carefully wrap several times, again overlapping by about half on each turn.



It takes five to ten years to fully develop a bonsai using this technique

unwrap tape slowly, typically starting in late May, early June. Unwrap only the very tip of the grafting tape and then gradually unravel one turn every two to three weeks after that. By the end of the summer season, the grafting tape around the scion will have been totally removed. Continue to protect the scion growth from direct sun, or from harsh freezing during the winter. Leave the grafting tape at the base of the scion where it was inserted in the receiving plant for the entire winter and into early spring the following year.

The next spring, as the scions begin to elongate, cut off approximately 25% of the original growth of the receiving plant. By the end of that growing season, another 25% can potentially be removed. Repeat this process in the third year until all of the original foliage is completely removed and only the donor foliage remains.



The essential items are grafting tape and a very sharp grafting knife.



In the case of this tree, five scion grafts were applied; however, it is very common for dozens of such grafts to be made on individual plants.

For more info:
See the online "Advanced Bonsai Course" in which Björn Björholm explains a wide range of advanced bonsai techniques. Go to: www.bonsaiempire.com/courses/advanced-course

Read more:
www.bonsaifocus.com
Grafting techniques issue 1-2010.





Crataegus

Hawthorn: The challenge is to create a finished tree starting from scratch

Text: Kinbon. Illustrations: Kiyosuke Gun and photography: Kinbon

In this series we look at creating bonsai from cuttings, grafting and other methods with interesting and unusual species. With the help of illustrations we will see how to take a piece of material through to completion

Crataegus, or hawthorn, is a member of the *Rosaceae* family and is a small deciduous tree. There are many different varieties of hawthorn, with more than a hundred types in North America. In Japan there are three varieties that grow wild in Hokkaido. The variety used for bonsai in Japan was brought over from China in the distant past for medicinal purposes and has a white flower.

Years 1-3

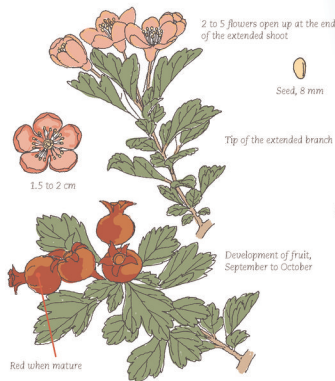
April - May

In the bonsai world they are not only prized for their flowers that blossom beautifully in the

spring, but also their fruit, which develop in the autumn. There's even a seasonal word used in Haiku associated with the flowers of this tree, which can be appreciated in all four seasons.

Red flowering varieties are also used in bonsai, with their single and double flowers. Single red-flowering varieties are similar to the white in their ability to fruit. The double-flowering red types rarely set fruit, but are appreciated for their gorgeous spring flowers and are frequently seen in exhibitions between April and May.

Shape of flower



Shape of fruit



Similar to a pear

Shape of leaf

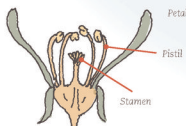
Flattened oval



Reverse oval shape

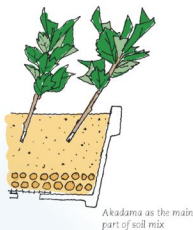
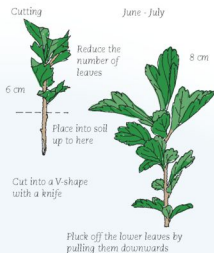
Leaf length 2 to 7 cm

Cross section of the flower



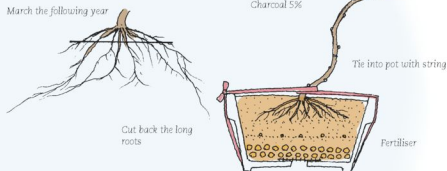
Method for taking cuttings

Cuttings around the edges should be placed at an angle to increase sunlight penetration.



Transplanting

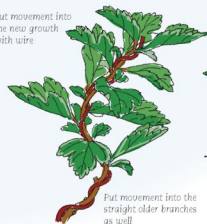
Example soil mix:
Akadama 7
Kiryu 3
Charcoal 5%



Wiring branches

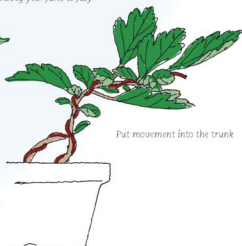
June to July

Put movement into the new growth with wire



Wiring the trunk

Following year June to July



Crataegus HUSBANDRY

Propagate:

With cuttings, or air layer.



Placement:

During the spring and autumn they should be placed in full sun with good ventilation. During winter protect from the harsh conditions. If there is any risk of drying out in the summer, place under a shade cloth.



Pruning:

Prune the elongated branches that have grown out of shape and those short tertiary twigs should be left alone.



Repotting:

Every 3 to 4 years into a mix. When pruning too much it can start to wither a bit, so be conservative on repotting and root pruning. To increase flowering leave mature trees a little more pot-bound.



Watering:

Appreciate lots of fertiliser and water, specially during flowering and fruit setting season and if they dry out, foliage is likely to burn and branch death will occur. During the winter, the risk of drying out should also be lessened by watering every day without fail.

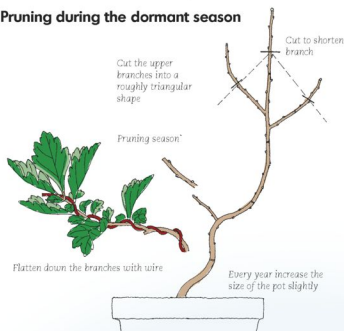


Wiring:

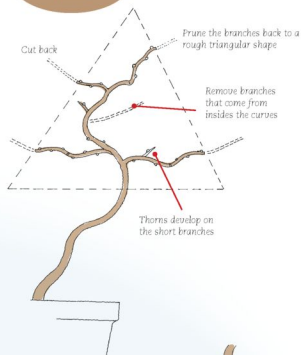
Only very young branches are best wired. Apply clip and grow method so as to maintain its unique growth.



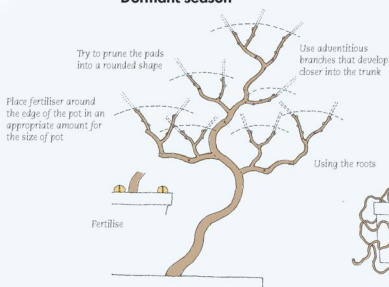
Pruning during the dormant season



Years 4 - 6 Pruning



Pruning foliage pads Dormant season



Fertilise once or twice between April and June
Use liquid fertiliser during July and August and then two or three times between September and November

Use liquid fertiliser during the summer months rather than solid

Repotting

September or March

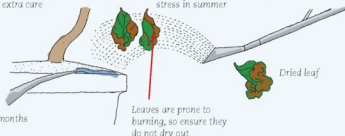
Cut the roots so they are even



New shoots will develop from cut pieces of root

Remove fine roots half way along

Take care not to cause drought stress in summer



Developing branches

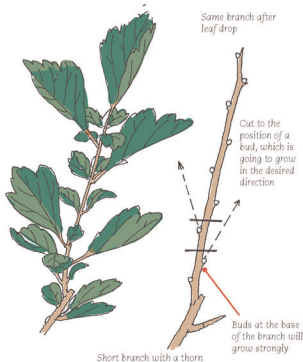
On the hawthorn flower buds develop at the ends of the short branches. They develop in the autumn and then are really visible in the spring when the new growth extends. As a result, the position of pruning and timing is very important if you want to enjoy the flowers and fruit.

When the tree is young and in development, it is better to focus on creating structure rather than concentrating on flowers. Create the foundation of the branching structure by pruning back the new growth to force a second flush. Once the number of secondary branches builds up, they will

naturally start to form the shorter tertiary branches on which the flowers will develop.

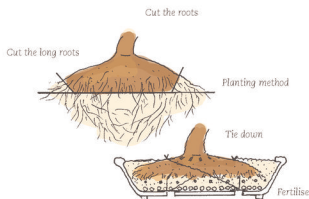
During the dormant season, the only thing that should be pruned is the elongated branches that have grown out of shape. Those short tertiary twigs should be left alone. It is very difficult to determine the difference between flower and leaf buds during the growing season and so they should be left unpruned. When pruning the shoots, the direction of growth should be considered and the shoot pruned back to a bud which is growing in the desired direction.

Growing season



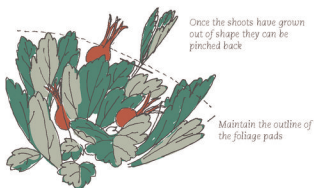
Years 7 - 10 Pruning

Repotting September or March



Soil Mix:
Akadama 8
Kiryu 2
5% Charcoal

Pruning back new growth



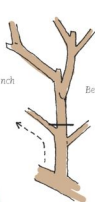
Working on the foliage pads

Dormant period



Upward growing branches

Cut to a weaker branch growing sideways



Becomes stiff

Branches are all too close together



'Armpit' growth, cut off



Cut off shoots developing at the base of branches

Appreciating the fruit

September to November

30 cm

An even, arc-shaped outline of the silhouette

Green fruit become red in the autumn

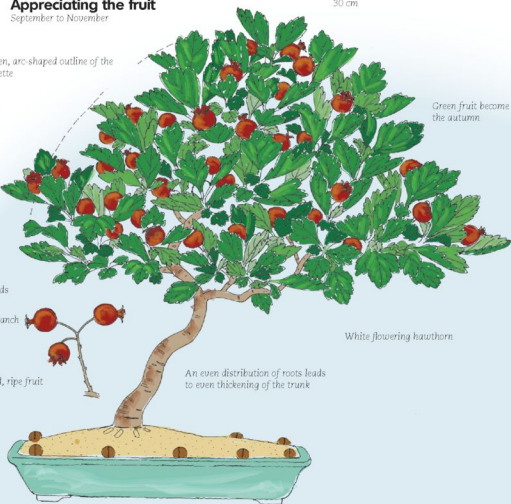
Leaf drop
November onwards

Fruit remains on the branch after the leaves have dropped

Red, ripe fruit

White flowering hawthorn

An even distribution of roots leads to even thickening of the trunk



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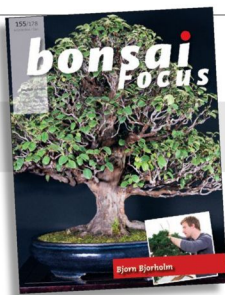
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