

'Best of'

20 years Trophy

by Bonsai Association Belgium
international BONSAI show
8 - 9 - 10 Feb 2019

Top international demonstrators

Masayuki Fujikawa (JP)

Ryan Neil (USA)

Vaclav Novak (CZ)

Gabriel Romero (ES)

Special Korean guest demonstrators

Cho Won Dong

Choi Song Ho

Her Youn Hang

Kang Sook Hoon

Kim Seok Ju

Lee Kwang Jong

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- Exhibition of suiseki and exclusive bonsai pots
- More than 90 international bonsai traders

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Belgium
www.limburghal.be

BONSAI ASSOCIATION BELGIUM



Esprit Bonsai



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► The magazine for bonsai enthusiasts • February/March 2019 #98

► BONSAI AND ZEN

GRAFTING A
SAVIN JUNIPER

Notes for
Beginners ►
MATTERS
OF STYLE

The beauty
OF LICHENS

REPOTTING
AN AZALEA

POTS BY
MARTINE
GEOFFROY

Bonsai's avant-garde
in **KYOTO**

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The specialist magazine for bonsai enthusiasts

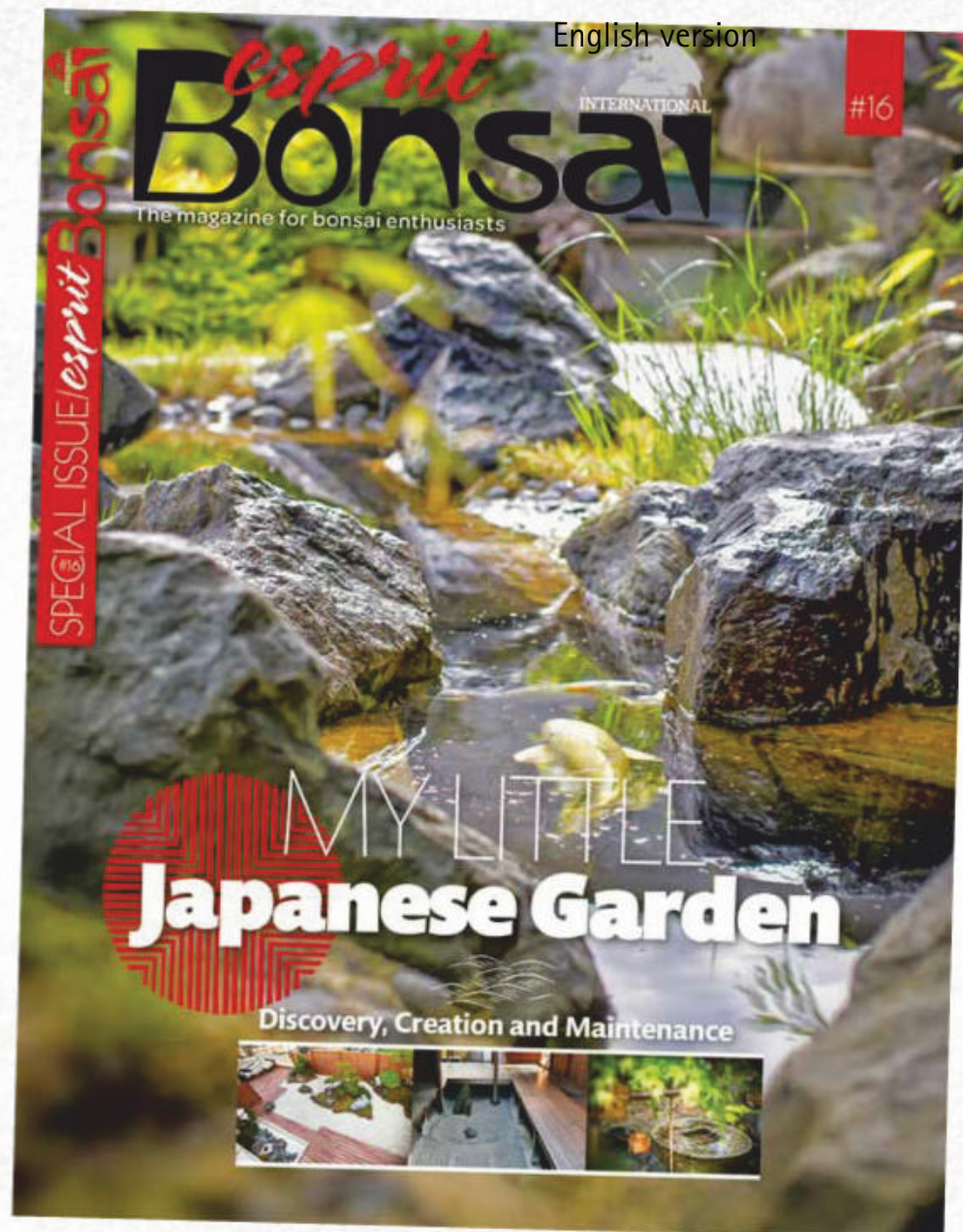
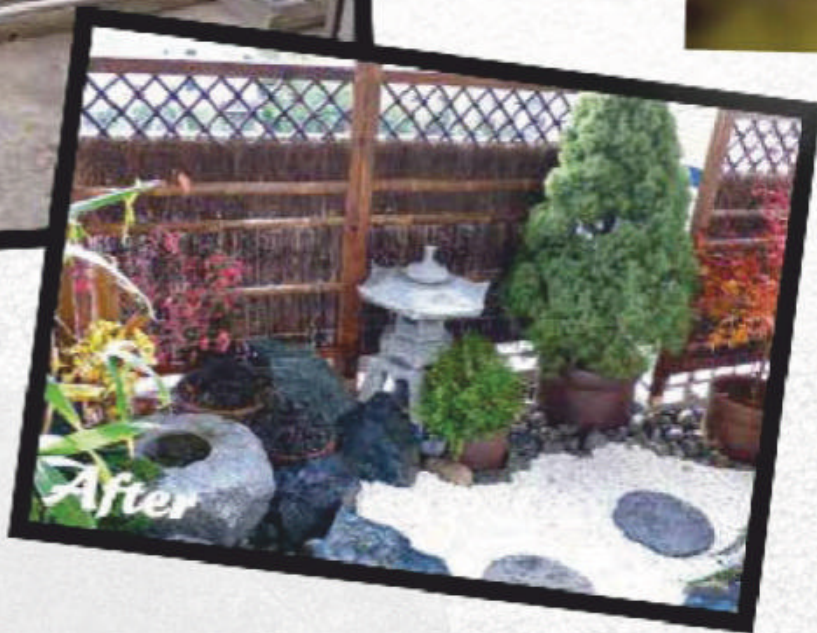


MY LITTLE JAPANESE GARDEN

SPECIAL ISSUE #16

At a time when urban life is enjoying a flirtation with the yearning for nature, little Japanese gardens are inviting themselves onto balconies, roofs of apartment blocks, and indeed into any small outdoor areas.

Bruno Heller, a specialist in the field, offers guidance to inspire you to create your own project.



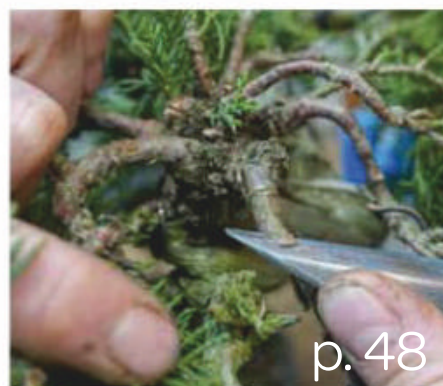
Bruno Heller is a bonsai tutor and professional.

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4 News and resources

The Spirit of Bonsai

7 Zen and bonsai

Exhibitions

8 **Taikan-ten 2018**
From traditional to avant-garde

14 The Asociacion del bonsai español (ABE) Convention
 A leader in European bonsai

18 Heathrow Bonsai Show:
 a confirmed hit

Trees and People

20 **Valentin Brose**
 "There is no single way of bonsai"

Getting Off to a Good Start

24 **A clump:**
a tight-knit group

Notes for Beginners

27 The formal upright style:
 A very strict character

Botanical Profile

30 The Japanese black pine
 An iconic species

Portrait of a Species

32 Carob: a Mediterranean species

Treegazing

36 Lichens: mutualism in order to live

Shohin : Small Bonsai

38 Preparing and
 repotting a juniper

44 How to set up a basic
 shohin bonsai display

Techniques in Detail

48 **Grafting foliage**
on a sabina

Spotlight on Broadleaves

52 Repotting a beautiful
 satsuki azalea

Spotlight on Conifers

58 From preparation
 to demonstration

Potters and Pots

64 **Martine Geoffroy**
"I love giving clay
a cracked effect ..."

Besides Bonsai

68 Preparing kusamono for spring

Japanese Gardens

70 The Jodai-ji temple garden
 Letting nature take its course

Ikebana

74 Ohara: Japonismes 2018
 "Souls in harmony"

76 Senshin-Ikenobo:
 When the flowers have gone

Clubs and Enthusiasts

78 **Seijaku Bonsai Club, Rouffach**
 "We have 11 co-presidents!"

Unwinding

Social, economic and political turmoil have been shaking up a number of countries for several weeks, months or even years. What could be more reassuring than being able to take refuge in doing something you love? Not to ignore the reality of what's going on around you, but simply to unwind and perhaps get to the very essence of what it is to be human. In "The Spirit of Bonsai", Jean-Guy Arpin invites us to take the Zen path, which has allowed him to go beyond mere passion to experience moments of grace and bliss. It is also said that we don't choose to meditate, but that the meditative state comes to us – a subtle difference, if there is any. Be that as it may, although meditation is very fashionable, not everyone will throw themselves into it body and soul. However, it is worth noting that many bonsaists have in common the fact that they achieve a state of great serenity when they are working in peace and quiet and in perfect harmony with the plant kingdom. So, whatever we might call it, it is this state that is important, as well as the spirit of sharing that it induces, and what it changes within us. You may well already have felt this sense of intense density and harmony, of both completeness and emptiness after a long time spent working on a tree. If not, you just need to keep on trying ... but without trying too hard. Simply be there, fully present, with the tree.

Enjoy the read!

Michèle Corbihan

DIARY

IN JAPAN

The 93rd Kokufu-ten exhibition takes place from 9 to 17 February 2019 in Tokyo. For several years now, this prestigious Japanese exhibition has been presented as a two-part event.

Part 1, 9 to 12 February;
Part 2, 14 to 17 February.

■ Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in Ueno Park, Tokyo. Opening hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., 17th 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission: 1,000 yen (Group reduction for parties of over 20 people, 700 yen).

IN THE USA

• Bonsai on the Bayou

The Houston Bonsai Society, together with the American Bonsai Society and the Lone Star Bonsai Federation, present Bonsai on the Bayou 2019. The convention will take in Houston, Texas.

There is a bonsai and suiseki exhibition with awards and over \$2,000 in prize money assigned by a judging panel. The event will feature workshops, seminars, critiques and vendors galore – there will be something for everyone at Bonsai on the Bayou.

Enrique Castaño, Danny Coffey, Mike Serant, Brussell Martin, Dave Kreutz, Clark Long, Byron Myrick and Mark Rhyne. The Houston Marriott Westchase, 2900 Briar Park Drive, Houston, TX 77042 For details, visit <https://www.facebook.com/HoustonBonsai/>

• US Shohin Bonsai Exhibition

The North Carolina Research campus, Kannapolis, will host the 2nd US Shohin



Bonsai Exhibition from 28 to 30 June 2019. Demonstrations, workshops and sales area.

Featuring Minoru Akiyama (Japan), Marc Arpag (NY), Michael Ryan Bell (MS), Mark Fields (OH), Carlos A. Morales (PR), David Paris (NY), John Romano (RI), Michael Sullivan (FL), Sean Smith (PA), Peter Warren (UK), William N. Valavanis (NY).

■ <http://www.internationalbonsai.com>

IN ITALY

• Satsuki Bonsai Festival

From 18 to 26 May, Crespi Bonsai, in Parabiago, near Milan, is organising the 8th Satsuki Bonsai Festival. A unique exhibition of extraordinary satsuki azaleas, all bonsai created by the masters of the

renowned Satsuki Bonsai Association of Kanuma (Japan), famous the world over for the cultivation of azaleas. More than 50 azalea bonsai on display. Free educational workshops by Crespi Bonsai's staff.

■ Crespi Bonsai 37 S.S. del Sempione 20015 Parabiago (Milan) www.crespibonsai.com

• Crespi Cup 2019

The 13th International Bonsai & Suiseki Meeting – Crespi Cup will be held on 14 and 15 September, in Parabiago, near Milan, Italy. The event has grown over the years, presenting bonsai and suiseki with exceptionally high-quality pots. It has become one of the most prestigious events dedicated to bonsai and suiseki. More than 250 exhibits comprising bonsai, shohin, suiseki and pots are displayed. Immerse yourself in the world of bonsai and suiseki and discover these ancient oriental disciplines.

Special guests: master Shinji Suzuki, and master Sadamitsu Kataoka – stage name Koshousen – Living National Treasure – Yamaaki Company Tokoname. Five exhibitions/competitions: Crespi Bonsai Cup, Crespi Shohin Cup, Enthusiasts' Exhibition, Crespi Suiseki Cup and Crespi Pot Cup. Free guided tours by the experts, free lessons and free educational workshops by the Crespi Bonsai's staff.

■ Crespi Bonsai 37 S.S. del Sempione 20015 Parabiago (Milan) www.crespibonsai.com



IN THE UK

• 17th Winter Image Show 2019

Swindon & District Bonsai Society hosts the 17th Winter Image Show 2019 on 24 February 2019 in Swindon. Again enthusiasts from all over the UK will be attending the Swindon show. All of the available space in the two large halls at the Grange Centre will be used. The numbers attending this event have steadily grown and this year's event is planned to be even bigger. As well as a large display of trees from members of 10 clubs and societies – one of which is travelling down from the Middlesbrough area – there are 28 invited exhibitors with some of the best trees in the UK, the most that we



■ Featuring Ryan Neil, Boon Manakitivipart, Will Baddeley,

have ever had. There are lots of traders, offering everything that you need for the hobby. It is one of the few bonsai shows in Britain that is held during the winter months. The trees take on a different image without their leaves. Although the general gardener sometimes doesn't understand the "Art of Bonsai", most enjoy seeing the hard work that is put into the presentation of the displays.

■ Grange Leisure Centre
Grange Drive, Stratton
St Margaret,
Swindon, SN3 4JY
Opening hours:
10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
Contact: Paul Bowerbank,
Chairman – Swindon &
District Bonsai Society, tel:
+44 (0)7982 401103.
Further details:
www.swindon-bonsai.co.uk

• Bristol Bonsai Society Annual Show 2019

The Bristol Bonsai Society Annual Show 2019 will be held on 18 August in Failand Hall, Bristol. All UK bonsai enthusiasts are welcome to submit pictures to Dan Barton of trees they would like considered for the show. Vendors will trade for free on the outside lawn but must provide their own tables/chairs/gazebos, etc.

■ Failand Hall, Oxhouse Lane,
Failand, nr. Bristol, BS8 3TS.
Contact: Dan Barton,
tel. +44 (0)1275 393010.
E-mail:
dantheman.barton@sky.com

Exhibitions and Conventions

2019

GENK, BELGIUM	8-10 February	'Best of' 20 Years Trophy Demonstrators: Masayuki Fujikawa (JP), Ryan Neil (USA), Vaclav Novak (CZ), Gabriel Romero Aguade (ES) and Cho Won Dong, Choi Song Ho, Her Youn Hang, Kang Sook Hoon, Kim Seok Ju and Lee Kwang Jong from Korea. Limburghal c.v., Jaarbeurslann 6 www.bonsaiassociation.be
MILAN, ITALY	22-24 February	4th Festival of Shohin Bonsai Exhibition of over 100 compositions. Guest of honour: Hiroki Miura. Crespi Bonsai, S.S. del Sempione, 37 - 20015 Parabiago (MI) www.crespibonsai.com
HARLINGTON, UK	7 April	ExpoBonsai UK Harlington Sports Centre, Pinkwell Lane, Harlington, Middlesex UB3 1PB Admission: £5 Opening hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. E-mail: markmoreland@live.co.uk www.ExpobonsaiUK.weebly.com
ARCO, ITALY	26-28 April	XVIII Arco Bonsai Trophy, Municipal Casino Displays from Italian bonsai clubs. Demonstrations by Mauro Stemberger and suiseki exhibition. http://www.arcobonsai.com
ENGHIEN, BELGIUM	18-19 May	6th Enghien Bonsai Show Guests: Tony Tickle and Filip Haesen. www.facebook.com/events/1956345621125368/
CHELSEA, LONDON, UK	21-25 May	FOBBs Bonsai Display: Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW3 4SR Contact: Tony McKenzie, +44 (0) 7837 577680 Email: am.pm@talk21.com
BURY, UK	14-15 September	UK National Bonsai Show Castle Leisure Centre, Bolton Street, Bury, Greater Manchester BL9 0EZ E-mail: nationalbonsai@gmail.com www.nationalbonsaishow.co.uk
HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND	11-13 October	2019 New Zealand Bonsai Convention at Hamilton Gardens Featuring Suthin Sukosolvisit, New Zealand demonstrators and the largest ever exhibition of bonsai in New Zealand with the NZBA National Show and displays from the Hamilton, Rotorua and Bay of Plenty Bonsai Clubs. Venue: Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton, New Zealand Further details at http://bonsaiconvention.net.nz/
SAULIEU, FRANCE	12-13 October	European Bonsai-San Show www.european-bonsai-san-show.com

GATHERING

'Best of' 20 years Trophy

"Best of" by Bonsai Association Belgium is the new name for the Noelanders Trophy, but the concept remains the same! And for the 20th edition of this now highly esteemed gathering, it will be "Best of" 20 Years Trophy! So bonsai lovers are still invited to the Limburghal in Genk, and this time for three days of festivities, from 8 to 10 February. In addition to the trees and suiseki, pots will also be on show. Alex Rudd, of the European Bonsai Potter Collective, is a lover of ceramics and will have put together a display of antique and modern pots. The demonstrators' stage will be as prestigious as it gets! Masayuki Fujikawa (Japan), Ryan Neil (USA), Vaclav Novak (Czech Republic) and Gabriel Romero Aguade (Spain) are the international guests. A special delegation of six Koreans – Cho Won Dong, Choi Song Ho, Her Youn Hang, Kang Sook Hoon, Kim Seok Ju and Lee Kwang Jong – will also show off their talents. On the Sunday, the Korean group will work as a team on a pine, a savin juniper and a yew, and on the Sunday four of them will come together to construct a large forest of Hinoki cypress, *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, on a stone measuring 120 × 70 cm (47 × 28 in.). About 40 trees of all sizes will be available to them, some of them in pots, others field-grown. The trade market will feature almost 100 vendors' stalls! Enough to get lost in its aisles ... On the Friday the exhibition will open at 1 p.m. for a rather special day, with admission by pre-paid weekend ticket only. However, a cash desk will be open to people who want to buy a ticket on site. Around 1.30 to 2 p.m. there will be a preview of the exhibition, until 4 p.m. At 4 p.m.: start of the Korean artists' demonstration, until 7.30 p.m. 6 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.: second preview of the exhibition. Gala dinner on the Saturday, by reservation only (€65).

Clearly the unmissable event of this year in Europe will be in Belgium!

■ Limburghal

Jaarbeurslaan 6,
3600 Genk, Belgium

Opening hours: Saturday, doors open at 9 a.m., and the exhibition space at 9.30 a.m., closing at 6 p.m. Sunday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the whole event.

Admission: €42 for the two days including demonstrations (€38 if bought in advance via the website), €25 per day including demonstrations, €15 per day exclusive of demonstrations.

E-mail: secretaries@bonsaiassociation.be

Website : www.bonsaiassociation.be

International demonstrators



Masayuki Fujikawa
of Japan.



Ryan Neil of the USA.



Vaclav Novak of the
Czech Republic.



Gabriel Romero
Aguade of Spain.

Six Koreans will be working in tandem on the Friday, as well as on the Sunday when they will construct a large forest of Hinoki cypress together.



Cho Won Dong



Choi Song Ho



Her Youn Hang



Kang Sook Hoon



Lee Kwang Jong



Kim Seok Ju



About 40 cypresses will be available
for the demonstrators to use.



The forest will be set up on this stone.
Dimensions: 120 × 70 cm (47 × 28 in.).

Zen and bonsai

Bonsaist and long-time practitioner of Zen, the author puts the art of bonsai and Zen into perspective: two practices, that without one being necessary to the other, follow the same rules.

Author: Jean-Guy Arpin

One learns from various written works the important place bonsai occupied in the daily lives of scholars (Japanese intellectuals), as well as its social, religious and artistic role. It is certainly very present in Zen Buddhism. Indeed the monks ensured the maintenance and well-being of these small trees.

Like all living beings, trees have their own story to tell, which can be seen in their bearing, and in their shapes sculpted by time and bad weather. Thus, all the marks from life events will leave their imprint on a small tree's journey that can sometimes exceed 500 years.

The time spent with one's bonsai invites contemplation and becomes a moment of meditation.

And this is the link with Zen; the two unite in every action taken and every sphere of intervention required in the art of bonsai.

The benevolence of bonsai

Bonsai brings peace of mind and suspends intellectual activity. A feeling of peace takes over and gives us a sense of comfort and well-being.

To understand this better, here is an extract from a piece written in 1971 by Hoseki Shin'ichi Hisamatsu: "The act of creating and caring for bonsai is one of meditation and full awareness. We can lose ourselves in the creation of this small version of a fragment of the cosmos, while trying at the same time to find our true selves. One can even say that creating bonsai is like contemplating a Zen paradox, or *Kōan*."

There is a Japanese white pine – a remarkable specimen in the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum (National Arboretum, Washington DC) – that started life as a bonsai in 1626. Yes, in 1626! Countless generations must have taken minute and meticulous care of this tree before being offered to the United States by the bonsai master, Masaru Yamaki, a survivor of Hiroshima. The tree is also a Hiroshima survivor.

The same rules

Peace of mind and solitude: these are the feelings a tree should convey.

As Zen art is directed inwards, anything contradicting this peace must disappear.

A bonsai tree must be stripped of all extravagance – leaving only the essential.

A bonsai tree must be irregular, imperfectly balanced and informal.

We eventually find the essence of a tree that gradually reveals itself.

The author

Author, poet and lecturer, Jean-Guy Arpin has been practising the art of bonsai for 18 years. He lives in the strict tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism and has practised meditation for nearly 40 years. For several years, he lived a life punctuated by the striking of gongs, whose purpose like meditation, is to rid the self of the illusion of coherence.

www.jeanguyarpin.com



The art of bonsai and the art of Zen follow the same rules. A white American cedar. Collection: Jean-guy Arpin.

As in Zen, time is unimportant. A tree collected from nature, can take between 10 to 15 years before it is ready to be shared and viewed by other eyes. And this is not very long, given that the tree does not fully mature in this time.

Bonsai and Zen are the same: all the rules concerning Zen, in letting go, discipline, concentration and patience in the continuum of everyday life are applicable and necessary to practising the art of bonsai.

A bonsai tree is one of the few pot plants in the world, with which it is possible to maintain a lasting relationship.

Taking care of a bonsai tree is as much about gardening as it is about art, both of which nurture happiness and a state of Zen.

If one takes good care of a bonsai, it will show its gratitude through its artistic and aesthetic beauty.

A moment of grace

The passion I felt at the beginning has disappeared, and like all other passions preceding it, the feeling never returned. This is because passion has no place within the state of Zen.

I still have this morning view – always different – when the sun makes its appearance. It is a moment of grace from the daily watering and maintenance required to keep my trees as healthy as we must do for ourselves. It is a precious present moment, as all the present moments of each day.

Needless to say the Zen way is not indispensable in the practice of bonsai – but oh! – how refreshing it is! ●



An avant-garde display of polystyrene "rocks" created by Team Suzuki entitled "Back to the Source". It is the first time that they have made such creations and the idea behind it is very interesting. It certainly created a talking point and divided opinion. The innovative use of lighting is a welcome addition. Signs perhaps that some in Japan are looking outside for inspiration.

TAIKAN-TEN 2018

From traditional to avant-garde

In late November every year, in Kyoto, the Taikan-ten offers participants a chance to explore new ways of displaying their trees. The mixture of traditional and avant-garde, presented side by side, prompts debate.

Author: Peter Warren



No, it is not a new Japanese boy band, it is Team Suzuki, Mr Shinji Suzuki (bonsai professional and director of the Taikan-ten), his son Hiroaki and other apprentices, including Manu, a new French addition to his squad. It is an interesting way to try to make bonsai more appealing to a younger audience.

Over the ten or so years that I have been attending, the look and feel of the Taikan-ten have changed; initially it morphed from an interesting seasonal exhibition of reasonably high quality, to one where the level of some trees was embarrassingly poor and the main reason to go to Kyoto was for the food and the autumnal colours. Thankfully over the last three years and under the guidance of Shinji Suzuki, it has transformed back into a must-see exhibition which improves year on year. In 2018, from 23 to 26 November, at the Miakomesse in Kyoto, there was an increase in the number of individual themed booths as well as an impressive addition to the sales area.



An Arakawa rough-bark maple on show in the booth from Mr Saito. Usually they have the most vivid and deep autumnal colours that seem as though they are on fire. Sadly this year the saltwater spray from the numerous typhoons destroyed the leaves, making them unsuitable for display.



One of the rarer trees in the exhibition, a genuine yamadori Japanese mountain hornbeam. It was tucked away in one of the corners, but it attracted the attention of several professionals who were very pleased to see such a rarity.

Sea spray on leaves

The overall level of the individual trees was remarkably good and the only thing that was disappointing was the understandable lack of quality autumnal colours in the trees on display and in Kyoto as a whole. Throughout the late summer and early autumn Japan had been hit by a number of very powerful typhoons which carried with it sea spray deep inland. Nurseries and enthusiasts within 50 kilometres (30 miles) of certain coastlines were badly affected by the salt water, which caused damage to leaves and made them impossible to show in colour, and so leaves were removed, making it feel a little more of a winter show, despite the unseasonably warm temperatures outside.

Plans for a museum

Mr Suzuki's influence was also very much on show with the booths containing his avant-garde display of "rock" plantings. Featured in *Kinbon* magazine in the issue published just weeks before the Taikan-ten, "Team Suzuki" created some interestingly shaped rocks from polystyrene blocks before coating them and painting them to enable them to have small junipers placed on them. Displayed in a black booth and carefully illuminated including with a beautifully detailed moon, it took



Unusually for the Taikan-ten, the conifers were more apparent in the exhibition. This slanting-style red pine has the character and looseness that is reminiscent of bonsai displayed around a hundred years ago.

the art of bonsai in Japan in a new and different direction. Some visitors and professionals were bemused by it and some made fun of it, but the overall impression was positive. From a personal perspective it is always interesting to see new things attempted and done on a large scale. Modernising bonsai is essential for the survival of it ►►►

● Exhibitions

▶▶▶ as an art form, both in Japan and world-wide, and this is one step in doing just that.

One of Mr Suzuki's largest clients, Mr Tanaka, has been acquiring some of the most important masterpiece and historically important trees, pots and stones so that bonsai culture can be preserved in Japan and not get exported to China. The collection has been given the name Keiun-an, with the ultimate goal to create a bonsai museum in Kyoto which is currently under negotiations with the city council. Many of the items on display from the Keiun-an collection I had never seen before, including a Miyasama trident maple on rock, which is the most well-developed and largest I have ever seen. It dates back to the start of modern bonsai practice and was part of the booth celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Revolution, a time which is also seen as the starting point for bonsai practice as we know it today.



An overview of the Keiun-an collection which this year was themed to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Revolution, featuring trees, stones and artefacts from the time. It was an interesting link back to the history of modern bonsai, and reassuring to know that it is being protected.

One of the original *Nishiki* cork-bark black pines, dating back to the Meiji Period when they were first discovered and became incredibly popular. It is rare to find such trees still healthy and so full of branches and foliage.



A *Miyasama* trident maple dating back to the Meiji Period and owned by a famous aristocratic bonsai enthusiast of the time. *Miyasama* is the native Japanese trident maple and has a larger leaf and coarser growth habit than the type of trident maple that we are most familiar with. It was commonly used 150 years ago but fell out of favour as smaller leaf varieties were imported from China.





A superb high-quality shohin display that was rightfully awarded a prize. There are usually only a handful of shohin displays at the Taikan-ten.

An artistic exercise

The big difference between Taikan-ten and the Kokufu-ten which is held in Tokyo in February is the display aspect, with scrolls and other objects used to accompany the trees. It makes for a much more interesting feel to the exhibi-

tion in Kyoto and allows trees to be displayed that would not have the character to be shown by themselves. Rather than being just a heavyweight battle of the best of the best, it is much more an exploration of bonsai as an art form.



One of Mr Kobayashi's trees on display in his personal booth. It is a well-known white pine that was once part of the Takagi bonsai collection. It has taken on a much looser appearance with age and the changing style of Mr Kobayashi.



A powerful Chinese quince paired with a powerful scroll painted by Kawabata Yasunari, a Nobel-medal-winning author. The fruit of the tree were stuck on after we arrived at the exhibition, and I initially suggested to Mr Kobayashi that we had stuck on too many, but due to the positioning of the booths, it could be seen from a great distance and it was a beautiful sight.

Notoriously difficult maples

Mr Kunio Kobayashi, my master, was invited to display an entire booth which meant that we had a little more to take than usual, with five of his most important trees and one suiseki taken to represent his current preferences and aesthetic ideas. It was a pleasure to be involved with the preparation and display of the trees, and his display was warmly received by the public. One of the trees, and a personal favourite, a *Prunus mume* had previously been displayed at the Taikan-ten after it had been awarded the Kokufu-sho prize.

It is greatly rewarding to see the reaction of the public to those trees which have a special place in one's own heart, and makes the stress and effort of preparing the show worth it.

Additional booths included the ever-present Mr Saito who this year displayed a collection of Arakawa rough-bark maples of the highest quality, renowned as a species that are notoriously difficult to develop and maintain with compact branching. Despite this Mr Saito had a number of incredibly impressive specimens on show. ►►►



One of my favourite trees in the world, a *Prunus mume* that won the Kokufu prize five years ago and is the absolute definition of the species as a bonsai. Paired with an antique unglazed *udei* pot, it is perfection in bonsai form.

A playful spirit

Breaking the rule of “always put a conifer in an unglazed pot”. It may not be to everyone’s taste, but the Japanese are more accepting of such a playful spirit than you may think.



An interesting display featuring two relatively average-quality trees displayed in unique pots with a painted background. For many it is too much of a deviation away from tradition, and for others a welcome distraction from the rigid formality of Kokufu-ten.



The elegant and understated Funayama Collection display booth featuring impressive collected white pines from a number of different areas of Japan.

An incredible twisted-trunk yamadori white pine that has a long and well-documented history in the bonsai community. It is now part of the Funayama Collection and was last on show at the World Convention in 2017.

Bonsai made of clay

In addition to the exhibition there is also a reasonably sized sales area where a lot of professionals based in the west of Japan have sales booths. This year for the first time there was a large presence from the S-Cube bonsai company, headed by Mr Seiji Morimae. He had a partnership with Mr Kimura to sell some of his rock planting creations and a large black pine, all of which sold on the first day to a Chinese buyer. On their stand a small section was devoted to artificial bonsai created by a very talented lady from Hokkaido. From a distance they are completely realistic and incredibly well made from clay. Many visitors were completely fooled by them and thought they were real. They are ideal for those who want the image of a bonsai tree, but none of the fun and enjoyment of looking after one. ●



Incredibly skilful crafted artificial trees that from a distance look as though they are genuine trees. Made from clay and other modelling materials, the attention to detail is amazing.



This literati needle juniper has been displayed at Taikan-ten several times and keeps improving time after time. A tree that shows age and character in a slender and subtle form.



The first exhibition on 3 and 4 November held in Fuenlabrada, a suburb of Madrid, by the very new Asociación del bonsai español (ABE) proved to be an event on a national, even European scale and confirmed the high standard of Spanish bonsai.

THE ASOCIACION DEL BONSAI ESPAÑOL (ABE) CONVENTION

A leader in European bonsai

In November 2018, the very new Asociación del bonsai español (ABE), gave its first major exhibition near Madrid; a magnificent show, which put Spanish bonsai at the top of the European bonsai leader board.

Author: Michèle Corbihan

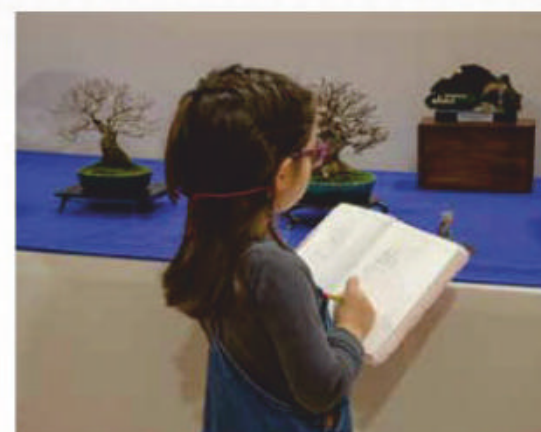
For some years now, Spanish bonsai trees displayed at national European exhibitions have shown the very high level the Spanish have attained in the art of bonsai. The major national exhibition held on 3 and 4 November by the very new Asociación del bonsai español (ABE), in the municipal hall at Loranca, Fuenlabrada, confirmed their expertise. “For several years now, Spanish bonsai has had the highest levels in Europe, but this is the best exhibition that has ever been held in Spain,” explained Jose Maria Rubio, president of the association that was founded in 2017. One of the guests of honour, Marco Invernizzi from Italy expanded on this. “The level of the show is sometimes equal to Kokufu particularly with certain trees. The quality of the trees is so



A magnificent conifer by the talented Luis Baliño was joint winner of the ABE prize, as well as those of the Fuenlabrada municipality and the best *omono* conifer.

Advice by Marco Invernizzi

Marco Invernizzi gave this advice to Spanish bonsaists, and perhaps to others as well that, “they have to organize even better the transport of their trees and they have to try maybe to see a show as a long-term target instead of one for tomorrow. They might be able to say, ‘ok, I see this tree for a next show, and I will show it in few years’ time, and it has to be perfect.’ They have to be a little more patient for that and try to make a deciduous tree look more like a deciduous tree and not like a conifer.”



Interest in bonsai can start at a very early age and take different forms...

high in Spain that people there will not exhibit a tree that is not up to standard.” And the Japanese master Koji Hiramatsu affirmed that “The level of the trees is very high.”

Lorry transport

A great many visitors came to admire the numerous conifers and deciduous trees both large and small. A friendly atmosphere prevailed among the public and the organisers, and of course, one adopted Spanish hours and tempo.

Up to now, there has been no association on a national scale in Spain able to gather the best bonsai trees in the country under one roof. This became a reality in 2017 when ABE was set up to remedy this lack and at last to offer bonsaists major national events. Today, ABE has over 400 members and wants to be the link between bonsai practitioners: a link that will also help with transporting trees. “One of the most important things about the association and this event is that lorries were hired to pick up many trees from the four corners of the country and bring them to Madrid. Because it is very important to understand that the reason the level of the Japanese is so high is because trees are always transported and taken ►►►



This European oak, *Quercus robur*, by Manuel Otero Abril, was joint winner of the ABE prize.

►►► care of by professionals. There are no amateurs who travel 800 kilometres to deliver one tree for the show,” Marco Invernizzi explained.

Seventeen prizes!

The exhibited trees were, of course, in competition, and no fewer than seventeen prizes were awarded. “I still believe that, for this kind of show, we shouldn’t have so many awards. We should have the four best in show and that’s it,” Marco Invernizzi said emphatically. “People have to understand that judging trees and the method of classification is not easy. People should gather here not because they want to win, but because they want to share.”

The big winner was undoubtedly Luis Baliño whose superb *Juniperus chinensis* swept away the ABE prizes awarded by the Fuenlabrada municipality, and for the best omono conifer (over 60 cm/23⁵/₈ in.)

Of particular mention was a stand in the exhibition hall with a display of very beautiful pots by Japanese and other potters.

There was a plethora of activities on offer: demonstrations were given during the weekend by the guests of honour, Marco Invernizzi and Koji Hiramatsu, as well as by Luis Vila (ES), Rafael Torres (ES) and Jan Culek (CZ), who specialises in tree on rock plantings. Juanjo Pardo (ES) gave a lecture on fertilisers and the phytosanitary factor; Nestor NDM (ES) lectured on the harmony between pot and bonsai, and Carmen Lopez (ES) on ikebana. José Antonio Guerao (ES) gave a raku demonstration outside, in front of the exhibition hall.

In addition, a tea ceremony closed the opening speeches to this first ABE convention.



Guests of honour, Koji Hiramatsu (Japan) et Marco Invernizzi (Italy) gave two demonstrations accompanied by many explanations.



Luis Vila from Spain.



A raku demonstration by José Antonio Guerao from Spain.



Jan Culek from the Czech Republic.



Rafael Torres from Spain.



Best *chumono* conifer (between 30–60 cm/11³/₄–23⁵/₈): *Pinus sylvestris*, Jose Luis Crespo.



Best deciduous omono (over 60 cm/23⁵/₈ in.): *Acer buergerianum*, David Benavente.



Best indigenous tree: *Pinus sylvestris*, David Quintana.



Best *omono* evergreen (over 60 cm/23½ in.): olive, Juan Rafael Ortega Soler.



Composition by David Ruiz, *Juniperus chinensis*, Zelkova and fern: best deciduous *komo* (up to 30 cm/11¾ in.) for the Zelkova; best shohin display and the El Bonsai y Yo prize.

The awards

- **ABE:** *Juniperus chinensis*, Luis Baliño, *Quercus robur*, Manuel Otero Abril
- **Awards made by Marco Invernizzi et Koji Hiramatsu**
Komono (up to 30 cm/11¾ in.)
 Conifer: *Pinus thunbergii*, David Beresaluze
 Deciduous: *Zelkova*, David Ruiz
 Evergreen: *Rosmarinus palaui*, Carlos Fernandez de Botoño
- **Chumono** (between 30–60 cm/11¾–23½ in.)
 Conifer: *Pinus sylvestris*, Jose Luis Crespo
 Deciduous: *Ulmus nigra*, Juan Vicente Hueso
 Evergreen: olive, Arturo Garza Mateo

- **Omono** (over 60 cm/23½ in.)
 Conifer: *Juniperus chinensis*, Luis Baliño
 Deciduous: *Acer buergerianum*, David Benavente
 Evergreen: olive, Juan Rafael Ortega Soler,
 Indigenous tree: *Pinus sylvestris*, David Quintana
 Shohin display: David Ruiz
- **Special prizes**
 Fuenlabrada Municipality Prize (a public vote award): *Juniperus chinensis*, Luis Baliño
 El Tim Bonsai Evolution award: *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa', Alberto Gimeno Cordoba
 FAE award: *Juniperus chinensis*, David Benavente
 El Bonsai y Yo award: shohin display, David Ruiz

The first step

The ABE organised a 2018 new talent competition in which about a dozen candidates participated. Tomeu Valls was the first to win the title of ABE new talent. Several professional stands in the demonstration hall offered pots, trees, fertilisers, and tools. It was a small market, but with quality stands and, as usual, an extremely friendly atmosphere.

“Because it is important for bonsaists to let their trees be seen by the public,” explained José Maria Rubio, “a handful of motivated enthusiasts got together to create ABE and to organise a

great exhibition.” Particular mention should be made that the free entry was made possible by the members’ subscriptions, and no doubt by the partnerships formed with the professionals and the Town Hall.

The exhibition at Fuenlabrada is a first step. We already expect excellent quality Spanish trees at other European exhibitions, but from now on, we must get ready to attend quality exhibitions in the Iberian Peninsula, and why not on a European scale? That is certainly ABE’s avowed ambition. And we will be there! ●

Contact

Facebook: Asociación del Bonsai Español
<http://www.abebonsai.es>



The 9th edition of the Heathrow Bonsai Show was proof – if proof were necessary – of this event's major place in the UK bonsai world: 36 clubs put on displays on 21 October at Harlington Sports Centre in Harlington, near Heathrow.

Heathrow Bonsai Show: a confirmed hit

Author: Steve Hale
Photos: Steve Hale and Amelia Williams

Over the years, the Heathrow Bonsai Show has become the UK's most popular bonsai gathering. In this convivial autumn exhibition, trees are displayed by club rather than individually.



There are no individual exhibitors at the Heathrow Bonsai Show: displays are by club – as here, with the Sutton Bonsai Society.

As the unseasonably warm sun rose over the queue of traders and exhibitors waiting to enter and set up at the 9th annual Heathrow Bonsai Show on Sunday 21 October 2018, in the Harlington Sports Centre at Harlington, it became obvious that this would be a big event. The day did not disappoint and it transpired that a record number of visitors would attend the show to mix with the many exhibiting club members present.

A clubs-based exhibition

The Heathrow Bonsai Show was founded by Mark and Ming Chen Moreland with humble beginnings in a small hall just 3 kilometres (less than 2 miles) from Heathrow Airport, 22 kilometres (14 miles) west of London. It has grown from that to become the show of the year for

The keys to success

So, what makes the show so successful? It is the largest club-only event in the UK, has a well-balanced traders' market and the quality just gets better and better. It is not only this, though, but the friendly, welcoming atmosphere that most people comment on. At the start of the day all exhibitors and traders were given something for breakfast, a welcome gift especially after a long drive for many. The layout is well organised, with clear instructions given to each participant. Many exhibitors have commented that these personal touches make them feel wanted, and most plan to attend next year. Long may that continue.

<https://www.facebook.com/HeathrowbonsaiShows/>
<http://heathrowbonsai.weebly.com/>



The red maple by Brian MacKichan (Exeter Bonsai Society) received the most votes from visitors.

many clubs throughout the UK. With the help of a hard-working team of volunteers led by Brian Wallin the latest venue, still near Heathrow, now accommodates a display area for 36 clubs from all parts of the country.

This was backed up by 35 appropriate traders covering everything from labels and books through to yamadori and specimen trees. The concept works. No individual exhibitors but a show aimed squarely at the club member who wishes to display amongst his fellow team, and all levels of the hobby catered for. It was very noticeable this year that the growth in the show has encouraged exhibitors to improve their own standards, influenced perhaps by displaying alongside the more experienced clubs who are more used to a show environment.

Votes for all

Extra entertainment was provided this year with the addition of demonstrations by leading club members. This was designed to fit in with the club theme and was a great success. Two lots of three demonstrators working intimately with the audience amongst them proved to be a hit. In the morning these were held by Geoff Conybeare, Malcolm Driffield and Mark Kerry. The afternoon team consisted of Paul Eslinger, Peter Shields and Robert Stewart. Certainly an aspect of the show that will stay for the future.

There are no trophies at this event but to keep things simple there are two votes. Both the visitors

and exhibitors are given the chance to vote for their favourite tree. This year the visitors' choice was won by Brian MacKichan with a vivid red maple. The exhibitors' vote gave a joint first place: Dean Morgan with an elegant white pine and Alex Rudd with his rugged olive.

The show also saw the launch of a new organisation for the UK bonsai enthusiast: the UK Bonsai Association. A story for another day but let's hope that the UK Bonsai Association has a great future ahead of it. (Facebook: UK-Bonsai-Association) ●



The olive by Alex Rudd (Maidstone Bonsai Society) was joint favourite among exhibitors, along with ...



... the white pine by Dean Morgan (Maidstone Bonsai Society), which also came third in the public vote.



Valentin Brose undertook his apprenticeship in Japan, under Master Kunio Kobayashi, for three and a half years. He's now founding his nursery near Stuttgart, Germany.

Valentin Brose

“There is no single way of bonsai”

A former apprentice of master Kunio Kobayashi, the German Valentin Brose is working on establishing his nursery in Öhringen, near Stuttgart, Germany.

Interviewed by Anne Royer
Photos: Valentin Brose

Esprit Bonsai International: How did you become a professional bonsai artist?

Valentin Brose: As a kid, I was already fascinated by plants. My first contact with bonsai took place at a Christmas market at the age of 11. I was very touched by the small trees that I could hold in my hand – and my mother gave me one as a Christmas present. At that time, I was also trying to make some bonsai from trees I collected in the forest. But they didn't survive long because I had no idea how to keep them alive. Many years later, in 2006, I became interested again in bonsai, after



This lime tree is one of the first trees that Valentin collected, before he left for Japan. Height: 50 cm (20 in.).



It was planted 40 years ago by his grandmother in front of his parents' house.



Valentin collected this European charcoal (*Euonymus europaeus*) in Germany in 2006.



Nearly ten years later, the same tree has become a shohin with a well-balanced shape.

a gardener's apprenticeship. I realised that I wanted to become a professional bonsai artist. I was fascinated but I didn't know anything about bonsai ... I joined the bonsai club of Mannheim, where I was living at the time, and learned the basics over the course of six months.

I thought the best way to learn was to go to Japan, where bonsai is very developed. In a video about Kunio Kobayashi's garden, called Shunkaen, in Tokyo, I saw that Peter Warren and other foreigners were studying bonsai with him. I tried to contact Shunkaen many times, without success: no one there could speak English at that time. One day, I finally received an email from the husband of Kobayashi's daughter, with only some information about the daily routine, but no confirma-

tion of whether I had been accepted as an apprentice. I decided to go there and see what was happening. I finally started my apprenticeship in April 2008. For me, that was the real beginning of the path to becoming a bonsai professional.

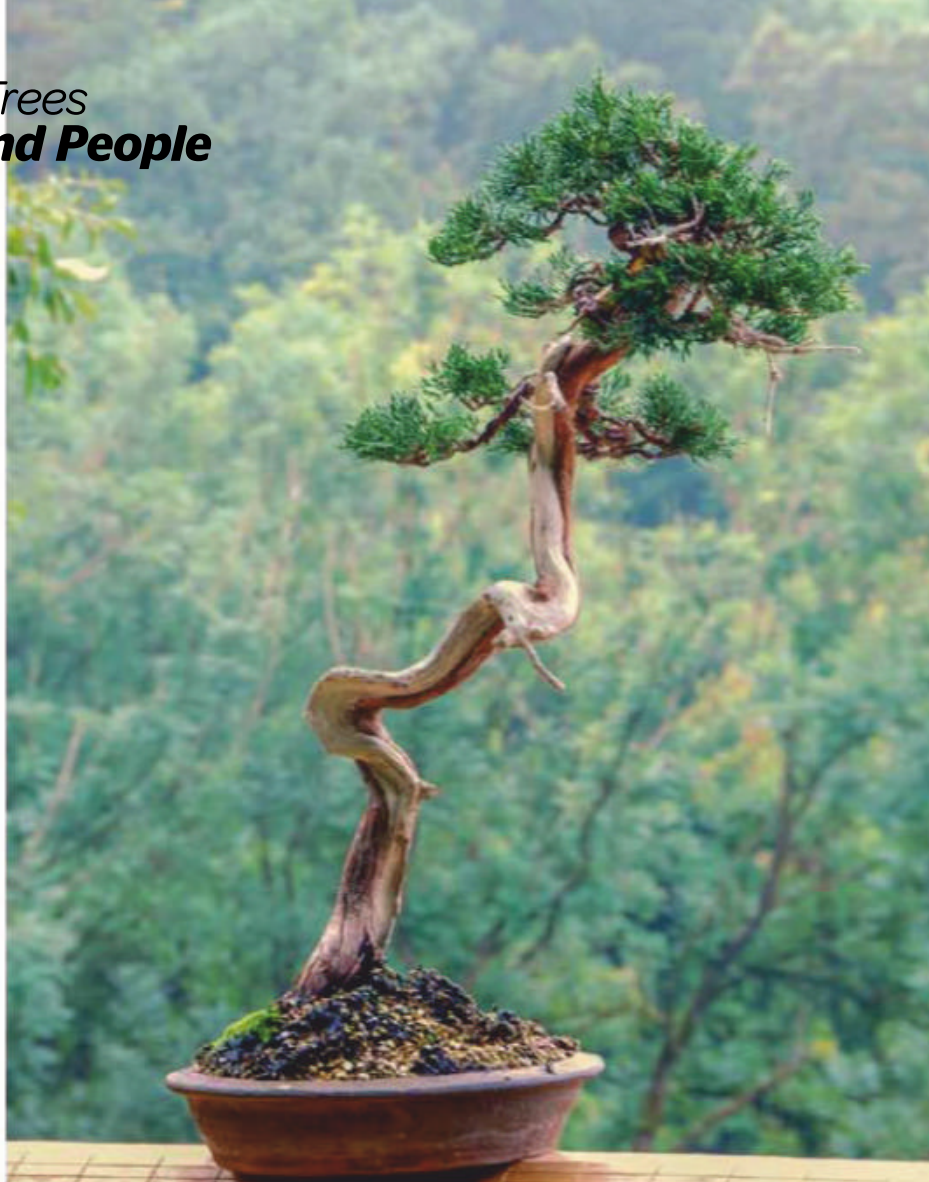
E.B.I.: What are the main lessons you learned from your apprenticeship with Master Kunio Kobayashi?

V.B.: I did a three-and-a-half-year apprenticeship with Kunio Kobayashi. I chose him because I liked the style of his trees and his garden, his overall view of bonsai together with the pot and also his tokonoma display [Editor's note: an area dedicated to art in a traditional Japanese house]. He taught me to try to express the character of each tree species. In Japanese, we call

it "lashisa". It is also very important to learn to read the tree in order to bring out its best parts.

As a "deshi" – apprentice – in Shunkaen, we had time to work on the trees only in times when there were not many visitors to the garden, or even at night. Actually, you learn a lot by looking at the trees and the works of the master and the senior apprentice, or by assisting on photo shoots.

I remember that the master told me, during my third year, when I was thinking about buying a tree but I was not sure how to handle the species: "You have to eat the apple to know what it tastes like." He meant that when you own something, you can have a closer relation with it and learn more. ►►►



Juniperus sabina. Height: 70 cm (28 in.).



Valentin has had this beautiful Chinese juniper for seven years. Height: 25 cm (10 in.).



Valentin often travels to China, especially to work with Isao Fukida on old trees: here, a juniper.

E.B.I.: Have other mentors influenced your bonsai practice?

V.B.: During my apprenticeship in Japan, I was also influenced by senior apprentices Isao Fukida, Minoru Akiama and Peter Warren. They often come to help and do photo shoots in Shunkaen. At the moment, I'm learning a lot from Isao Fukida, with whom I work in China – the country that is at the origins of bonsai and rebuilding its bonsai culture.

E.B.I.: Do you think a tree can ever be completed?

V.B.: No, I don't think so. A bonsai can know have different finishing stages in its life. When you work on a tree until the right stage of ramification, balance and proportions, it reaches a high point. Then, but it also depends on the species, the tree grows out of its shape. After that, you bring it to another peak of beauty. The life of a bonsai goes in waves ...

E.B.I.: Which tree species do you prefer to work with?

V.B.: I like working with many different species, deciduous trees as well as conifers ... It's much more interesting and challenging. Scots pine is a tree that I particularly like, because it's very suitable for bonsai: it's strong and has an amazing expression of age when it gets older. I also like the old wild pear trees of my area a lot, because of their leaves and their rough bark.

E.B.I.: What do you think are the essential qualities for becoming a talented bonsai artist?

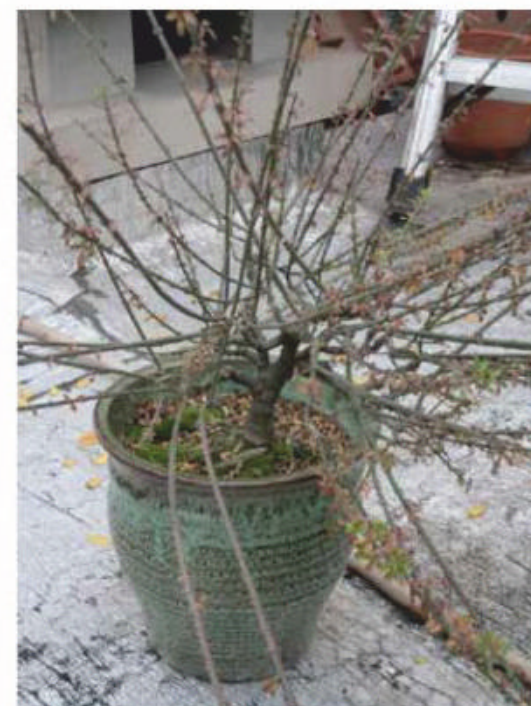
V.B.: First of all, you have to really love what you do. Also, you need to have an artistic sensibility, be patient and develop gardening and craftsmanship skills.

E.B.I.: How do you approach working on a tree?

V.B.: It is a creative process that focuses on the growth of the tree in the future. Basically, it's good to be in a good mood when working on a tree. Even if, as a professional, one must be able to work in any state of mind. When I work on a tree, I look at the tree's qualities and try to bring them out. The first step is always to remove anything that is not necessary. Then things come one after the other.



Winter jasmine shohin in bloom.



The same shohin five years ago, before the first pruning.



Satsuki azalea
of the variety
“Korin”, created
from raw material
since 2012. Height:
40 cm (16 in.).

Ligustrum sp.
Height: 23 cm (9 in.)

As I travel a lot for workshops or to meet clients, I buy trees here and there, at bonsai nurseries or at exhibitions. From time to time, I also import trees from Japan.

E.B.I.: What do you think makes your generation of bonsai artists different from previous generations? What relationship do you have with tradition?

V.B.: An important difference is that the present generation can build up their knowledge on what they have learned from the previous generation. Now, in Japan, there are more people learning bonsai than before, because it has become easier to study it. The Internet has made a big difference; people have access to a lot more information.

Then, the question is what you mean by the word “tradition”. In the West, the vision of traditional Japanese bonsai is quite limited. In Japan, there are many ways to perceive and practise bonsai, as in any artistic discipline. Each master has his own way of doing things ... There is no single way of bonsai. If “tradition” refers to what my teacher taught me, of course I would say that I have kept many things but also developed my own style.



E. B.: What dreams or projects would you like to achieve in the years to come?

V. B.: Actually, I’m realising one of my dreams at the moment with the creation of my own bonsai nursery. I’ve been working on this project for a year already. It will be like a show garden and a nursery, in which I will give workshops, present all my trees and sell bonsai and related objects. ●



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Instagram: brosevalentin

A CLUMP: a tight-knit group

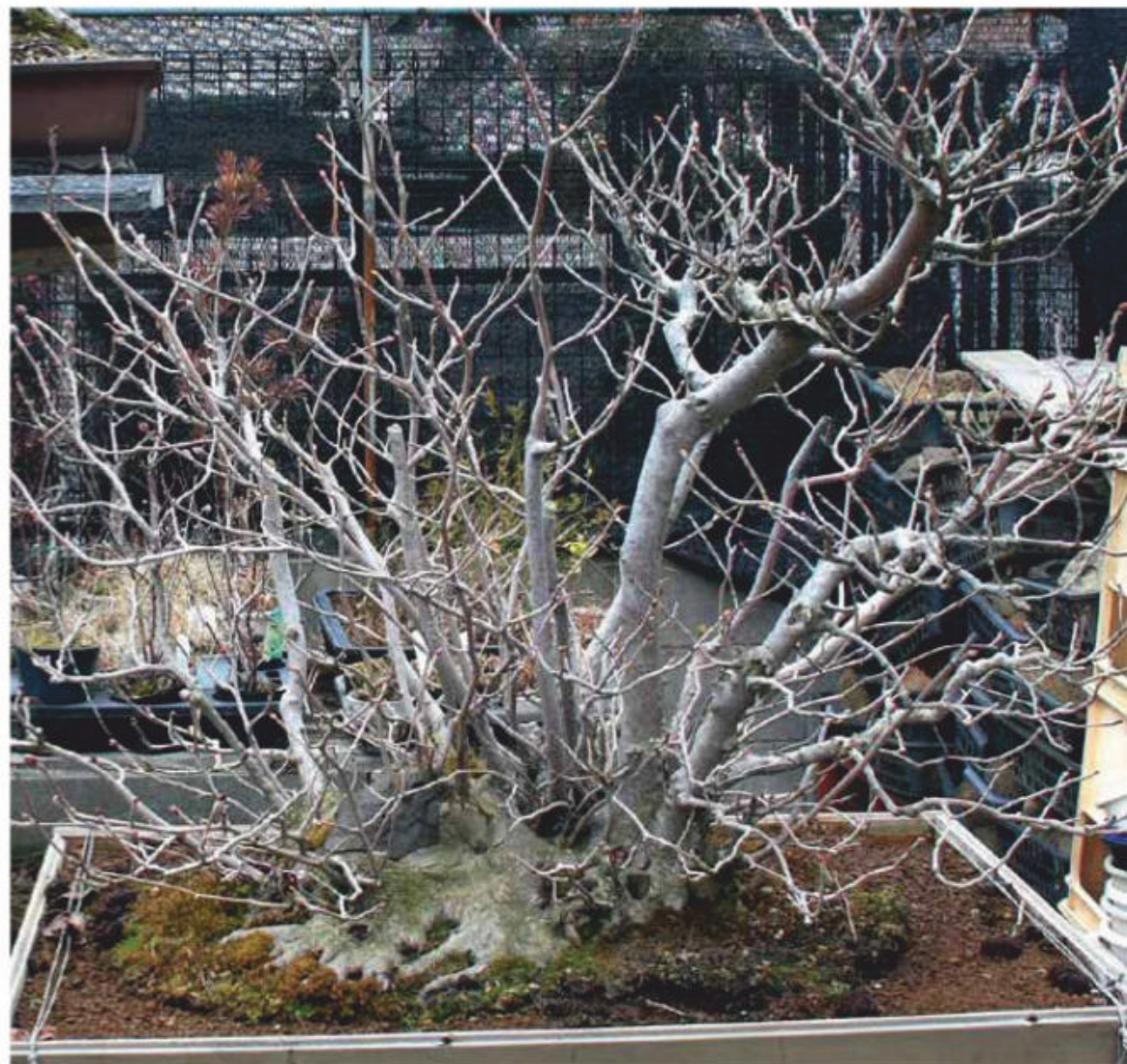
Some trees are multi-stemmed and make good subjects for constructing a tree group or clump. This bonsai form, in which the trunks are fused at the base, is easy and fun to create.

Author: Gilbert Labrid

Among the many bonsai shapes one can construct, a clump of trees united at the base belong to a category that is often poorly exploited. One understands from the word “group” a shape that is made up of more than three individual trees. In this category, we are only concerned with groups that have a common root system, particularly multi-stemmed trees, and will leave aside the raft style (stems formed from a fallen trunk on its side) and *netsuranari* (a group connected by roots).

1 Making the most of a species' momentum

There are many ways of rapidly obtaining a group of multi-stemmed trees, the most common being to attach several trunks together to fuse them. Another method is simply to make use of the characteristics of a particular species.



Constructing a clump from a multi-stemmed plant is easy, and what is interesting here, are the species that sprout from the stock. This multi trunk *Corylopsis spicata*, in training, is clearly a collected tree. The central trunk has been removed, and construction and ramification have started. To encourage growth, the stock was placed in a wooden crate.

Boosting the natural push of vegetation to form a clump of trees is easy and fun to implement. All one needs to do is to cultivate a species that puts out from the stock, to choose the shoots, and then train them following a general plan.

Some of the species that naturally sucker from the trunk's base tolerate repeated pruning and being cultivated in a pot. These include flowering trees and fruit trees (*Forsythia*, *Corylopsis*, fig, apple, *Lagerstroemia*, *Chaenomeles*, azalea, *Ilex* etc.) and most deciduous trees.

2 Working on the base

The initial material can be young plants, potensai (pre-bonsai), nursery plants, or collected trees. Whatever the choice, when cultivating, one must focus on regularly improving the nebari and finding ways of widening it to form stable anchoring in order to balance the above-ground trunk mass. As the point of visual

The overall look

As far as the general aspect of the group is concerned, the difficulty lies in the architectural construction of the whole. Individuality and communality must be compatible.

In order to avoid a monotonous uniformity, the trunks that shoot from the root base must have different dimensions (width and height) and develop in their space with asymmetric but coherent forms. A “natural” spontaneous look should be the goal rather than an artificially constructed schema that complies with the norms.



Apple (*Malus sieboldii*). There are many suckers at the base of the trunk of this dead apple tree cultivated in the ground.



One can see the remains of the main trunk, a stump, which in the last few years has put out suckers - one, two, three and four years old from the finest to the largest.



Once the stump has been removed, it needs to be cleaned, and if possible, all the vertical roots should be removed. However, all the lateral roots that have root hair should be retained. Plant the piece in a mix of akadama and pumice stone, and cover the surface with sphagnum moss.

impact is at the base, modification of the group will be limited to the removal of some trunks or the addition of new ones. And in most cases, this would be to improve the nebari.

Work on anchoring certainly takes longer when working with collected trees, as the roots have not been controlled from the outset. Recourse to grafting or air layering is almost obligatory if one is to achieve quality rooting. The addition of young plants is also essential if widening the base is not possible by air layering. One must prepare seedlings or cuttings for this work in case they are not obtainable from professional nurseries.

Anchoring other potted plants can be easily monitored before buying and can be chosen for their potential.



To improve an “impossible” tree, such as this trident maple, plants of the same variety were procured and have been appropriately placed to correct the huge faults at the base. The way these trunks are positioned around the main trunk will give the subject a different impetus by turning it into a group.



Several plants are grouped together in one place. Their bark is stripped and they are tightly held together until they are completely fused. If the trunks are too straight, orient them to avoid parallel movements between them. By placing this created group in a cultivation crate, one can monitor the spread of the roots once all the vertical roots have been removed.

3 Grafts to weld the trees together

Certain pre-bonsai trees are rejected by bonsaists, because they do not have all the criteria to make good subjects. On the other hand, they are inexpensive and, with a little imagination, it is quite relaxing to envisage new ways of beautifying them. Constructing a multi-trunked piece by grafting young plants round an unattractive base is a gratifying exercise that everyone can do.

Another solution is to bind a group of plants tightly round the trunk flare so that they fuse together. They must be very firmly wired in order to form a solid graft. Guide the still flexible stems with wire in the required direction. Before constructing the branches, cultivate them in a pot if you want a shohin group, or in the ground for rapid growth.

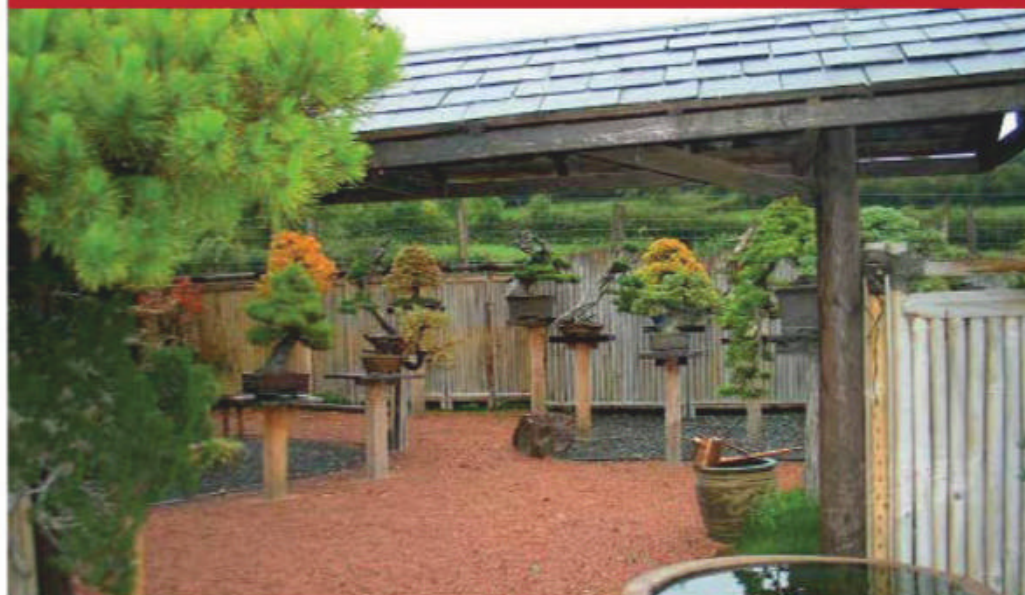
Trees in a clump reflect universal harmony, in which each of the different individuals that make up the composition finds exactly the place that corresponds to them. ●



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The formal upright style: A very strict character

Author: Antonio Ricchiari

Each tree species has a particular shape due to its genetic make-up. For example, a juniper in the formal upright style will be completely different from a maple, even if the latter is in the same style.

There is a constant quest for space in the shaping of a tree. It contains the concepts present in natural landscapes – distance, air, and the material perception of things. Balance, rhythm, enhancement, and harmony guide enthusiasts through the process of creation, and inspire them to produce subjects of immense value.

For all trees

- **Balance** interpreted as symmetry or asymmetry, implies stability. In bonsai, balance is an extremely important aesthetic requirement, which is constantly studied, and sought by the Japanese in their compositions. In fact, symmetry (in the sense of harmony and proportion) is monotonous and is unstimulating to the eye. This aspect of perception is not appreciated by westerners, as our sensibilities are not on the same level as the Japanese in this art. Indeed our preparations and level fall below theirs.

- **Rhythm** implies repetition: an undulating line that will take the eye slowly to its final point. This is important in bonsai. The observer's eye must not stop at one point in the composition, but take in the whole. It should not be arrested by a specific detail, but should absorb the

details without being particularly attracted to any one of them.

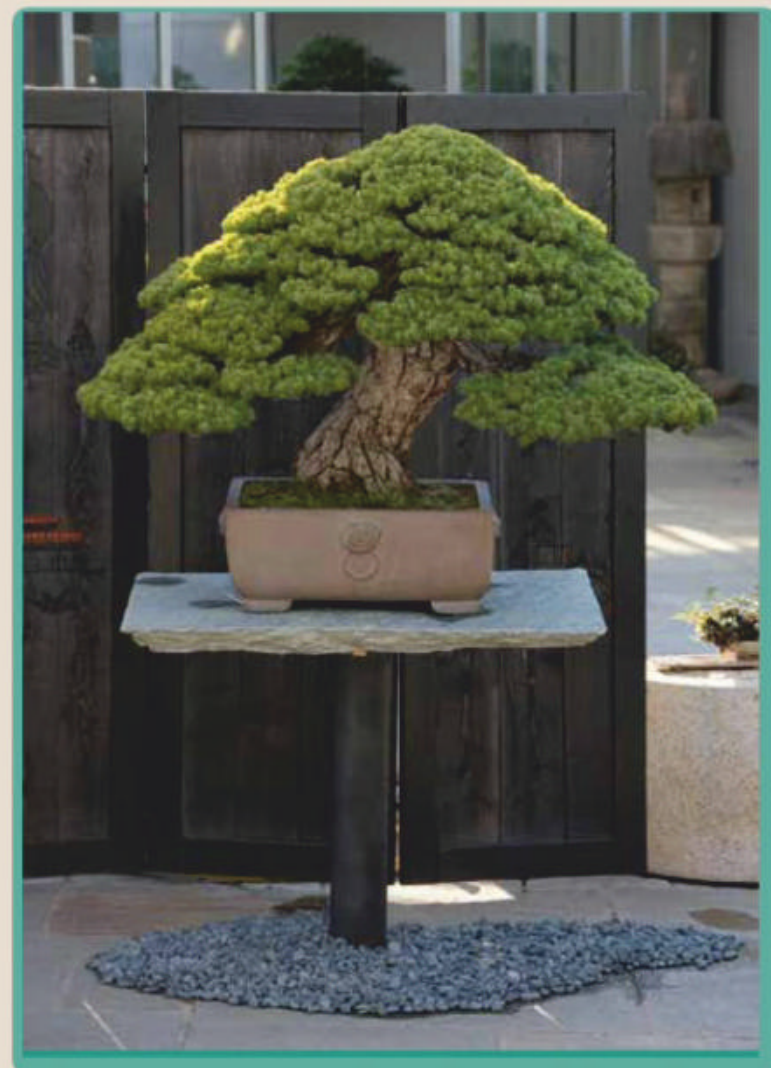
- **Enhancement**, underlined by the graphic expression of the shape, is achieved thanks to the precise lines, the intensity of colours, and the light. It can also be expressed in the contrast between the thickness of the trunk, the branches, and the fine ramification; between the size of the pine needles or leaves and the character expressed by the bark; or in the colours of the trees.

- **Harmony** results from colour, line, form, structure, or the space derived from the piece as a whole.

The aesthetics of the formal upright style

A tree in the formal upright style (chokkan) will have a trunk that is absolutely straight with good tapering. Apart from the trunk's characteristics, other considerations to be taken into account are the position and distribution of the branches. Good proportions are extremely important. Make an appropriate choice for the front that best corresponds to the most interesting aspect of the tree, and the apex should incline towards the observer. Symmetry is the watchword for this style and must be adhered to as much for the right as for the left side, and the same again for the top part and the base (nebari) of the tree.

Proportion is the result of the relation between the different parts of the tree. In conventional ►►►



The formal upright style adheres to strict, very precise rules. This *Pinus pentaphylla* from the Crespi museum in Parabiago, near Milan, Italy, is an excellent example.



The apparent simplicity of this tree is based primarily on the rules.

▶▶▶▶ bonsai, the diameter of the trunk and the height of the tree must have a ratio of 1 to 6 (for example, a trunk with a 5 cm/2 in. diameter, must be 30 cm/11¾ in. tall). In this respect we can add the golden ratio or the Fibonacci sequence.

It is therefore, a style that has a masculine aesthetic for the trunk and also for the branches.

The trunk

To a large extent the impression of dominance and force conveyed by this style is due to an absolutely straight and vertical trunk. A generous nebari must divide into surface roots that cling to the soil to give the impression of stability. The visual weight of the tree is felt through its perfect equilibrium.

The apex

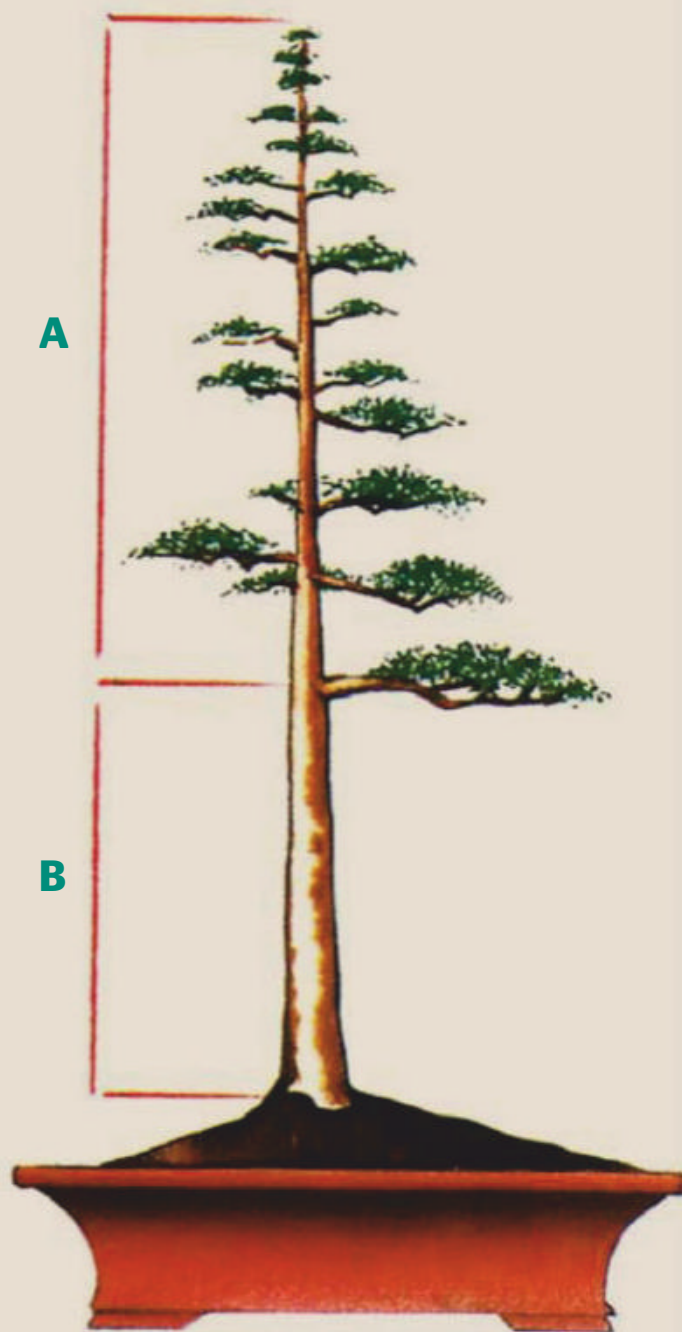
A problem can arise when topping the crown to the most suitable height and proportions for the creation of the new crown. For this we can pollard just above a branch and then position it on the same line as the trunk.

The branches

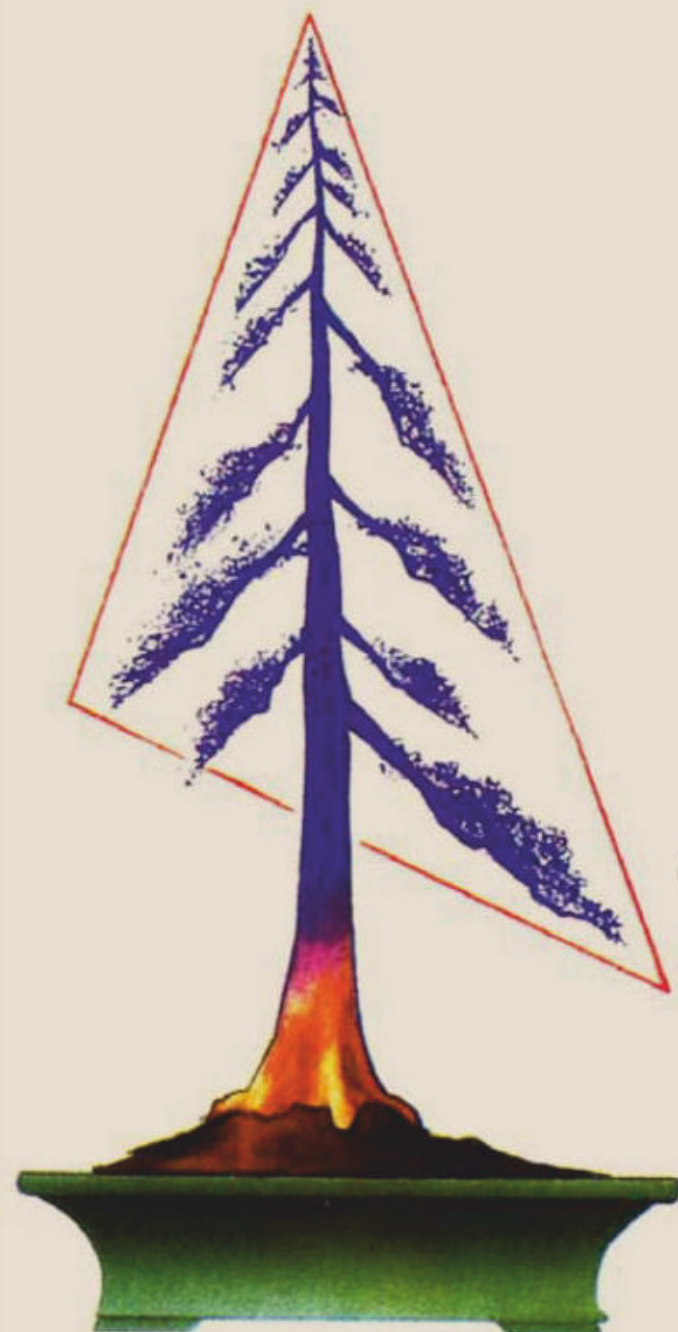
Starting from the base, let's take a look at the disposition of the branches. They should be positioned as follows:

- The first branch growing from the base of the tree, must be as long as possible and will be placed on the right or left side.
- The second branch is shorter and more subtle and should be opposite the first branch and distanced about one third of the way between the first branch and the crown of the tree.
- The third branch, higher than the second, is found at the rear of the tree.

From the base, the branches progress in a virtual spiral towards



Ratio between trunk and the foliage of the pads.



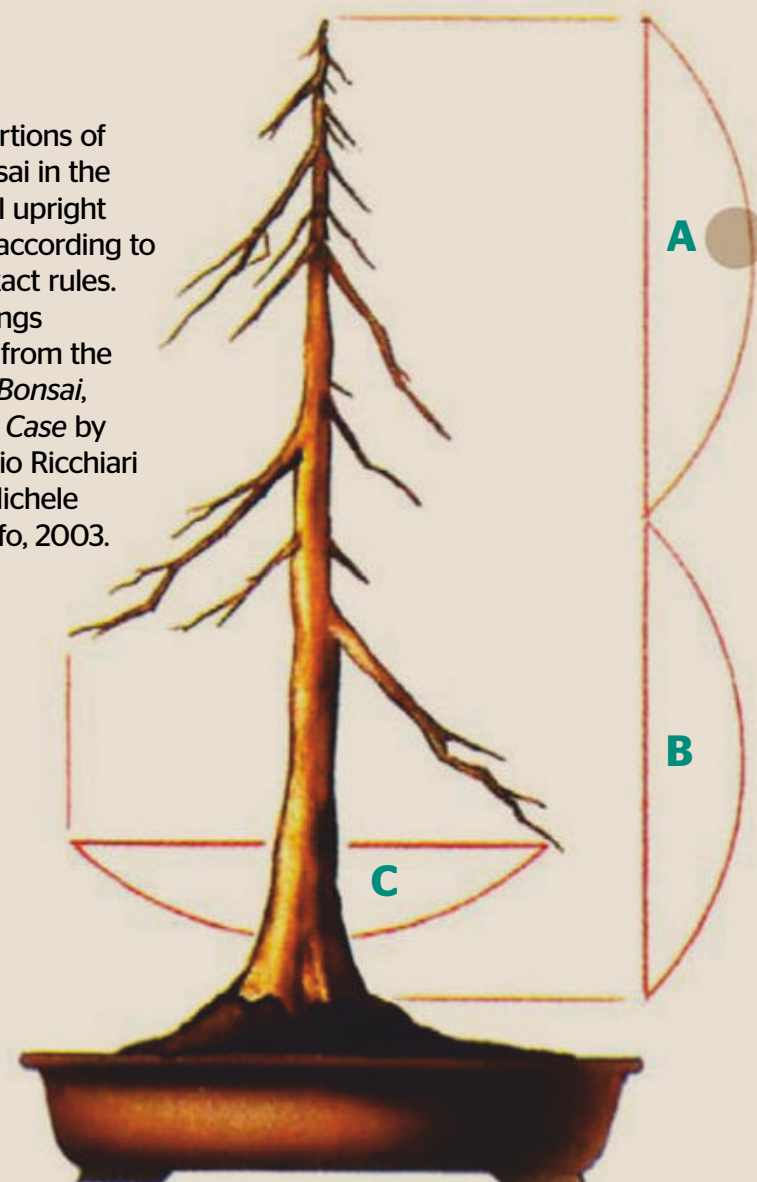
Schematic diagram of the disposition of the pads in the formal upright style.

the apex of the tree and become successively, smaller, shorter and closer to each other. The apex is slightly inclined towards the viewer while emphasising the perspective.

The basic rhythm of the three branches in the formal upright style (lateral and posterior) is repeated the length of the trunk and reiterates the rhythm of the first part of the tree.

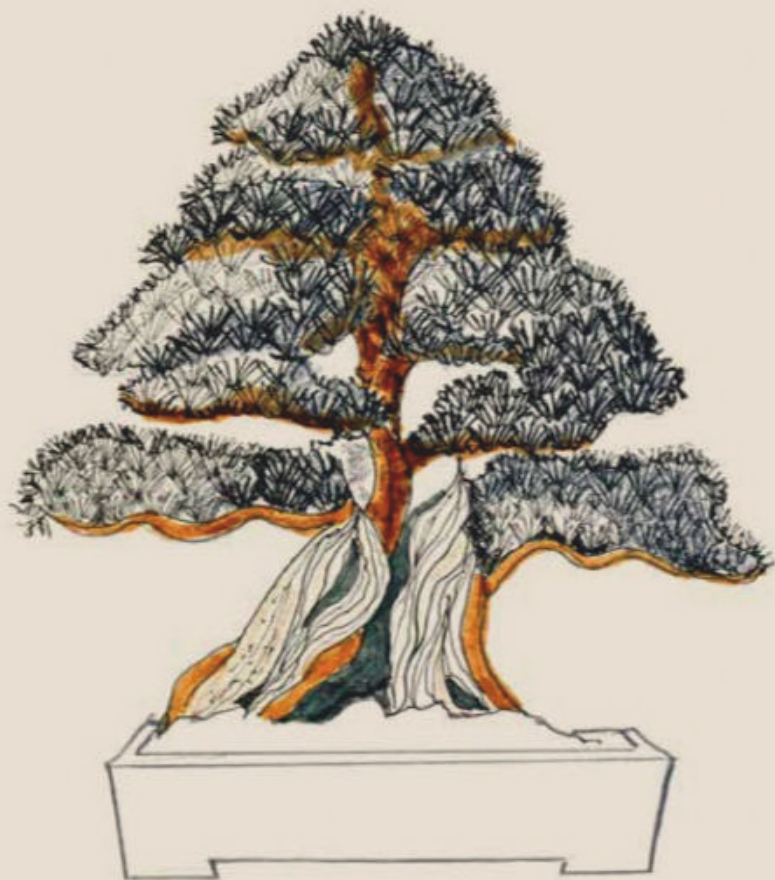
In the apical area a few small branches are needed at the front of the tree to give the crown a conical shape – a severe feature that characterises this style.

Proportions of a bonsai in the formal upright style, according to the exact rules. Drawings taken from the book *Bonsai, Corso Case* by Antonio Ricchiari and Michele Andolfo, 2003.

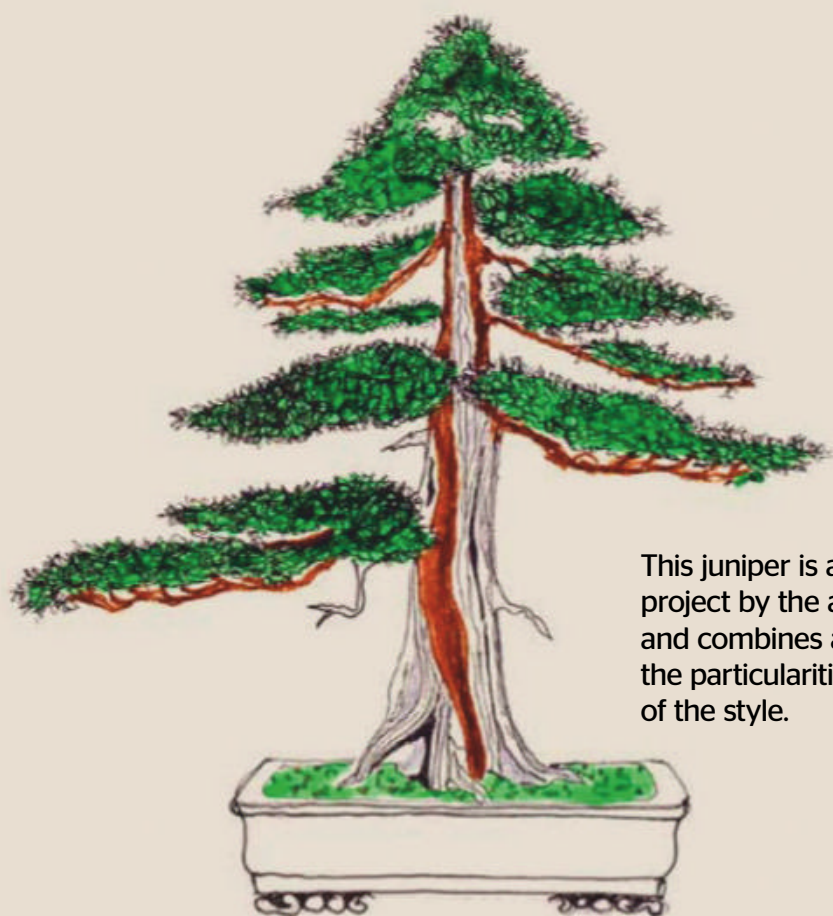


The dead wood

Where dead wood is concerned, eventual shari must be worked in a manner to boost the strict character of the trunk that has not been subjected to problems and heavy damage from natural forces. Jin is more likely to be present, evoking the occurrence of broken branches in nature. With this type of style, jin is relatively frequent.



Dead wood is present in the dynamic of a tree in the formal upright style.



This juniper is a project by the author and combines all the particularities of the style.



A good example of *Taxus baccata* in the formal upright style. Collection Giorgio Raniero

Pots

Pots are rectangular to emphasise the stability required for this style and their linearity corresponds to the straight line of the trunk. One can also consider round pots such as drum-shaped pots with rivets. One should avoid enamelled pots which diminish the typical character of the formal upright style. ●

The Japanese black pine

An iconic species

Emblematic of its native country, the Japanese black pine is nevertheless a staple in the world of bonsai.

Author: Louis-Victor Bourdeau

Classification

Common name: Japanese black pine

Family: Pinaceae

Genus: *Pinus*

Species: *Pinus thunbergii*

P*inus thunbergii*, the Japanese black pine is an evergreen conifer, *Pinus* genus of the Pinaceae family. In its natural habitat it can reach heights of 40 metres (131 ft) and its trunk can measure up to 2 metres (6½ ft) in diameter.

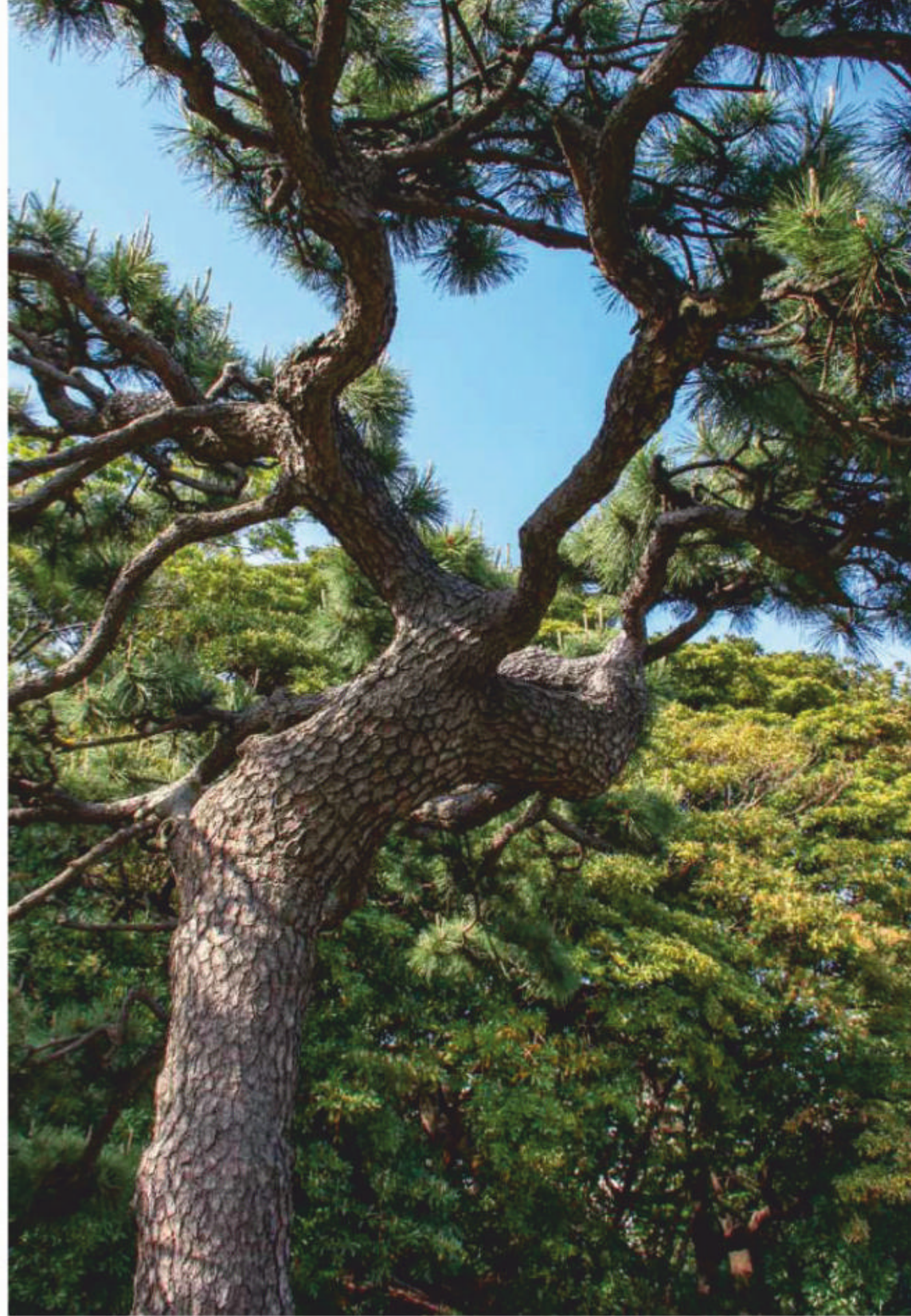
Anatomy

The bark of the Japanese black pine is a dark, sombre grey, sometimes with purplish overtones. It forms in scaly plates, often with deep, longitudinal fissures. The needles of a handsome dark green are grouped in pairs and attached to the branch in a white sheath. They measure between 7 and 12 cm (2¾–4¾ in.) in length.

The buds, measuring between 1 and 2 cm (¾–¾ in.) are white, ovoid and pointed.

The cones are scaly and are about 4 to 7 cm (1½–4¾ in.) long. After two years of maturation, they release winged seeds measuring 6mm (¼ in.).

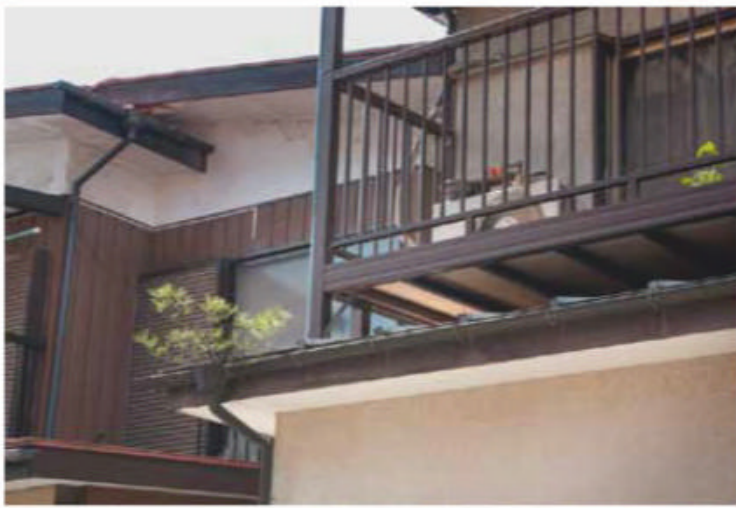
Genetic studies have shown that the *Pinus thunbergii* is related to the *Pinus nigra* (Europe) and *Pinus hwangshanensis* (China).



The Japanese black pine, *Pinus thunbergii* is named for its dark, scaly and fissured bark.



In the Imperial Palace Park in Tokyo, each tree species is emblematic of a Japanese prefecture. Note the number and length of the candles at the beginning of May. *Pinus thunbergii* represents the Gunma prefecture.



Pinus thunbergii grows so spontaneously, in Japan, its native country, that one can find young seedlings in the most unlikely places

Geographic distribution

With the exception of Hokkaido Island, the Japanese black pine grows in the coastal areas of South Korea and Japan. In the south, it can be found at an altitude of 1000 metres (3825 ft) from the point of the seed dispersal.

Habitat

Pinus thunbergii needs a warm, humid and temperate climate. In the ground, it tolerates infrequent freezing conditions provided temperatures do not drop below -25°C.

In its natural habitat, one can find the tree as much in damp, even soaking wet, soils as on a steep, sunny mountainside. Due to its resistance to pollution, it is often planted in cities.

Longevity

The tree can live for hundreds of years and in its native country, one can find specimens that are over 400 years old.

The tree and humankind

People have used *Pinus thunbergii* principally for two purposes – its wood and its ornamental potential.

The use of its wood goes back to the 14th century and one can still find centuries-old frameworks made from Japanese black pine.

But its most common use is ornamental. Japanese black pine is very tolerant of needle pinching at different times during the growing season: a tolerance that enables gardeners to produce exact and representative shapes. This is almost an essential feature of Japanese gardens.

Because of its tolerance of sea spray, it is being tested as a protective species in certain sandy coastal areas in Europe.

As bonsai

As bonsai, it is of course, an emblematic tree and is used as much for small-sized trees as for very imposing subjects ●



Pinus thunbergii lends itself particularly well to *niwaki* (the art of Japanese pruning). Shown here are a few examples at the Hamarikyu gardens in Tokyo.



This shows the meticulously detailed work carried out by gardeners on the candles of the Japanese black pine at the end of May, at the Koraku-en gardens in Tokyo.

Descriptor

Pinus thunbergii was identified in 1867 by the Italian botanist Filippo Parlatore (1816-1877), who named it after Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828), a renowned Swedish explorer and botanist, who has given his name to about 250 species, mostly plants. A pupil of Linnaeus (one of the fathers of animal and vegetable classification), Thunberg is an unavoidable name in Japanese botany. In 1775, he passed himself off as a Dutchman in order to reside in Nagasaki Bay.

At that time, Japan was closed to foreigners with the exception of a few merchants from the Dutch East India Company. In 1776, having gained the confidence of the authorities, he accompanied the director of the Dutch colony to Edo (the future Tokyo). On this trip, he collected a great number of animal and vegetable species, which later gave rise to his book, *Flora Japonica* (1784). This was a major work which allowed the western world to discover many species hitherto unknown.

Carob: a Mediterranean species worth knowing about

Carob is a sun-loving, southern species. Popular in Italian and Spanish collections, its ease of cultivation and its wonderful deadwood make it an appealing choice.

Author: Antonio Ricchiari

A small, evergreen species of tree native to the Mediterranean coast, the carob – *Ceratonia siliqua* – is attractive, slightly exotic, and well suited to cultivation as bonsai. It is very common in Italy's southern zones. Carob trunks are straight, sturdy, wide and squat; their ramification is dense; and their crowns are rounded, dense and untidy. Their smooth, greenish-brown bark features numerous swellings that tend to develop over the years.

Edible seeds

The leaves of *Ceratonia siliqua* are large, compound, pinnate, dark green in colour, thick, tough and shiny. It is a dioecious species – with separate male and female plants – and is covered with reddish flowers in summer. On female trees, the flowers give way to long clusters of semi-ligneous seeds that then transform into green pods, or carobs, which turn dark brown when ripe. Each pod contains a large number of edible

The carob, *Ceratonia siliqua*, is a Mediterranean tree that is easy to work into a bonsai. Its beautiful bark also makes it a very attractive species. This carob tree was exhibited at the 22nd UBI Congress, Arco Bonsai, in May, in Arco, Italy. Pietro Sampirisi collection.

seeds, which are used in the food industry and herbalism.

The leaves are composed of three to six tough leaflets, intense green on their upper surface and whitish-green underneath, and remain on the tree for up to 16 months.

Like other bonsaists, I have observed six growth phases: three sprouting ones and three resting ones. The new leaves start to



© Michèle Corbihan

Cultivation tips

Family: *Fabaceae*

Genus: *Ceratonia*

Species: *Ceratonia siliqua*

Soil: well-draining, with sand, pozzolana and pumice.

Exposure: sunny; in a greenhouse when below 10°C (50°F).

Feeding: organic fertiliser in the spring and autumn, slow-release mineral fertiliser, liquid fertiliser with vitamin B and a high level of amino acids.

In Sicily

Sicilians view the carob species as particularly important. The researcher Livio Tornabene found carob fossils in the tufo of Mount Etna which date back to the Pliocene epoch. It seems that the first people to cultivate carobs were the Phoenecians, around 200 BC, when they brought them to every new region that they conquered. In Italy, the areas where the species is cultivated the most are in Modica and Ragusa, in south-east Sicily, which generates 95% of the national output.



In nature, carobs spread their evergreen foliage out into a broad crown. They often reach 5 to 7 metres (16 to 23 feet) in height.



Trunks of trees collected from nature are real works of art. This tree is undergoing work.



The branches carry broad, oval-shaped, opposite leaves.

appear over the last ten days of January, up to the last ten days of March. Then, around 20 May, new sprouting begins, until 20 July. When the sprouting phase is over, the flowering phase starts. At the same time, the fruits produced over the course of the previous year finish maturing. Around 20 September, flowering ends as both the racemes of the male flowers and the unfertilised female flowers fall off. Around 20 November, the last sprouting phase finishes, then the tree goes dormant until

20 January, at which point it starts a new sprouting cycle.

At the same latitude as the observed carob trees, the 37th parallel, the same growth cycle applies to other evergreen species such as lentisk, evergreen oak, viburnum, myrtle and lemon.

New shoots are pinched back to two pairs of leaves around the start or end of summer, once the spring buds have lignified.

Carob trees do not grow very quickly, either in terms of the branches or the trunk. ►►►

Easy to find

Seed propagation of carobs is very easy in both spring and autumn. These days, seeds are generally sown in black bags 12 centimetres (4¾ inches) wide and 30 centimetres (11¾ inches) tall, and later removed from the bags and planted.

Carobs can also be successfully air-layered on a branch of up to 2 centimetres (¾ inch) in diameter.

Collecting carobs from nature is not particularly difficult in terms of getting them to take off afterwards, because they produce roots easily, as well as plenty of suckers. You just need to remember that their root system includes a taproot. Peripheral roots extend far beyond the span of the crown. They manage to make their way through fissures in the rock, in order to find water and nutrients.



Carob trunks are twisted and covered with lovely bark.



This carob is being worked on in Antonio Ricchiari's workshop, and is in its second year of shaping.



The design for the tree.



A multi-trunk style. Carobs sprout vigorously if their cultivation conditions are optimal.

Poor soil

Carobs cope with direct sunlight all year round. They love heat, and sometimes can grow throughout the year, without stopping, even during the summer period. In winter, remember to put them in a greenhouse to protect them from the cold as soon as the temperature falls below 10°C (50°F).

These trees prefer poor, dry, well-drained soil. For their cultivation as bonsai, a coarse-grained mixture of sand and pumice or pozzolana is recommended. These hardy trees adapt to different types of soil as long as they drain well.

Repotting is done every two to three years, in the spring, when the tree has started a vigorous new sprouting cycle, because repotting during dormancy can bring the tree to a halt for months.

Apply organic fertiliser in both spring and autumn (Biogold or Hanagokoro), or slow-release mineral fertiliser, taking care not exceed the recommended dose as this will scorch the tree. Additionally, using fertiliser that contains microelements and is enriched with vitamin B and amino acids is ideal during the summer period, especially after repotting, which is a risky time for the tree. Vitamin B stimulates



Pietro Sampirisi's tree from the previous page, during work, a year before the UBI exhibition in Arco.

physiological processes, which will compensate for the deficiencies related to the leaching that is provoked by successive waterings.

Disease resistance

Ceratonia siliqua is a hardy species that is not prone to parasites or disease. Sometimes, some bugs might attack it; in this case, use a pyrethrum-based product or – for a more natural alternative – a mixture of water and Marseille soap sprayed onto the tree. Fungal diseases can appear due to excessive dampness. ●

A tip for repotting

When repotting, a good tip is to defoliate the tree and put it in a transparent bag until it has started to vigorously put out new shoots again.



Pietro Sampirisi finishes off the shaping.



The tree's right-hand side.

LICHENS: mutualism in order to live

Lichens are a composite of an alga and a fungus. To survive they need a support such as a tree, which they will protect without taking anything from it.

Author:
Louis-Victor Bourdeau

Micro-organisms

Trees, like animals, are complex, evolved organisms that live with many microorganisms. As with animals, most of these microorganisms are invisible to the naked eye, but their discreet role in the defence against pathogens is being recognized more and more by scientists. Mycorrhizae are, of course, the most familiar and today, we know that they are indispensable to most plants. Lichens likewise have a role to play.

Beneficial to trees, lichens add to their poetry and patina.

Prevented from growing on the upper part of this larch by a vigorous, dominant apex, this *Usnea barbata*, can be seen in the shadows on the lower weaker branches, which will give the lichen time to grow.

In nature it is easy to see some organisms that, although spectacular, seem less useful than others, but whose presence, from a scientific point of view, seems less and less fortuitous – namely, lichen.

In their natural habitat, the aerial parts of nearly all trees are more or less covered with lichen. These small organisms of various shapes and colours often enhance already beautiful trees.

Very slow growing

Obviously in winter, lichens can be seen more easily when the branches are bare. One can also often find them growing abundantly on trunks. They usually grow on heavily crackled bark and on old branches. It is usually the very old trees that have the most lichen.

For a long time it was believed that lichen weakened the trees on which it grows. In fact, it is a rever-



These *Peltigera* are pioneer lichens that grow rapidly (for lichens) in damp conditions. They are accompanied at the base of a spruce by moss that like them is epiphytic.



When conditions are favourable, many lichen species cohabit. A veritable mosaic of lichens is growing on the trunk of this birch. *Parmelia* (white), *Xanthoria* (yellow), and some small *Cladonia* (grey).

sal of cause and effect. Lichen grows so slowly, that it can only take hold on subjects that grow little or very slowly, with mature bark that scarcely renews. Some lichen species grow only a few millimetres a year, and would not be able to settle on young vigorous branches.

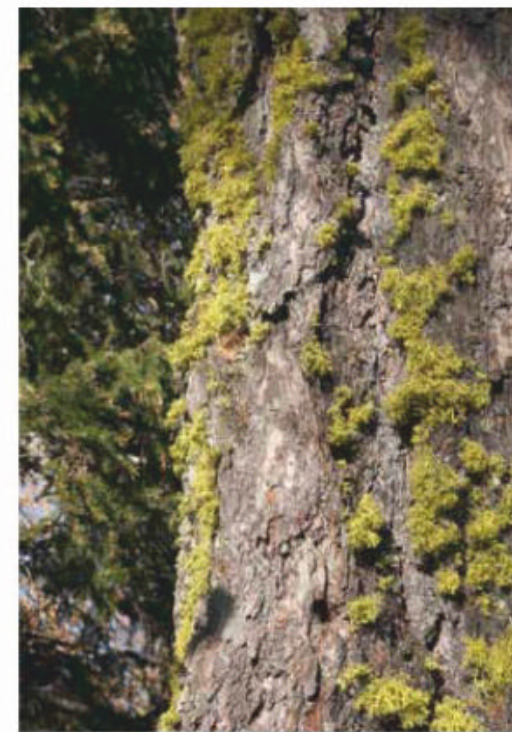
More than decoration

Lichens are not parasites. They take nothing from the tree that serves only as a support. They need nothing except water, light and air – and very little of those! Because of their particular composition (see inset) they are among the most frugal organisms in the living world.

It would seem that the role they play on trees is much more important than the merely decora-

tive. They contribute to the moisture in the crown; they give shelter to insects that are helpful to the tree and they clean the surrounding atmosphere by trapping and accumulating toxic, polluting elements: for which reasons they are excellent bio-indicators of air quality.

Finally, lichens contain many antibiotic or anti-septic substances which are being progressively extracted by researchers for use in medicine. Therefore, it is highly likely that they play an important part in a tree's defence system against pathogens. The future and scientific research will surely determine in detail the interactive bond between trees and lichens. ●



The contrast between this old larch and the bright yellow of these *Letharia vulpina* is superb. This species is known for its production of vulpinic acid, which is toxic and a very rare characteristic in lichens.



Growing on a moraine in difficult conditions, this birch has given plenty of time to a veritable colony of *Evernia prunastri* to cover its trunk. Nevertheless, the tree is neither sick nor dying.

A life of mutualism

Lichens are extremely idiosyncratic organisms in the living world, as they are the product of a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationship between a fungus and an alga.

By photosynthetically taking up CO₂ from the air, the alga provides organic matter to the fungus which anchors and protects the alga with its filaments. The fungus in turn provides the alga with a damp environment and mineral salts. This association enables lichens to adapt to dry conditions and temperatures that no other organism could tolerate, such as in deserts or in Arctic or Antarctic zones. Many lichens growing in extreme conditions are described as being epilithic (growing on rocks), whereas lichens that live on trees are epiphytic (growing on vegetal surfaces). Trees, like lichens, are proof that life is only possible at the expense of mutualism. Lichens have pushed this strategy so far that they have become the most resistant organisms in the living world.

After three years in a training pot, this juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa', initially cultivated in the ground, is ready to take its place in its definitive pot. The front of the tree. Height: 18 cm (7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)



Juniper: rear view.

A one-year waiting period

Every year, the most ardent clients of the Syoukaen nursery and shohin specialist, Hiroyuki Tanibata, reserve trees as soon as they have been collected from the field. They can leave the trees they have ordered at the nursery for a year before taking possession of them, which guarantees the health of their purchase.

Preparing and repotting a juniper

If it is obvious that one must prune the roots when repotting a juniper, it is also common practice to do a little housekeeping in the ramification, as for this seven-year-old juniper now ready for its definitive pot.

Author:
BonsaiTranslations
Demonstration: Hiroyuki Tanibata, Syoukaen

Spring is the time for repotting and this shohin, after several years in a training pot, must be planted in its final pot after a little work has been carried out on the foliage and roots. This small *Juniperus chinensis* 'Itoigawa', grown in the ground, came from the Syoukaen nursery, owned by Hiroyuki Tanibata in Osaka. Due to a finely honed technique, Mr Tanibata can produce a tree of this type in just seven years.

This tree is about ten years old, and so has only been in its training pot for three years! Trees collected from the fields are placed in training pots for several years. In the summer following their collection, the foliage is more yellow, as the roots are still weak. As it is very vigorous, this tree is ready to be planted in an exhibition pot. This must be carried out in spring, when frost is no longer a risk.

Removing branches

One usually prunes a tree before repotting it. The view from above reveals the tree's excessive growth. Therefore, it is necessary to prune the ends and compact the foliage. A shohin bonsai consists of a large trunk, one or two branches and foliage, so it is important to remove all branches that are too thick before they unbalance the tree. After a tree has been collected, unwanted branches are kept temporarily, as the tree is too weak to remove them. However, after three years in a pot, it is time to get rid of them! ▶▶▶



A review of the tree shows that pruning is necessary to compact the shohin.



When junipers are subjected to great stress, they tend to put out foliage in the form of needles. It is quite normal for this sort of foliage to appear after a tree has been transferred from the field to a pot. Pruning is all that is needed. When the tree becomes less stressed its foliage returns to normal.

A shohin bonsai consists of a large trunk, one or two branches and foliage.



1 One removes the useless branches.



2 Cutting this branch poses no problem here, as the surrounding foliage is in good supply.



3 This branch is also unnecessary.



4 It is cut.

Dead wood

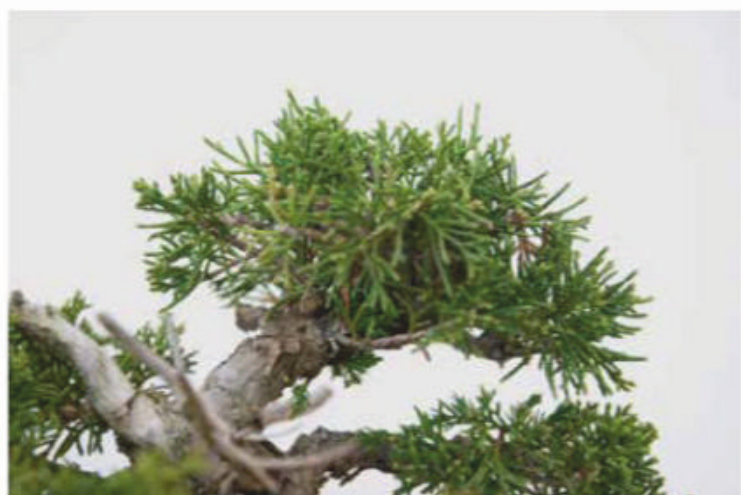
The dead wood in the crown of this tree is called *tenjin* - ten means sky and *jin* a dead branch. As the tree has been grown in a cultivation field, these dead branches are not natural. Work on dead wood is carried out in winter. For now, we will leave this alone.



We will work on the dead wood next winter to make it look more natural.

Pruning twice a year

After removing the unnecessary branches and excess foliage, the bonsai is revealed. In order to promote new shoots, it is important to enable the sun to reach the tree's centre, which, for junipers in Japan, is achieved by thinning the foliage twice a year – at the beginning of spring and in summer. One allows them to grow vigorously by fertilising them, and then they must be pruned as shown here. This technique is preferable to frequent trimming.



A It is important to keep the foliage well rounded and compact. Reducing the length of the foliage makes the trunk appear larger.



B We also remove foliage that grows under each pad, as this area must remain flat.

C It is quite normal to prune so much foliage.



Replacing branches

Most of this tree's branches will be replaced over the next five years. The problem is to get replacement branches to grow in the right places. Old branches can serve as jin if they are well positioned. This is the most difficult and most important part in the creation of a shohin. One must work with the existing branches while waiting for new shoots.



1 Why keep this delicate branch growing parallel to the large branch? A shohin bonsai consists of a thick trunk with delicate branches, so one must constantly replace heavy branches with smaller ones.



2 Over the years, most of the branches will be replaced by more delicate branches.



3 As the front of tree is rather bare, the first branch on the left is brought forward, by using dead wood as an anchor point.



4 The second and third branches on the right have been lowered to harmonise the space between these branches.

Pruning the roots

When the tree is taken out of its pot, the root ball must be untangled and all the substrate removed. The size of the root ball must be reduced in order to place the tree in a smaller pot.



A When the tree is out of its pot, one can see the vigorous growth of the roots.



B This is the third time the tree has been repotted since it was taken from the ground. The substrate was removed at each repotting. A few places were overlooked, as shown here on the left. One must completely remove sand, mould, black soil and moss, particularly towards the centre of the base when transferring a tree to a smaller pot.



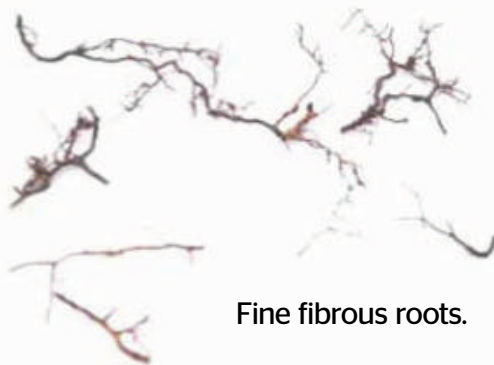
C The roots should never stick to the pot. There must be at least a centimetre between the root ball and the pot. So the roots must be pruned according to the size of the pot chosen.

Three kinds of roots

For this type of tree, there are only two kinds of roots – taproots and fibrous. However, one must take into consideration another type of root, which is a taproot that will form part of the nebari. Since the purpose of the root is aesthetic and is not to anchor the tree to the soil, we consider it to be another type of root. When studying the underpinnings of the bonsai one can see the difference between the taproots and fibrous roots.



We have removed the taproots, as they are obtrusive and ineffective.



Fine fibrous roots.



Some aesthetically interesting roots could form part of the nebari. If one keeps these large roots, one must protect the fibrous roots that are connected to them otherwise the entire root must be cut.

Waxing the trunk

For an impeccable finish when exhibiting, Koji Hiramatsu – a professional shohin expert whose nursery is at Takamatsu, Shikoku – uses a fruit and vegetable wax, similar to that used on apples. In this way, the reddish wood will look wonderful at exhibitions.

Cleaning the bark

In winter, one can remove the top layer of bark from junipers for aesthetic reasons, but it is a question of choice and is not essential.



Tweezers are used to remove the top layer of bark. It is also possible to use fine grain sandpaper to smooth it down.



The colour of the trunk's bark is a reddish brown, which contrasts well with the white of the dead wood.

Choosing the pot

Junipers are usually placed in fairly shallow, lotus-form, oval or hexagonal pots. Square pots with feet are also popular.



1 Some pots are better suited to juniper than others. This square pot is used for pine. It is too small to contain the roots of this juniper.



2 This sort of coloured pot is kept for deciduous trees. Contrasting colours are not suitable for juniper.

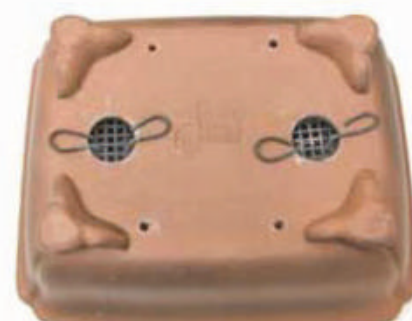


3 "Experimental" pots are interesting from an artistic point of view. However, bonsai is not considered an art in Japan ...

Repotting the tree



A This pot is traditionally associated with juniper.



B The mesh is fixed to the bottom of the pot with aluminium wire.



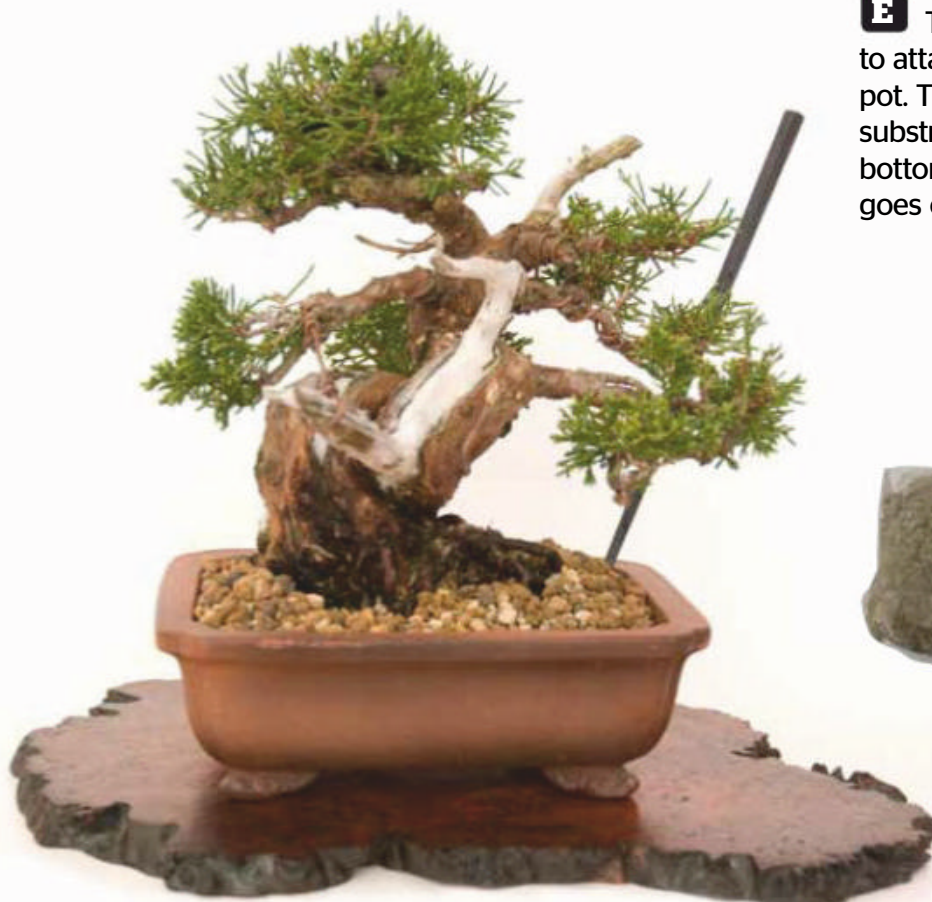
C A small- to medium-grain substrate is prepared ...



D ... as well as the charcoal.



E The wire is positioned to attach the tree to the pot. The medium-grain substrate is put at the bottom and the small grain goes on the top.



F We put the tree in its pot and attach it firmly. Using a chopstick, we fill the spaces with fine substrate. This is a very important step, as empty spaces encourage mould and insects, which would obstruct the growth of the roots.



G We put moss on the substrate to retain moisture during the hot months and for its attractiveness. The moss can be dried or naturally collected.



This handmade pot gives the impression that the bonsai is growing from a rock. One can feel the mountain winds battering this little juniper clinging to its rock. A small pot emphasises the size of the tree.

A question of style

The tree's style is imprinted by the pot chosen. It is important to envisage the piece to be created as a whole and to adapt the choice of pot to this image: an example of two completely different pots. Junipers are mostly seen in pots that appear too small, as the trees originate from cliffs and mountains. Therefore, one must choose the pot, the stand and the style to reflect the landscape one wishes to represent. ●



This traditional pot gives the tree considerable stability, and it no longer resembles a fragile branch on a cliff. It is sturdy and mature in a conventional garden. The front of the tree after work. Height: 17cm (6¾).



The rear of the tree after work.



After repotting

One must always ensure that the bonsai is well protected from frost, when it has been repotted.



How to set up a basic shohin bonsai display

Displaying shohin is an art in itself, with rules that have to be followed and sometimes adapted! Morten Albek, a British expert in the field, reveals the most important ones.

Morten Albek, author of a bestseller on shohin, has just launched an online course with Bonsai Empire. Here he shares some secrets on how to display small bonsai.

Author: Morten Albek
and Bonsai Empire

The shohin bonsai display differs from the traditional bonsai display that shows only one tree. A shohin bonsai display makes use of multiple trees set up together, and viewed as one piece. The overall goal is to communicate the beauty of the changing seasons, as well as the power of the trees. Shohin bonsai are a maximum of approximately 20 centimetres (7½ inches) tall – not to be taken very rigidly, but trees need to fit in the standard shohin bonsai racks, used for displaying. Both racks and small tables are used to elevate and arrange trees. The main purpose of the shohin bonsai display is reflecting landscapes that change seasons. Every season has its subtle changes. The differences between early or late summer periods can be

Online training

The shohin bonsai display tutorial is one of 16 lectures featured in Bonsai Empire's "Shohin Bonsai Course", in which Morten Albek explains a wide range of bonsai and shohin bonsai techniques. Two lectures can be previewed for free at www.bonsaiempire.com/courses/shohin-course (the full course is priced \$44.99 for lifetime access).

shown in a display by small suggestions like leaf maturity, colour and flower development. Just as a bonsai is not a precise mimic of trees in nature, a display is not a precise mirror of a landscape, but an expression of feelings of nature. It may be better defined as a poem or a piece of music describing nature. Besides



Different tables and racks for shohin display.



The seasonal approach is the most important part of the shohin display. Cotoneaster with berries showing a clear sign of the autumn season.

Indications of season

Spring is expressed by trees that show foliage in tender colours typical of the time of year. Autumn displays make use of the colours of autumn leaves, and trees with berries. Depending on the time of the season, leafless trees can also be used, presenting berries or fruit in full glory. The winter display will by nature focus on a mood of modesty and emptiness. It is not necessary to make emphatically clear that the display is suggesting the winter season; however, any objects or trees that might lead thoughts to another time of the year are inappropriate.

the presentation of trees, the display must express wind, light, and the smell of nature through a seasonal theme, rather than trying to impress with overdone colour and vitality.

With or without a scroll

There are two main styles of displaying shohin bonsai. One is a simple setup with two trees, an accent planting and a scroll painting. The second makes use of a rack with more trees as the key point of interest, supported by a receiving tree at the side, and often one accent. In this second type of display, scrolls are not used. There is no room for them. All displays are made (as standard) within an area measuring 90 by 180 centimetres (35 by 70 inches). For smaller mame (bean bonsai) the area may be reduced 90 by 120 centimetres (35 by 47 inches). Within this area, ►►►



There are two types of shohin display. Here, a display is arranged using two bonsai, one accent and a scroll, with a seasonal approach.



This type of presentation involves a display rack, a receiving tree and an accent plant - here in an autumn display showing colours of the season.

● Shohin: Small Bonsai

▶▶▶ it is up to the artist to choose how many trees there can be, while maintaining simplicity and open spaces. Smaller trees allow for a larger numbers of pieces than larger trees.

A strong main tree

There are a few traditional and bonsai cultural observations to take into account. Of importance is the tree placed on the rack's main, top shelf. This tree must show great strength and be of a more or less formal character, in order to bring peace to the display.

If the top tree is weak, feminine or too expressively styled, it will make the display look disturbed and lack harmony.

In Japan it is often the Japanese black pine that is used as the main tree. This is solely related to culture and traditions. It can just as well be any other specimen – as long as it shows strength and beauty.

The main tree placed at the highest point must have a direction and visual flow towards the receiving tree, and the receiving tree stabilises the flow. A third element is a grass, flower or ornament suggesting for instance a location or time of year.

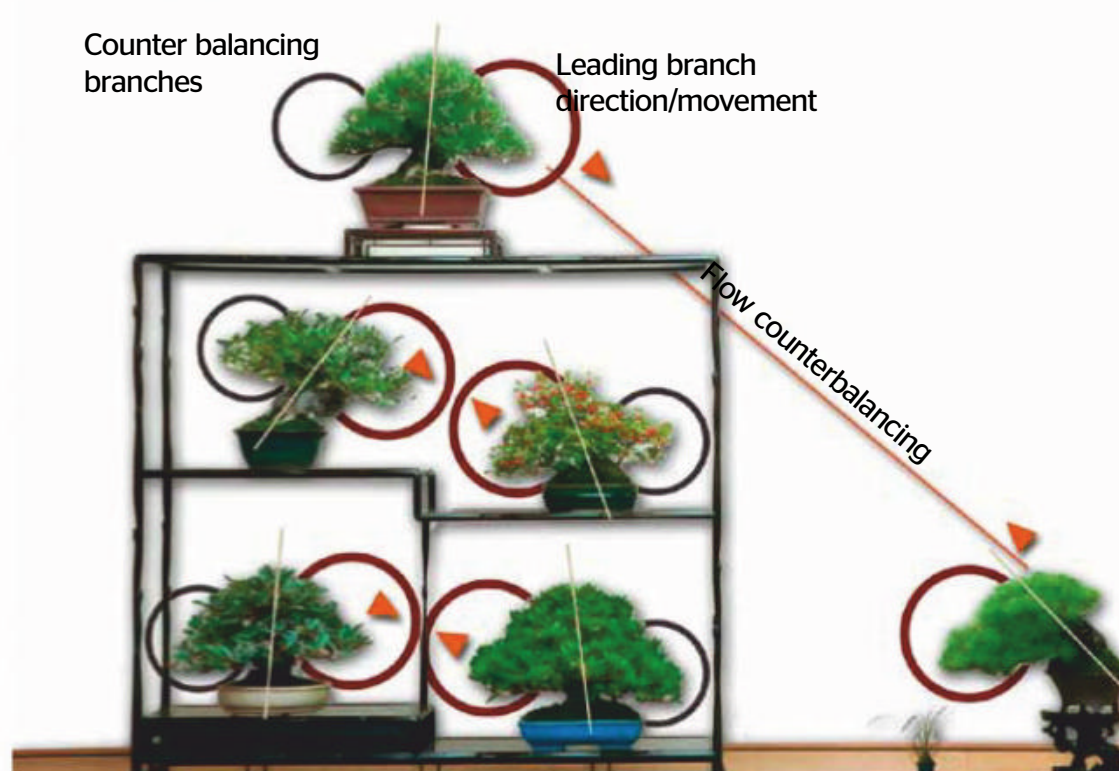
If a single-trunk tree is used as the main tree, the best to use for the receiving tree will be a multiple-trunk or clump-style tree. This will make for a visually stable and calm display. Remember that grasses, flowering shrubs and ornaments used in a display have to be of a size that is in harmony with the trees, and small enough to create a natural and peaceful arrangement.



Trees on different levels of the display rack. The traditional and visually strongest tree is at the top.



Morten Albek favours the European yew as the main tree, as a replacement for the traditional Japanese black pine.



It is very important to place the trees well in terms of movement. Every tree will have a movement. For cascades, the direction they are pointing in is obvious. Use the trees with the clearest movements to bring the trees together, by pointing them towards the centre of the arrangement. Trees with a looser form, or with less movement, are used to make the scenery calmer, and make smaller hints at direction.



Place the bonsai at the centre of the display table or rack. The tree's balance should be present by itself, and not need to be adjusted by placing the tree at the side of the table.



The shohin bonsai artist needs several trees to choose from, when arranging a display. Different styles and direction of movement are necessary.



The basics to understand are the relationships between trees. The main tree, being the most important tree in the display, decides which trees best support it. Avoiding repeating the style of the main tree when choosing the secondary and supporting trees is a simple and basic guideline to remember.

No repetition

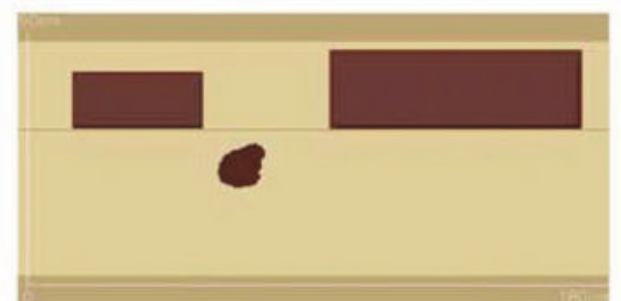
A variation from classic rectangular shelves are round shelves or half-moon racks. Cascade and semi-cascade trees often fit well in this type of shelving as main trees, because the round shelves invite this type of movement. Don't use the same species twice in the display. Also, the style and colour of pots must not be repeated. The species and their style, colour, fruit and size has to differ, in order to make a well-balanced and beautiful display. Judging the trees is mainly focused on balance and the beauty of the whole display. As in bonsai in general, examining the growing control techniques and training techniques is always very important. An often misunderstood perception is that only an uneven number of items may be displayed. This is not true, although many Westerners preach it. In fact, it is up to the artist to decide. Display tables and stands are available in many varieties. There are stands that can hold different numbers of shohin bonsai, and tables for solitary plants. Stands are designed to hold both odd and equal numbers of trees. ●

The main tree

In Japan, masculine and strong trees are always pines or junipers, because this is how the trees act in the country's mountains, and have done throughout history. The pine especially has great value to the Japanese. Therefore, pines, and sometimes also junipers, are often used as the main and most important tree in the Japanese way of displaying shohin bonsai. In Europe, the European yew will make a great substitute and be a good choice for the top tree in a shohin display.



Formal display.



Less formal display.



Free display.

Seen from above. Graphic showing three different ways of adding depth and interest to the perspective through the use of tables.



This sabina or savin juniper, *Juniperus sabina*, collected six years ago, has been cultivated for five years in the UK. It has been transplanted into bonsai soil, wired and styled once, and appropriately pruned to control tip growth, but the branches are still growing outwards and the foliage has proved difficult to make compact. The solution is to graft foliage from an “Itoigawa” juniper. Height: 47 cm (18½ in.)

Grafting foliage on a sabina

For a sabina – or savin juniper – that has resisted all attempts to compact its foliage, one solution remains: grafting foliage from an “Itoigawa” juniper. Here’s how.

Author: Peter Warren

Why graft?

Reasons to graft include wanting to get foliage closer to the base of branches or to grow branches in much more desirable positions. With a lot of yamadori material, branches can be very leggy and foliage a long distance away from the trunk. In many cases, particularly with larger trees, branches can be manipulated and bent so that the foliage is closer to the trunk, but there are many cases where this is impossible or impractical.

The technique

of grafting is one which is underused in bonsai practice in the West because of a fear factor and a desire for immediate results. Grafting can be a very lengthy process that requires patience and a long-term view but can ultimately result in much better trees.

Here we will look at a sabina that I have been growing for close to five years in the UK. It was repotted into a bonsai pot and initially styled. For the first two years the foliage behaved well, but since it established itself, it has proved to be very difficult to achieve foliage pads due to the heavy flowering and fruit production each year. Despite best efforts of trying heavy fertilising, no fertilising, and additional sunlight during the winter months, it just will not behave. Other sabinas that sit next to it on my benches have developed into respectable bonsai, but the DNA of this tree is not suited to compact growth. As a result, it has been decided to turn it into a “sabigawa”, a *Juniperus sabina* trunk with *Juniperus chinensis* “Itoigawa” foliage. The process of changing it over will take anything up to three years before it can have a first styling, and within five years it should look something like a decent bonsai. If you compare that to the five years I have spent battling to try to get the foliage type to become more compact in the UK climate, then it is of a similar time scale.



The limp foliage contains lots of female flowers, with curved-over tips. Each of these curved tips will either generate fruit if pollinated or will die off and the leaf will drop off, creating leggy growth and causing new shoots to form at the base of the branch, resulting in cluster-like growth.

Changing the foliage type

One reason to graft is to entirely change the foliage type over to one which is more suitable for cultivation – as for this sabina. This is commonly done with junipers, for example grafting compact Itoigawa foliage onto the branches of a collected tree from the Tohoku region which naturally has coarse foliage and can be less favourable for long-term cultivation. Although less common, the same can be done with pines, for example grafting Sunsho-variety foliage onto a normal black pine trunk, or grafting black pine onto ponderosa pine which is sometimes done in American bonsai.

It must be said that this *koromo-gae*, or “wardrobe change” approach to grafting yamadori trees is not one that should be done on all trees. There are many ponderosas that should remain as they are naturally found, and there are some sabinas that can be grown with the native foliage; however, there are others that would benefit from a change.

Grafting in the spring

Timing of scion grafting is important. It should be done in early spring, just as the trees are coming out of dormancy so the union has chance to heal, but not so late in spring that the scion is growing and cannot be supported by the stock.

Tools and hygiene

In terms of the actual technique of grafting, the principal tools required are a sharp grafting knife, quality grafting tape and wound sealant. A grafting chisel is also useful for certain situations and species. The sharper the knife, the cleaner the cuts are and the quicker and more successful callusing and union between the scion and stock will be. Dirt and bacteria or fungal spores can also be a cause for failure, and so cleanliness will also improve success rates.



Grafting knife, grafting tape and wound sealant are essential, as are scissors for cutting the scion. “New Medel” by Aglis is by far the best grafting tape around, and Kiyonal is the best wound sealant for grafting as it hardens more than other liquid-type sealants.



Sharpen the knife at an angle on a fine whetstone, using oil or water as a lubricant. Disinfect and then clean with sterile tissue.

Experience and an open-minded approach will guide you to make the correct decision.

The techniques for scion grafting are not incredibly difficult to understand but they require practice and repetition. A scion is a twig containing buds or a shoot that is cut from the same, or another tree, and is then grafted onto branches or the trunk of a tree, known as the stock tree. Failure is always a possibility with scion grafting and even the most seasoned Japanese professionals will often have years or trees where success rates are less than 50%, but others that are closer to 100%.

There are three fundamental aspects to grafting: technique, decision-making and horticultural ability.

Choosing the scion and graft site

Decision-making is pivotal in terms of selecting a suitable scion and position on a suitable stock tree. Vigour is key here, as both the scion and the stock need to be strong healthy plants, with strong buds or growth tips on the scion that will have the impetus to grow. The stock needs to have strong healthy roots and, importantly, foliage above the graft site in order to fuel the initial formation of the callus and then growth of any successful graft. Trying to graft onto a weak tree or a branch with very little foliage will reduce success rates.

Finding the best position to graft onto needs careful consideration of the future design as well as technical considerations such as ease of access for tools and hands. Before making an incision, ►►►



A suitable site for a graft. Thick branch, easy access and close to the base.



A strong scion of "Itoigawa" juniper, with strong growth tips and a woody stem. The thicker the better. Approximately 10 cm (4 in.) long.

▶▶▶ consider how you will wrap the grafting tape around the site: is it easily accessible, or is it so difficult and tight that as you are working you disturb the alignment of cambium layers between the scion and the cut? Experience will teach you these points, but initially begin with easily accessible branches. From a design perspective, imagine that you have just the trunk and no branches and then build up foliage pads and structure around it in the ideal way. As long as there are suitable branches nearby then it is possible to grow foliage wherever you want.

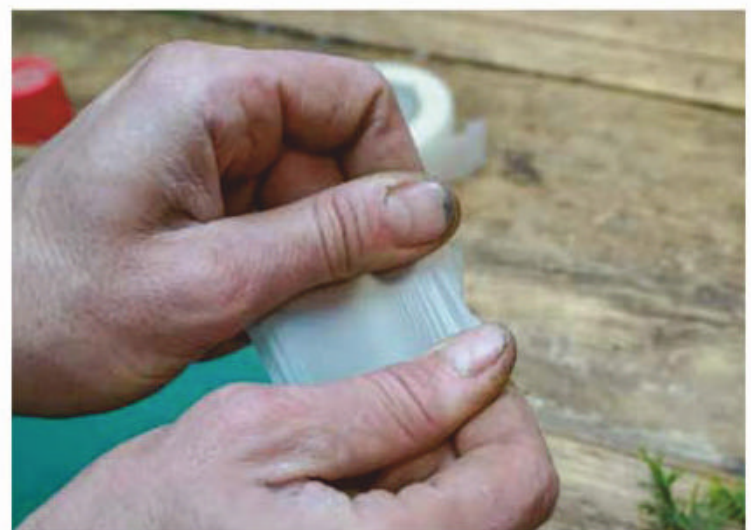
Preparing and grafting

Once a suitable scion has been chosen then it needs to be prepared. Reduce the amount of transpiring foliage down to a minimum. There is a sweet spot for the amount of foliage necessary to promote energy production on the scion and drive growth and callus formation at the union site. Too little and the scion cannot grow, too much foliage and it loses more moisture than it can provide and then dries out and dies. On a pine scion, reduce the number of needles down to around eight to ten pairs; on a juniper, remove weaker side shoots.

After-care is also important: keep the tree out of the wind and away from intense sunlight until success has been confirmed and the scions begin to burst through the tape. After this, allow the scions to grow freely for at least a year before starting to consider removal of foliage on the stock tree, or cutting back to the graft. It will take three years to be completely sure of success, and even then the graft sites should always be treated with caution when wiring or bending. ●



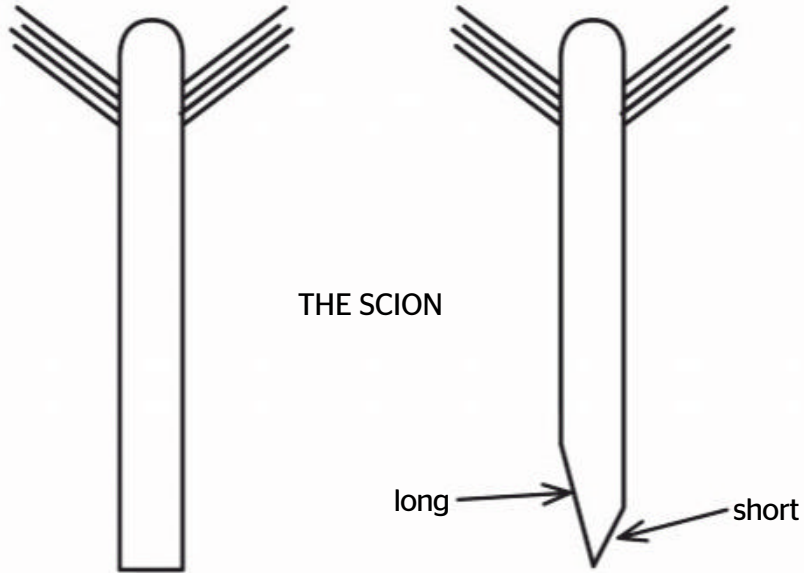
1 Reduction of foliage mass, removing shoots at the base and foliage without active-looking growth tips.



2 Grafting tape is cut and stretched out to make it thinner, so more sunlight can penetrate into the scion, and it is easy for the scion to penetrate out once it starts to grow.



3 The scion is wrapped carefully to avoid twisting it inside, but tightly in order to protect it from moisture loss before the graft union is complete and water is provided from the stock tree, and so that no moisture can penetrate in or out.



4 The scion needs to be cut in an uneven V shape, one side long, one side short. When inserting into the stock, the long side is facing into the tree, the short side is upwards.



5 The cut into the stock tree is made at a shallow angle to expose as much of the cambium layer as possible, and deep enough into the branch to insert the scion.



6 The scion is inserted in one smooth movement, not going in and out several times. It is done so that the green edges of the cambium layers match up on one side or the other.



7 The union is then wrapped in grafting tape to cover the entire area and any exposed stem on the scion. There must be some tension on the tape, but it must not be pulled so tight that it dislodges the scion.



8 Care must be taken at this point not to move the alignment of the scion in any way.



9 Two grafts in position. You can see the graft has been lightly covered with sealant. The grafting tape is self-adhesive but the sealant gives added protection. I also add a small amount just at the base of the scion if there is a tiny gap. Water and air must not be allowed to get into the union site.



This beautiful Japanese azalea by Janine Droste - an expert on this species - needs to be repotted. Repotting a satsuki is not a difficult task; it just demands some knowledge and care.

This Japanese azalea, of the 'Osakazuki' variety, is a beautiful bonsai, not only because of its beautiful trunk line, but also because the variety's flowers are purple in colour and look good against the green of the leaves. It is time for it to be repotted.

When to repot

The best time to repot a satsuki is in the spring, before the growth of the new buds (so from about the middle to the end of March) or not too long after the flowering period (from about June to the middle of July).

Young bonsai are repotted every two years; older ones every three years.

Repotting a beautiful satsuki azalea

Janine Droste is very knowledgeable about satsuki - Japanese azaleas. She chooses a fine specimen of the "Osakazuki" variety to show the stages of a successful repotting, in detail.

Author: Janine Droste



1 Hold the bonsai pot at a slant, and cut the wires.



2 Remove the wires over the root ball, and carefully pull them loose.



3 To get the tree easily out of the pot, it is best to cut the root ball along the pot edge using a knife.



4 Carefully remove the tree from its pot. Now we can see the condition of the roots.



5 Remove the unnecessary small surface roots that are not being used.

Untangling roots

The roots of satsuki are so fine that they act like hair roots. For this reason, the root mass is very difficult to disentangle. With old trees you can cut off a slice of the root ball with a sharp knife, both from the bottom and from the sides. After that, the root ball is disentangled and carefully trimmed. Satsuki generally endure root pruning well and make many new roots in a short time. ▶▶▶



6 Disentangle the surface roots and remove the black soil with a chopstick with a radial movement from the trunk, being careful not to damage the roots.



7 Use a pair of tweezers and/or chopstick to look for useful underground roots. The soil between the surface roots is of vital importance for the tree, because it is only through this that the water can reach the roots lying directly under the trunk.



8 Scrape away the dirt and some soil on the sides of the thicker roots, so that they become more visible.



9 Loosen the soil on the side of the root ball with a rake.



10 While satsuki roots are very delicate, it is best to cut them with a sharp knife or saw on the side and bottom of the root ball.

Spotlight on Broadleaves



11 Also disentangle the roots on the side and bottom of the root ball.



13 Two thirds of the roots have been pruned.



12 New roots that are growing out of the dark soil must also be removed. After untangling the roots, you can trim the root ball with a root scissors.



14 Some overly thick roots had to be removed or shortened to stimulate the development of finer roots.



15 Keep the root ball moist.

Kanuma soil

Repot a satsuki in 100% kanuma, a volcanic product with ideal acidity. Sieve the soil before using it. ▶▶▶

The ideal soil

Kanuma is the ideal soil for satsuki because of its good drainage qualities and perfect acidity (pH) of 4.5 to 5.5. The soil type is named after the Japanese city north of Tokyo. Kanuma is heated in an oven at 300°C (570°F) for about fifty minutes, so that all bacteria are killed and the soil is sterile. Kanuma absorbs water well, drains well and provides the tree with exactly the desired moist environment in which the roots can develop quickly and easily.



16 Place a piece of mesh over each drainage hole in the pot to prevent the soil from washing away. Attach the mesh with clamps, which you can make with aluminium wire. Pull the wires to fix the tree through the drainage holes. In the pot, make a mound of sieved kanuma, with a grain thickness of 3 to 5 millimetres.



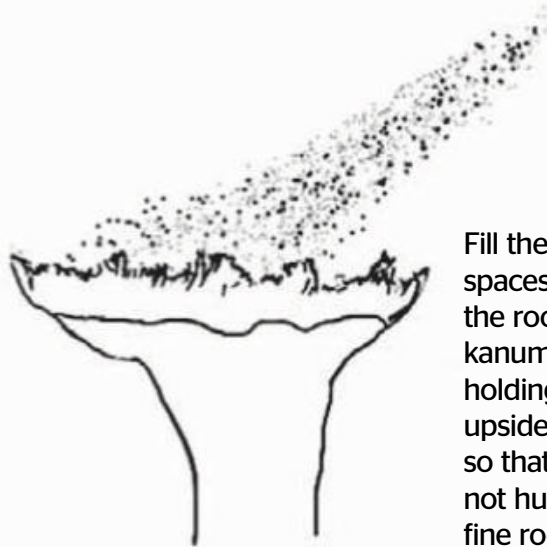
17 Keep the tree upside down and fill the open spaces between the roots as well as possible with fresh soil (kanuma).



18 After the tree has been potted in the desired position, it is fixed in place using the pre-prepared wires so that the tree cannot move anymore.

Avoid harming the roots

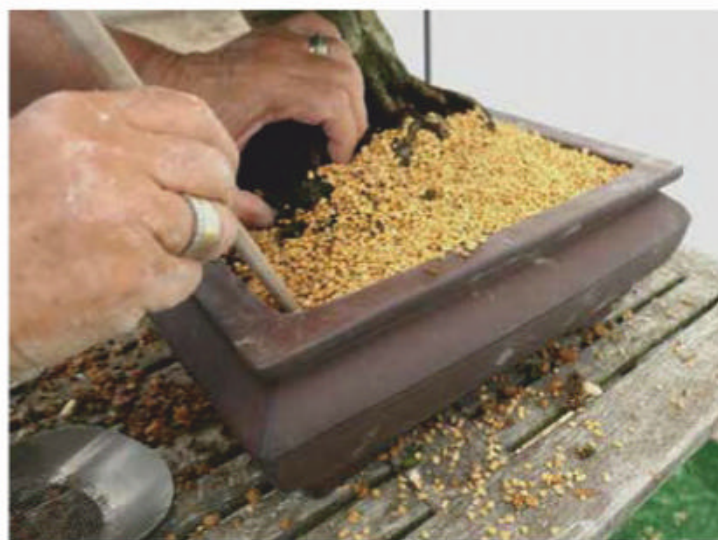
If you put the tree on a mound of soil when repotting, and you move the tree forwards and backwards to fill the empty spaces between the roots with kanuma, the roots can be hurt by this movement. The solution is to fill the empty spaces under the root ball with soil beforehand.



Fill the empty spaces between the roots with kanuma while holding the tree upside down, so that you do not hurt the fine roots.



19 The pot and all the holes between the roots are further filled with fine kanuma.



20 Push the kanuma carefully between the roots with a stick, so that there are no air gaps left in the root ball.



21 Check with your fingers that the soil is not compacted. Be careful not to crush the soil, because that could clog the drainage.



23 Water after repotting, until all the dust has disappeared and only clear water comes out of the drainage holes.

Cover with sphagnum

Compared to other species, a satsuki may be placed in a slightly deeper or higher pot. The soil and therefore also the roots remain moist longer.

However, it is advisable to cover the ground surface with moist peat or sphagnum moss immediately after repotting, to prevent it from drying out. Sphagnum moss can take 30 times its weight in water and it is just as easy. It actually works a bit like a sponge. It prevents dehydration of the soil and also promotes the growth of new roots. When these new roots become visible, the sphagnum moss must be removed.

Some satsuki nurseries have mixed the soil from before with about 10% sphagnum. ●



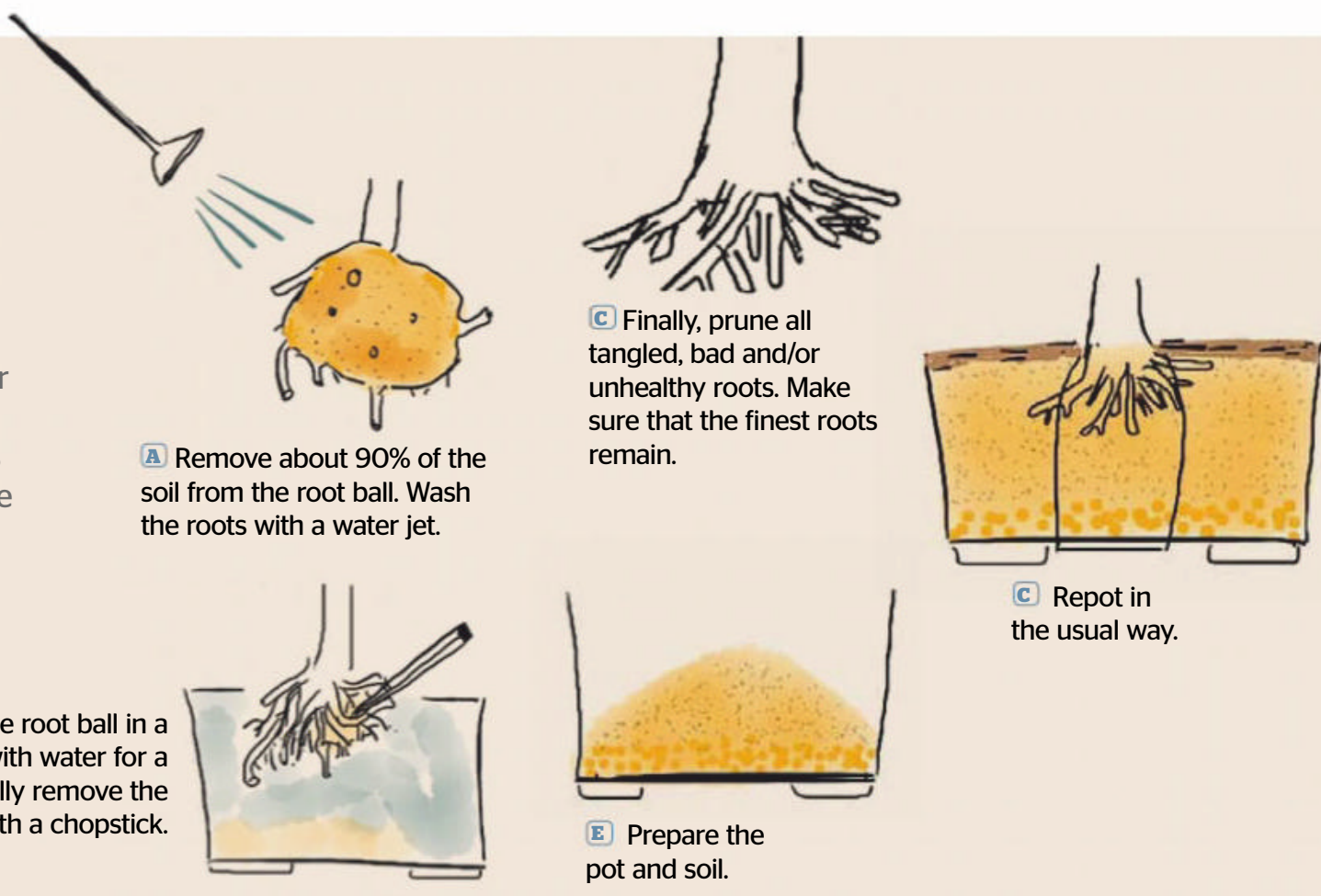
Cover the ground surface with moist sphagnum moss to prevent the soil from drying out. Sphagnum also promotes the growth of new roots. When new roots are visible, remove the sphagnum.



The final result a few months later: the same satsuki in full bloom.

For a collected satsuki

To clean the roots of satsuki from the open field, use the same method as for trees where the soil has become hard and compact. The water can hardly pass through and the absorption of nutrients is severely hampered. Complete repotting is required.



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This Scots pine was used as a demonstration tree by François Jeker during the 2018 World Bonsai Convention at Mulhouse. This is the raw yamadori in October 2017, five years after it was collected. The work on the dead wood was carried out over two days, well in advance of the demonstration.



A year later, at the beginning of October 2018, nature had done its work. It had aged jins and sharis, and dried out the dead wood, which now needs a good clean.

From preparation to demonstration

A demonstration or pedagogic exercise? The transformation of a Scots pine by François Jeker during the Bonsai World Convention was prepared in advance so as not to stress the tree. Result: despite being powerfully twisted, the tree was worked gently, without risk and with detailed explanations.

Text: François Jeker
Photos: François Jeker, Bernard Vogel,
Michèle Corbihan



Sap has oozed out and solidified on the surface of the worked wood while it was still living.

A good demonstration can give pleasure to spectators and demonstrators and offer a shared moment of interchange and emotions. For this Scots pine, worked on during the Bonsai Clubs International World Convention at Mulhouse, in October 2018, a maximum of tasks were carried out well before putting the tree on stage

Preparing the dead wood

To carry out the sort of work needed for dead wood on this pine would be impossible on stage. It would take too long. It is better to do it one or two years before the demonstration, to give nature time to play its part. (See *Esprit Bonsai International* No. 91)



The simplest and quickest way of removing the sap without damaging the patina created by inclement weather, is to first use a small water pressure gun with a very fine spray...



... and then, to clean the wood with a circular brass or soft metal brush.

Preparing the heavy twisting

To begin with, the crown will become a low branch, which calls for powerful, very spectacular, twisting, which is without risk to the tree, provided one has mastered the technique. Ten days before the demonstration, the parts to be twisted were first protected by damp cotton bandaging, and then by self-adhesive vulcanised rubber tape, which is usually used for temporary repairs to leaking pipes or hoses, or to repair electric cables. This flexible armature will pull the wood, sapwood, cambium, and bark together, which will limit the risk of breaking.



Self-adhesive vulcanised rubber tape is laid over the cotton bandage.



François protects the crown, which will be strongly twisted to become a low branch, with a layer of cotton bandage.



Once the wrapping is finished, the bandage is moistened.



The layer must be thick.

Preparing the wiring

There is nothing more boring than watching a demonstrator take hours to wire a tree. To avoid this, the yamadori's needles were lightly plucked so as not to weaken it, and then completely wired to the smallest branch in order to give

the tree a very precise shape. This is not only important for the design of the tree, but also for its health: each candle will be positioned in a way to receive a maximum of light. ►►►



Entirely wired and ready to be shaped, this is the tree when it took the stage for the demonstration at the world convention.

Shaping the tree

Even though the pine was ready prepared, it still needed four hours of concentrated work to shape it, particularly when strongly twisting the trunk. Even using ratchet straps, which are gentle and pose little risk, requires time. As soon as one feels resistance, one must stop tightening and change the anchor points to pull in a different direction. The tree will eventually bend, but will go where it wants to! ▶▶▶



1 Ideally, to achieve a strongly twisted tree, one should work with several ratchet straps. The anchor points must be very solid, such as these thick spurs of dead wood.



2 Sometimes, one has to create anchor points by screwing several grommets into the wood.



3 It is essential not to force the tree. As soon as one feels resistance, one must attach another strap and pull in another direction.



4 With the assistance of his two students, François was able to save a great deal of time: Cédric Knibihler ...



5 ... and Guillaume Jaegy.



The tree will eventually bend, but it will go where it wants to!

6 The upper part of the trunk is now at a good angle, but it has to be pulled towards the front.



7 Everything is in place. Small copper bracing wires have replaced the straps, which are removed.

The interior of the tree with its bracing wires looks like a harp.



8 With no fewer than nine bracing wires, the interior of the tree looks like a harp...



9 Shaping the foliage can start at last.



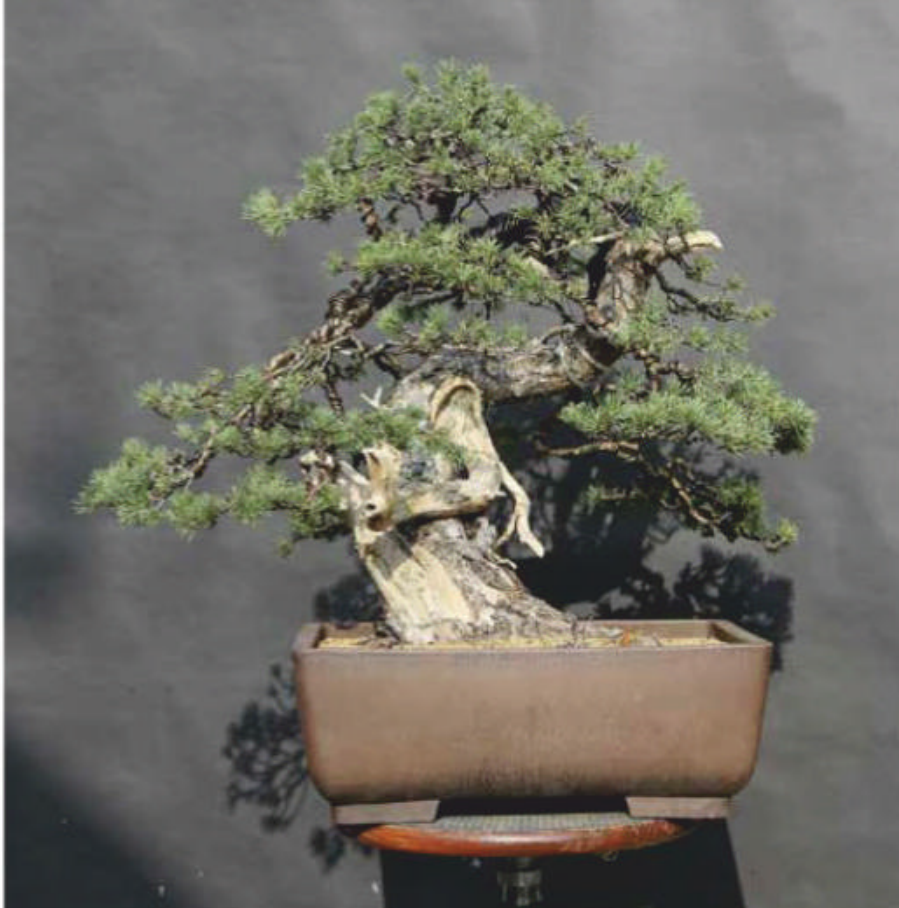
10 After four hours of exertion, the time has come to explain the aesthetic choices.

But it is not over...

After the demonstration, the tree returned to my garden. At this stage, other than watering it, one has to forget it and not touch it. After a week, one should look at the tree with a fresh eye, to catch the faults and try to correct them. In fact, a demonstration requires such intense effort and extreme concentration that a demonstrator automatically becomes less clear-sighted; hence the need to step away from it for several days. Some faults can be corrected immediately, such as rhythm in the foliage mass, empty spaces or unnatural symmetries, for example. Other faults will need time – several years. On the left of this tree, there are two redundant branches, and the same in the crown. Depending on the growth of each of these branches, I will remove the weakest in the next two or three years. In 2019, the tree will grow freely and unpruned, to allow it to fill out and settle definitively into its new curvatures. In 2020, work will begin on the ramification. ●

Corrections to be made

The first glaring fault: the empty space under the crown is too important. It is necessary to lower some branches from the crown and raise those that are beneath it. Second fault: there is not enough discrepancy between the first branch on the left and the balancing branch on the right. The balancing branch needs to be raised. Third fault: the third branch is too visible and too low. This must also be raised. Final fault: the tree is too symmetrical. The solution: lengthen the branches on the right and shorten those on the left.



The tree
after the
demonstration.



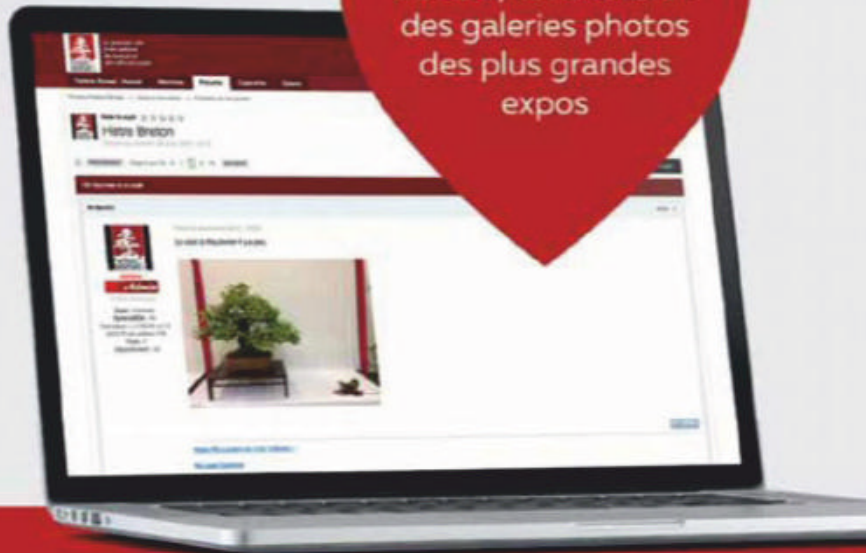
The tree after corrections were made
several days after the demonstration.



le rendez-vous des passionnés

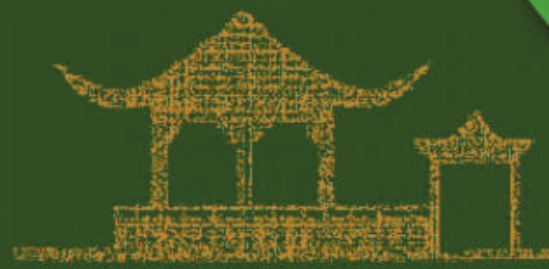
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On the Causse du Larzac, Martine Geoffroy creates pots with a sense of life, with lines and cracked effects or delicate glazes. Opening the wood-fired kiln always brings surprises. Nendosei is her new brand.

Esprit Bonsai International: You aren't a beginner in the pottery world. Why have you created your own brand?

Martine Geoffroy: I started to venture into working with clay 35 years ago when I fell in love with Pascal, the potter who became my partner. I gradually got involved in the workings of the studio by helping him to produce his pieces, particularly where slab-building, glaze preparation and firing were concerned. In 2001, I took a training course in throwing on the wheel, at CNI-FOP, in Saint-Amand-en-Puisaye. Over the last eight years I've been spending most of my working time making bonsai pots, which I show at regional, national and European exhibitions. To distinguish my work from Pascal's, this led me to create my own business under the name "Nendosei", which in Japanese phonetically means "made of clay" or, rather, "spirit of clay".

E.B.I.: What did you gain from your pottery experience that has helped you create bonsai pots?

M.G.: I was already familiar with the vocabulary and various techniques of ceramics, and was able to take advantage of this knowledge when making bonsai pots. However, I did need to rethink the shapes and some of the details in order to meet the criteria and demands of bonsaists. By the way, I'd like to thank them, because they helped me – and still are helping me – to improve along this path.

Martine Geoffroy

“I love giving clay a cracked effect”

Based on the Causse du Larzac, not far from Millau in southern France, Martine Geoffroy has been working as a professional ceramicist for eight years. Two years ago she founded her own brand name: Nendosei.

Interview by Isabel Ribeiro
Photos: Pascal Geoffroy,
unless stated otherwise



Building a large oval slab pot by adding a round edge that has been thrown on the wheel then transformed into an oval. Dimensions: 75 × 55 cm (29½ × 21½ in.).



Effects of ash and burnt patches give this pot a superb patina. Wood-fired. Dimensions: 12 × 12 × 12 cm (4¾ × 4¾ × 4¾ in.).

E.B.I.: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

M.G.: I feel close to Japan, of course – I've had the pleasure of visiting the country several times. I'm passionate about Japanese culture: I've studied shodo calligraphy, I love Japanese cuisine and I've been doing aikido for over thirty years. I seek inspiration in what I see in bonsai exhibitions and in books, so that my pots are compatible with the trees and fit bonsaists' expectations. I always start a cycle of work by copying pots that I've already made, a bit like making a product range, and I continue by seeking out new shapes or working on the details that will make the difference. Precise gestures fall into place, letting my imagination run free. But it's in the repetition and mastery of gestures that I find my freedom of expression.

E.B.I.: Between firing in a gas kiln or in a wood-fired kiln, which do you prefer?

M.G.: I have no preference, because they're used for different things and my state of mind is different depending on what I want to do: glazed or unglazed pots. I use the gas kiln solely for glazed pots, which are mostly intended for deciduous or flowering trees – species that need relatively colourful pots. The wood-fired kiln, on the other hand, allows me to make



Martine uses gas kilns or wood-fired kilns depending on the effects she is looking for. Contrast between an unglazed wood-fired pot and a glazed pot fired in a gas kiln.

© Isabel Ribeiro



A delicate glaze on an oval pot, with a shagreen effect (same in Japanese). Dimensions: 20 × 14 × 5 cm (7½ × 5½ × 2 in.).

unglazed pots, with a raw look that is given tone and shading by the fire; these are better suited to softwoods and old trees whose trunks are very thick and with prominent shari. The clays I use are stoneware ones that can cope with a temperature of 1300°C (2370°F), which makes the pots frost-resistant. I buy commercial ►►►



Flame effects on an unglazed, wood-fired tambourine pot. Diameter 21 cm, height 8 cm (3⅞ in.).



Pot with green nickel-oxide glaze. Dimensions: 22 × 12 × 5 cm (8⅝ × 4¾ × 2 in.).

►►► clays for the glazed pots, and I mix different clays that are prepared in the studio for the wood firings.

E.B.I.: What sort of wood-fired kiln do you use?

M.G.: I use the anagama kiln that Pascal built in 2000. It is 6 metres (20 feet) long and its capacity is 5 cubic metres (177 cubic feet), making it possible to fire lots of pieces, especially large oval or rectangular pots which can be a metre (3 feet) long. The firing takes up to six days and needs almost 15 cubic metres (530 cubic feet) of wood – mainly pine. It's a major undertaking. About two months to make the pieces, three days to load the kiln, six days of firing, a week cooling down, and then cleaning the pieces ... not to mention the precious assistance of three or four people, potters or bonsaists who are curious about the event. One firing a year is plenty enough!

Over the last four years, a new, small, 600-litre (136-gallon) "train"-type kiln has allowed us to do more frequent firings. We can manage these just the two of us, over about thirty hours, which demands less energy in terms of both wood and labour.

E.B.I.: You were saying that there are greater creative possibilities with a wood-fired kiln?

M.G.: I love slicing through clay, expanding it, giving it a cracked effect and leaving marks on it. Wood firing lets me bring out the best of the finish that corresponds to this way of relating to clay and offers more creative possibilities depending on where in the kiln the pots are placed. When loading the kiln, I put those pieces on which I want to see ashes, fire and smoke at the bottom of the kiln, near the firebox. I choose which side to face towards the fire

– the side where I want the flame to make its mark. By placing smaller pots in front of larger ones, I create "reserves", or hidden spaces, where the flame flickers through and produces effects. All of these procedures give patinas ranging from brown to ochre to red, with ashy shades. Unloading the kiln is always a moment of wonder and often reveals some surprises. The firings are similar to the ones at Bizen, because of the reduction and the intake of carbon, and the clays are close to the ones from Shigaraki, with their more rugged texture, full of rough bits. The kilns at Shigaraki and Bizen are among Japan's six historical centres of wood-fired ceramic production.

E.B.I.: After textures, talk to us about colours!

M.G.: "... a bit matt, not too shiny ... and what about some red? Couldn't you make

me a pot like this, but with a glaze like that?" Meeting demands isn't always easy! The colours – and therefore the glazes – are developed in the studio from minerals and oxides that are meticulously weighed according to precise recipes. They are the result of a great deal of research, requiring lots of testing, and not all the colours people might want are always available in the range of reduction-fired glazes – at least not at my level! It's a lengthy process, and perfecting a new glaze is always something that gives satisfaction.

I apply glaze by dipping the pots in tubs, and often put different glazes one on top of the other. Glazes don't always behave as you would expect them to, and having a good recipe isn't enough. Every time, you have to check the density of the liquid glaze, the thickness of the glaze that has stuck to the pot, the length of time



These pots were made manually by slab-building and were wood-fired without glaze.



Martine Geoffroy fires her pots in two wood-fired kilns: one large, one small. Here, a firing in the small one.

taken in dipping ... Each pot can be distinguished by its nuances. Once the process has been perfected, gas firing gives stable results. The glaze is more than a treat for the eyes; it should also inspire a desire to touch, and for me that's what makes it a success.

E.B.I.: What makes a pot unique?

M.G.: The firing and glazing methods that I've described already make the pots unique. If I throw a series of pots on the wheel using the same weight of clay, they still won't be calibrated, so they will still be different to some extent. Everything is done by hand – I don't have any moulds. You can tell the difference between pots from the work on the feet, which can be sculpted for instance in the shape of clouds, and the rims and curves can vary. I take special care over finishing them. I hollow out the base of the pot a little, so that the tree's fixing wires aren't visible; and I put dark clay slip on the feet. All these details and procedures allow me to personalise my pieces. It's especially important



Pot with cloud feet, ash-glazed and wood-fired. Dimensions: 30 × 20 × 7 cm (11¾ × 7⅞ × 2¾ in.).



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Studio visits by prior appointment.



Martine likes to give the clay a cracked effect, as illustrated by this wood-fired "Nanban" pot. Diameter 18 cm (7⅞ in.), height 4 cm (1⅞ in.).



"Kaki" iron-oxide glaze on an oval pot with cloud feet. Dimensions: 25 × 20 × 6 cm (9⅞ × 7⅞ × 2⅜ in.).

with pots that are custom-made, in the context of a commission intended for a particular tree.

E.B.I.: So you're a completely independent bonsai pottery professional?

M.G.: Yes, I'm registered at the Chambre des Métiers [Chamber of Trades] as an artisan, and I work full-time producing my output. But although I work alone in my studio, when I have to turn over a 40-kilogram [88-pound] pot to do its feet, or when I'm setting up a firing in the anagama kiln that will last several days, I still ask Pascal to help. Because in that situation, even a man wouldn't be able to do it on his own! (Laughter.) ●



Preparing kusamono for spring

Author: Xavier Dreux

To get off to the best possible start in the springtime, kusamono need a bit of care and attention: pruning withered parts and cleaning the pot, among other things.

As springtime approaches, there are several steps you can take to help prepare kusamono to start out right for the new spring season. The first thing is to clean the soil: remove the remaining organic fertiliser if necessary, eliminate any wild grasses or weeds, and perhaps add new soil if some has disappeared over the previous months.

A spot of cleaning

The pot is also entitled to a beauty check-up: clean its surface using a sponge, but without scrubbing, to encourage a patina to appear. Take particular care with the underside of the pot, clearing the drainage holes and removing all traces of earth, insects etc. If the roots are sticking out of the pot, they need trimming!

As they reach the end of overwintering, plants need help to prepare them for the spring: cleaning, rebalancing the composition if necessary ...

Until the spring arrives

Just like bonsai, accent plants are cultivated in small pots that don't offer genuine protection to the roots. The pots must therefore be put in a sheltered place, away from frost. A greenhouse, garage or polytunnel can all be suitable for protecting these plants. Most plants require light, not much water and temperatures around 5°C (40°F).

Then it is the turn of the plant itself: remove the dead or damaged leaves, and cut back plants that have grown too much in comparison to others, so as to preserve a balance between the composition's different species. If necessary, use a damp sponge to wipe the large or long leaves, such as those of black mondo grass, which can easily acquire a build-up of dirt and limescale.

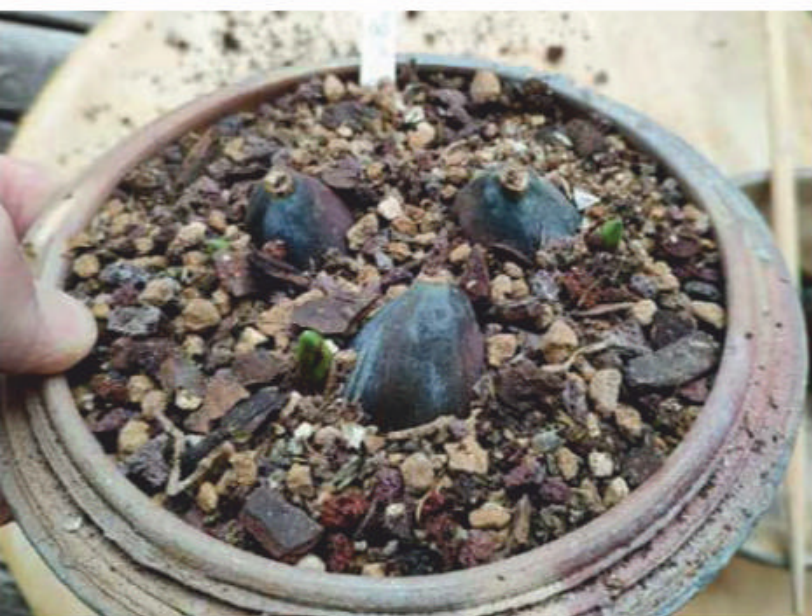
To perfect the composition, when it includes several plants, think about finding a balance of strength. The main plant should not be overpowered by a secondary plant. If you have left a few weeds to grow in your composition, be careful not to let them take over.

Repotting peacock orchids

Peacock orchids are terrestrial orchids that start off early in the spring and need to be repotted early.



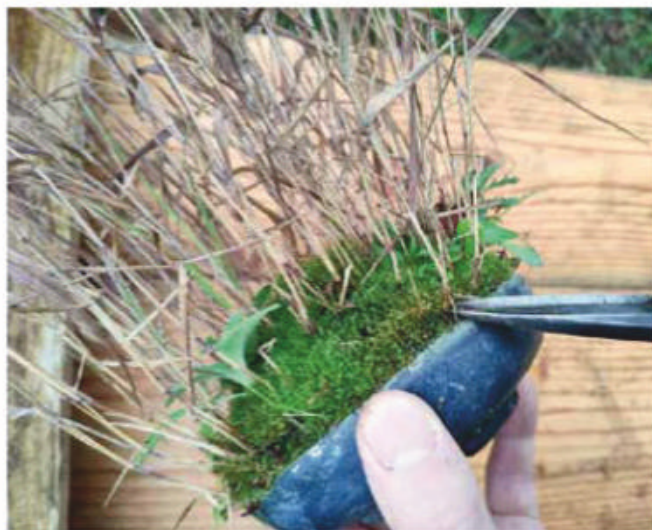
After removing the peacock orchid bulbs from the soil, trim the roots and clean the bulbs, eliminating whatever remains of any leaves.



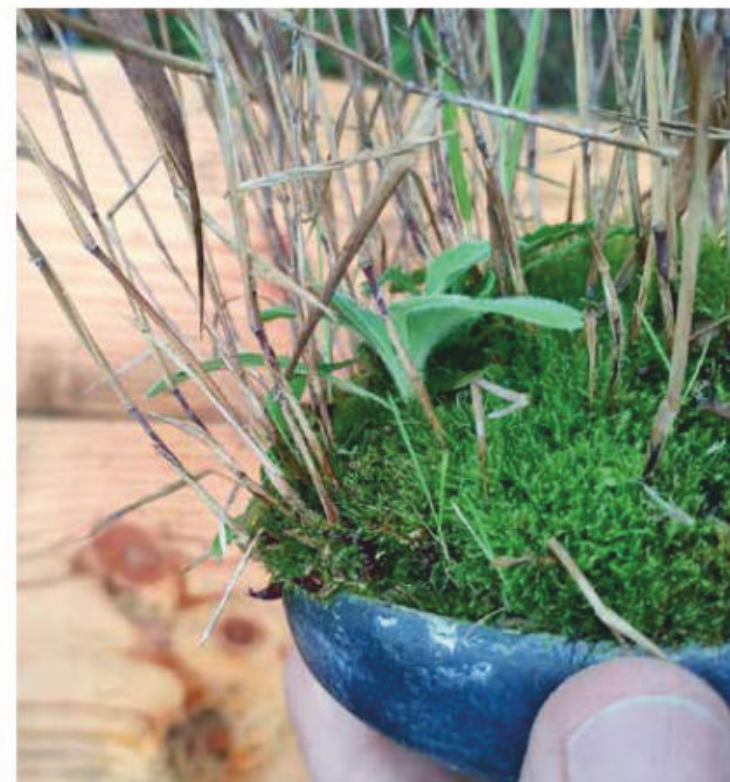
Repot in new soil (vermiculite, akadama, composted bark or compost), orienting shoots outwards to encourage them to develop well.

Winter maintenance for deciduous grasses

Deciduous grasses (*Hakonechloa*, *Imperata* etc.) should be cut back as short as possible, both to allow new leaves to develop properly and to maximise the kusamono's beauty.

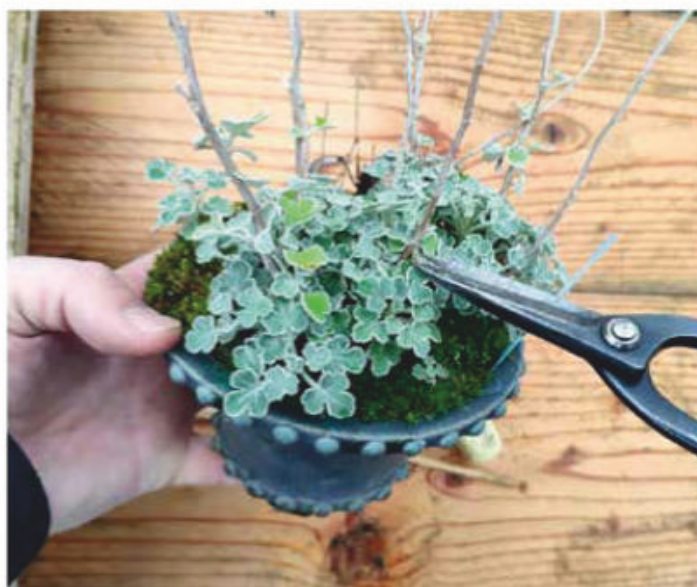


Cut faded leaves of *Hakonechloa macra* right back to the level of the soil, taking care not to sever the buds on the new shoots.

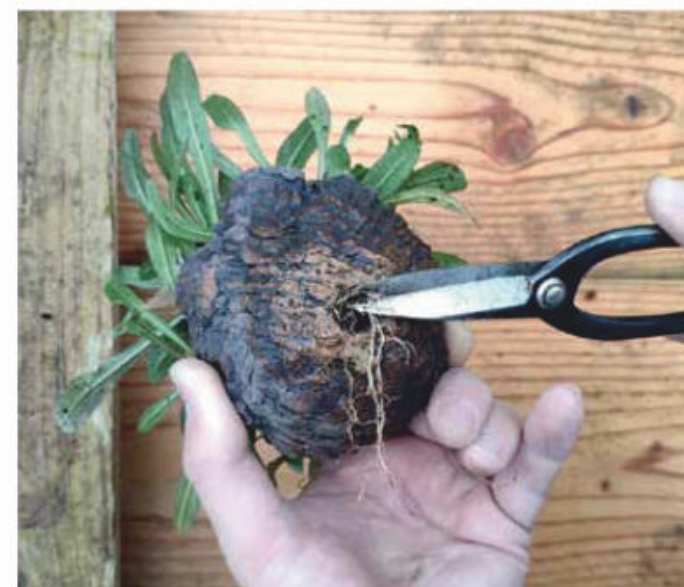


All ready for the spring, these buds are easy to recognise: pointed, red and shiny.

Cleaning a composition



Weeding and pruning faded leaves: this Japanese chrysanthemum's withered stems are being removed.



The roots that stick out of the drainage holes are trimmed, before the pot is cleaned.



A balance of strength: if one plant is growing a lot more than another, it needs to be cut back. If a shoot sticks too far out from the pot, it should be reoriented by anchoring it with aluminium wire.



This 52nd generation Buddhist temple monk explains the exhibited poem to us: the more knots there are to a bamboo, the happier one is in life. The knots represent happy events.



A bonsai stands at the threshold of the entrance.



The Jodai-ji Buddhist temple's Japanese garden in Sakawa, in the south of the Island of Shikoku. Full of charm, and with a forest as its backdrop, it is minimally maintained so that it retains its naturalness.

The Jodai-ji temple garden

Letting nature take its course

The jodai-ji temple garden on Japan's Island of Shikoku is not part of the tourist circuit, and yet it happens to be one of the three most beautiful gardens in the department and keeps to the spirit of the beginning of the Edo period 400 years ago.

Author: Michèle Corbihan

A maple bonsai placed on the ground welcomes the visitor at the entrance of Jodai-ji the oldest Buddhist temple in Sakawa on the Island of Shikoku. The garden takes you back to another era as you wander past a succession of beautifully designed topiaries edging a body of water and rocks to rather wild undergrowth where large hosta grow in mossy soil.

The Jodai-ji temple garden, called Hisago-en, has retained the spirit of the era in which it was constructed 400 years ago at the beginning of the Edo period. Indeed, what is striking about this garden is not the placing of the different elements that make up part of a Japanese garden's codification, but its history, as it is still as authentic as it would have been in the Edo period. Situated in the Kochi prefecture, Sakawa in the south of Shikoku Island, it is one of the three most beautiful gardens in Tosa – the former Japanese province that covered the entire south of Shikoku Island.

The Buddhist temple – the Chisan branch of the Shingon sect established 650 years ago at the time of Nanbo-

ku-cho (1333–1392), at the beginning of the Muromachi period – is older than the garden. In 1936, the temple and the garden were listed as the cultural property of the Kochi Prefecture. In this particular branch of Buddhism, the monk's role is passed from father to son. Thus it was a 52nd generation monk in the temple who welcomed a French woman and me accompanied by members of the Kochi prefecture who had invited us to discover the treasures of the region and for us to publicise. ►►►



Maintenance

In principle it is the faithful who are responsible for maintaining the garden once a year, even if, of course, they prune the topiaries more often. The garden of the Jodai-ji is protected and the trend now is to retain its natural spirit and to not do too much work on it, which makes maintenance easier.

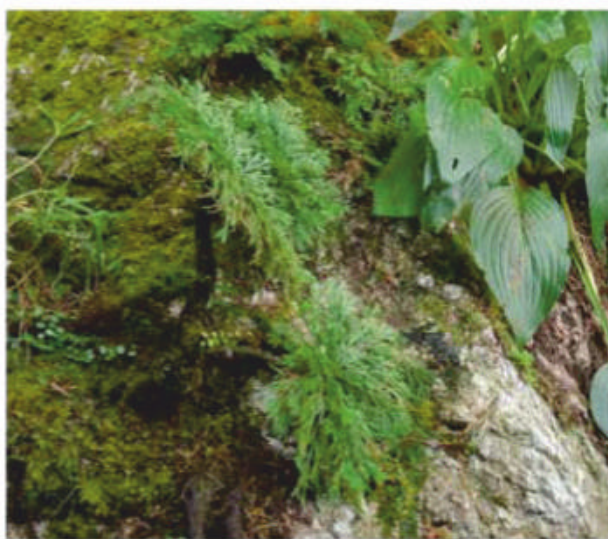


A calabash used by the nobles to drink from.

The gourd-shaped pond is covered with waterlilies and edged with old azaleas pruned into topiary.



Framed by the window the garden makes a beautiful picture.



The vegetation adds a poetic charm to the stone.

Foreign tourists

Faced with the problem of getting travellers to visit the temple gardens, the question asked by the monks is why should these gardens appeal to tourists when young Japanese are turning away from them? To which Kochi tourism professionals answer that foreigners are interested in Buddhism and gardens. It remains to facilitate access to the temples and their gardens and to make them known.

nobles to drink from. A waterfall cascades down into the water.

The garden's inorganic feature is a magnificent rock covered with vegetation, moss and fern that plunged down the mountain to the water's edge. The lord and the nobles would stand on the rock to climb into a small boat, but as the end of the rock obstructed access to the boat, it was cut without ado to give it enough room!



The end of the rock was cut to give access to a boat.

A gourd-shaped pond

The 1300 m² (0.3 acre) garden was first designed as a garden to wander in and meditate. A particular feature of the Hisago-en is that it is backed by a mountain, so its gardeners didn't have far to look to develop this kind of garden, a "borrowed landscape" with a backdrop, as the backdrop was already naturally in place.

Also of note is that it was to this mountain that the renowned botanist Tomitaro Makino (1862–1957 – originally from Saka-wa and father of Japanese botany – used to come to collect botanical specimens.

All meditation gardens have a body of water. This garden has two, one of which was covered with waterlilies. The main, calabash-shaped pond was used by the

Free and natural

Specialists who visited the garden advised not to replace a tree when it dies, but to let nature do its work. Perhaps this is what gives this garden so much charm and poetry arising from its naturalness and freedom of the vegetation.

A large 500-year-old *Ginkgo biloba* dominates the old topiary azaleas.

Maple and weeping cherry surround the body of water. Wandering through the garden one can identify, among others, various ferns, moss, hosta, ophiopogon (lily turf), and *Lespedeza* (bush clover). The colours of the plants vary according to their place in the garden, which is explained by the different substrates and light.

In autumn, the yellow of the ginkgo, commingles with the red of the maple and in spring, the weeping cherry is adorned in pink.

A Japanese poet wrote that the best time to visit the garden is in the rain, as that is when it is at its most beautiful: we are here in September, in stifling heat under a merciless sun, but in the Hisago-en garden of the Jodai-ji temple we are in an oasis of coolth and poetry. ●



The 650-year-old temple is one of 88 pilgrimage temples on the Island of Shikoku.



A small, delightful and refreshing air of the wild.



An old *Ginkgo biloba* dominates the azaleas.



An impression of undergrowth where hostas, moss and fern grow.



Vegetation rules - or almost.



Moss covered steps runs through the garden towards the mountain.

How to get there

Jodai-ji
1746 Ko, Sakawa
Takaoka District
Préfecture de Kōchi
789-1201, Japan

■ ■ ■ “Japonismes 2018”: as Nippon culture invites itself to France’s capital and regions for several months, to celebrate Japan and its relationship with the West, ikebana is never far away ...

Japonismes 2018: “Souls in harmony”

Author: Marcel Vrignaud



■ **Japonismes 2018:** a series of events to celebrate 160 years of Franco-Japanese diplomatic relations as well as Japan’s opening up to the West in 1868. An exhibition at the Cernuschi Museum in Paris traces the Rinpa School’s history. Japanese screen inspired by the Rinpa School.

“Japonismes 2018” is a series of events organised in Paris and throughout France, from July 2018 to February 2019, to commemorate 160 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and France and the 150th anniversary of the start of the Meiji period, when Japan set out decisively along the path of modernity and opened up to the West.

The idea behind the project was established in 2016 by the French President, François Hollande, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe, and was later taken up by French President Emmanuel Macron. All of the many themes that it addresses – from musical tradition to martial arts, video games etc. – place the emphasis on the aesthetic of harmony and respect for nature, which the Japanese hold dear.

From 30 January to 2 February 2019, at the Maison de la Culture du Japon (Japanese Cultural Centre) in Paris, a series of ikebana displays are being organised as part of Japonismes 2018. A special week was allocated to the art form, during which experts and grand masters from five of Japan’s ikebana schools – Ikenobo, Ichiyo, Ohara, Sogetsu and Mishō – were invited to France. Exhibitions, workshops and seminars gave the public the opportunity to enjoy the sensory experience of the subtle world that is the Way of Flowers.

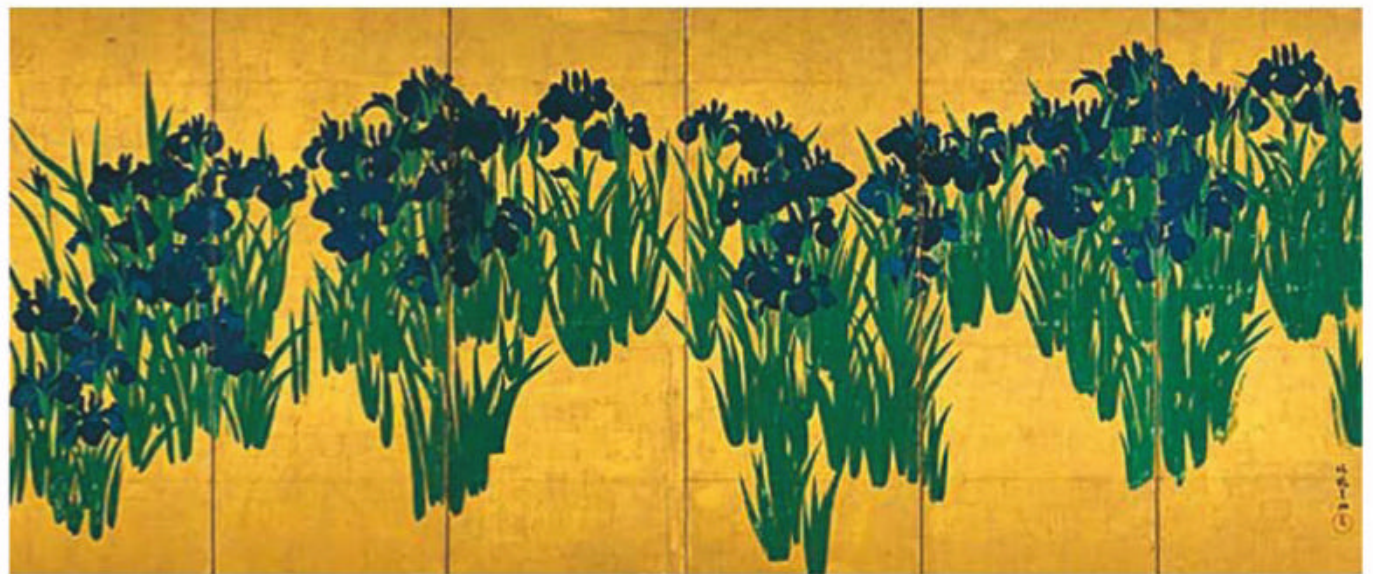
Homage to Rinpa

An exhibition titled “Treasures of Kyoto: three centuries of Rinpa creation” is taking place at Paris’s



■ Jubilee

The closing Rinpa arrangement from the demonstration by Marcel Vrignaud at the Société Nationale d'Horticulture de France (French National Horticultural Society), in May 2013, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ikebana teaching in France and Europe. Length: 2.2 m (7 ft 3 in.); height: 1.4 m (4 ft 7 in.).



■ Irises, Byōbu

Japanese screen by Ogata Kōrin – a national treasure of Japan. Ink and coloured paint on paper with gold-leaf background. Dimensions: 150.9 × 338.8 cm (59½ × 133¾ in.). Nezu Museum, Minato, Tokyo.



■ Homage to Kōrin

Rinpa arrangement inspired by the work of Ogata Kōrin, created for the inauguration of the Japanese garden at the Château de la Celle Saint-Cloud, near Paris.

Cernuschi Museum from 28 October 2018 to 27 January 2019. The Rinpa School was founded in 1615 when the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu gave Kōetsu – the famous calligrapher, potter and lacquerer – permission to establish a small craft community at Takagamine, a village north of Kyoto. Over 300 years, the movement gained renown through innovators such as Sōtatsu, Kōrin and Kamisaka Sekka, who were dedicated not only to painting, but also to the applied arts, in order to bring beauty into everyday life.

This exhibition concentrates particularly on the output of artists working in Kyoto, with a selection of masterpieces that are rarely displayed to the Japanese public. Folding screens, scrolls, illustrated books, ceramics and lacquerwork show off the range of Rinpa production in all its diversity (with over 60 pieces).

It is an exhibition not to be missed, especially for ikebanists from the Ohara School, one of the main styles of which is inspired by Rinpa paintings. ●

■ ■ ■ In winter and during summer heatwaves, flowers for ikebana arrangements are in short supply. But there are always a few plants blooming somewhere, and these are a gift for ikebanists.

When the flowers have gone

Text and arrangements: Marette Renaudin
Photos: Bénédicte de Saint Martin

There are seasons and times that are especially good for ikebana. Nature's luxuriant growth allows for glorious compositions thanks to plants whose extreme elegance alone brings the beauty of an arrangement to perfection. Examples include blossoming cherry branches in the spring, or maples in the autumn with their rich array of flaming colours. It is not unusual in this setting to hear people asking that typical beginner's question: "Can you still do ikebana in winter when everything in nature seems dead, or when flowers have been scorched by hot summer weather?"

In the corners of the garden

I have personally had to create exhibitions in those tricky periods when all the flowers seem to have disappeared. I would have loved to open my door and find all the luscious flowers and branches that would make it easy to produce wonderfully festive arrangements for such an occasion.

But what a surprise in this seemingly barren context to find discretely hidden, in the corners of my garden, shrubs that timidly offered up their beauty from beyond the gloom. This rediscovered familiarity is surely a profound means of getting closer to nature and honouring it even in the least exceptional circum-

■ When there aren't many flowers around, in winter and summer, it is still possible to find some great content for ikebana arrangements.
Large moribana, natural style
Mahonia x media "Charity", Thunberg spiraea, orange lily, small chrysanthemums.





■ Large arrangement, free style
Common dogwood, barberry, golden cypress,
Strelitzia, white chrysanthemums.



■ Large arrangement, nageire, natural style
Cotoneaster branches, privet, yellow chrysanthemums.

stances. These circumstances allow us to go right to the heart of a kind of ikebana that is less spectacular and yet deeply moving. And so, for every month, and even every day, there is a flower or branch waiting for us just around the corner, to fulfil all our hopes of paying homage to “living nature” – a literal translation of the word “ikebana”. Thus, above our egocentric desire to decide on the contents of our arrangements beforehand, let’s immerse ourselves in the great All of our universe, to reach beyond ...

The promise of flowers and trees is always there. This is ultimately a simple proposition for our future creations. So all that is left for us to do is to display our humble gratitude. ●



■ Large moribana, natural style
Nandina branches, variegated spindle, pink chrysanthemums.

Established in 2013, the Seijaku Bonsai Club in Rouffach, eastern France, brings together 52 keen members. Its 11 co-presidents are not short of ideas to keep the club going strong.

Text: Marie Albessard
Photos: Seijaku Bonsai Club

No fewer than 11 people share the task of heading the Seijaku Bonsai Club in Rouffach, near the French-German border. "It's true that we're one of the only clubs in France that function this way," concedes Roland Gruneisen, one of the co-presidents, in response to my surprised reaction. "When it's always the same person giving their time, it doesn't work over the long term. So each of us has a specific role (responsibility for training or purchases, treasurer ...) and that seems to work well!"

This young, recently formed club – founded in 2013 – thus appears to have found the right formula to motivate and organise its network of 52 members (28 male, 24 female).



▲ Roland Gruneisen, who is responsible for training, explains the results of a de-leaving exercise to Frédéric Sollmeyer during a lesson for experienced members.



▲ The Seijaku Bonsai Club, in Rouffach, eastern France, is headed by 11 co-presidents! Each of them has a specific responsibility. And every year, an outing is organised for the club's beginners to collect trees in the Vosges mountains, with authorisation from the ONF (France's governmental forestry office) – here, in 2016.

SEIJAKU BONSAI CLUB, ROUFFACH

"We have eleven co-presidents!"

The association was set up around some twenty founding members, with about thirty people aged from 11 to 75 subsequently joining up over the course of time. "The newcomers first approach the club for training. But friendship, mutual assistance and conviviality gradually set in – because there's always a good atmosphere at our gatherings!" explains Roland Gruneisen enthusiastically. The Seijaku Bonsai Club also has an ikebana section, counting about ten members.

A warm welcome for beginners

To meet the varying needs of its members, the association has set up two groups: one for beginners, and one for the more experienced – "although all the classes are open to all members", as the same Roland, who is the co-president responsible for training, specifies. And so lessons for beginners and experi-

enced hobbyists, as well as theory classes, are organised. "A Power-Point presentation starts things off, followed by time for discussion and debate. We consider these theory classes very important, because they are the fundamental basis of our passion," Roland adds. During the themed lessons (for example on wiring, pruning etc.), beginners put what they have learned into practice, with direction from a tutor. "We work mainly on yamadori collected by our members. For example, beech, hornbeam, hawthorn, wild apple..." he explains. As for the more advanced classes, these are based on individual project work and are adapted to the seasons.

Outings to the Vosges and the Alps

Once a year, a sort of tree-spotting exercise is organised in the Vosges: "We explain to the beginners which of the species can be



▲ A hornbeam by Roland Gruneisen, displayed at the French National Convention in Albi in 2015. It had already featured in the 2006 EBA (European Bonsai Association) convention in Książ, Poland.



▲ The club's team of tutors. Left to right: Roland Gruneisen (Fédération Française de Bonsaï (French Bonsai Federation) Level 2); Frédéric Sollmeyer (Level 1); André Lienhart (in training); David Meyer (in training); and Raphaël Ritter (Level 1).

collected. We pick out and mark the ones that we're interested in, and then, with agreement from the ONF [Editor's note: France's national forestry office], we collect them," describes Roland. "Visits to plant nurseries are also organised, to guide beginners towards the best purchase. These trees are studied and projects are developed around them, to nurture each person's creativity." Outings to the great outdoors are also organised for the more advanced members, in the

Alps. Two or three times a year, the self-taught Swiss bonsaist Serge Clémence offers training.

The club's training sessions are overseen by three tutors who are accredited by the Fédération Française de Bonsaï (French Bonsai Federation). Passing on knowledge is especially pertinent in this mixed club, whose members have between 2 and 40 years' experience. "Respect, friendship and mutual assistance are values that define our club," emphasises Roland.

A trip to Japan

Is it because of the club having 11 co-presidents? Whatever the reason, the Seijaku Bonsaï Club in Rouffach has no shortage of future plans! Preparing for the springtime exhibition in Schoppenwihr, organising the exhibition in Rouffach ... not to mention the regional selections: "Our club aspires to participate in each regional selection process, with the aim of being selected on a national level," states Roland. And the coming year will see them participate in the European Bonsai Association's convention in the southern French city of Albi: "Three of our trees (two maples and a beech) have been selected," he explains enthusiastically. "The whole of our group is proud to see our trees recognised at a European level."

The club also has other plans in the pipeline: for two years it has



▲ A beech by Daniel Stephan, during the inter-regional exhibition in Rouffach.

been making preparations for a trip to Japan, which is planned for 2020. And in 2019–20 it would like to create a wild forest, 1.5 by 2 metres (5 by 6½ feet). An exciting project, worth keeping an eye out for. ●

information

Seijaku Bonsaï Club

25, rue des Prêtres, 68250 Rouffach, FRANCE

Meetings:

Beginners, one Saturday per month, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Members with experience, one Sunday per month, from 8.30 p.m. to noon.

Theory classes: one Saturday per month, from 2 to 6 p.m.

E-mail: seijaku.bonsaiclub@gmail.com

www.seijaku-bonsai-club-rouffach.com



▲ Serge Clémence (left), a self-taught Swiss bonsaist, comes to the club several times per year to give classes.



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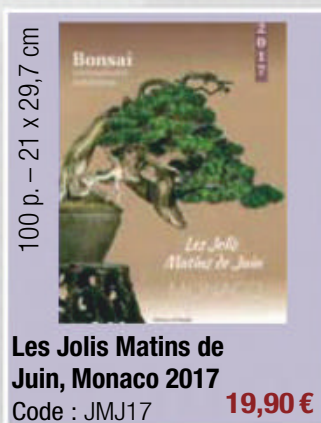
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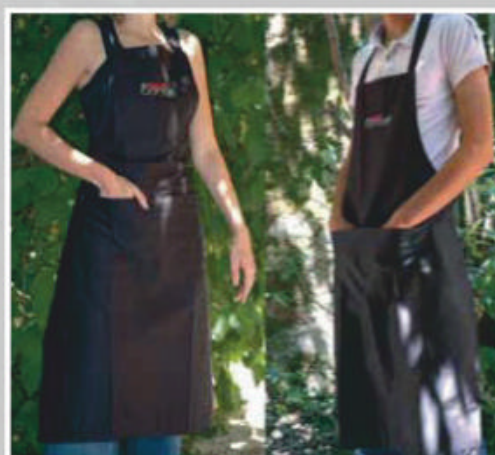
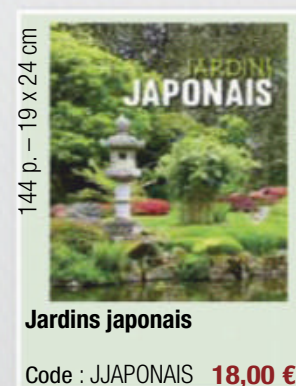
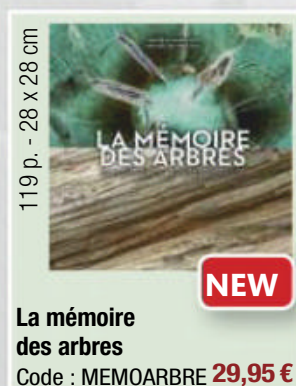
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