

6th EUROPEAN BONSAI-SAN SHOW

OCTOBER 6th-7th
SAULIEU FRANCE 2018

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**NEW
DESIGN**

**ARE THERE NATIONAL
STYLES OF BONSAI?**

► REPEAT:
**ONE FOR ALL,
ALL FOR ONE!**

**Notes for
Beginners** ►
WIRING

**SPECIES PROFILE:
CAMELLIA**

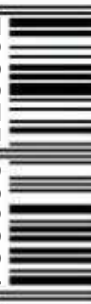
**A BEAUTIFUL
SAVIN JUNIPER**

POTS BY
CONNY HACKL

**Deep amid
the pines in Japan**

**New regular feature
on Japanese gardens**

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"We work alongside each other"

Exploring Japanese gardens

It only takes one step – one very small step – to get from Japanese gardens to bonsai. Because the art of bonsai has its roots in Japan; because Japan's gardens are marked by the same philosophy as that of the art of bonsai; because many of you love these gardens which allow us to see, among other things, trees worked as bonsai – we thought it would be a good idea to create (or, rather, reintroduce) a regular feature on Japanese gardens. Walking through these spaces transports us into another dimension: a communion with nature, a sense of calm. There is a lot to see, to understand, to sense, to hear. We will try to take you on a voyage of discovery, to show, to explain and – why not? – to surprise you. And we will always make the link between these gardens and the art of bonsai, to feed into your practice. The series of regular features opens with an article on the magnificent Ritsurin Garden in Takamatsu, on the island of Shikoku. I was lucky enough to visit it in September 2017, on the invitation of Shikoku island's Ministry of Tourism and Transport. From the many themes that could be explored in relation to this 75-hectare (185-acre) park, I chose to focus on seeing the pines. These wonderful trees amazed me by their construction: genuine bonsai! The Ritsurin Garden harbours many more treasures that we will be able to show you in future issues.

Happy reading!

Michèle Corbihan

DIARY

IN THE UK

• In Yorkshire

The British Bonsai Traders Association is organising its autumn exhibition for 28 October in Doncaster, Yorkshire.

■ Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger Way, Doncaster, DN2 6AY
Information: Corin Tomlinson,

Opening hours:

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission: £3, free for under-12s.

Contact: Mark Moreland, 07850 771201

E-mail:

markmoreland@live.co.uk

www.heathrowbonsai.

weebly.com

IN SPAIN

• At Alcalà de Xivert-Alcossebre

For its 11th edition, the Sakka-ten, an exhibition organised by Nippon Bonsai Sakka Kyokai Europe (NBSKE), invites bonsai lovers to come to Spain – to Alcalà de Xivert-Alcossebre – from 2 to 4 November. The NBSKE's aim is to promote the art and philosophy of bonsai in the tradition of its culture. The Japanese master Minoru Akiyama will be the guest of honour. The weekend will be peppered with demonstrations by him, but also by members of the NBSKE, as well as talks.

In this exhibition, the theme of which will be "Autumn Melancholy", the trees are presented to form a harmonious whole, rather than a succession of bonsai. No owners' or trees' names: just the pleasure of contemplating these plants in beautiful harmony. This is a gathering that we are particularly fond of. Some traders will be present.

■ Espai d'Oci
3 Cami del Palau, 12570 Alcalà de Xivert-Alcossebre, Spain



[http://sakkakyookai-es-fr.](http://sakkakyookai-es-fr.blogspot.com/p/info-sakka-ten-2018.html)

[blogspot.com/p/info-sakka-ten-2018.html](http://sakkakyookai-es-fr.blogspot.com/p/info-sakka-ten-2018.html)

www.facebook.com/sakkaten/

• Near Madrid

The Asociación del Bonsai Español (ABE – Spanish Bonsai Association) is taking over the municipal hall of Loranca, in Fuenlabrada,



near Madrid, for its first convention. There will be plenty of demonstrators from not only Spain but also Japan, headed by Japan's

Koji Hiramatsu and by Marco Invernizzi, who is Italian.

Bonsai competitions, demonstrations, talks, displays of pots and indeed a tea ceremony are all on the programme.

■ Junta Municipal de Loranca
1 Plaza de las Artes, 28942 Fuenlabrada, Madrid, Spain
Free admission
www.abebonsai.es

In Japan

The 38th edition of the Taikan-ten will be held from



23 to 26 November 2018 at the Miyakomesse in Kyoto. This exhibition is the largest autumn one in Japan, and brings together top-level bonsai, while also giving exhibitors space to be daring in terms of both the displays and the forms of the trees. It is the second-largest bonsai gathering in Japan after the Kokufu-ten in Tokyo.

■ Miyakomesse Kyoto
9-1, Okazaki Seisyoji-cho, Sakyo-ku
Admission: 900 yen
Opening hours:
9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
on 26 November
open until 4 p.m.



office@bonsai.co.uk

www.bonsaitraders.co.uk

• At Heathrow

Every year in October, the Heathrow Bonsai Show invites British bonsai clubs to exhibit at the Harlington Sports Centre. The 9th edition will take place on Sunday 21 October and will bring together 39 of the country's bonsai clubs and 38 trade stands, in the UK's largest event for bonsai associations.

■ Harlington Sports Centre
Pinkwell Lane, Harlington, Middlesex,
UB3 1PB UK



Gatherings

European Bonsai-San Show 2018

IN FRANCE

• In Brittany

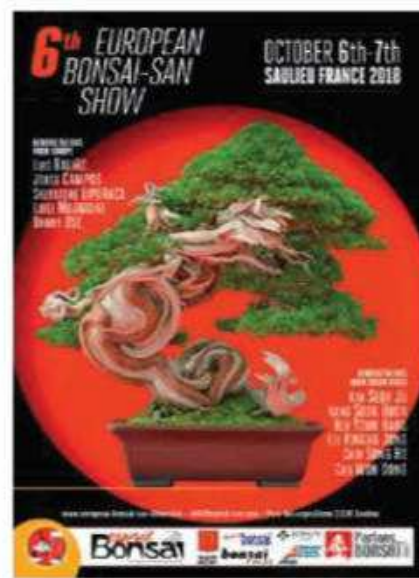
The city of Quimper, in Finistère, is organising the second edition of the "Grandeur Nature" fair, on 3 and 4 November 2018 at the Pôle Max Jacob (ateliers du Jardin, Ti Ar Vro – an educational garden). This year, bonsai are in the spotlight. It's a chance for the public to discover these miniature trees, but also other aspects of traditional Japanese art, such as ikebana, kokedama and ceramics. The jardin du Théâtre, on Quai Dupleix in Quimper, will serve as the setting. The public, whether newcomers or well-informed hobbyists, will be able to seek advice from producers, exhibitors and the Bonsai Club en Cornouaille association, which is partnering with the City for this event.

■ Free admission, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
www.quimper.bzh

• In Normandy

The association L'Arbre en Pot has had to cancel the exhibition it was planning for 13 and 14 October in Saint-Léger-du-Bourg following water damage in the intended venue. They have not been able to find a new venue, given the short notice.

The European Bonsai-San Show, in the French town of Saulieu, will be the first big European bonsai gathering this autumn. On 6 and 7 October, Frédéric Chenal, the organiser, will again bring together more than a hundred of the continent's finest bonsai, at the town's exhibition centre. A panel of judges – comprising Luis Baliño, Salvatore Liporace, Danny Use and Kim Seok Ju – will award four prizes, while 12 event partners will each contribute a prize in a category that they will have chosen beforehand. *Esprit Bonsai International* will reward the owner of the best large broadleaf with a beautiful piece of calligraphy by Denise Lach. No fewer than 11 European and Korean demonstrators will lead simultaneous demonstrations over the weekend, on a podium situated at the centre of the demonstrations room. Some of bonsai's big international names: Luis Baliño and Jorge Campos (Spain), Salvatore Liporace and Luigi Maggioni (Italy), Danny Use (Belgium), Kim Seok Ju, Her Youn Hang, Kang Sook Hoon, Lee Kwang Jong, Choi Song Ho and Cho Won Dong (Korea). One of Europe's biggest markets will offer tools, trees and prebonsai, plants,



pottery, books and magazines, sumi-e, etc. A major event, not to be missed!

On the programme:

• Saturday
11.30 a.m.: talk by Jorge Campos, "Bending Branches with a Secret Technique".
1–5.30 p.m.: simultaneous demonstrations by Luis Baliño and Jorge Campos; Salvatore

Liporace and Luigi Maggioni; Danny Use; Kim Seok Ju and Her Youn Hang.
7 p.m.: award ceremony, open to the public.

• Sunday
11.30 a.m.: grand raffle
12.30–4 p.m.: simultaneous demonstrations by Kang Sook Hoon; Lee Kwang Jong; Choi Song Ho; Cho Won Dong; Salvatore Liporace; Luigi Maggioni.

■ European Bonsai-San Show
Parc des Expositions
Rue de la Gare, 21210 Saulieu, France
Admission, including the demonstrations and a raffle ticket: €20 for one day, €25 for the whole weekend.
Opening hours: Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
www.european-bonsai-san-show.com
www.facebook.com/europeanbonsaisanshow/

Mulhouse, capital of bonsai

There will be so many bonsai events in the French city of Mulhouse between 4 and 14 October 2018 that it will be hard to know which way to turn. All of these exhibitions and activities will be part of the flower show Folie'Flore.

Of the 19 gardens on display for Folie'Flore at the Parc des Expositions, two will be devoted to the Bonsai Euro Top 30, where 30 of Europe's finest bonsai will be displayed. Two exhibitions will make up the rest of Bonsai Euro Top 30: ikebana from the Sogetsu School in France, renowned for its creativity, and beautiful French "ishitsuki" selected by the Fédération Française de Bonsai (FFB – French Bonsai Federation), which will be presented in semi-darkness, placed in water, in two rivers, with luminous lotus flowers, beneath a starry sky. From 12 to 14 October, the conventions of the Bonsai Club International (BCI), the FFB and the Association Française des Amateurs de Suiseki (AFAS – French Suiseki Lovers' Association) will take place as a joint event.



On display for the BCI convention will be: Spain's 10 best olive bonsai; the 10 finest bonsai created by François Jeker's students; Germans Gudrun and Willy Benz's suiseki collection; the best bonsai from the Jardin Albert Kahn (Paris) and the Forest of Peace, created during the previous edition of Bonsai Euro Top 30; and an exhibition of kusamono by Othmar Auer (Germany), a specialist in this art in Europe. In total, almost 240 bonsai and 100 suiseki will be on show to the public.

The demonstrations

About twenty French and European demonstrators with international reputations will contribute to the event. The most exceptional demonstration will be the creation of a giant ishitsuiki, on a rock that is more than a metre (3 feet) high, by Mitsuo Matsuda (Japan), John Wang (USA) and Budi Sulistyio (Indonesia). Another unusual and spectacular demonstration will be the one by Julian de Marco (Spain), who is able to graft thick branches and wire them on the same day. All the demonstrations will take place at the exhibition centre. The botanic and zoological garden and the Musée des Beaux-Arts will play host to trees by the FFB and suiseki by the AFAS. As for the gala evening, that will be held at the Cité de l'Automobile, amid royal Bugattis, Rolls-Royces, Hispano-Suizas ... About fifty traders will be on site at the exhibition centre, offering bonsai, tools, pots, Japanese decorative objects, books and magazines to visitors. What more could you ask for to reserve your weekend!

i Admission to Folie'Flore: €7.50
Admission to the World Convention, 12-14 October: Three-day pass €50, including access to all the venues and shuttles between them. Daily ticket of €35 for Sunday 14 October. Opening hours: Parc des Expositions, 10 a.m. to midnight (6 p.m. on 14 October); botanic and zoological garden, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. Full programme: www.parcexpo.fr/congres-bonsai/

Exhibitions and Conventions

2018

SAULIEU, FRANCE	6-7 October	European Bonsai-San Show www.european-bonsai-san-show.com
MULHOUSE, FRANCE	12-14 October	Bonsai Clubs International 2018 www.world-bonsai-mulhouse.fra
HEATHROW, UK	21 October	Heathrow Bonsai Show Harlington Sports Centre, Pinkwell Lane, Harlington, Middlesex, UB3 1PB www.heathrowbonsai.weebly.com
OMIYA, JAPAN	26 October-21 November	Masahiko Kimura Exhibition The Omiya Bonsai Art Museum, Saitama 2-24-3, Torochō, Kita-ku Saitama-shi, Saitama, 331-0804 E-mail: bonsai-art-museum@city.saitama.lg.jp www.bonsai-art-museum.jp
ALCALÀ DE XIVERT, SPAIN	2-4 November	Sakka-ten 2018, "Autumn Trees" International convention of the art and culture of bonsai Special guest: Minoru Akiyama. Espai d'Oci 3 Cami del Palau, 12570 Alcalà de Xivert-Alcossebre Facebook: Sakka ten 2018
MADRID, SPAIN	3-4 November	Convention of the Asociación del Bonsai Español Junta Municipal de Loranca 1 Plaza de las Artes, 28942 Fuenlabrada www.abebonsai.es Facebook: ABEBonsai
KYOTO, JAPAN	23-26 November	Taikan-ten Miyakomesse Kyoto 9-1, Okazaki Seisyoji-cho, Sakyo-ku
MADRID, SPAIN	26-27 January 2019	Convention of the UBE (Unión del Bonsai Español) Centro Cultural Isabel de Farnesio Aranjuez Capitán, 39 28300, Aranjuez E-mail: ube@ubebonsai.es Facebook: Unión del Bonsai Español
GENK, BELGIUM	8-10 February 2019	"Best Of" 20 years Trophy Demonstrators: Masayuki Fujikawa (JP), Ryan Neil (USA), Vaclav Novak (CZ), Gabriel Romero (ES) and the Koreans Cho Won Dong, Choi Song Ho, Her Youn Hang, Kang Sook Hoon, Kim Seok Ju and Lee Kwang Jong. Limburghal c.v., Jaarbeurslann 6 www.bonsaiassociation.be

Are there national styles of bonsai?

Between mastering techniques and expressing a geographical territory, does bonsai carry a country's identity? A good question ...

Author: Louis-Victor Bourdeau

The art of bonsai developed in Japan several centuries ago, having come there from China. The Japanese added many elements and codes from their own culture to arrive at the trees that we admire today and which remain, for the time being, unequalled in terms of both quality and quantity.

Over the last few decades, this typically Asian art has been exported almost everywhere in the world.

In Europe, bonsai arrived in countries that enjoyed a long history, a long artistic past and a variety of cultures. Although it arrived only recently, Europeans approached the art of bonsai with sensibilities specific to their own countries, despite the obvious and inescapable influence of Japanese bonsai.

Yet can we speak of British, French, German or Italian bonsai? Does bonsai as it is practised and exhibited in these countries have specific features?

Technique comes first

Some will argue that it is still too early to say so – that bonsai is too young in Europe – which is probably a good answer.

In an interview a few years ago, the North American bonsai professional Bjorn Bjorholm arguably settled the debate: "Distinguishing bonsai according to Japanese, Western or European styles, or any other style of the sort, and making them into judgment canons, is extremely limiting and lazy. It inhibits the progress of our art and the genuine understanding of the beauty of bonsai. I believe that bonsai is far more technical in its nature than how

it is taught in schools. Yes, aesthetics are very important, but failing to master the technical bases causes major problems in the long term. A lot of people in the West understand what I mean."

You can't be clearer than that! In this declaration, Bjorholm places the technical and craft aspect of bonsai before any artistic considerations, and therefore before any cultural considerations. And here again, this vision seems to bear the stamp of obvious truth.

Expressing something different

However, Ryan Neil, another very talented North American, has been striving since his return to Japan to develop an

American vision of bonsai – and with apparent success. He works mainly with native yamadori, using the high-level technique that he learnt during his apprenticeship with Masahiko Kimura in Japan. And he has clearly achieved results: ample and remarkably refined bonsai that express something different than Japanese trees.

It therefore seems difficult to choose between these two visions, which ultimately do not really contradict each other. Perhaps, very simply, the tree species used dictate the style and impression and evoke their country of origin. Should a European beech be worked on and displayed in the same way as a Japanese beech? Technically yes, but aesthetically perhaps not.

Ryan Neil's trees evoke the vast expanses of wilderness in the United States, just as a Spanish juniper can evoke an Iberian sierra. So, ultimately, it is perhaps just the tree and Nature that impose their style and cut across the prism of our cultural heritage.

Trees remain the masters of bonsai. ●



Evoking alpine landscapes where mountain pines grow is perhaps one of European bonsai's ambitions.



BONSAI-CLUB DEUTSCHLAND

40 years of passion

It was at the Kongress am Park in Augsburg, Bavaria that the Bonsai-club Deutschland celebrated their 40 years of passion at an exhibition held on 25 to 27 May 2018. It was a high-level event and a felicitous combination of art and bonsai.

Author: Herbert Obermayer

To mark its fortieth anniversary, the Bonsai-club Deutschland (BCD) offered the Kongress am Park in Augsburg a superb weekend dedicated to the art of bonsai and studded with high-level demonstrations.

The Bonsai-club Deutschland (BCD) celebrated its 40th anniversary with a large exhibition held at the Kongress am Park, in Augsburg, Bavaria. In addition to the display of trees by club members, was a very attractive exhibition of contemplation stones by the Deutsche Suiseki-Gesellschaft (the German suiseki society).

The quality of the trees shown – even at a European level – was excellent. Many professionals spoke of it as being the finest exhibition in the history of the BCD.

Some large trees

For jury evaluation, the trees were classified into three categories: shohin (under 20 cm/8 in.), chuhin (between 20–45 cm/8–18 in.), and omono (over 45 cm/18 in.). Surprisingly, there was a clear



This *Taxus cuspidata* by Heinrich Hacker won the gold medal for the category of bonsai measuring over 45 cm (18 in.).

majority of “large” trees that made up almost 80 per cent of the pieces exhibited.

For many years, the trees exhibited by the BCD have been evaluated on homogenously and judgement is based on various criteria that do not all have the same value in the final mark. The aesthetic impression of the whole piece counts six times more than the choice of pot. In theory, the maximum number of points is 100. The three trees that obtain the greatest number of points in each category are awarded the gold, silver and bronze medals. Trees that obtain over 60 points are awarded a “jury prize”.

In the shohin category at the Augsburg exhibition, Peter Scwharzer won the gold medal for his display; followed by Hannelore Bünger and Petra Kriegl. Ivo Drüge was distinguished in the chuhin category, ahead of Herbert Obermayer (both displayed *Carpinus coreana*), and Bernd Hochwarner (*Acer palmatum*). In the Omono category, the gold medal went to an outstanding *Taxus cuspidata* by Heinrich Hacker; an impressive *Acer palmatum* by Claus Kimmig won the silver medal, and the bronze was awarded to an *Olea europaea* by Christian Przbylski, who in February, was the winner of the Noelanders Trophy. Many other special prizes were also handed out. ►►►



Carpinus coreana by Ivo Drüge, gold medal in the 20-45 cm (8-18 in) category.





Shohin display by Peter Schwarzer, gold medal in the under 20 cm (8 in.) category.



Deutsche Suiseki-Gesellschaft (German suiseki society), exhibited many stones.



Werner Busch
working on
a *Taxus*.



Hartmut
Münchenbach
working on a
Pinus densiflora.



Daisuke Katagiri
styling a *Tsuga*.

Some young Japanese artists

Among the high spots of this birthday weekend, were the styling demonstrations for which the organisers relied on well-known German artists, Udo Fischer, Hartmut Münchenbach, Werner M. Busch, and Uwe Schulze-Zumhülsen. And on an international level three young Japanese artists, Yoshihiko Moriyama (27), Daisuke Katagiri (32) and Hiroaki Suzuki (26), all sons of renowned bonsai masters, also gave demonstrations. René Alber, the winner of the preceding year's German New Talent Contest, followed tradition by working on a tree in public.

The quality of the material brought from Japan was superb – some of the trees could easily have been displayed in the adjoining exhibition. The various demonstrations were therefore less focused on styling, than on much more detailed work. The magic touch of the Japanese visiting artists was stunning, but no less so than that of the German special guests. ►►►

The Bonsai-club Deutschland

The Bonsai-club Deutschland (BCD) was founded under the name of Bonsai-Club, Verein europäischer Miniaturbaumfreunde e.V. (Bonsai-club association for European amateurs of miniature trees). Among the founder members were Paul Lesniewicz, the late Horst Krekeler, Wolfgang Zimmer and the late Willi Benz. The today has some 2000 members and is one of the largest national bonsai associations in Europe. The BCD is run by a governing board of eight people. Elmar Heil has been its chairman since 2015.

The BCD sees itself as a service provider and offers occasional and

continual training. It offers free training for its members at all its ten regional branches. For the heads of work groups and local clubs there is a specific complementary training programme. Financial support is also provided for workshops or regional exhibitions.

The club's quarterly magazine, *Bonsai*, is made up of news on the national and international Bonsai scene, with specific information and shows various presentations. The club also publishes an annual catalogue that presents the pieces displayed at the annual federal exhibition. The club's catalogue and the magazine are free to BCD members.



Between styling large demo trees, Yoshihiko Moriyama works on a little shohin – just for fun!



Hiroaki Suzuki
and a juniper
over rock.



Teamwork
of different
generations
– Udo Fischer
(centre), Yoshihiko
Moriyama (left)
and Hiroaki Suzuki
working on a
large juniper.

Paintings and antique pots

To round off the exhibition of trees and sui-seki, there were displays of mature kusamono placed on elegant columns, historic bonsai pots from Japan, and China, pots by the renowned German potter Peter Krebs, and Japanese wood-block prints with bonsai motifs.

Individual bonsai displayed singly with large landscape paintings as backdrops, formed fascinating compositions giving a special emphasis to the whole.

A special presentation was dedicated to the history of the Bonsai-Club Deutschland – a birthday obligation! ●

A few bonsai trees displayed singly in front of landscape paintings with fascinating effect.



A row of kusamono displayed on columns.



Some fabulous antique bonsai pots and this traditional style pot by Peter Krebs the German ceramicist.



'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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Belgium
www.limburghal.be

BONSAI ASSOCIATION BELGIUM





Spruces

put on a show



Spruces are hardy trees that grow easily at altitude. Recommended for beginners in bonsai, they have relatively little deadwood. The German bonsai professional Udo Fischer has a number in his collection which impressively illustrate various shapes that these alpine trees can take on.

Photos : Studio Siebold,
unless stated otherwise



↑
Picea abies worked on since 1993.
Height: 75 cm (29½ in.).
Age: 90 years.
Pot: Tokoname.
Owner: Udo Fischer.

→
Picea abies worked on since 1991.
Height: 90 cm (35½ in.).
Age: 70 years.
Pot: Tokoname.
Owner: Udo Fischer

→
Picea jezoensis worked on since 2002.
Height: 69 cm (27¼ in.).
Age: 120 years.
Pot: Tokoname.
Owner: Udo Fischer.





↑ *Picea jezoensis*
worked on
since 2008.
Height: 52 cm (20½ in.).
Age: 40 years.
Pot: Tokoname.
Owner: Udo Fischer.

↗ *Picea abies* worked
on since 1994.
Height: 70 cm (27½ in.).
Age: 150 years.
Pot: Kataoka.
Owner: Udo Fischer

→ *Picea abies* worked
on since 2001.
Height: 85 cm (33½ in.).
Age: 70 years.
Pot: Tokoname.
Owner: Udo Fischer.



© WILLY EVENEPOEL, BONSAI ASSOCIATION BELGIUM.



Bamboo forest by Christian Coquelle, winner of the “Natural” prize.



Francisco Ferreira led the “L’Arbre et le Geste” workshops, with Alain Arnaud (not in photo), for some great moments of sharing with the public.

FRANCE’S SALON NATIONAL DU BONSAÏ 2018

Diversity and sharing

The Salon National du Bonsaï, in Maulévrier in western France, took place on 8 and 9 September. Its themes were diversity and sharing: diversity among the species and presentations, and sharing through demonstrations by participants in the “L’Arbre et le Geste” workshops.

Author: David Jamet

For its sixth edition, the Salon National du Bonsaï, at the Parc Oriental (Oriental Park) of Maulévrier, Maine-et-Loire, succeeded once more in bringing together almost 50 high-quality bonsai from all over France and two talented French guests – Alain Arnaud and Francisco Ferreira – for the “L’Arbre et le Geste” (roughly translatable as “Hands-On With Trees”) workshops. It happened on 8 and 9 September, in glorious sunshine.

Forests of bamboo and *Crassula*

In the exhibition, the public were able to see classic species of bonsai (pine, maple, juniper ...), but also some more original examples – such as a large forest of *Crassula ovata* (jade plant), planted on a stone slab by Marcel Poisson, a hobbyist from Nantes who is passionate about bonsai and succulent plants, or the wonderful bamboo forest by Christian Co-

quelle. As Christian told us, this forest of *Fargesia murielae*, created in 2011, was much admired by a Japanese grand master of bonsai during the last edition of the European Bonsai-San Show, in Saulieu (see the article on its creation in issue 94 of *Esprit Bonsai International*). These two forests were among the prizewinners at the 2018 Salon. ►►►



An original forest of *Crassula ovata* by the hobbyist Marcel Poisson.

►►► Presented specimens of species that are rarely used in bonsai, such as a Sicilian sumac (*Rhus coriaria* L.) literati, offered a source of inspiration for creating our living works of art. Some hobbyists took daringly unusual approaches to their displays by using metal *jita* (fine slabs traditionally made of wood). The area devoted to shohin featured good-quality, beautifully delicate small trees.

This year, the organisers – the Parc Oriental de Maulévrier – again decided to dedicate a whole section of shelf space to suiseki, to introduce the subject to newcomers. In addition, Pierre Chantry, a member of the AFAS (Association Française des Amateurs de Suiseki / French Association of Suiseki Lovers), gave a talk on the Saturday afternoon to an attentive audience, explaining the basics of this Japanese art.



A number of suiseki, including this rock belonging to Pierre Chantry, occupied an area of the exhibition's shelf space.



Pierre-Yves Lidec (left) was presented with the “Strength and Power” prize by David Jamet (in black), and was awarded the “L’Arbre et le Geste” prize by Alain Arnaud and Francisco Ferreira.

The “Strength and Power” and “L’Arbre et le Geste” prizes went to this trident maple by Pierre-Yves Lidec.

The prizegiving evening was this year organised inside the exhibition hall. This was the moment when exhibitors, traders, special guests and members of the organising committee got to hear or announce the results, in a spirit of friendliness and sharing, before taking a little night-time tour of the park.

It was at the end of the Salon that the prize for the public's favourite tree was awarded, to Eric Gauthier's Japanese maple, after the numerous votes from visitors over the course of the whole weekend had been counted.



François Buttin's Sicilian sumac (*Rhus coriaria* L.): a very rare species in bonsai in this part of the world.

The prizewinners

- “Natural”: bamboo forest, Christian Coquelle.
- “Elegance”: shohin composition, Ronan Le Bras.
- “Strength and Power”: trident maple, Pierre-Yves Lidec.
- “Venerable”: Japanese maple, Éric Gauthier.
- “Harmony”: shohin composition, Xavier Casalta.
- “Parlons Bonsai”: Scots pine, Alexandre Wemaëre.
- “Nejikan's Canal”, awarded by Fabrice Huertas: *Juniperus squamata*, Adriano Moreira.
- “L’Arbre et le Geste”, awarded by Alain Arnaud and Francisco Ferreira: trident maple, Pierre-Yves Lidec.
- “Public”: Japanese maple, Eric Gauthier.



“Public” and “Venerable” prizewinner: *Acer palmatum* by Éric Gauthier.



“Elegance” prizewinner: shohin composition by Ronan Le Bras.



The shohin displays were elegant and high-quality.

Free workshops

Each edition of the Salon National du Bonsaï celebrates a particular bonsai artist. This year, it was two French bonsai artists who were in the spotlight – Alain Arnaud and Francisco Ferreira, who admirably led the “L’Arbre et le Geste” workshops, organised by the association Parlons Bonsaï and attended by a number of students.

On the Saturday afternoon, in the trade village that was set up for the occasion, students from their workshops styled two pines in front of an audience of members of the public, with advice and encouragement from their teachers.

On the Sunday, a free workshop organised by Parlons Bonsaï, sponsors of the Salon, delighted bonsai lovers of all levels, who worked on some 15 trees – both collected and nursery-grown – under guidance from Alain Arnaud and Francisco Ferreira, and watched by many visitors, some of whom were very intrigued.

Further talks and workshops were given by others, including on making

daiza for suiseki, cleaning rocks, and a demonstration of stone carving.

Two guided tours of the exhibition gave the visiting public a more concrete understanding of the art of bonsai and the trees on display.

“Japonismes 2018”

In the exhibition hall, members of the Maulévrier bonsai club, a partner of the event, offered advice to visitors who wanted to take their first steps in the art of bonsai.

Participants and visitors alike spoke about how friendly the Salon was, and highlighted the quality of the entire display – both being values that the organisers have upheld since the beginning.

It is worth noting that this edition of the Salon National du Bonsaï was featured in the related programme “Japonismes 2018” – the cultural year of Japan in France, to celebrate 160 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the 150th anniversary of the start of the Meiji period, when Japan opened up to the West.



A handsome yew by Alain Arnaud, one of the invited teachers of the “L’Arbre et le Geste” workshops.

With over 2,000 visitors over the course of the weekend, this edition set a new attendance record. The statistics prove once again the quality and seriousness of this show, and confirm its place as a point of reference on the French bonsai scene.

Make a date for 14 and 15 September 2019! ●



Des hommes
et des arbres

Trees
and people

John Wang, a North American former lawyer, started as a bonsai professional ten years ago. He works mostly on spectacular yamadori pines and junipers.

John Wang

“I ignore any material that doesn’t have a spectacular future”

In his nursery in Los Angeles, California, the 50-year-old North American John Wang has been working his trees as an aesthete for the pleasure of demanding collectors. He will be demonstrating at the Bonsai Clubs International convention in Mulhouse in October 2018.

Interviewed by Anne Royer
Photos: John Wang

Esprit Bonsai International: Where did you study the art of bonsai?

John Wang: I had my first class when I was six years old. I’ve studied at local Southern California nurseries and Sansei-en in Saitama Prefecture. There I was influenced by a crazy-but-genius-type teacher, Seiji Sakurai. I found him purely by luck, exploring the nurseries around Angyo, about 45 minutes from Omiya. I got lost and I saw beautiful, original, high-level material, and high-class lines. Sakurai’s nursery is like a bonsai work factory, with some awesome raw material-in-progress ... it’s much more a working place than a viewing place. All the best pieces make their way directly to clients, or more often than not, end up in the “showroom nursery” known as Mansei-en in Omiya Bonsai Village. I only stayed two years at Sakurai’s, but on the “awards certificate wall” at the nursery, my plaque hangs next to Marc Noelanders’, as student no.2!



“For the most part, the foliage on collected California junipers must be grown out for two to four years before styling, as typically there is not enough green mass to manipulate in the beginning,” says John. “That also gives a chance for the tree to regain strength.”



This juniper was collected in 2013, in southern California.



John gave the tree its initial form, allowed it to grow up for four years, and then decided to use external wiring on the live vein to orientate the branching correctly.



The same tree, after styling.
Height: 150 cm (59 in.).

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

J.W.: Pretty much what Kimura said in his interview to Bonsai Empire [a website that specialises in information on bonsai – Ed] in 2016, hard work is 50 to 60%, the rest is innate genius. A little luck helps. But if you lack either the work or the genius part, it will be difficult to make a great tree. You may get lucky like a one-song wonder, but without those traits, the chances of tree-making success are unfortunately low.

This is where we need a severe paradigm shift, at least in the United States. We are a culture of DIYers and most people

are proud of “doing-it-yourself”. But we also need more collectors, people that are non-DIYers, and seek professional assistance, to produce more quality trees.

E.B.I.: How do you perceive work on a tree?

J.W.: Sakurai once told me that if you make a tree in a typical, classical style (moyogi, kengai, shakan, etc), the tree produced must be exceptional. Otherwise there are too many of similar style, and such a tree will never be special. In other words, if you have an unexceptional tree, you must do something different with it. Basically, I try to stay far away from making trees that

resemble the Great Pyramid of Giza, with triangles on top of basically each and every trunk shape.

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

J.W.: Junipers and pines, because I can alter their forms most severely. This is the part I love the most. I pretty much only work with yamadori. Field-grown “market trees” are a bit passé. I have this terrible habit of ignoring any material that doesn’t have a spectacular future. When I dig a yamadori, it usually dies, so I don’t [laughs]. I’ve searched pretty much the entire western United States, from the ►►►



John Wang bought this juniper in 2016. "Our California junipers typically have foliage extremely far away from the trunk, and thus are difficult to compact," he says.



The main live veins are positioned. The tree is at rest, prior to more detailed wiring.

▶▶▶ border of Canada, down to Mexico, but it's unimaginably difficult, at least for me, to find awesome yamadori in the mountains. So being a bonsai professional, I buy from people with such talent. In the United States, there are a few people who specialise in digging yamadori as their main source of income, which is great for the future development of American bonsai.

E.B.I.: What do you think of American bonsai?

J.W.: Most trees are like the "McMansion"-type houses they build here. The future level of US trees depends solely on the existence of patron customers. Michelangelo couldn't have painted the Sistine Chapel without the support of the Medici. Of course I'm not equating us bonsai pro stooges with Michelangelo, but you get the idea. Unfortunately, hobby-level customers are not enough to sustain pros, unless you do remarkable feats of marketing and social media, and even then it may be difficult to work with the highest-level material. Think of working with high-end material as very capital intensive. To support all professionals, I strongly encourage all US bonsai enthusiasts to seek out our assistance, to improve everyone's eye, and make some nice trees together.

The United States also needs an organisation for bonsai professionals. We are



Juniperus californica, after styling and light carving. Height: 140 cm (55 in.).

not very organised and have no accreditation for teachers at this point – all sorts of people teach, and shape tastes. Once a student's eye, or bonsai sense, is locked in, it is difficult to alter. Most professionals agree that technique is somewhat generic, but the most important thing to learn from a teacher is their line, bonsai sense, or bonsai aesthetic.

E.B.I.: In October 2018, at the BCI congress, in Mulhouse, France, you will take part in a three-person demonstration with Budi Sulisty and Mitsuo Matsuda. How are you preparing for this event?

J.W.: I practised by creating a 3-metre (10-foot) aquascape for a reef aquarium,



Juniper collected in 2014.



After one year's growth, John bent the largest live vein at 120° and started carving deadwood on it.



In 2017, after carving and sandblasting. The tree has grown enough to be styled.



A year later, the structural line of the tree is finally emerging.

so I am completely prepared [laughs]. I have decided that I will talk, Budi will do the stones, and Matsuda will do the pines [laughs].

E.B.I.: What projects would you like to achieve in the coming years?

J.W.: After I make about two more batches of trees, I plan to retire from bonsai, and either return to my former career, or do a crazy mariculture project in Papua New Guinea or thereabouts. I used to work as an international lawyer, with the United Nations and many large multinationals for twenty or so years, which was quite interesting. However, I left that work mid-career about ten years ago, as I was irresistibly drawn into the world of beautiful lines and trees. I found making trees was a much more purist pursuit, and had a great

first half decade, economically speaking. Due to the small number of high-level collectors in my area, I found myself completely challenged to make new, better trees, that these same customers, whom I've sold trees to in the past, could not resist. That presented a huge challenge! In bonsai, when you think you've scaled the highest mountain, there's another higher one waiting... you just haven't seen it yet. ●



In 2018, after styling, its lines recall of that of origami cranes [a symbol of peace in Japan - Ed], as John likes to point out. Height: 160 cm (63 in.).



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Twist a branch - then create a jin

Autumn is the time to make various winter preparations, and a holiday break would be an opportune moment to prepare and twist a branch with the aim of creating a jin as described below.

Author: Francisco Ferreira

At the end of this autumn, our trees will not need to be supervised as much as they were in the preceding months. Watering, thinning the foliage to let in more light, fertilising, pruning and wire removal etc. are all tasks that take up a great deal of time. It is often the case that we go straight to protecting the trees for winter, without dealing with the smaller tasks that we could still do, such as preparing a branch to be transformed into a jin.

In autumn

For this project on a mountain pine, two branches will not be used as they are too large and without taper. They will be removed. Before doing so, we will prepare one of them to try to obtain some attractive deadwood. This would seem a bit of a gamble because it is so rigid. If we were simply to cut it and transform it into jin, the result would not be very interesting. To get round this we decided to twist this branch to create a more dynamic jin.

Evolution over the course of the months

To create this jin on a mountain pine, the initial work - branch pruning and wiring - started at the end of October. And although not all the work was carried out in one operation, it is interesting to see how this type of smaller work evolves.



October 2016. This mountain pine branch will become a jin. As the base of the branch is quite sturdy, an incision must be made using a trunk splitter.



Once the bark has been removed, the branch is wired. The wiring must be sufficiently slack so that the branch can be twisted without blocking the wire.



After wiring, the branch can simply be twisted by hand, and the wiring will tighten on the branch. The branch is now showing some dynamism and will give some interesting effects once the wood has dried.

In Spring

A little over a year later in the spring of 2018, it was time to check the development of this jin.



1 The wood seems to have hardened sufficiently to remove the wiring, which has to be left for quite a long time to prevent the wood from going back to its initial shape.



2 The wood fibre has a nice spiral mostly at the end of the jin. The middle part is less successful as it is less twisted.

Sandblasting the jin

After smoothing out the rough edges by hand, one can now carry out the first sandblasting, without further waiting, as the wood, after a year-and-a-half, has hardened off. The sand on the dry wood will already produce a good result. ●



A Preparing a tree for sandblasting is always an important and meticulous step. The foliage and substrate must be very well protected. The sand used is almost as fine as dust - it gets into everything and can damage the leaves or compact the substrate.



3 The next stage of the work has become more "classic" - removing bits of wood with hand tools (a blunt chisel or old screwdriver) by following the thread of the wood. If the branch had not been prepared in that autumn before last, it would not have been possible to have obtained so much movement in the wood. This preparatory work has enabled us to remove wood from the middle of the branch and to create gaps that will give a very interesting play on light.



4 The effects of light and shade will certainly be one of the main features of this jin



B The result is well worth the work and the preparation



C It is difficult to imagine that this deadwood was once nothing but a rigid bit of wood without interest. Here one can see the lovely effect of light on this jin.



This “little” jin, about fifteen centimetres (six inches) long, seems much larger given its wealth of detail.



The tree still needs a lot of work done on its foliage. Its cultivation over the years to come will contribute to the creation of its ramification and will enhance the quality of its jin.

Wiring

Author: Antonio Ricchiari

Wiring is one of the most difficult techniques to learn in the art of bonsai.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to successful wiring. Before starting the process, one must clean and remove dry and useless branches as well as the stumps of the cut branches. Old needles and superfluous buds are also removed to facilitate the wiring and to improve airflow and light. It is important to work calmly and with concentration. Haste and imprecision, will produce bad results.

If care is taken over the preparation, the tree's structure will be clearer and more defined and it will be easier to place the wire.

Note that a branch is only wired when it has four or five pairs of leaves, not before. It must have lignified to achieve the expected result.

The principles of wiring

Before starting the process, extreme care must be taken to fix the end. As a general rule, one wires two branches at the same time with one strand of wire.

It is extremely important when attaching the wire:

- not to cross the wires – particularly if using thick strands.
- to start with the largest branch finishing with the smallest.

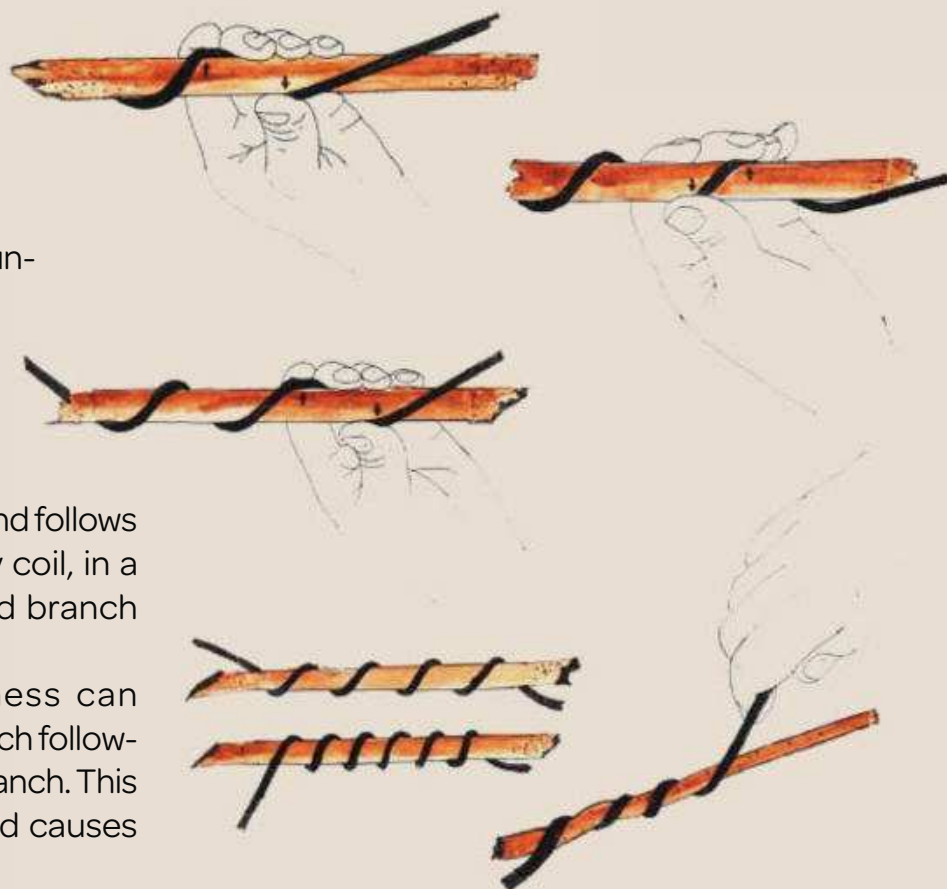
The above two points are fundamental for wiring correctly and for occasioning as little stress as possible to the tree. For every wire placed, one must anticipate where the next coil will go.

Some principles to observe when wiring:

- The index finger is fundamental to the process: it coils the wire without pulling it.
- The right hand moves spirally.
- The left hand holds and follows the wire in place, coil by coil, in a way that keeps wire and branch firmly together.
- The wire's thickness can change on the same branch following the diameter of the branch. This is more effective like and causes less stress to the tree.
- The coils must not be too tight, otherwise the wire will embed itself into the bark before the desired result can be achieved. ▶▶▶



Wiring for a beginner does not come easily. The actions are technical, but not insurmountable.



The left hand holds the wire in place while the right hand moves spirally.

▶▶▶ - The distance between each coil must be consistent.

- The coils should be angled at 45 degrees: the thicker the wire, the greater the distance between coils.

- If the coils are too close to each other, the bend will not remain in place.

- On a young tree, once the wire has been removed, the branches have a tendency to return to their original position. Therefore, one needs to pull the branch a little further down than seems necessary.

- When a branch has to be lowered, its base that supports the effort of bending must be maintained by the course of the wire.

- Branches of the same diameter are wired two by two.

- Even the small branches are wired two by two. The first and thickest wire placed, serves as a hook for the new wire.

- If the wires are crossed, apart from the unattractive aspect, the wiring will not be effective.

By respecting these principles, two successive branches will always be wired together. Once the wiring is finished, the fine ramification will spread out like a fan.

The strongest branch does not necessarily have to be in the centre of the pad, but it is important that it is homogeneous.

The techniques for shaping a bonsai does not follow one particular method (which could be the wiring), but on the combination of numerous methods.

When to place the wire

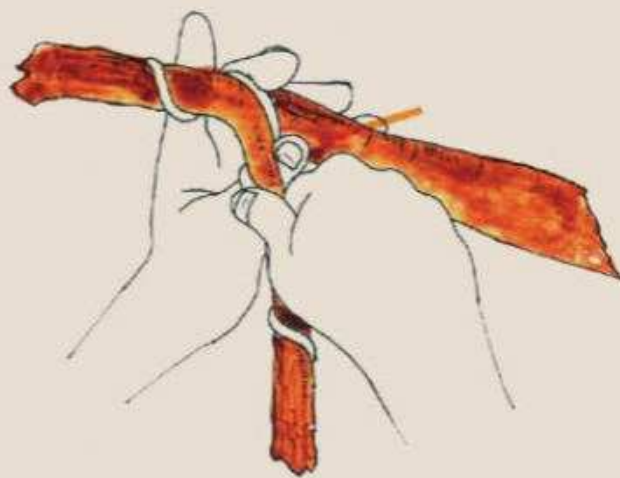
With young trees the wire should remain on the tree for four to six months to keep the desired shape. Mature and old trees need up to three years, but this depends on the thickness of the branches and the species.



The branches are wired two by two.



The coils must be uniform, neither too loose nor too tight.



The position of both hands on the branch for placing the wire.

Evergreens and conifers need longer to retain the required shape. For these varieties, one should only cut the wire after a year or even a year and a half, just before the wire starts to biting into the bark. It is not possible to establish a precise time for removing wire, as many fac-

Choosing the wire

In the majority of cases annealed copper is used for wiring.

Aluminium is more suitable for small branches, as it is less aggressive on fine bark. Because of its flexibility, one must remember to use a thicker strand than one would for copper.

Aluminium is used more frequently, because it is more flexible to apply. The only negative point is its price, which is quite high, which is why I advise buying it in large rolls. Two wires can be placed parallel to each other if a branch is particularly sturdy or thick.



Copper and aluminium wires of different thicknesses.



From left to right: fine-wire cutter, wire-bending pliers, needle-nosed pliers for bending fine wire, thick-wire cutter.

tors have to be taken into account. Therefore, this involves regularly checking that the wire is not digging into the bark. For example, on a young tree with strong growth, it would only take a few months for the wire to damage the bark. One has to take into consideration the difference in a tree's growth between the apical zone (faster) and the inferior zone (slower) with a more or less important influx of sap. After a trunk or branch has undergone severe bending, it is the scar-producing cells that block the wood into the new position.

The time to wire:

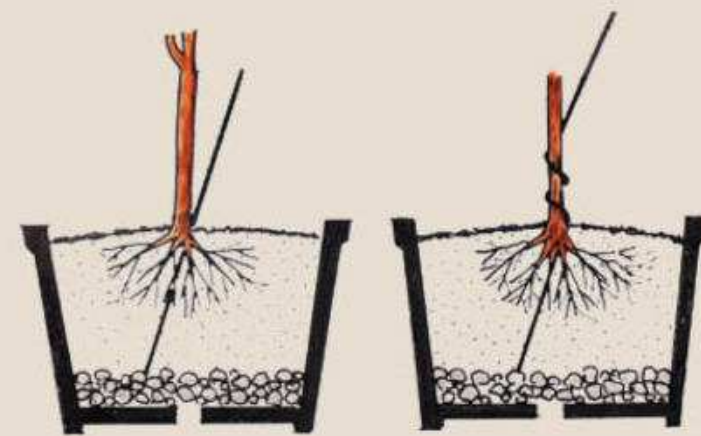
- conifers – during the growing period.
- deciduous trees – in early spring.
- flowering trees – after the flowering period.

The wiring process

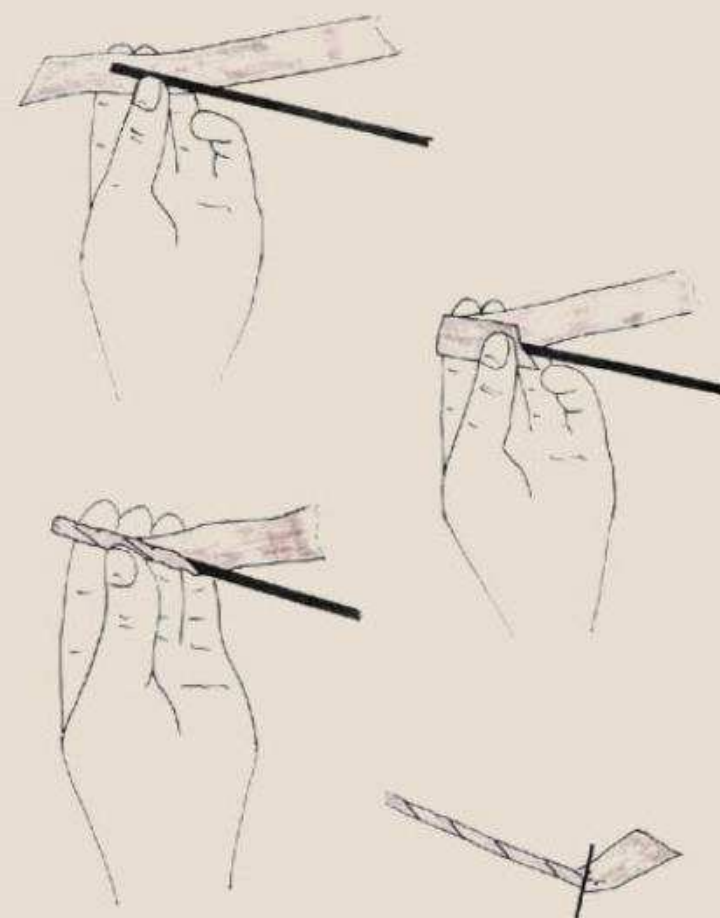
Before starting to wire a tree, it is advisable to stop watering it a few days before, which will make the branches more flexible.

To avoid waste, cut the wire to about one and a half times the length of the branch to be wired. The wire is applied at a 45 degree angle either clockwise or anti-clockwise so that it holds fast to the bark but without damaging it – neither too loose nor too tight. If the wire is too tight, the tree will not be able to grow correctly and the wire will have to be removed a very short time after being attached, and before it has had any effect. If the wire is too loose, the branch will not keep the desired shape.

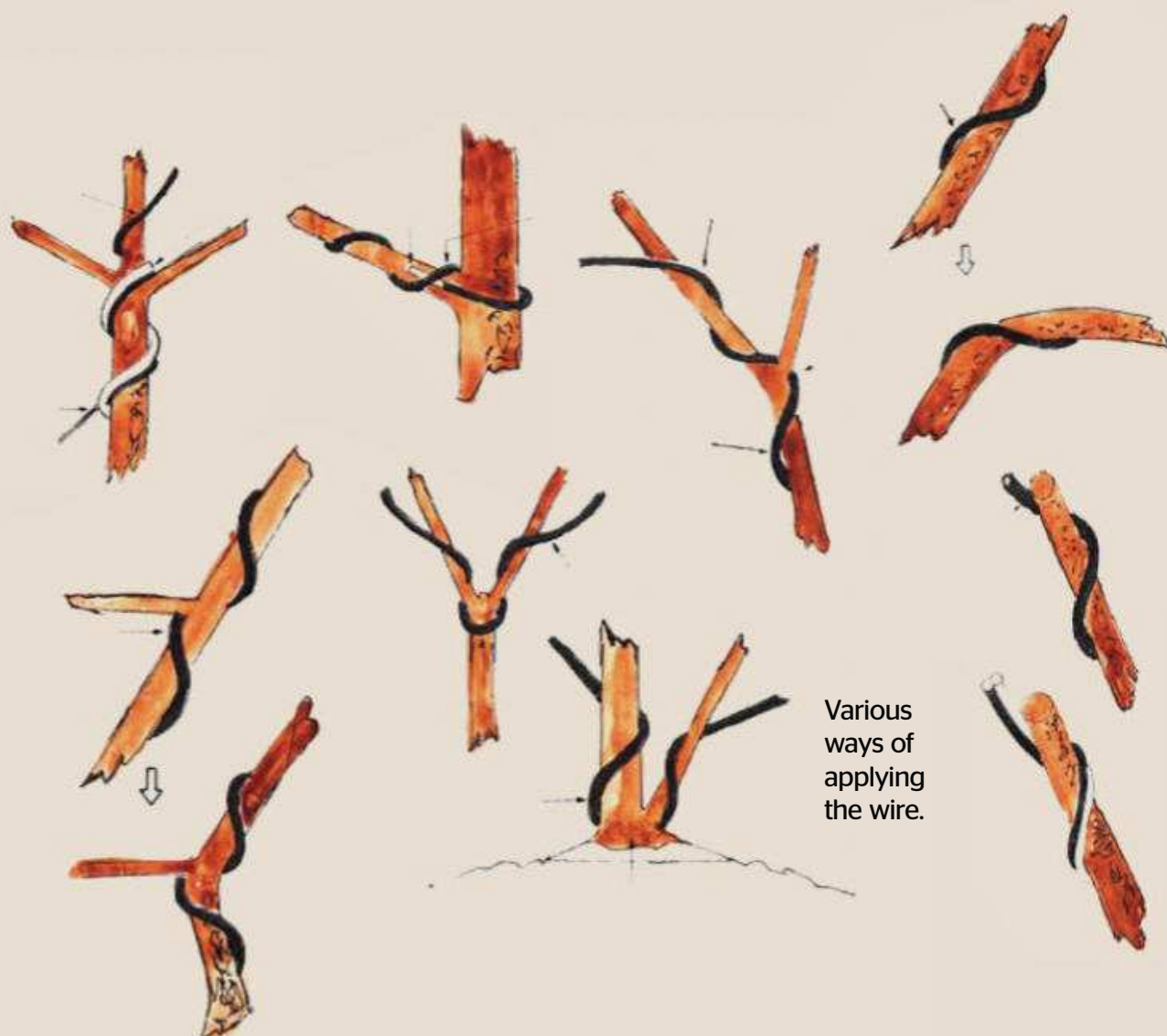
Wiring begins at the trunk, then to the primary branches, and then to the secondary branches, and will finish with the youngest and finest branches. One starts at the base of the trunk by inserting one end of the wire into the soil and then coiling it upwards to the tree's apex. The same applies to the branches. The departure point is from where it grows out from the trunk and will continue to the tip. If the branch is isolated, the wire is attached to tree's trunk. ▶▶▶



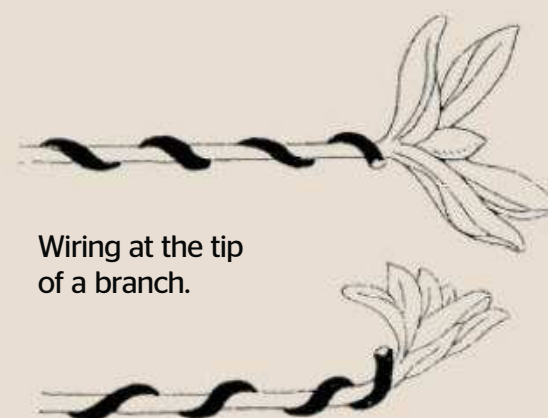
Anchoring the wire at the base of the trunk.



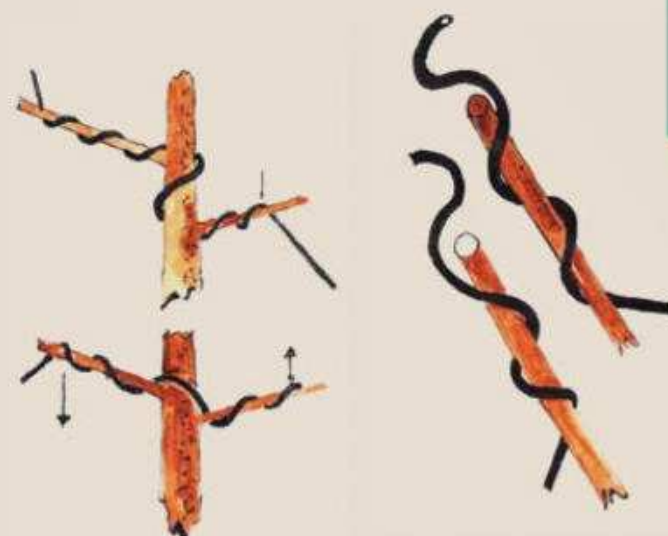
One can protect the bark by covering the wire with masking tape.



Various ways of applying the wire.



Wiring at the tip of a branch.



►►► For practice, one could start on an isolated branch or on one that will not be needed in the bonsai's final design.

Shaping

Once the wiring has been applied, the branch is positioned, by placing one's thumbs on the under-

side to support the branch while giving it the shape required. The curve is gradually guided by both thumbs to avoid breaking the branch.

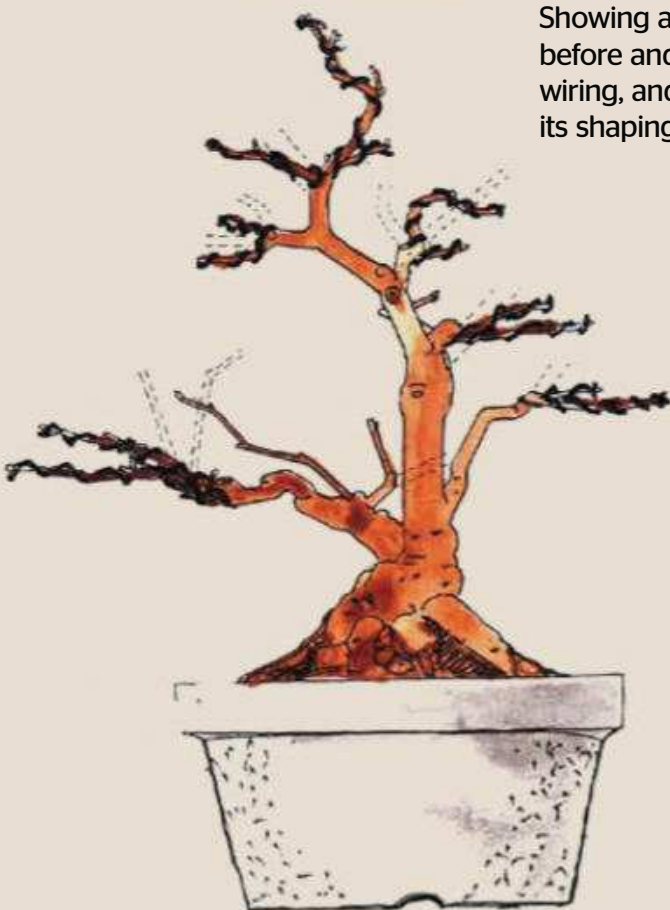
Particular attention must be paid to the wiring of branches with a lot of foliage; especially at the end of the branch, when bending it with

the fingers will prove to be more difficult. Using a pair of pliers will help this work.

Shaping branches must be carried out gradually. Do not intervene on primary branches and young shoots all at the same time. A global and drastic intervention will lead to the many internal lesions for the tree. ●



Showing a tree before and after wiring, and then its shaping.

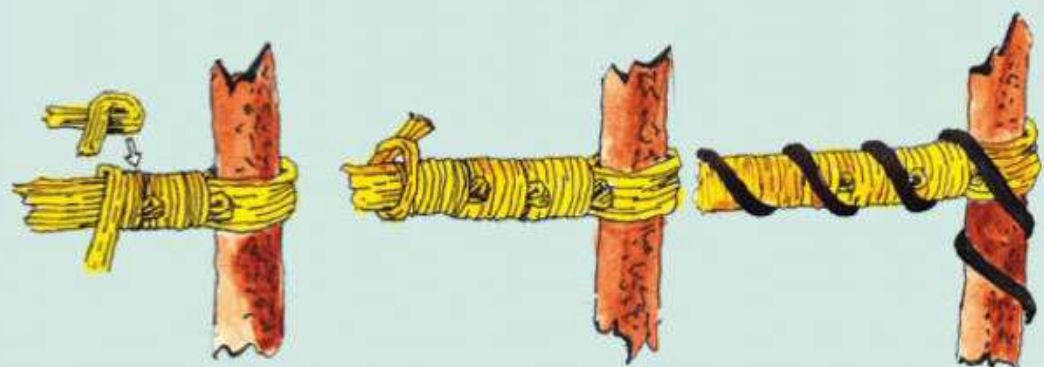
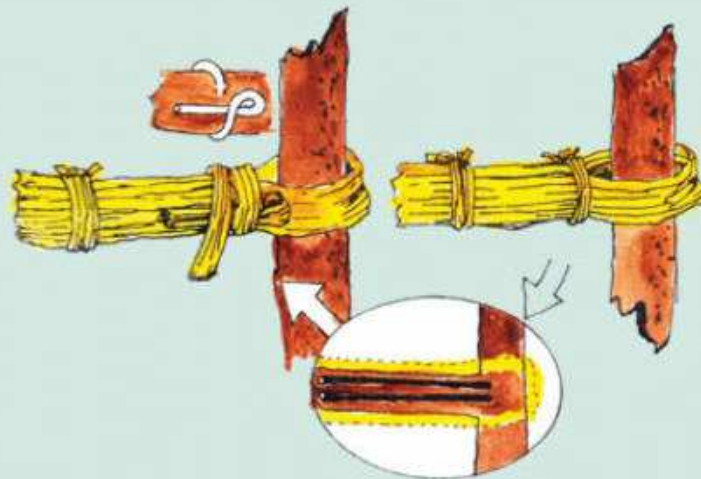


In the case of a large trunk

The trunk is the most difficult to bend because of its thickness. The more robust it is the more dangerous it is to bend it. It is easier to start shaping a tree, and therefore, its trunk, when it is still young and the results will be much better. For this work, thicker wire, rods, an iron bar, and a bonsai jack would be needed.



Before bending large branches or a trunk these must first be protected by raffia.





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For good healing on maple

A few tips to achieve fine callusing on maple: prune in two stages; clean the cut meticulously, and protect the wound.

Author: Francisco Ferreira



The trunk of this *Acer palmatum* was pruned some months ago. There has not been much sap bleed, so we can continue cutting without risk. The branch that has taken over has become the continuation of the trunk, and has very much benefitted from the removal of the former crown, and its diameter is now almost the same as the part that was cut. It also gives some movement to this future bonsai.

Healing wounds after pruning large branches can often be problematic. Great care must be taken to prune at the right time so that the callus forms as quickly as possible, and that it is as discreet as possible. Timing and the method used must be appropriate to the species to achieve the required result.

1 Cutting

Maple (*Acer buergerianum* and *Acer palmatum*) is a species that heals well from large cuts. Nevertheless, one must be careful to limit sap loss, particularly on an *Acer palmatum*. In addition, if the trees are very robust, healing can be poor and the callus somewhat thick.

To avoid these two pitfalls, it would be better to make the cut in two stages. For the first cut, leave a little wood to prevent the tree from losing sap. And then, in the following spring, continue with the second cut for its aesthetic aspect and for the wound to heal well ensuring a smooth continuity with the trunk or branch.



The bit of remaining wood has been removed. It would have been possible to have done this earlier, but for better healing, it is advisable to resume this type of cutting in spring during the tree's growing period, when healing is faster and the callusing less obtrusive. If one skips the two stages and immediately cuts the branch flush to the trunk, in spring, sap bleed could disrupt this work.

2 Cleaning up the cut

To complete the operation satisfactorily, use a very sharp knife to carefully remove wood shavings from the wound without damaging the cambium or lifting the bark. Very often, when cutting or sawing a branch (or trunk), the bark can peel away from the wood, which does not facilitate healing, and could have an unattractive result.



By removing the wood shavings, one can also modify the wound and give it the shape required.

3 Protecting the wound

Once the pruning has been completed, one must always protect the wound for the healing process to take place. Without it, the fresh cut will dry out and callusing will be difficult, perhaps impossible. There are many ways of protecting wounds such as with cut paste, cling film, or sticky-backed aluminium tape.

• Cut paste

This is perfect for small cuts. But note that not all commercial cut pastes are suitable for bonsai. Some tar-based pastes become too hard and do not allow calluses to form correctly, and can even dry out the bark.



A cut paste that is suitable for small cuts.



One should choose a special cut paste for bonsai.

• Plastic cling film (kitchen variety)

This is a good and inexpensive solution, as it keeps the wound area moist and does not prevent the callus from forming. It is very suitable for protecting small and medium cuts, but is more difficult to handle for large cuts.

• Sticky-backed aluminium

This is another solution and has almost the same advantages as cling film – good price and good moisture retention, etc. In addition, aluminium helps accelerate the callusing, as it is a good thermal conductor. Sticky-backed aluminium is also easier to apply to large wounds. The only drawback is that one often has to check the aluminium to make sure it does not peel away and that it stays well in contact with the cut. ●



Cling film will protect small and medium wounds.



Sticky-backed aluminium protects medium to large wounds and accelerates callusing.



One must often check that the aluminium stays in contact with the wound.

CAMELLIAS

FLOWERS IN ALL COLOURS

Camellias bloom from autumn to spring, but they seldom feature in Western bonsai collections. And yet they have qualities that make them suitable to become bonsai.

Author: Gilbert Labrid

The history of the camellia goes back a long way, especially in China and Japan. It was not until the late 19th century that it started to be cultivated as bonsai, initially through the use of plants collected from the wild. Since then, most specimens have come from specialist nurseries or been transformed from garden plants.

Relatively ordinary in appearance, camellias are always very sleek and vertical, and have lots of shoots from the base that can become trunks, which means that in parks and gardens they just look like any old shrub when not in bloom.

Camellias produce flower buds at the ends of new shoots, and it is a real challenge to maintain an attractive shape without destroying their floral display. As with most flowering trees, the best time to prune the flower buds is just after they have finished blooming.

Although camellias demand some attention and patience, they can be rewarding to make into bonsai.

Camelia japonica from Higo displayed at the Kokufu-ten in February 2010, in Tokyo. A superb, delicate specimen with good proportions. Height: 80 cm (31 in.).

The flowers come in a range of sizes and colours depending on the variety, but size is a greater concern here than colour, in relation to the bonsai's overall harmony. Camellias flower from October in the case of scented *C. sasanqua*, in December for *C. sinensis* and from February for *C. japonica*. ►►►



Cultivation tips

Family: Théacées

Genus: *Camellia*

Species: *C. japonica*, *C. sinensis*, *C. sasanqua* are the most common, with numerous cultivars.

Soil: acid and with good draining properties, such as 50% akadama, 40% kanuma and 10% pozzolana.

Watering: with acid water; do not let the soil dry out.

Exposure: semi-shade, to the east. Protect from frost.

Feeding: organic fertiliser in the spring.



1 Camellias are not often sold as pre-bonsai, which means that bonsai lovers have to resort to nursery-grown trees that are often not very interesting. The large specimens are very linear and their trunks lack ramifications. Young plants that are more flexible and have more ramifications offer greater possibilities. This young plant is oriented in a semi-cascade style.



2 Wiring is usually used for young shoots. The fact that the wood is quick to rigidify means that the possibilities for later modifications to branches and trunks are limited. Trees respond better to harsh pruning at the end of winter, and new lateral shoots can be favoured to build a new shape.



3 When it comes to repotting, remove all the soil and place the tree in a mixture that is good for cultivating acid-soil bonsai. Before cutting the fine roots, untangle the root system and look for where the large roots start. You will often find one or two thick roots that cross over each other under the compact mass of rootlets.



4 Cut off the lower root with some sharp cutters and considerably trim back the one at the base. Harsh pruning of roots encourages the branches to develop well, and all the more so given that camellias produce new roots quite easily.



5 Remove the vertical roots and keep only the horizontal ones. Put wound sealant over the cuts on the thick roots. To encourage new rootlets and ensure that the new, well-draining soil penetrates consistently, remove all of the old soil.



6 About eight years later and after a few more disappointments, the tree in flower in November 2017. Inadequately protected for the winter, it died in February 2018 after an extreme bout of frost (-12°C; 10°F) - totally unexpected in what is normally a milder Mediterranean climate.

Repotting

The choice of shapes is limited by the raw material and by how the species is cultivated.

Repotting can create some problems, because camellia foliage is perennial, with the leaves remaining on the tree for two to three years. Cutting back the roots too harshly can cause the leaves to fall, make the buds dry out and put the whole tree in danger.

To avoid this dehydration and ensure that the tree takes root again, it is advisable to remove some of the foliage before repotting. First, cut off all the leaves that are near the largest buds. Then cut off half of the leaves that are close to medium-sized buds; but don't touch the leaves that are near the smallest buds. Without partial defoliation – of at least half of the foliage – it is best to refrain from harsh pruning of the roots.

Replace all of the earth with an acid soil (50% akadama, 40% kanuma and 10% pozzolana) that drains well, depending on the local climate.

It is very important not to let the soil dry out, and to water with water that is pH-neutral or acidic.

Camellias are greedy where organic fertiliser is concerned, and so they need to be fed regularly and generously in the spring, especially after harsh pruning, to encourage regrowth on the old wood. The drainage quality plays a key role in this phase.

Pruning

Pruning is done just after flowering. New shoots are cut back to two leaves, or to only one if they are very vigorous. Pinching stimulates budding and reduces the length of internodes. To achieve the result you want, it is crucial to intervene at the right time. On a tree that is suitable to be displayed when in flower, do not pinch back too late. The flowers appear at the ends of the shorter branches.



A Several trunks grow out of the base, and they are often very straight. Depending on the design, they can be retained or removed. Here the trunk that is too straight is detached using a gouge, while retaining the rootlets.



B On the left, the two separated parts. On the right, segments of twisted roots, to be propagated immediately as cuttings. Obtaining bases that have movement is every bonsai-lover's dream.



C Mid-March. The part that has a bit of rhythm is cultivated in very well-draining soil. The roots are cut back severely, and therefore 90% of the foliage is removed, while keeping the leafstalks in place.

Don't hesitate to prune harshly, because camellias produce new buds on old wood very easily.



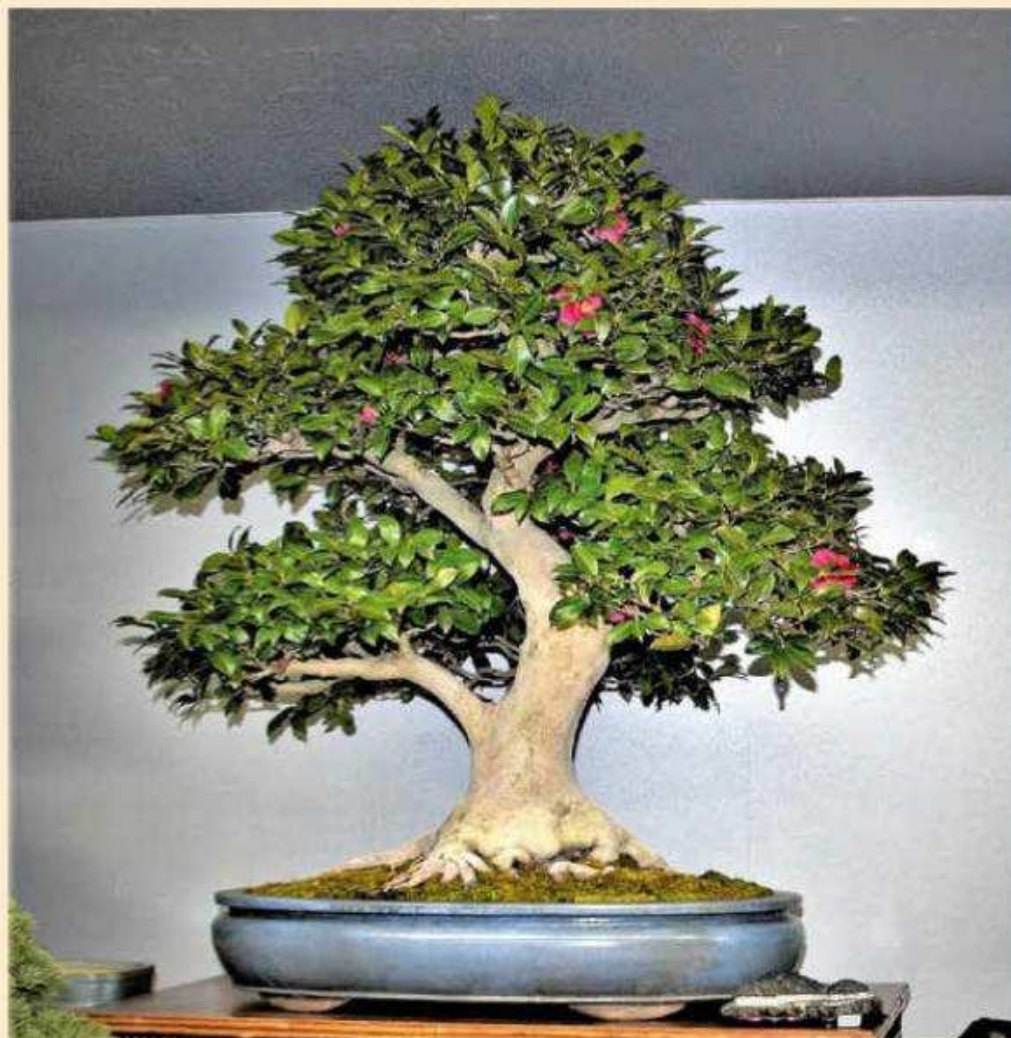
D The tree in July, after the foliage has grown back and the rooting has been re-established. The first pinching exercise will be carried out in the following spring, with the removal of all the flower buds. This will be necessary over several years, to obtain interesting ramification.

Limit blooms to one per branch, and prune at the end of the flowering period.

Protection and exposure

It is essential to protect pot-based trees over the winter, because their roots will freeze below 0°C (32°F). Camellias need to be placed in a sheltered position when in regions with a harsher climate than those where they have been produced.

They like morning sun, so an easterly exposure is generally recommended. ●

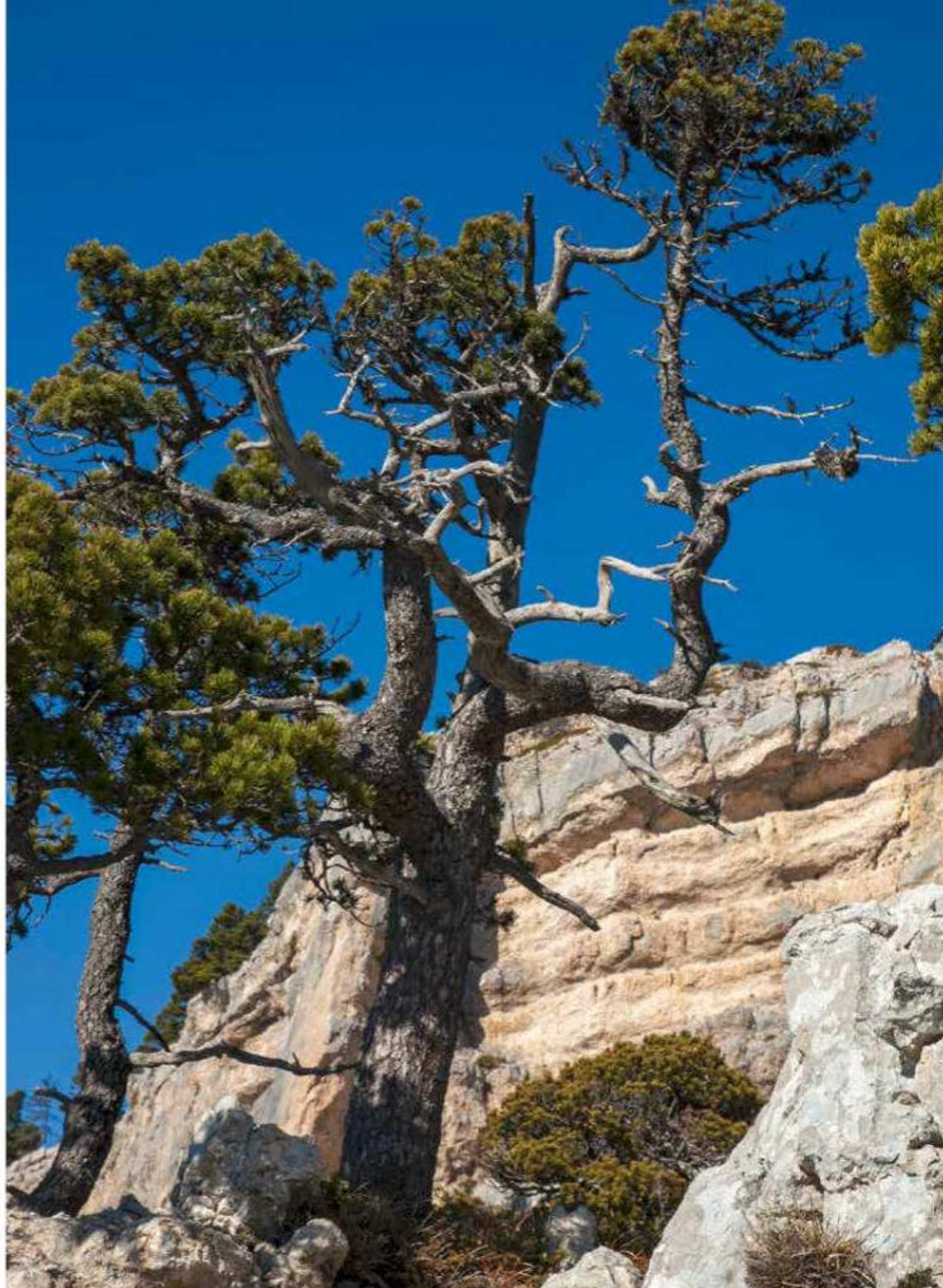


A *sinensis* camellia with beautiful nebari that is extended by the accentuated movement of the trunk - a rare quality for this species. The ramification is likewise quite impressive.



You will rarely come across camellias in bonsai gardens. Most specimens are large, and they are often field-grown, like this one which is still under construction.

A cascade-style camellia with very fluid movement, freed of many classical conventions.
Tokonoma: Kunio Kobayashi, Shunka-en.



Mountain pine grows in an environment that gives rise to traumatic reiterations, which are the duplications of the tree's architecture following a traumatic event.

Behind this somewhat basic term hides a phenomenon known to all, but one that goes far beyond the mere duplication of a tree's architecture.

Author:
Louis-Victor Bourdeau

Reiteration: One for all, all for one!

Reiteration: the duplication of structural unity in the course of a tree's development – shoots, runners, and suckers have different formations.

Anyone observing a tree as a whole is able to see that, irrespective of the shape of its leaves or fruit, there is a difference between a spruce, a linden or a birch. The positioning of the branches on the trunk, or the structure of the ramification, greatly differs from one species to another. Yet

for a very long time, the only criteria for identifying trees have been by the leaves and fruit. Even if this is still a valid method, in the 1960s, two botanists, the Frenchman, Francis Hallé and the Dutchman Roelof Oldeman, found a new way of classifying trees based on their architecture as a whole, at different stages of their lives. Thus, many generic models were characterised, in particular, by the way they grow and their ramification systems.

This discovery of architectural models brought a fascinating phenomenon to light, and one indispensable to the understanding of the life of trees – reiteration.

Suckers and runners

In the course of their numerous travels through tropical forests, these two botanists found that, on the trees with strongly inclined trunks, the branches straighten out and reproduce exactly the same architectural model as the species, forming a replica of the tree, only younger.

We have all noticed these reiterations on the trees around us without actually putting a name to them; without even knowing perhaps, that they are reiterations.

Commonly known, among others, as suckers, runners or shoots, these different terms also correspond to specific situations, as reiterations can be seen in various forms and in different conditions. A trunk that has collapsed to the ground due to snow or wind and whose branches start to grow skywards; a pine's crown that has been struck by lightning, or has been broken, and then replaced by a lateral branch; or again, the bottom branch of a spruce, which under the weight of snow, touches the ground and self-marcots, are just a few examples of reiteration which is very often reproduced in nature.

Moreover, astute gardeners the world over, very soon learnt how to take advantage of this aptitude in trees and how to propagate them by developing cutting and marcotting techniques.

The tree becomes a coloniser

But why and how do trees produce these reiterations? What circumstances are involved in their development?

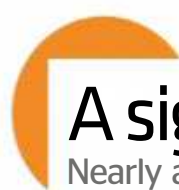
It is generally thought that it is a question of a coping strategy to adapt to their environment.

When a tree suffers a trauma such as a crown breakage, a collapsed trunk, or in extreme cases, when the trunk is completely severed and reduced to a stump, it will produce reiterations as a defence. This is called a traumatic reiteration.

But there also other forms of reiteration that can come about in favourable conditions, such as root runners in poplar, or aerial roots found on tropical ficus.

A great number of tree species can produce reiterations, but it should be noted that this phenomenon, is best seen in trees that are high on the evolutionary scale.

This type of development is really fascinating, as it overturns our perceptions of living organisms, and our categories relating to the definition of the individual or group. Thus, as the tree becomes a coloniser, it acquires many advantages over



A sign of evolution?

Nearly all trees can produce reiterations. But can one pick out the category of trees that reiterates more than the others? Here too, trees astound us by covering their tracks and escaping definitive classification. Take conifers, for example. Nearly all of them reiterate in the case of traumatism, but they hardly ever throw out runners. Only certain species put out from the stump such as the yew, the sequoia and certain species of juniper. It would seem, therefore, that the most evolved conifers reiterate more easily and more completely. However, the *Araucaria* genus, one of the oldest in the conifer species very often produces reiterations.



In the mountains in northern Japan, this *Betula ermanii*, a magnificent Japanese birch shows excellent examples of complete reiterations.

its competitors: it finds space more rapidly and more flexibly, and increases its capacity to capture energy.

In addition, each reiteration of the colony has a slightly different genome from the tree's other reiterations. This genetic variability acquires great potential for adaptation to eventual changes to the environment.

Lastly, and for us, not the least disconcerting aspect of coloniser trees is that they can become virtually immortal. If each part of the tree does not live eternally, the colony as a whole can reach a staggering age. Thus, the age of an American poplar has been estimated at 80,000 years, whereas each reiterate has barely reached one hundred years – an extraordinary paradox for a tree that is known for its short life span.

A different form of life

Once again trees compel us to completely revise our perception of living organisms. They have a form of life so different from ours that if we wish to understand them, we must rethink our essential concepts of time, space, movement, and death or reproduction. ●

*"E pluribus,
unum"*
(Out of many, one)



When I saw the juniper for the first time, I saw quite a lot of attractive features in it. Plus, the Itoigawa foliage type is ideal for small bonsai. It does have a few problems to overcome, but the positives within the tree greatly outweigh the negatives or problems.

A distinctive rock-planted shohin Part 1

Shohin junipers can sometimes lack originality. To make them more appealing, John Armitage, a British expert in small bonsai, will plant one on a rock. But before he does that, some preparatory work is needed.

Author: John Armitage

A small Itoigawa juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* "Itoigawa", can be made more original by being turned into a rock-planted tree. But first of all, the tree needs to be prepared. This juniper was one such tree that lodged in my mind. One of the major appealing features of shohin bonsai for me is the accessibility of material. When I look for a tree or happen to come across one that captivates me in some way, I find I am collecting, purchasing or air-layering not just a tree, but a dream. I find myself fantasising about what this tree could become in the future. Driving away from the nursery with my new acquisition in



Detail of the lower trunk.



The juniper has not had much attention for a few years. A hard pruning several years ago has resulted in a bit of juvenile foliage but not enough to worry me. The crudely applied aluminium wire has been on the tree a few years too. It has started to fade and bite in a few places.

the boot of my car, the trunk would thicken and the branches would become more compact – but only in my imagination, of course. A stop at the service station would bring me back down to earth. It was at the Swindon Bonsai Club's "Winter Image" show that I found the juniper on the trade stand of WindyBank Bonsai from Surrey. I went back to the tree several times throughout the event but ultimately walked away at the end without it, leaving it unsold. It was not expensive either – £175 (just under €200). On the long drive home, I regretted not buying it. The following day I contacted Ken Leaver from WindyBank Bonsai and asked him to hold on to it for me until I next saw him. To cut a long story short, my dear friend Peter Warren picked it up for me and after a wait of a few months it finally made it to my garden. Now the dream can start.

Bringing the dream to reality

What first attracted me to the tree was the two live veins, the twist of the trunk and that it could be styled with either side as the front. The Itoigawa foliage is good, and it appears to have remained unattended for some time, judging by the state of the original wire which is still present. The downsides are the almost 90-degree bend of the trunk and the lower trunk appearing to have an inverse taper. It is a relatively straightforward task to make a pleasing bonsai from this, as it is good-quality material. However, to make it stand out further, I have decided, once the tree has recovered from styling, to plant it on a rock. I wanted to make the tree more unique and increase the possibilities of its use in a shohin display. ▶▶▶



From above, the dense Itoigawa-type foliage is vigorous with many growing tips.

Choosing a front

Either of the obvious fronts would be acceptable at first glance. But if we look a bit more closely ...



A Front A - This was the “offered” front when it was for sale. And it was the view of this front that first attracted me to the tree. However, closer examination shows a couple of concerning features. The first is the way the two live veins move together. They create a sort of cross-legged image which in turn creates an inverse taper.



B The other annoying element is that the bend in the trunk is a perfect right angle - although a change in viewing angle would make this less obvious.



C Front B - For me, this is the better front. The inverse taper, the “crossed leg” live veins and the right-angled bend seem lessened. The live veins twist around the trunk in an interesting way and can be improved further. The branches now emerge from the rear of the tree. It is always easier to make a pleasing image with junipers when the branches come from the rear to the front rather than the other way around.



D The bend of the trunk looks more sinuous from this side and less like a right angle.

A change of angle?

The change of angle has presented us with a problem. A large root connected to one of the live veins will now become raised at the new angle. Simply removing the root will endanger the live vein. If this vein were to perish, the whole lower trunk which has already rotted slightly would weaken. I will solve this when we repot.



The strength of the root is evident and is keeping the whole of the live vein alive. But changing the planting angle of the trunk also alters its foothold.



E To further improve the trunk and to hide the apparent right angle of the first bend, I have decided to tilt the tree further.

Preparation and cleaning

As always, with all junipers, the first step is cleaning. This way we can fully realise the potential of the tree. We can explore the deadwood possibilities by locating and following the live veins and thus avoid disastrous outcomes. Old, flaky bark is removed along with blind foliage – that is, foliage without an active growing tip. Foliage growing in forks is also removed, with the aim of making the tree look refreshed and even giving it a harmonious density. ►►►



1 Identifying the “blind” foliage. The foliage without a vibrant growing tip is removed.



2 After removal. I am looking for an even density across the whole tree. None of the growing tips have been pruned. This is important to increase vigour and prevent juvenile foliage from recurring.



3 The tree after preparation. No growing tips have been removed – only the lacklustre blind foliage. Some juvenile foliage has been removed too, where the growth is strong and it is safe to do so.



4 This branch which is now at the new front is predominantly juvenile foliage and will also be removed. Too many branches are coming from this point.

Improving the deadwood

After cleaning, the tree presents a few more clues that were hidden before – areas where large branches have either been removed or have started to die back. Flat areas or even valleys begin to appear, showing where the new sap course lies.



A This area of the trunk is between dead branches. As a result, the section has died back. This is identified by its being flat with slightly raised edges where the sap is continuing to flow, and the branch is continuing to thicken.



B Its always safe to mark out the area before cutting, to prevent costly mistakes.



C Instead of using a power tool, simply ripping with pliers gives a more natural appearance. The wood was dead and this can be clearly seen.



D Because the wood was dead and dry, it was treated immediately with lime sulphur for cosmetic reasons.

Minimum stress

The juniper was styled one evening at my bonsai club, the Yorkshire Bonsai Association, and used as a teaching tool to explain the approach and steps I take when styling shohin bonsai.
Minimum wire + Minimum stress
= Maximum development.

Ideally you must try to touch the tree as little as possible: once when you prune, once when you wire and once more when you shape. Although the final image is quite pleasing and I am very happy up to this point, I feel the tree could be even more eye-catching. Often, due to their size, shohin bonsai can be a bit similar to each other. So, in Part 2, we will make the tree more unique and appealing by planting it on a rock.

Training wire

I always use copper wire on conifers. It would be a much more difficult job to do using aluminium wire. It's not just for the cosmetic purposes of copper, but more that copper hardens and therefore holds the branches much more stiffly. As I explain to people at my club, aluminium wire tends to move, while copper does not, and every time a branch or twig is pushed out of place - when the tree is moved or whatever - then the clock is reset. The length of time it will take to set in its new position starts again, thus delaying the tree from becoming a bonsai. Because copper wire hardens as you apply it, you must have a clear picture in your head to follow. There can be no bending back and forth in the hope that an image presents itself.



*Minimum wire
+ Minimum stress
= Maximum
development.*

1 Always begin with the lower branches. One hand guides the wire, whilst the fingers of the other hand move twigs out of the way. This way the turns of the wire remain evenly spaced.



2 Where it is too tight for hands and fingers to bend, long pliers make the bend easily.



3 The first branch is put in place.



4 In a little under an hour the rest of the tree comes together. I am always looking to make the most compact tree that I can.



5 The back. The tree will look more original when it is placed on a rock.

To be continued...

Coming soon in our next edition, Part 2 will see the dream come to fruition, as the juniper is installed on its rock.

Planting on a rock

Now the tree will be left out of direct sun, fed well and watered as needed. I will now concentrate on collecting suitable rocks, mosses and underplantings for the second stage in a few months' time. Once new growth is confirmed, the growing tips can be pruned but only back to active growth and no further.

One thing that is always worth remembering is that as soon as a tree is planted on a rock, the growth rate will substantially decrease. Most of the tree needs to be there before we plant. ●



I grow young trees either for mame-sized bonsai or for inclusion in rock planting. I consider the tree with as many rocks as I can until I find a happy marriage between the two. A small rock will make the tree look large, and a larger rock will have the opposite effect.



CALENDAR – FEEDING BONSAI CORRECTLY Part 2

Feeding a bonsai tree cannot be improvised. The tree's needs evolve with the seasons, and the fertilisers used must also follow the calendar.

Author: Jérôme Hay

The plant has different needs between spring and autumn. Those of the pine are fairly limited in spring. Only the candle growth needs to be stimulated, the benefits of which will be nullified when pinching is carried out at the end of spring. Therefore, for coherent activity, a minimum of fertiliser should be applied.

Fertiliser input varies from one season to the other. Final part of the fertiliser input calendar continued from Part 1 published in *Esprit Bonsai International* 95.

April ■

Depending on the region, April marks the start of the growing season from the time the buds appear to when the leaves are fully open. Up to this point the plant only needs water. As root activity increases, and new absorbent root hairs emerge, fertilisation can begin.

Solid fertiliser will provide a gentle, regular intake. After application, one must count on two weeks for it to diffuse, as it first has to be decomposed ►►►



The same tree in autumn, when the dosage of fertiliser is doubled. The plant no longer needing it for growth, will stock its elements to be used the following spring.

Solid fertiliser takes two weeks to reach optimal diffusion.



For pre-bonsai trees we encourage growth to heal pruning cuts, and also for the construction of branches. The NPK ratio should not be much stronger than is used on a bonsai, but the dosages will be more substantial.



▶▶▶ by microbial activity. If solid fertiliser is applied just as the leaves are forming, it is not to nourish the plant, but for the fertiliser to operate fully fifteen days later.

One has to be careful of spring, as it can be fairly chaotic with warm periods alternating with cold. This can affect not only the plants, but also microbial activity and therefore, the fertiliser's diffusion. To remedy this, one can use a complementary organic liquid that is more easily absorbed by the microorganisms and can be assimilated much faster. This also applies to plants that have been subjected to a harsh winter.

Plants that were repotted in February/March should be left alone for a good two weeks. One should then begin with solid fertiliser, which diffuses more slowly and without risk. This safety period ensures better root recovery. But after

repotting, one must take care to stimulate the roots by using more of a healing product than it is fertiliser.

The word "fertiliser" can sometimes extend to other products that are more "ferticaments" – products that stimulate a plant by feeding it with elements needed to heal root wounds after being cut back, and that boost the production of roots. But these do not nourish the plant as such. However, they will suffice during the weeks of deprivation

May ■

With milder temperatures and constant humidity, May is the period when plants are at the height of their growing activity. This is when the more fertiliser given to the plant the more it will respond. Therefore, it is essential that one takes care not to overfeed the plant in relation to the expected result.



Some Superthrive products (vitamin supplements) can transform a root fertiliser into a foliar fertiliser, as they can penetrate a leaf's protective cuticle by dilating the stomata (respiratory cells), which then allow a part of the macroelements to gain entry.

The action of solid fertilisers is more or less limited. Fertiliser balls usually have a life span of about two months, although one can find fertilisers, mostly in pellet form, that are active over four months. Where the latter are concerned, they may be long-lasting, but there is a problem in their diffusion. Indeed, since nitrogen is the most tenuous element, it tends to release very rapidly. To offset this, these fertilisers are cut with elements that decompose more slowly. This normally enables the nitrogen to be diffused more regularly over several months. But it is not specified that it is not perfectly regular; there are gaps in the diffusion that do not allow for precise nourishment to the plant. It is better to use a fertiliser that has a shorter diffusion period and to regularly replace the fertiliser balls. However, fertiliser balls that are progressive in their upward phase of diffusion, are similarly so, in their downward phase. This is something to be taken into account, and the balls should be replaced every six weeks to maintain an effective and regular diffusion.



It is easier to use liquid fertilisers on small plants such as those for kusamono or even on shohin, because there is not always room to place the fertiliser balls.

June ■

June is a transitory period. Pinching has finished and the plant is disposed to completing its construction work. For flowering plants, flowering is over and fruiting has begun. The plant's needs are still just as important and regular watering is essential.

Liquid fertilisers can be a great help when the days begin to get very hot. The humidity levels between watering sessions are shorter, which can undermine the intake and the decomposition of solid fertiliser.

One should also consider using a foliar fertiliser, which bypasses the root system and is more rapidly available to the plant because they are at the stage where they are needed during photosynthesis. Nevertheless, they are not the most balanced type of fertiliser as the foliar barrier does not allow all the macroelements to be absorbed. So a foliar fertiliser cannot replace a root fertiliser. It completes and strengthens.

Other materials can also help. Hormones, amino acids, vitamins and trace elements etc. protect the plant from multiple aggressions such as abiotic stress (due to inappropriate environmental conditions) or cultivation stress. Foliar application should not be underestimated. One spraying per week alternated with different regenerative, anti-stress, stimulating, or revitalising products such as slurries of nettle, horsetail or others can genuinely strengthen the immune system and prevent disease and deter pests. ●

Foliar application should not be underestimated.



SMALL AUTUMN FRUIT

Vine, cotoneaster, apple and dogwood bonsai trees all bear their quota of small fruit in autumn. Here is some advice on how to choose and cultivate them.

Author: Gilbert Labrid

Small-fruit bonsai trees are ravishing in autumn and relatively easy to cultivate. Dogwood, *Cornus mas*, grown from seed. Height: 30 cm (11¾ in.). Attractive flowers and fruit on a resilient shrub.

As summer draws to an end, one can look forward to the start of autumn and to enjoying a season made particularly colourful by the foliage of deciduous trees and the many different ripened fruits. Bonsai enthusiasts should not deprive themselves of the pleasure of this sight, especially when the difficulties in cultivating these shrubs can be overcome. Not to mention that their size is particularly adapted to being reduced to bonsai dimensions.

Pruning questions

When planted in the ground, it is fairly easy to make most species of fruit trees produce flowers and fruit every year. This is a little more compli-

Spring and autumn

The size of these berries changes very little during spring and autumn. For these species there is no point in fertilizing them between these periods.



Pyracantha berries at the end of spring and in autumn.



Crab apples (*Malus sieboldii*) in spring ...



... in autumn.



Cotoneaster berries in spring ...



... in autumn.



Virginia creeper berries in June ...



... in autumn.

cated where bonsai is concerned. The beauty of the branches in relation to the size of the trunk is essential to the appreciation of bonsai. Since, on some species, the flower buds appear at the end of a branch, it is impossible to regularly pinch them out if one wants to keep the flowers and then the fruit on the tree. On the other hand, since the art of bonsai consists of mastering the art of pruning, it would make no sense to preserve, at all costs, branches of 40 or 50 cm (15¾ to 19¾ in.) long that protrude from the tree's silhouette.

To avoid these problems, one must use appropriate techniques. Without this knowledge, it would be better to opt for species that fruit on old branches, which are easier to control as they tolerate pruning during the growing season.

Supervised watering

The most important part of the cultivation lies in the watering. The plants cannot do without water during their flowering and fruit set; otherwise both

flowers and fruit will be lost. One plant in particular, the Japanese winterberry (*Ilex serrata*), is extremely reactive to lack of water and will immediately lose buds and fruit if watering is interrupted.

A temporary halt to watering in summer will often lead to premature foliage colouration and accelerated fruit ripening. This reaction can also be seen in other species, notably, maple. If one notices autumn colours from mid-September, when normally the leaves turn at the end of October, this indicates insufficient watering during summer.

The species that bear small berries need to be fertilised at the start of autumn and at the very beginning of spring. Small fruit when developing do not grow larger, so it is pointless to fertilise them at other periods – the opposite applies to large fruit such as quince, or pomegranate. In practice, an organic fertiliser rich in phosphoric anhydride is recommended, taking into account that fruit consumption is not the main aim, although using an overly concentrated fertiliser is still tricky. ►►►

The plants cannot do without water during their flowering and fruit set.

Not too much fruit

The species described here are fairly easy to cultivate, and most originate from Europe.

In all cases, one should remember that it is better not to force a bonsai to produce an abundance of flowers and fruit every year. Thinning out flowers and fruit in spring helps to prevent branches from being lost from exhaustion. Stopping a tree from flowering or to fruit enables energy to be directed towards the construction of new branches, which is a prerequisite for quality bonsai. ●



Ilex serrata displayed at the Kokofu ten 2010 exhibition in Tokyo. Height: 80 cm (31½ in.). Power and balance, and yet a degree of lightness to this tree's silhouette.

Pyracantha is one of the easiest small-berried shrubs to cultivate. A good response to severe pruning and generous fruiting, are the characteristics of this species. Height: 55 cm (21¼ in.).



Malus sieboldii, height 65 cm (25½ in.). A crab apple variety with yellow fruit in autumn. One needs to watch the distribution of fruit on the tree, and starting in spring, to relieve the crown of a large proportion of its berries.



Large but small fruit

Fruit that grow larger while staying small-sized.



The *Eleagnus pungens* fruit do not change colour over the months.



Dogwood, *Cornus mas*, has an extremely attractive flowering in spring and later, sweet-tasting fruit in the most appealing colours!



The autumn fruit of the spindle tree, *Euonymus europaeus*, have spectacular colours of orange-yellow, pink and red.



Cotoneaster, Japan.
This is an ideal shrub for creating remarkable shohin, thanks to its smallness and abundance of flowers and fruit.



Detail of a shohin display at the Kokofu ten 2010 exhibition. Two fruiting evergreen shrubs: *Eleagnus* shown above and *Fortunella hindsii* below.



Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus*. In autumn, its small berries often disappear behind the vivid colouring of the foliage

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A savin juniper of great elegance

A demonstration can still be very instructive, even if it does not reflect the reality of the art of bonsai. In Italy, last May, this was how Gabriel Romero Aguadé, a Spanish bonsai professional carried out work to transform a savin juniper.

After being introduced to the public at the 21st IBS National Congress, by Luca Bragazzi, the IBS president, the Spanish bonsai professional, Gabriel Romero Aguadé began his demonstration on a savin. He started by suggesting a new front for the tree.

For the occasion of the 21st National IBS (Italian bonsai and suiseki instructors) Congress on 19 and 20 May 2018, in Camparosso, Italy, Spanish bonsai professional, Gabriel Romero, gave a demonstration on a savin, *Juniperus sabina*. He brought the tree with him from Spain, which had first been worked on by another person.

Discovering the structure

Although the front already chosen was undoubtedly the most obvious, Gabriel disliked the line generated

Text: Isabel Ribeiro
Photos: Patrice Rolando,
unless otherwise mentioned



The tree is strongly inclined for this new project. The Spanish artist analyses the disposition of the low branches ...



... and those at the apex.

by the trunk. He felt that the main vein was too thick and that the tree lacked dynamism, which called for a radical change. Turning the tree 180° to determine a new front, the Spanish artist strongly inclined the tree! The first step was essential for Gabriel. This was to discover the tree's structure by following the trunk's line, so that it was more readable, and to open a perspective on the tree's natural movement – its "skeleton", in fact. In the present case, the tree strongly suggested to the demonstrator a bunjin-inspired style, but adapted to suit its sinuous curves. The juniper had dense foliage with two thick branches pushing towards the right and many smaller branches, often growing in all directions from the same point. Pruning was called for! Gabriel quickly cut the branches growing either downwards or upwards. He made a meticulous selection among the many branches growing from the same point, and little by little, the juniper's 'skeleton' emerged. ▶▶▶



Removing unwanted branches.

Heavy twisting

A long branch growing towards the right in the upper part of the tree was to become the new apex, thus giving more height to the tree – stretching it in a way. But for this change the branch needed to be twisted. At this time of the year, in May, one had to be very careful. The plant was bursting with sap, and its bark very fragile, which could give way, and would certainly condemn the branch to decay if it did. Gabriel explained concisely that a break in the wood is less dangerous for a savin, than a tear in its bark. The best time to carry out this type of severe twisting is in winter, when the plant is dormant. This is why, at this time of the year, in May, it is important to protect the branch that one wishes to bend. There are two options for this: natural raffia, which is the best, and rubber strips. Gabriel chose to use rubber strips, which do not need prior preparation – an appreciable time saver when travelling to give a demonstration. He applied the rubber protection to the branch to be bent, and then wired the long branch with a large gauge aluminium wire. Before starting the bending process, the demonstrator picked up from the soil, a branch he had cut and bent it with both hands to test its resistance. “This way, I know just how far I can bend the future apex, without putting the branch in danger.” He then started to twist the branch little by little to ensure that the branch did not give way. The resistance test he carried out on the cut branch allowed him to twist first in one direction and then in another to complete the apex. In this way, the demonstrator avoided a corkscrew effect, which would be very unattractive, and gave more dynamism to the juniper’s new crown.



1 Having chosen the main branch, the demonstrator temporarily places the first thick wire in order to better read the interior of the tree.



2 The majority of useless branches were removed. Gabriel places rubber strips to protect the large branch when being twisted, which will lift it to form the tree’s future apex.

Gabriel’s advice

Natural raffia is the best option for protecting a branch when it is being severely twisted. But it needs to be prepared by soaking it for a long time in cold water. When applying the raffia, the strands must be well stretched the length of the branch to protect it, with the first layer being wrapped parallel to its direction. The second layer of raffia is then rolled around the branch making sure that the strands are tightly applied to limit dissociation at the time of bending. If the strands of the second layer come apart, the first layer will still protect the branch.



3 Wiring the savin that is now free of many unwanted branches. One can see the dynamic character in the tree’s ‘skeleton’, thanks to its new inclined position.

Gabriel’s advice

Gabriel uses aluminium

to wire the juniper.

“Why not wire it with copper?” a spectator asked, while watching the demonstration. Gabriel Romero Aguadé explained that aluminium and copper both have their advantages and disadvantages. From a practical viewpoint, when one has to bring along a lot of material to a demonstration, aluminium is lighter to transport than copper! When it is a question of twisting a large, thick branch, aluminium

wire is also easier to handle.

And finally, for the first shaping, the Spanish demonstrator again prefers aluminium, “with due respect to copper”. Indeed, during the first year after the shaping, a plant as vigorous as a savin, will grow rapidly and its branches will thicken. To prevent the wire marking the tree, one must not wait too long before removing it. For a relatively short time, using aluminium wire is consequently less expensive than copper wire. And one’s wire budget is not negligible in the art of bonsai.

A few jin

Once the savin's apex was completed, Gabriel cut away more unwanted ramification, some of which he turned into jin, and preserved the third branch. For the creation of jin, he emphasises that at this time of year, bark peels away very easily. So it is better not to let it dry out, as it would make the task of lifting it more difficult. He also advises against the immediate use of calcium polysulphide – jin seal – which would turn yellow on such fresh wood.

He was then able to wire other branches. As he did not wire the branches to their tips, he explained that this was the tree's first shaping. The more meticulous finishing work would be at another stage, when he would use copper wire and wire to the ends of the branches. ►►►



© Isabel Ribeiro

The process of wiring.



Always accessible to his audience, the Spanish demonstrator explains his choices when selecting the branches, particularly rival branches growing from the same point.



Gabriel takes advantage of the wiring time to give his audience useful advice.



The wiring is almost complete. The main pads are in place. Only the apex remains to be done.



Shaping the new apex will give height to the savin.

Gabriel's advice
When positioning the wire's direction, one must take into account the envisaged twisting, in order to maintain the wire's perfect adherence the length of the branch. If the wire distends, it will not keep the branch in place effectively.

Cultivation

While the Spanish demonstrator was wiring the tree, always a fairly long process, he dispensed a lot of advice on the cultivation of the savin. Good cultivation depends principally on the sun, water and fertilisation. Gabriel lives near Barcelona, where the water is extremely hard. He therefore, resorts to water purified by reverse osmosis to water his trees. However, this process removes all the components in water, such as mineral salts, which are necessary to plants. This can be an advantage for amateurs who want to control the exact intake of nutrients by choosing precise dosages.

Where the savin is concerned the demonstrator administers a regular dose of calcium, as this juniper species does not tolerate an acid substrate, especially acid induced by regular fertilisation of the soil. The intake of calcium, in regard to foliage and roots, contributes to a plant's vigour. The foliage is strengthened and better resists the heat of a dry, Mediterranean climate. Gabriel thus obtains an evolution in his trees in record time. His bonsai



With meticulous care, Gabriel adds the finishing touches by stepping back, to tweak the newly established foliage.

are mature after four or five years, whereas an amateur, would need about ten years to achieve a similar result. To fertilise his trees, Gabriel makes use of about ten products that he applies alternately each week. Why finish one bottle of fertiliser before using another? It is more beneficial to the plant to vary its nutrient intake, which completes the effects of solid organic fertilisers, which lose their effectiveness in the heat. Gabriel ended by giving advice on pinching as, unlike the Itoigawa juniper,

the savin does not tolerate extensive pinching of all its extremities. Only the long shoots clearly growing out from the pad must be carefully cut with scissors.

An easily understood tree

After four and a half hours' work, Gabriel displays his newly transformed *Juniperus sabina*. Its shape is now defined – slender, and clearly oriented towards the right; the 'skeleton' is coherent and understandable. The next step will be to repot it! ●



The last corrections have been made to the savin. The pads are well defined and some branches have been transformed into jin.



The finished tree seen from above, the bonsai professional has avoided creating a 'corkscrew' apex. The jin will be refined at a later date.



A 'before and after' of the savin. A new front and inclination has produced a lighter tree clearly oriented towards the right. The branch ends will be wired in the next stage.

Powerful does not mean heavy!



This rare olive tree from Majorca, by Jean-Michel Adam, a French bonsai artist, aligns strength with elegance. It will be exhibited at the Bonsai World Convention in Mulhouse in October 2018.

Re-imagining a tree

This section sets out to analyse the choices made by the artist through trying out other options - to demonstrate the significance of these choices, and quite simply to learn how to admire ...

Jean-Michel Adam a French bonsai artist has known how to get the best from a magnificent, powerful olive and give it elegance.

Author: François Jeker

This large olive yamadori was collected on Majorca Island in 2009, and its first shaping was carried out in 2013 by its owner Jean-Michel Adam during a training session at my home in Alsace. Jean-Michel, also known as "Bonsaiolo", and a maverick figure in the Bonsai world, managed to bring the tree to maturity in record time, giving the lie to those who assert that it is impossible to ramify an olive in a continental climate. Jean-Michel lives in the Vosges and his tree has nevertheless flourished quite as fast as it would have in its original habitat.

Unity and elegance

The tree had natural dead wood from the beginning, which although exceptional, was overpowering and gave the olive a character that was far-too dramatic.

The first challenge was to create a balance between the dead wood and the foliage mass, while interlocking them to give a strong unity to the whole.

Now the dead wood, with its beautiful sinuous movement, is perfectly visible without being unduly eye-catching. The second challenge was to give elegance to the yamadori and avoid heaviness. Jean-Michel more than met the challenge by freeing up the lower part of the trunk, creating spaces between the branches, and by giving

the tree a sawtooth silhouette on both sides of the trunk. Another noteworthy aspect is the coherence between the old, dead wood, patinated by time, and the well-rounded spreading crown, typical of old subjects.

Option 1: by adding a lower branch on the left

With a low branch on the left, the tree is more classical in shape, but the movement of the trunk and the dead wood, is now too concealed and has become insipid and less elegant. By leaving only the high branches, Jean-Michel has enhanced the thrust of the trunk.

Option 2: by hiding the dead wood in the upper part of the trunk

The sinuosity of the trunk and dead wood on the upper part has disappeared taking the tree's unity with it. It now seems top-heavy and clumsy.

Option 3: with a more regular silhouette

Making a uniform silhouette by filling the empty spaces between the branches, the bonsai is completely crushed by the foliage. As the Japanese say, "it is not the rose that is beautiful, but the space that surrounds it". ●



1 The tree loses a little of its elegance by the addition of a lower branch on the left.



2 The tree becomes too inflexible if the dead wood and the upper part of the trunk are hidden.



3 The foliage becomes too overpowering with a more uniform silhouette.



The Austrian ceramicist Conny Hackl shapes all her pots by hand. In recent years, Conny has been using a potter's wheel to make shohin and kusamono pots.

Based near Linz, Austria, Conny Hackl, 57, draws inspiration from wood or stone to create bonsai and kusamono pots with amazing textures.

Interviewed by Anne Royer
Photos by Conny Hackl

Conny Hackl

“There is no limit on imagination!”

Esprit Bonsai International: How did you become a bonsai ceramicist?

Conny Hackl: I have been devoted to bonsai for almost 35 years. Before moving to Linz (Austria) seven years ago, I ran a bonsai shop for 21 years. Back then, I already enjoyed experimenting with clay: I made bonsai and accent pots for my clients and for myself. Due to lack of space in Linz, I had to give up on my shop and scale down my tree collection. I focused on pot-



The ceramicist is inspired by wood and stone to work the textures of her pieces, as with this pot whose apparent roughness is reminiscent of bark. Width: 13 cm (5 1/8 in.).



For bonsai pots, the Austrian ceramicist uses red grog clay. An oval pot before firing.



The oxides give this brownish colour after firing. Unglazed pots. Dimensions: 32 × 8 cm (12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), 23 × 10 cm (9 × 4 in.) (hexagonal pots).

tery and set up my studio in my basement. It all started in a single room and progressively I occupied more and more space. With some racks, the central heating room became a drying room for my bowls. My husband's workshop is also used to store pottery and my electric kiln can be found in the garage!

E.B.I.: You are constantly seeking to come up with something new, especially by experimenting with textures. Where do you find inspiration?

C.H.: Nature is my main source of inspiration. I am a keen gardener and during the summer I spend all my free time in the garden. Often, I let my eyes wander and new ideas come to me immediately. I like the idea of wooden surfaces on ceramics... for example, I pressed ceramic tiles in birch bark to create an accent pot. Stones can also be used to create interesting surfaces. I also really like scraping and pressing techniques. There is no limit on imagination!

I participate in many bonsai exhibitions in Austria and Europe to present my pots. And it's always a pleasure to discuss with customers about the colours and shapes they want, or the harmony between a bonsai and its pot. These discussions are very important in that they allow me to develop my thinking on the design of future pots. This is also how I find inspiration to experiment and create new and different things.

Pottery has become a very creative part of my life... some nights, I can't even sleep because of the too many ideas buzzing around in my head. I have to get out of bed to write them down and draw new drafts and designs. A lot of sticky notes ►►►



This rough-textured pot is perfect for a cascade bonsai. Dimensions: 10 × 18 cm (4 × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.).



This unglazed pot was designed to bring out the lightness of a bunjin. Dimensions: 32 × 27 × 14 cm (12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.).



Foamy texture and white matt glaze for this original kusamono pot formed by hand. Width: 10 cm (4 in.).



Grog clay pots can't be thrown on the wheel because of the roughness of the clay, and so the ceramicist shapes them by hand. Unglazed pot. Dimensions: 23 × 8 cm (9 × 3½ in.).



The hand shaping of grog clay pots allows for unique shapes. Unglazed pot. Dimensions: 27 × 6 cm (10⅝ × 2⅜ in.).

►►► can be found on the walls of my studio, and every day I challenge myself to turn them into clay sculptures. Of course, I also make pots to order, but it's so rewarding to realise your own ideas and see that others like them and buy them. It largely compensates for all the hard work done in the basement.

E.B.I.: What material and techniques do you prefer?

C.H.: For bonsai pots, I prefer to work with red clay. After adding oxides and firing, it takes on a reddish-brown colour. These are perfect for pines and junipers. All my pots are handmade. Because of the amount of coarse grog [clay that has been high-fired and then crushed – Ed] in the clay, it is impossible to work on a potter's wheel. And I don't use plaster or casting moulds either. It is by shaping each pot by hand that I can create unique designs. For glazed pots, I use lighter-coloured clay as well as coarse grog, but mostly matt and silk-matt glazes that give them a velvet texture after firing.

I use a single firing process, which means that I fire only once for both the bisque and the glaze. This approach can be difficult sometimes because the dry ceramic must be handled with care. But I find the result more convincing: the glaze fuses with the clay and we can obtain a perfectly consistent surface.



Every day, she works between six and nine hours in the workshop set up in the basement of her house.

Whether the pots are glazed or not, I always use different oxides, self-made or bought, to obtain interesting and experimental results. I also try different techniques to mix the clay ... I even tried to use mocha on kusamono pots!

E.B.I.: In recent years, you have been concentrating on kusamono pots. Do they give you more freedom, the possibility to experiment more?

C.H.: Kusamono pots offer many opportunities in terms of textures and colours. So

far, I have mostly created oval or rectangular pots. Last year I treated myself to my much longed-for potter's wheel – which led to a greater lack of space that I overcome daily with severe discipline! Now, I can offer many round pots, especially for kusamono and shohin trees.

Accent and kusamono pots are my favourites. They make my heart, and my customers' ones, beat faster. Take one in your hands and you immediately have ideas that come to your mind. Again, imagination has no limits: a plant, a compo-



Beautiful shades of green, beige and blue for these silk-matt-glazed shohin pots, created on the potter's wheel.



Kusamono pot made by hand from two clays - light-coloured clay and coarse grog, partially glazed. Width: 10 cm (4 in.).



The ceramicist offers a wide range of kusamono pots, shapes, colours and textures.

sition of different flowers or herbs, big or small, with colourful or discrete blossoms ... anything you like. Every two years, a bonsai and kusamono festival takes place in Salzburg, Austria. Each time, we can admire more and more compositions of plants, all shapes and colours, and each time we meet more enthusiasts looking for the most unusual bowls ...

E.B.I.: As a ceramicist, what are your next projects?

C.H.: From time to time, I like to create paintings: I would also like to paint my pots in the future. I look forward to testing these techniques – the colours are on

the rack, waiting to be used. And I would like to try smoke and raku firing as well as many other ideas for kusamono bowls ... I will need to live past a hundred to have time to test everything! ●



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This kusamono pot has been handcrafted from a white clay pitted with oxides, before being partially glazed. Width: 9 cm (3½ in.).



The *Tricyrtis* genus has the charm of the iris and orchid combined. Dubbed toad lilies, these perennials are at the height of their beauty in autumn, as can be seen in this kokedama. *Tricyrtis* and *Hakonechloa*. Created by Young Choe.

© YOUNG CHOE

Toad lily - an autumn companion plant

Mid-way between an iris and an orchid, this inaptly named toad lily is unusually beautiful.

Author: Xavier Dreux

A species of the genus *Tricyrtis*, the toad lily's best feature is in its blooms; not only are the flowers astonishingly attractive, they have the added advantage of flowering throughout summer to the end of autumn. The *Tricyrtis* genus, classified in the *Liliaceae* family, originated from Asia, mainly from Japan and China.

At first sight, the plant seems delicate, but *Tricyrtis* is in fact a robust genus and quite easily cultivated.

A deciduous perennial

These rustic perennials will flourish preferably in a shady or semi-shady spot and in a rich, fresh and fairly acid substrate with good drainage. They can tolerate a sunnier spot if they are sufficiently well watered.



© SOUSUNARBERPCHERFR

The flowers of *Tricyrtis*: *T. formosana* 'Dark Form', have diverse colours and shapes.

The *Tricyrtis* genus is little affected by parasites, but a watchful eye is still needed for slugs and snails, who love the shoots and leaves of the toad lily.



Large white flowers and variegated leaves characterise this *Tricyrtis* sp. 'Shirobana Haniri'.



Tricyrtis sp. 'Murasaki': is a cultivar that is fairly representative of the genus and is easy to grow.



This *Tricyrtis nana* f. 'Purple Leaf' with purple foliage does not grow taller than 10 cm (4 in.), and is a curiosity reserved for experienced collectors.



If you are looking for a robust Japanese cultivar, *Tricyrtis hirta* 'Shisui' is the one for you.



This Formosa toad lily, accompanied by a *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola', is about to come into flower. Created by Young Choe.

Choosing a variety

All *Tricyrtis* varieties are interesting. It should be mentioned though, that the foliage of the *Tricyrtis hirta* tends to get damaged and marked unlike that of other species (*T. formosana*, *T. lasiocarpa*, or *T. macranthopsis* etc.). As for *T. lasiocarpa* this has a very late flowering, which can be an advantage when used as a companion plant at the end of the season.

To prolong the flowering, regularly deadhead, and new flowers will keep appearing until the first frosts.

Tricyrtis are deciduous and disappear at the beginning of winter. It is then advisable to tamp down the clump of dried foliage.

Cuttings should be taken at the beginning of summer before the flower buds have formed.

Remove a stem of between 8 to 10 cm (3 to 4 in.), and retain just one or two leaves at the top end of the stem. Place the cuttings in a warm, light place in a damp substrate. One can also divide *Tricyrtis* at the end of winter. However, to be viable, make sure that each part of the rhizome has a clearly visible eye.

Seeding is possible from autumn when the seeds are mature.

In a kusamono composition

Tricyrtis will grow well in pots provided the substrate is kept damp. A little overdose of sun or lack of water will cause the ends of the leaves to dry out. Even in winter, make sure the plant does not lack water.

These perennials flower lavishly at the end of summer and at the beginning of autumn. When creating an autumnal kusamono, one can combine it with various types of foliage, such as hosta, hakonechloa, and ligularia etc. The *Tricyrtis* leaves have an attractive effect in spring and summer, and pleasingly complete the composition. One just needs to combine them with a spring flowering plant, which is the focal point at the beginning of the season that will give way to the flowering toad lily in autumn. ●



This creation by the American artist Young Choe admirably showcases the *Tricyrtis* qualities - unusual, useful in autumn, or even after it has flowered, as can be seen here.



Amid the Ritsurin Garden's pines

Author: Michèle Corbihan

The Ritsurin Garden in Takamatsu is one of Japan's most beautiful gardens, or perhaps even *the* most beautiful. It is home to a magnificent collection of pines whose forms were tortured during the feudal period, but started to rise skyward when Japan opened up to modernism.



Legendary for this famous bridge and this breathtaking view over its tea pavilion, the Ritsurin Garden boasts remarkable pines that bear witness to Japan's history from the 17th century to today.

The Ritsurin Garden contains almost 1,400 pines, and its sublime beauty has earned it the label of "Outstanding Landscape"! Beyond the symbolic image of boats and bridge on the pond in front of Mount Shiun, this magnificent park, situated in Takamatsu – the capital of Kagawa prefecture, on the island of Shikoku – allows us to glimpse the evolution of the art of landscape and pine cultivation in Japan from the Edo period (1603–1868) to the Meiji period (1868 to the present).

Traditional and modern

It was during the feudal period, in 1620, that the *daimyō* (lord) Takatoshi Ikoma began construction of the southern part of the estate and conceived it as a pine garden. In 1642, the garden passed into the hands of the Matsudaira clan, and it grew and evolved over the years until it acquired its definitive structure in 1745. At that period, the lords wanted to make their garden a representation of a landscape. In this case, it is set in front of Mount Shiun, which gives it depth:

there is a series of ponds, appearing like seas around islands, while forests of trees as well as buildings – a tea house and pavilion, the lord's manor – also feature in the landscape. In 1868, when Japan opened up to the rest of the world, the northern part of the garden was developed with the introduction of Western landscaping techniques: areas of grass, as well as shrubs and topiary, appeared. Modernisation had arrived, and the Ritsurin Garden ►►►



The garden extends over 75 hectares (185 acres): to the south is the Edo-period garden, and to the north a more modern area.



A black pine (*kuromatsu*) grafted onto the trunk of a red pine (*akamatsu*): they represent man and woman and form a couple, *meotomatsu*.

A nursery

Trees that are unwell are dug up, if not too big, and placed in the ground in a nursery zone. This pine, with its yellow needles, is one example. It has been being receiving treatment for a year already, as it is important because of its great age – 200 years.



This 200-year old tree is sick, and has been transferred to a nursery zone to be treated.



In the Edo period, the pines had tortured shapes.

▶▶▶ became the first Western-inspired garden in Japan. It was a meeting of two worlds, which lives on today. In 1875, the garden became the property of the Prefecture and was opened to the public.

Tortured or straight

In the feudal period, owning fine, old, beautifully shaped trees was an outward sign of a lord's wealth, and therefore of his power. The owners of the Ritsurin Garden favoured pines, which thus constitute the vast majority of the trees here. Of the 1,400 specimens in the garden, 1,000 are pruned and 400 are left in their natural form! No fewer than 14 gardeners are required to take care of these precious



Fourteen gardeners are responsible for maintaining the garden's 1,400 pines.



A screen of plants

Along the various pathways, you come across a form of tree that is typical to the Ritsurin Garden: black pines (*hakomatsu*) are lined up as a hedge and pruned at right angles, as if to form a box. A veritable wall of plants, the hedge served to protect the privacy of the owning lord by hiding him from prying eyes.



In the Meiji period, the forms became taller and simpler. These black pines (*hakomatsu*) form a screen to ensure the owning lord's privacy.

trees, many of which are over 250 years old. Pruning trees into *niwaki* form is very different from maintenance work on "normal" trees – it demands the highly esteemed and very specialist know-how of the *niwashi*, the master gardener. The pines are pruned in two ways, depending on whether they date from the Edo period or from the Meiji period. The old trees are cultivated like bonsai, with more elongated forms or a sideways emphasis, and with twisted branches. The most beautiful branches are to the front, and are worked on with greater care than the ones to the back. The trees' rear branches are very frequently smaller than their front ones.

With the advent of modernity in the Meiji period, the trees' shapes were simplified, becoming straighter and rising up towards the sky. The structure of the branches lost its complexity.

Red and black pines

There are two main categories of pine to distinguish between: red (*akamatsu*) and black. Black pines are sturdier, and were preferred by the owning lords, while red pines are slither and therefore associated with femininity. To distinguish a black pine from a red pine, especially if it is old, you simply need to touch its needles: those of the red pine are much softer.



The finest pine in the Ritsurin Garden, which evokes a crane taking flight. To the lower right, the tortoise constituted of 110 rocks.



This red pine dives down towards the water, which requires it to be worked on from a boat.



Branches like strokes of calligraphy ...

The Ritsurin Garden's finest pine is a *kuromatsu* (*Pinus thunbergii*, Japanese black pine). This very hardy species has a lovely, highly cracked bark. The tree illustrates a crane taking flight – a symbol of luck – from above a tortoise that is composed of 110 rocks. Now 350 years old, it was given to the Matsudaira lord by one of his vassals. To secure their lords' protection and avoid going to war, the vassals would offer gifts to them. This pine is so precious that only one gardener looks after it – nobody else is allowed to go near it. On the island of the crane, facing the island of the tortoise, another large pine – a semi-cascade, with its apex reaching out over the water – also symbolises a crane taking off. It may look like a black pine, but in fact it is a red pine. The pond, the islands and the tree are 340 years

old. This shape, drooping down to the water, can only be obtained by specialists, because the gardener – the *mimochi* – must stand up in a boat to work on the branches, which are very fragile. With nothing easy to hold onto and no contact with the ground, he dare not make a grab for the branches. The Ritsurin Garden affords wonderful pines to admire, but also much more than that. It plunges you deep into a peaceful world, between Japanese and Western traditions, with its six ponds, 13 hills, tea houses, bridges, waterfall, cherry trees, plum trees, maples, irises, lotus ... an unforgettable visit. I offer my thanks to the Ministry of Transport and Tourism of the island of Shikoku, in southern Japan, who in September 2017 invited me to visit the iconic places in their area. ●

To visit

Ritsurin-kōen
1-20-16 Ritsurin-cho Takamatsu,
Kagawa, 760-0073 Japan
Tel: +81 87-833-7411
www.my-kagawa.jp/en/ritsurin
www.discovershikoku.com



A *tsuboniwa* (small garden) for a little tea house, 300 years old. Wisteria is never far away in this rather feminine space.



A shoe-cleaning point. Thanks to Mr Kohei Kubota, my guide, and to Mr Masahiro YABUNE, for inviting me on this journey to Japan.

■ ■ ■ A new style created by the young Iemoto Hiroki Ohara has been added to the Ohara School's compositions. Hana-kanade is based around the lines of a particular type of triangle.

***Hana-kanade* :** a new style

Author: Marcel Vrignaud



■ The Iemoto Hiroki Ohara presented *hana-kanade*, a new style for the Ohara School, to mark his first public exhibition, in 2012.

For his first public exhibition, in Tokyo in 2012, the young Iemoto of the Ohara School of Ikebana, Hiroki Ohara, presented a new style that he had created: *hana-kanade*.

The name of the new style – *hana* meaning “flower”, and *kanade* meaning “offer” or “dedicate” – is a term borrowed from *kuge*, which are floral offerings to Buddha.

The main point of *hana-kanade* is to showcase the crisscrossing lines of the arrangement, unlike *rimpa* which is created for its colours. As the three principal stems cross over each other, it obtains a rhythm and movement that carries right through the composition.

The flexibility and softness of the plants employed counter the rigid presentation, while giving a feeling of tension and relaxation.

A triangular base

The technical basis of *hana-kanade* first and foremost involves creating a right-angled scalene triangle – a triangle with three unequal sides and one angle of 90°, with the longest side facing the right angle and the two other sides being of different lengths. This triangle gives a sense of stability. To begin with, three flower frogs are placed in the vase according to this principle.



■ Fragility

The purity of the lines of these stems contributes greatly to the desired result: movement and elegance.



■ Convergence

Branches of holly with berries and *Corylus contorta*. At the base: ornamental cabbages and wild carrot flowers.

Hana-kanade is a contemporary arrangement that relates to hana-isho and hana-mai. It constitutes a new tendency that is deeply rooted in *moribana*, the origin of the Ohara School.

Hana-kanade expresses the beauty of the interaction between the plants with their inward movement in relation to the composition. The stems cross over one another and their bases are placed at the points of the triangle. The arrangement of the three main lines (*shu*, *fuku*, *kyaku*) is based on that of *moribana* created in round dishes (*suiban*). The three essential elements lean in towards the middle of the container or containers. They cross over at various levels. The



■ Shall we dance?

The dancers: glory lily (*Gloriosa superba*) and a branch of *Spiraea*. The spectators: *Oncidium* orchid and fern.

Proportions of the lines

The length of the *shu* is one-and-a-half times the diameter of the vase plus its height. The *fuku* measures anything from three-quarters of to the same length as the *shu*. The *kyaku* is two-thirds to three-quarters as long the *shu*.

right-angled triangle formed by the ends of the three principal stems is identical to the one formed at the start by the flower frogs.

Plant combinations

One to five sorts of plants can be combined here. The *shu* and *fuku* lines are often of the same type, while the *kyaku* varies according to whether the emphasis is being placed on the beauty of seasonal plants or on that of plants chosen for their lines and colours.

Aside from these three principal lines, other plants (flowers, foliage, branches) complete the composition and decorate the three insertion points so as to provide an accompaniment to the *shu*, *fuku* and *kyaku* and to hide the flower frogs. They can go slightly beyond the edges of the vase. ●

■ ■ ■ When receiving their teaching diploma, masters of the Ikebana Sogetsu School also receive a *gagoh*, a type of cognomen, from their instructor.

Gagoh : the name bestowed on an Ikebana master

Author: Soazic Le Franc

There are many Ikebana schools in Japan – structured and hierarchical – that pass on their knowledge and validate it by issuing diplomas. Whatever the school, one has to be a master to teach it and for the Sogetsu School, one has to belong to the teachers association. A student can obtain four certificates during the course of studies, and then reach the level of Master Grade 4.

Once the title of “master” has been achieved, the student receives a *gagoh* – a Japanese name – conferred by their referral teacher, or by default, the Iemoto. This name is written on the diploma in kanji, originally, a Chinese script. For us westerners, the *gagoh* is similar to a pseudonym or a baptismal name.

A place – a flower

The *gagoh* must be relevant to Ikebana. It underpins vegetation, seasons, earth or water, the elements and place. From the time I started conferring the diplomas that my grade permits, I have preferred to choose the *gagoh* myself. I get to know my pupils during the course of their studies, and I try to find them names that correspond as closely as possible to their personalities, their tastes and their style. But sometimes it is difficult to discover their true personalities, so I will then choose names that relate to their geographical place of birth or one they love.

There are currently twelve masters who gravitate around the Asphodelinh association. I have chosen the *gagoh* for nine friends; two others, who joined our group having studied under another teacher, and myself. I received the name of *Soumu* from the then Iemoto, Hiroshi Teshigahara. Conferring the *gagoh* is not a commonplace act. Other than validating that the course of studies has been followed correctly, it seals a friendship and puts the new teacher with this knowledge on the path of disseminating the art of Ikebana of the Sogetsu School.



■ Composition by *Kinuhana* 絹花 “Silk flowers”,
Brigitte Léonard, atelier Asphodelinh.

A modern composition: the pine needles complement their container and inquisitive violet coloured flowers peep out from their nest, in this composition called “Ruché” (ruched), the impression of strength seems to be offset by a diagonal with a touch of negativity that reflects its creator!



■ Composition by *Matsume* 松 芽, “Pine tree bud”, Michèle Robert, atelier Asphodelinh.

In this modern, composition “Polymorph”, Michèle has used a sprig of pine to partner pieces of polystyrene. There are no flowers, apart from the red glow of *Leucadendron* ‘Safari Sunset’. The composition illustrates the Vosges landscape dear to Michèle’s heart.



■ Composition by *Kako* 花 光, “Flower radiance”, Yvette Petit, atelier Asphodelinh.

Radiant flowers and leaves on a vase of crackled glass. Yvette’s *gagoh* is taken from the name of the “Eclat des fleurs” (Flower radiance) exhibition that was held in Nantes in 2007, in which Yvette was very much involved.

With the diploma

Our Latin writing and its concept cannot literally translate the kanji script originating from China and used by the Japanese. Choice and interpretation remain subtle, except for flower names, if they exist in the Land of the Rising Sun. Thus the *gagoh* “Yuri” refers to the Iris.

My own name, *Soumu*, is very difficult to translate. Having tried it out on many Japanese friends and at the Sogetsu School, it appears to be very poetic, which suits me well, but in translation it becomes extremely equivocal as its approximate meaning is “grass craving”. The sound of which, moreover, I do not find particularly attractive. But of course, I must keep it and I have chosen to interpret it as “plant dream”!

I am also skeptical of many other translation particularities. *Shuurin*, which means “autumn rain”, is transcribed to *Shuu*, which can be pronounced *Shuame*. *Nindo*, which I thought meant “honeysuckle”, demonstrates a certain “poetic licence” – do they have honeysuckle in Japan?

The poetic meaning conveyed by the translation is nevertheless very pretty.

New masters receive the *gagoh* from their referral teachers, and normally, this should arise from the teacher’s own *gagoh*. Thus the pupils of *Hanaringo* (which could translate as Apple-tree flower) should receive a *gagoh* with a word that relates to the apple, for example, *ringo* (meaning apple). This is a custom I have not adopted for my own pupils.



■ Composition by *Soumu* 草夢, interpreted by “Plant dream”, Soazic Le Franc, atelier Asphodelinh. Bare branches tossed by the west wind with warm-hearted *Cymbidium*. The creator of this composition would like to think that it is representative of her.

Two new masters will be named when the Asphodelinh reconvenes in. Awarding the diploma will be a moment of genuine and shared pleasure, which is often an emotional occasion. I am also looking forward to the time when one of my friends will, in turn, baptise one of their pupils, thus ensuring the continuity of the Sogetsu family. ●

Thirty years old and the Bonsai Club de Bourges hasn't aged by a wrinkle! It has a dynamic approach and an unflagging interest in learning and discovering.

Text: Cinthya Arenas
Photos: Bonsai club de Bourges



▲ For 30 years, the Club de Bourges has endeavoured to promote the principles and the practice of the art of bonsai in a good-humoured atmosphere. Today, the club boasts at least twenty members.

The Bonsai Club de Bourges, in the Cher district, has just celebrated its 30th birthday. "In 1988, the club was created with the intention of bringing together people who wanted to discover and learn the art of bonsai; the objective being, to 'work and discover together, as much the techniques as the philosophy of bonsai, in order to master this noble art,'" explained Sébastien Jacques, the club's president, quoting an excerpt from the club's statutes, which helps to understand the basis on which the club was founded.

Constantly evolving

Sébastien Jacques, talks with affection and friendship of the club members. "Last season, we num-

▼ The Club de Bourges exhibition held at the Hôtel de Bourges, in June 2017, attracted 890 visitors.



BONSAÏ CLUB DE BOURGES

"We work alongside each other"

bered 27 members." Our members are made up of 16 men and 11 women, with an average age of 52. Among them is François Brun, the former club president, who has been a member for many years. "He is one of the people who make up what could be termed as our 'council of elders'," the president added. "The Bourges Associations forum, the introduction to bonsai at a large nursery in April, our blog and Facebook page, and above all, the organisation of exhibitions have motivated our members."

An atmosphere of goodwill

"As it does for many clubs, conviviality characterises our association," Sébastien Jacques affirmed. It is this atmosphere that gives rise to a general benevolence, ideal for the dissemination of knowledge and know-how. This concept of

transmission is spread through the sharing of experience regardless of a member's age, level, or number of trees they possess. "From a small seed a mighty trunk may grow," the president concluded with a maxim to illustrate his point.

He attaches great importance to supporting beginners. "They are welcomed by everyone. People first attend two or three sessions free of charge to get an idea of the club. And then, the club's atmosphere brings them together, and their a priori newness is dispelled by the sharing of experience and by individual or collective encouragement. I believe I can say that we collectively integrate and support newcomers by building up their experience."

Indigenous species

Club members work on many different species. The president modestly confided his own tastes.



▲ Gooseberry, *Ribes grossularia*, root over rock.



▲ Bruno Delabarre, wearing a cap, working on a juniper.



▲ In May 2018, the Club de Bourges took part in the Ouches de Morogues fête, in the Cher district. From left to right: Hugues Bedu (treasurer), Jean-Luc Chauveau, Sébastien Jacques (president) and Daniel Clerc.

"I have not really specialised in any one species. In the course of my small experience at exhibitions such as the European Bonsai-San Show, and the one in Couzeix, and of course, the Noelanders Trophy, I think my preference is for the Scots pine and local species such as hawthorn. But I am also very fond of the azalea, which reminds me of my mother and grandmother."

Other club members work on all kinds of species and varieties of trees. "Local species are very common and we encourage their cultivation."

For training, Gilles Rigal steps in with pedagogical support and gives

theoretical and practical courses. The members meet on two Thursdays a month from September to June.

Great encounters

To maintain its dynamic of conviviality, the club also looks outside its own walls and organises exhibition outings for its members. The next visit will be to the European Bonsai-San Show in Saulieu in October 2018.

We shall also get together on 20 April 2019, for an introduction to Jardiland at Saint-Germain-du-Puy, north-east of Bourges, and for the association's exhibition that will take place at the beginning of June 2019, in the Hôtel de Ville in Bourges.

Bonsai has a different message for each one of us. For Sébastien Jacques, "Bonsai enables one to live to a rhythm in time, which seems to be accelerating. To a certain extent,



▲ A trident maple, *Acer buergerianum*, in the *neagari* style (exposed roots) belonging to Gilles Rigal. The tokonoma was made by club members, Denis Blanc and Hugues Bedu.

it perpetuates my roots as the grandson of a winemaker. It is a generational thread ..." they are roots he nourishes and shares with the club, which also flourishes thanks to those roots he weaves. ●



▲ A convivial atmosphere does not deter hard work, in fact, quite the opposite: Gilles Rigal shares his know-how with other club members during a meeting.

Useful information

Bonsai club de Bourges France
17 rue Garibaldi
18000 Bourges
Meetings: two Thursdays a month, from 8.30 p.m.
Meetings in the salle du Val d'Auron
Place Martin Luther King
18000 Bourges
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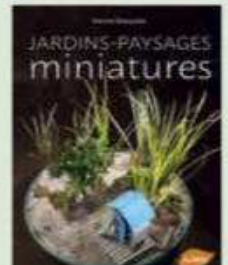
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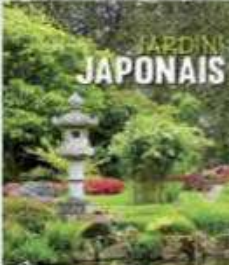
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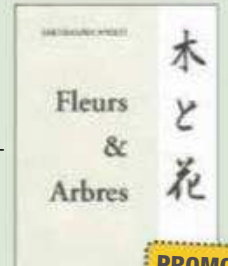
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