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international friendship
through bonsai



bc*i*

Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2014
Q4



The Blue Parrot, Blue Grape Agate Stone
from the collection of Bradley Barlow,
Australia.

- BCI 2014: Sunrise on Australian Bonsai**
- Sunrise on Australian Bonsai: Exhibit**
- 1st Philippine National Bonsai
Exhibition & Competition**
- Bonsai Triennale 2014:
Three Nations One Passion**
- Daniel Robinson: A Unique American Artist**
- Judging Bonsai Part Three: The Criteria**
- An Invitation to Discover:
Viewing Stones of North America**
- Elegance & Grace: Bamboo Bonsai**
- Hard Wood, Easy Bonsai: *Carpinus orientalis***
- Less is More: *Cryptomeria sp.***
- Spotlight on BCI Members:
Sam Lee, Hawaii, USA
Pauline Muth, USA
Soeroso Soemopawiro, Indonesia**

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President's Message

Our 2014 convention, Sunrise on Australian Bonsai, in the Gold Coast, Australia will long be remembered as one of the finest conventions ever held thanks to the great organizational skills and efforts of Lindsay and BCI Vice President, Glenis Bebb. Over 400 people from many countries around the world converged on the east coast of Australia for three days of fun, wonderful exhibits of trees and stones, extraordinary demonstrations, lectures, and the opportunity for people to meet and interact with others who share an interest in bonsai and stone appreciation. It is gratifying to know that these art forms are alive and well down under. Actually, they are thriving as they develop more of their bonsai from locally grown materials and search the far reaches of Australia for new and fascinating stones. Congratulations to everyone in Australia who helped to make this a great event.

During the convention, I had the pleasure to award three BCI Awards of Excellence to three bonsai artists and to three stone collectors for their outstanding pieces. Details of these awards are given in the article about our convention. BCI awarded Pauline Muth with the Distinguished Service Award for serving in different capacities on the board, including most recently as treasurer, and for her life-long commitment to the promotion of bonsai. Congratulations Pauline!

A major portion of this issue will be devoted to reporting on the activities of our Gold Coast convention. Perhaps, this will stimulate you to attend our annual meeting next year in Guangzhou, China. Also in this issue, you can learn about bamboo bonsai, a subject that few of us know about or have ever read information on how to make a bonsai from a bamboo species. BCI is growing literally and figuratively. Beginning with this issue, Bonsai and Stone Appreciation magazine will be expanding the number of pages in our quarterly magazine as quality materials become available. The board of directors voted for this improvement as one of the ways we can provide better services to our members.

The cost of traveling long distances to attend our convention has been steadily rising and is now a serious obstacle for many of our members who would like to attend. People new to bonsai may be hesitant to invest funds in a major trip not knowing what to expect from our conventions. As a result, the BCI Board of Directors voted unanimously to experiment with regional meetings in addition to our major annual convention in 2016. Two years from now, our convention will be held in September in Vilnius, Lithuania. This is a beautiful older city in the Baltic region of



Over 400 people from many countries around the world converged on the East coast of Australia for three days of fun, wonderful exhibits of trees and stones, extraordinary demonstrations, lectures, and the opportunity for people to meet and interact with others who share an interest in bonsai and stone appreciation.

northwestern Europe. Plans are already underway to make this another fabulous convention. But, we know from prior experience that few people will travel from Asia to attend. Thus, we will have a regional BCI meeting early in 2016 in the Philippines in collaboration with the Philippines Bonsai Society. Furthermore, we will have another regional meeting in mid-December in India. Our goal is to greatly expand our outreach program and bring bonsai and stone appreciation to much larger groups of people than we can achieve with just a single once-a-year meeting. This will be an interesting experiment and I hope that the majority of our board members can attend at least one of these meetings.

Each member of the board of directors serve for a two-year term. These terms are staggered so each year some members completed their service to BCI and leave the board, while new members join our board. The members who completed their term and are leaving the board have made significant contributions to BCI and the promotion of bonsai worldwide. I want to thank and acknowledge the efforts of Chiara Padrini, Les Dowdell, Joan Greenway, and Pauline Muth. At the same time, we welcome the addition of Vic Ceballos from the Philippines and Gudrun Benz from Germany to the board of directors.

Finally, we are working to provide our members with better services. Our next major improvement will be a completely revised web site, www.bonsai-bci.com. Watch for this late this year. The new site will be easier to use and contain more useful information. 🌳

Tom Elias, President
BCI

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

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!
Any donation you can make, will help.**

Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!

For more information contact:

Thomas S. Elias; tselias@msn.com



ABOUT THIS ISSUE

At the recent Annual BCI Board Meeting at *Sunrise on Australian Bonsai*, President Tom Elias proposed that the BCI magazine expand by eight pages to accommodate additional content whenever necessary. The Board approved this initiative and the result is this issue; 72 pages plus cover, featuring recent exhibits in Australia, Philippines and Germany, as well as the usual array of articles on people, bonsai species and books.

Our feature presentation is the BCI 2014 Conference, sponsored by BCI and hosted by the dedicated volunteers of the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs (AABC). It turned out to be the largest convention ever conducted in Australia and the largest BCI Convention in recent times with 402 people from 16 different countries registering for convention activities. Congratulations to convention manager, Lindsay Bebb and BCI Vice President, Glenis Bebb for organizing a successful event. *Sunrise on Australian bonsai* was also sunrise on Australian viewing stones, as Tom Elias reports in his article on the stones exhibited at this convention.

We welcome many new Philippine members to the BCI family and report on the 41st Philippine National Bonsai Exhibition and Competition and a display of many beautiful trees and stones sure to inspire enthusiasts everywhere. We also welcome Gudrun Benz, newly appointed BCI Director, who reports on the Bonsai Triennale that was just held in Dresden, Germany.

Victrinia Ridgeway, student and friend of Dan Robinson, presents a warm-hearted look at this American bonsai pioneer and his unique works of art.

We are also introducing you to several BCI club members, a feature we will continue on the new BCI website that will be launched soon.

In *Judging Bonsai*, part three, Kath and Malcolm Hughes complete a series of articles shedding light on the process of judging and provide helpful suggestions to help improve the quality of trees when exhibited.

Many excellent trees are being exhibited by enthusiasts all over the world, but many of these marvellous creations are only seen or enjoyed by people attending the exhibit. Therefore, I encourage exhibitors to take a "portrait" of their tree or stone so it can be enjoyed by an unlimited number of people when it is published in newsletters, magazines, books, in blogs and on social media sites. The better the tree or stone, the more effort you should make to take a brilliant photo. I also suggest you don't wait for your work of art to be placed on display before you take the photo. Exhibit coordinators are club volunteers who sometimes must use less than ideal spaces, and may have limited resources when mounting a show. This means your photo can be compromised with things you can't control, such as poor light, background clutter and crowded spaces. Once you have these wonderful photos, you are ready to share and promote your creations and accomplishments at any opportunity that arises, such as the new photo contest announced on the back cover. BCI is looking forward to your entries. 🌳

—Joe Grande, Canada (bcieditor@grandesign.net)

MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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Digital images must be provided at 300 dpi resolution for an 8 x 5 inch size minimum.

Authors are requested not to submit articles simultaneously to another publication.

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Q4	O/N/D	August 1



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ON OUR COVER: On exhibit at Sunrise on Australian Bonsai: BCI 2014, *The Blue Parrot*, Blue Grape Agate Stone; uncut stone, 20 x 31 x 12.5 cm. Country of origin; Gobi Desert, China. Collector; Bradley Barlow, Australia. Daiza carved by Qin Shaojun. Photo courtesy Bradley Barlow.

BCI 2014

Sunrise on Australian Bonsai

Text contributed by Glenis Bebb, Australia and Kath Hughes, UK

Photos contributed by Helen Su, China; Alan Walker, USA; Frank Mihalic, USA; Malcolm Hughes, UK; Peter Woosley, Australia; Leanne Esteb, Australia; and Lindsay Bebb, Australia.

“BCI Australia was a warm convention that linked many bonsai lovers from around the world to be together and enjoy the friendships. To my mind, it is the first time that many Asians from China, Taiwan, Philippines and even Korea, attended a convention in Australia. It is a good sign of BCI growing in the East.”

—Budi Sulystio, BCI Director, Indonesia



The 80 Bonsai on exhibit came from South East Queensland, with the exception of two trees on loan from the National collection in Canberra, and one from a private collection, also in Canberra. The 80 Viewing Stones were from collections around the country.

A Visit to a Very Large Island

Australia—10,900 miles from England, 9,000 from USA, and 4,000 miles from China—is the largest island on the globe with a population of a mere twenty-two and a half million, less than many cities in the Far East. “Why go all that way, amazingly, to attend a bonsai convention and visit long-term friends?” asks Kath Hughes, recalling BCI’s 2014 convention. “For those uninitiated, who have flown to Australia from Europe or North America for the first time, arriving in this southern continent can be somewhat disconcerting. To begin with, the Europeans land having flown virtually non-stop for some 24 hours. To those from North America, flying over the international dateline results in those losing a day. Now to some, this could be deemed exceedingly irritating—I mean, somewhere in your life, 24 hours has been mislaid; there again, the reassuring aspect of this is when flying back, you somehow manage to arrive in California before you leave Brisbane or Sydney—an even neater trick!!

Australia, particularly Queensland, proves different in many ways. The seasons are back to front—mild mid-winters in June, the hottest temperatures at Christmas—just imagine Christmas trees plus a barbecue on the beach. Also, the vast percentage of animals and plants on that continent, exist nowhere else in the world, with one particular creature that does not run or canter, but bounces around from one place to another—it obviously never read the instruction manual. The people prove to be among the friendliest and most outgoing people you could ever wish to meet.”

Back in 2010, at the BCI annual convention in Guangzhou, China, the Australian Association of Bonsai Clubs (AABC) won the bid to host the BCI 2014 annual convention. A small group of volunteers was set up as the Planning Committee under Convention Manager Lindsay Bebb, to work on a plan that would welcome the international bonsai community and showcase Australian bonsai and viewing stones.

The display committee, led by Carole Waller, set out to design and make individual display alcoves and plinths for the bonsai display. Peter Woosley joined the team and took on the task of building them. Trevor Simmons was responsible for construction and setup of the stone display. More people were recruited for the Selection Panels to choose the Bonsai and Stones for the respective exhibitions.

BCI director Kath Hughes and husband Malcolm got there early to help their long-time friends, “Our arrival in Brisbane on the Monday preceding the event was the start of an amazing visit. On arriving at the home of Lindsay and Glenis Bebb, we discovered just how much work and organization goes into staging an event of this kind. Within hours, or dare I say minutes of arriving at their spacious home, we found almost every spare inch filled with *stuff* for the Convention. Boxes and boxes of paperwork, stones, books together with bonsai and every conceivable piece of equipment needed for this three-day event. We were quickly put to work putting name cards into badge holders for the 400 plus registrants attending from sixteen countries. The phones rang continuously, deliveries of various kinds kept arriving and the work never stopped until well into the evening.”

The next day, more of the same starting at exceptionally early hours of the morning; tasks included Lindsay and Malcolm carrying out the final preparation of the bonsai to be exhibited and pots being cleaned.



Top to bottom; Friday morning, participants were welcomed by AABC President Lindsay Bebb who stated, “... this is the largest convention ever conducted in Australia and the largest BCI Convention in recent times with 402 people registering for convention activities from 16 different countries.”

The Official Opening was performed by BCI President Dr. Tom Elias.

Many bonsai-related items were available from vendors.

Top left; Friday's program started with the International Round Robin team; Jyoti Parekh created a Saikei of *Buxus harlandii*, south Australian black lava rocks planted in a cream oval tray..



Top middle; Nikunj Parekh created a Saikei of *Ficus retusa* with central Australian red Jasper stones planted in a shallow blue oval tray.



Top right and middle right; Chen Wenjuan from China, who is the Curator of Mr. Xin Changbao's Bonsai Park in Changzhou, styled a Juniper squamata that she attached to a large Australian sandstone rock.



Bottom left and right; Budi Sulistyto took on the challenge of a large *Ficus microcarpa* 'Green Island', which he planted in a large shallow cream tray.



Facing page, top four photos; Gong Linmin take us step by step through the creation of making a semi cascade pot. The detail and explanation was thoroughly enjoyed by all. His theatrical finish capped off what was a fantastic demonstration.



The Bonsai was all local, from South East Queensland, with the exception of two trees on loan from the The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia, and one from a private collection, also in Canberra—80 bonsai in total. The Viewing Stones were from collections around the country, also 80 stones on display.

Kath continues, "Wednesday dawned and we were to travel some 70 kilometers south to Surfer's Paradise on Queensland's Gold Coast, with Glenis and I setting off in their well-loaded car via Brisbane Airport to

pick up Helen Su, one of the many BCI Board members and delegates that Glenis was responsible for getting to the event. The Gold Coast airport, Brisbane Airport—in they came at all hours and arrangements had to be made to ensure they all got ferried to the QT Resort, the venue for the Convention, for some, in time to participate in the BCI board meeting and WBFF board meeting."

"So much detailed planning," exclaims Kath, "it all had to faultlessly slot into place; nobody could be left stranded. Malcolm remained with Lindsay and his son



David to load all the display equipment, trees and stones onto an eight-ton lorry, to be transported to the QT Resort that afternoon and then, with the help of many other enthusiasts, set up on the two floors of exhibits.”

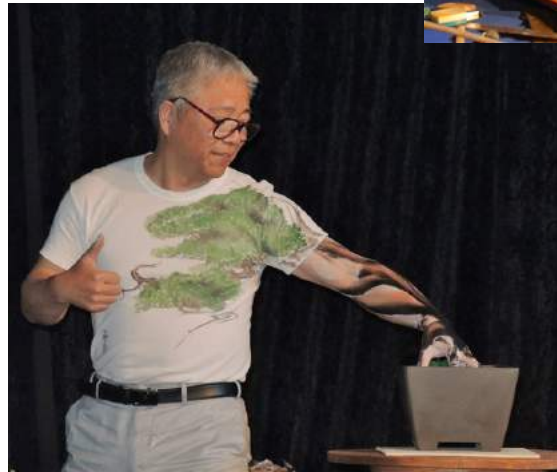
The location for the event, the QT Resort Hotel, newly refurbished in the retro style, Mid Century Modern, provided all the facilities necessary for an international bonsai and stones convention and exhibition, “...and what an event it proved to be! Nothing was left to chance—it all ran like clockwork” adds Kath, “Exhibitions were excellent, well-staged and with great variety; demonstrations of very high standard and of astonishing variety from amazing transformations to highly entertaining competitive styling. The food was good and plentiful, the accommodation trendy and different as well as very comfortable; what more could we ask for? This proved to be an exceptional occasion for all those who arrived at the Gold Coast for the BCI 2014 Convention.”

For BCI Vice President Glenis Bebb, the convention truly started with the Thursday night Welcome Reception—a reward for all her hard work—she could finally relax, even if was for the evening, to catch up with old friends and meet and welcome many new like-minded fanatics!

Friday morning, at the opening ceremony, participants were welcomed by AABC President Lindsay Bebb who stated, “... this is the largest convention ever conducted in Australia and the largest BCI Convention in recent times with 402 people registering for convention activities from 16 different countries.” The Official Opening was performed by BCI President Dr. Tom Elias.

Friday’s program started with the International Round Robin team representing BCI Directors, Budi Sulistyono and Nikunj Parekh and BCI Life Member Jyoti Parekh. Nikunj created a Saikei of *Ficus retusa* with central Australian red Jasper stones planted in a shallow blue oval tray. Jyoti created a Saikei of *Buxus harlandii*, South Australian black lava rocks planted in a cream oval tray. They both gave detailed explanations of the process and planting positions. Budi took on the challenge of a large *Ficus microcarpa* ‘Green Island’, which he planted in a large shallow cream tray.

Glenis recalls, “We had lots of action on stage and this kept everyone’s attention. After morning tea, they



Bottom six photos; the Australian Demonstration Team of Tony Bebb, Chris De Nola and Joe Morgan-Payler. Tony took on the task of creating a semi cascade Black Pine, *Pinus thumbergii*, which required the help of a large bending bar; Chris styled a Japanese juniper, *Juniperus procumbens*, in a pseudo-Literati Style; Joe transformed what looked like a very difficult Juniper into a stunning bonsai.



Left column; Frank Mihalic's jewelry making work shop where participants created a wax original that Frank cast in silver at his studio in the US, using the lost wax process.

The finished silver bonsai pins that were sent to the workshop participants.

Right column; Tom Elias Suiseki Critique of the Stone exhibition where 80 stones were on display..



“For this great Bonsai Family Gathering, which we all got to relish, congratulations to Lindsay, Glenis, BCI and the team of Australian members for the success it deserved.”

—Nikunj Parekh, BCI Director, India

were joined by Ms Chen Wenjuan from China who is the Curator of Mr. Xin Changbao's Bonsai Park in Changzhou. Ms Chen styled a *Juniper squamata* which she attached to a large Australian sandstone rock. Some radical bending, and chipping at the stone by Tony Bebb, helped to make it fit. She may be small in stature but is one very strong lady! At the same time we had Mr Gong Linmin take us step by step through the creation of making a semi cascade pot. The detail and explanation was thoroughly enjoyed by all. His theatrical finish capped off what was a fantastic demonstration. The pot will soon be fired at 1117°C as instructed.”

Next up was the Australian Demonstration Team of Tony Bebb, Chris De Nola and Joe Morgan-Payler. Tony took on the task of creating a semi cascade Black Pine, *Pinus thumbergii*, which required the help of a large bending bar; Chris styled a Japanese juniper, *Juniperus procumbens*, in a pseudo-Literati Style; Joe transformed what looked like a very difficult Juniper into a stunning bonsai.

Also on Friday, participants had the opportunity to attend an optional jewelry making work shop with

Frank Mihalic, a second generation bonsai artist from USA, also a BCI Director.

Saturday morning, over forty BCI members and club representatives rose early to attend the 7:30 AM, BCI Annual General Meeting. BCI President, Tom Elias gave an update on the progress of our organization, planned improvements to the website and our much improved financial position.

He introduced the BCI newly elected Officers for 2014-2016. Minutes of this meeting will be made available soon in the member's area of the BCI website.

Demonstrations continued with Zhao Qingquan (also known as Brook) from China showed us the talent of his 40 years of experience and created a large land-water Penjing using 2 large *Melaleuca rypophylla* on a marble tray 1.2 meter long. Tom Elias held court with his very well received Suiseki Critique of the Stone exhibition where 80 stones were on display. “The fascinating array of Australia stones on displayed were indicative of the growing interest in native stone appreciation,” said Tom.

After lunch it was time for the International Relay Team Challenge. The original three teams selected were: Australia, consisting of Tony Bebb, Chris Di Nola and Joe Morgan-Payler; Asian Team, with Nikunj Parekh, Joyti Parekh and Budi Sulisty; the third team comprised Lindsay Muirhead NZ, Poppy Englebrecht NZ and Les Dowdell, Canada.

Glenis explains, “After consultation with some participants it was apparent that the Aussie boys were up to mischief. So at the last minute the teams were all mixed up to make it a truly international event. Team one was Chris, Poppy and Nikunj; team two was Joe,



Lindsay and Les and team three was Tony, Jyoti and Budi. The idea was that all team members leave the room. One representative from each team came back in and started working on their respective trees, *Gymnosporia diversifolia*. When Lindsay Bebb, acting as time keeper, called their time, they left and the next team members took over. They each had two turns at styling and then the entire team had 10 minutes more to finish off and pot the tree. Unfortunately it became obvious Lindsay found keeping time a challenge to say the least! There was lots of fun with teams hiding tools on each other; one person cut the top off their tree but the next team member didn't like that, so he wired it back on, resulting in a pseudo-graft. When the race was over, the audience voted for their favorite tree. Team 3 was the popular choice." Jyoti Parekh adds, "Of course, the Team Relay event, with a cocktail of Australian and international delegates and some headliners, was an attempt to have an element



of surprise, suspense and every moment was joyous for all delegates, filled with fun."

Saturday afternoon, Brook was back working on a *Juniper procumbens*, which he planted in a bonsai pot. Brook was assisted a by a competent Chinese team which included Ricky Wu, also known to our readers as Ng Shin Fat, as translator. Also on Saturday afternoon, Dr. Tom was back with the first of two Suiseki presentation which were held in the Stone Exhibition room, all reports indicate his presentations were very well received. Another jewelry workshop on Saturday afternoon was also well attended and lots of fun.

"The BCI convention on the Gold Coast, Australia was one of the best convention I attended. We sincerely appreciate Lindsay and Glenis's hard work, they have set a very high standard for BCI conventions."

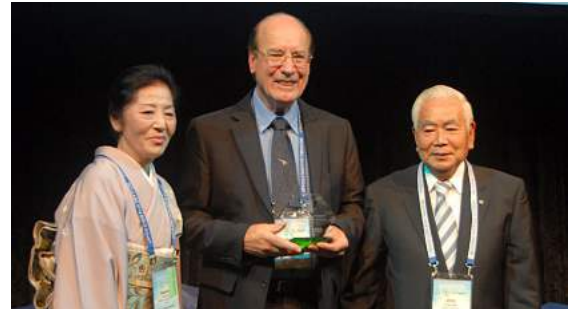
—Helen Su, BCI Director, Taiwan

Left column, top to bottom; The International Relay Team Challenge. Team one was Nikunj Parekh, Chris Di Nola and Poppy Englebrecth; team two was Lindsay Muirhead, Joe Morgan-Payler and Les Dowdell; team three, shown here claiming victory, was Tony Bebb, Jyoti Parekh and Budi Sulistyo.

*Right column; Saturday afternoon, Brook was back working on a *Juniper procumbens*, assisted a by a competent Chinese team which included Ricky Wu as translator.*

Left column and top right; Shinichi Nakajima kicked off the Sunday programme creating a group planting of Chinese Elms, *Ulmus parvifolia*, on a large central Australian sandstone slab.

Far right; Lindsay Bebb receiving WBFF Appreciation Award from Chairman Fukuda and Vice Chair Naemi Iwasaki



member and is taking a break. We hope she will return to the board in the not too distant future.

The WBFF Chairman gave a Bonsai Award to Tony Bebb for his *Ficus oblique* Multi-Trunk and Suiseki Award to Bruce Harkness for and Australian coastal stone.

The Ryuga Tool Award which consisted a tool set, wall plaque and \$300 cash, was won by Grant Bowie for his *Banksia integrifolia*.

All of the demonstration trees from Friday and Saturday were auctioned off at the hands of our talented demonstrator and auctioneer Chris Di Nola. Chris also conducted the auction of items displayed online prior to the convention. This was followed by some international entertainment. "Budi entertained us with his singing, not bad indeed, which is more than I can say for us Aussies. We were a bit flat!!! Without a doubt the highlight of the night was our Chinese friend who entertained with his singing and then came down from the stage amongst the tables singing an collecting. Great fun, entertaining and very generous donations," said Glenis.

Shinichi Nakajima kicked off the Sunday program creating a group planting of Chinese Elms, *Ulmus parvifolia*, on a large central Australian sandstone slab. Many thanks to Hiromi Nakaoji, a professional simultaneous Japanese-English translator and wife of BCI President, who translated for him. Shinichi-san was back on Sunday afternoon to work on an old *Juniper procumbens* planted in 1969.

Another Suiseki Critique by Tom was over booked due to its popularity. Glenis adds, "We don't get many Stone experts visiting Australia and this was apparent with the numbers booked. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed Tom's critiques and lecturers. He was back after lunch with another Suiseki Presentation."

The Chinese delegation from Guangzhou then gave their presentation for BCI 2015 to be held in



Above four photos; BCI President Tom Elias, presented BCI Excellence Awards for Bonsai to Tony Bebb and Carole Waller. Also BCI Excellence Awards for Viewing Stones went to Brenda Parker and Trevor Simmons..

Saturday night was the Banquet and Awards Night. Good food good wine and good company. BCI President Tom Elias, presented three BCI Excellence Awards for bonsai to Tony Bebb, *Ficus oblique* Multi-Trunk Style; Carole Waller for *Pinus canariensis* and Steve Cullum for a Lillypilly, *Syzygium smithii*. Also three BCI Excellence Awards for Viewing Stone to Brenda Parker, Trevor Simmons and John Cowgill.

He also announced the BCI Meritorious Service Award, which went to a very well deserving Pauline Muth. Pauline has been a long serving BCI board

Guangzhou in September 2015. This was followed by the AABC presentation by Andrew Ward, President of South Australian Bonsai Society inviting everyone to AABC in Adelaide in May 2015.

Glenis concludes, "The Delegation from the Philippines then gave us a fun presentation with a message from Fely Gupit inviting everyone to the Philippines in 2016 for a regional convention. BCI board members past and present appeared in cartoon format on the presentation. It was very well done!

Over the three days we had a constant silent raffle with great prizes. Some of our international guests were not familiar with raffles but after a bit of coaching they really got involved. The raffle coordinator, Bruce

Harkness, was full of enthusiasm both in voice and dress! He hand painted the raffle boxes in Australian aboriginal designs and sold them off and the end of the convention, proceeds going to the convention of course.

All good things must come to an end and both host Presidents Lindsay Bebb, AABC President and Tom Elias, BCI President gave their closing speeches. Both agreed it was a very successful event which was enjoyed by all and thanked everyone for coming. Next year in September, we are back to Guangzhou. Please join is for what will be yet another great BCI event!" 🌳

An Array of Asian and Australian Viewing Stones at the 2014 BCI Convention.

By Tom Elias, USA

A splendid display of some eighty stones was exhibited at the BCI convention in Australia. The display was arranged along both sides of a bright and airy hall leading to the area where two stone appreciation lectures were presented. It was extremely interesting to see this multinational display of stones and to learn of the rapidly growing interest in Australia for unusual and beautiful stones that can be collected, displayed and appreciated as objects of art.

Some excellent stones were displayed from the collections of Bradley Barlow and Lindsay Bebb. The majority of the stones displayed were from different regions of China. A small collection of Lingbi and Ying stones were displayed, but the majority were more recently collected stones; from Gobi Desert stones, to a variety of excellent stones such as Dahua and Sangjiang from Guangxi Province in south-western China. One of these outstanding stones, owned by Trevor Simmons, was a large arch-shaped Laibin stone of a standard high enough to receive one of the three BCI Excellence Awards presented to the stones in this display.

There were a small number Japanese suiseki on display including a polished Neo Valley chrysanthemum stone and a large Seta River stone.

While initially influenced by both Chinese and Japanese stone appreciation guidelines, many Australians are turning to their dramatic native stones rather than importing stones from elsewhere. The fascinating array of Australian stones displayed is indicative of the growing interest in native stone appreciation. The lighter colored stones displayed evoked the more arid regions of Australia. These included several reddish stones of considerable interest because of their abstract shapes.

One flat stone displayed in an upright position exhibited a pattern resembling a forest of large trees with tall straight trunks. Appropriately named *Lost Forest* by its owner Brenda Parker, this stone was another recipient of a BCI Excellence Award. It recalled the recent discovery of a large grove of a new species of trees, the Wollemi pine, discovered in a hidden canyon in 1996. This new genus of trees, closely related to the *Araucaria*, led to the description of *Wollemia nobilis* as new to science. A third BCI Excellence Award was presented to John Cowgill for his stone resembling a coastal bluff.

Displaying newly found stones with a distinctly Australian history is an important step in the development of the Australia stone appreciation culture. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of Lindsay Bebb in promoting this art form, and the participation of collectors like Trevor Simmons, Frank Kelly and Bradley Barlow, many more Australians are engaged in Chinese and Japanese stone culture. With a geology that includes virtually all known rock types and from all geological time periods of the Earth's history, stone enthusiasts are searching more remote areas for the fantastic new stones that can be found in Australia. These will be largely distinct from well-known Japanese suiseki and Chinese viewing stones—new discoveries to further enrich and broaden the worldwide suite of stones that are enjoyed as the stone appreciation culture spreads. 🌳



Above; A third BCI Excellence Award was given to John Cowgill for his stone that resembled a coastal bluff.

Sunrise on Australian Bonsai

BCI 2014 GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

21 - 24 August, QT Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

EXHIBIT



Top left; *Taxodium disticum*



Top right; Laibin Arch Stone, Guangxi

Middle right; Waterpool Stone, China

Bottom right; Chrysanthemum Stone, Japan



Top left; *Juniperus procumbens*
 Top right; *Acacia howittii*
 Middle left; *Ficus benjamina*
 Middle right; Dahua Stone, China
 Bottom; Mountain Stone. West Australia



Top left; *Bougainvillea glabra*
Top right; *Celtis sinensis*
Middle left; *Ficus obliqua*
Middle right; *Ficus obliqua*
Bottom; *Bougainvillea miniature*





Top left; Lost Forest, Picture Stone, New South Wales, Australia

Top right; Clerodendron inermis

Middle left; Picture Stone, USA

Bottom left; Juniperus squamata 'Prostrata'

Bottom right; Juniperus squamata 'Prostrata'



Top left; *Pinus thunbergii*
 Top right; *Leptospermum laevigatum*
 Middle; Ibigawa Mountain Stone, Japan
 Bottom left; *Clerodendron inerme*
 Bottom right; *Ficus natalensis*





Top left; Mountain Stone, China

Middle left; *Pinus thunbergii*

Middle right; Mountain Stone, Japan

Bottom left; *Callistemon viminalis* on loan from The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia

Bottom right; *Ficus obliqua*



Top left; *Pinus thunbergii*

Top right; *Pinus thunbergii*

Middle left; *Ficus obliqua*

Middle right; *Portulacaria afra*.

Bottom left; Lingbi Object
Stone, China

Bottom right; *Duranta*





Top left; *Bougainvillea glabra*
Top right; *Clerodendron inerme*
Middle left; Petrified Wood,
Queensland, Australia
Middle right; Mountain Stone,
South Australia
Bottom; Mountain Stone, New
South Wales, Australia





Top left; Yadan Object Stone, China
Top right; *Syzygium paniculata*
Middle left; *Ligustrum*
Middle right; *Ulmus parvifolia*
Bottom; Mountain Stone, China





Top; Plateau Stone, West Australia

Middle left; Syzygium sp

Bottom left; Sanjiang Stone, China

Bottom right; Taxodium disticum



Top left; *Leptospermum*
 Top right; *Celtis sinensis*
 Middle left; Ligurian
 Mountain Stone, Italy
 Middle right; *Meleleuca
 stephelioides*
 Bottom left; *Juniperus
 squamata* 'Prostrata'
 Bottom right; Kamuikotan
 Mountain Stone, Japan





Top left; *Ulmus parvifolia*
Top right; Wujiang Plateau
Stone, China
Bottom; *Pinus thunbergii*

41st Philippine National Bonsai Exhibition & Competition

Below; Bobby Gopiao, Shohin Display, Gold Winner

Text by Tom Elias, USA and Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Studio Photographs by At Maculangan
Additional Photos by Tom Elias



One hundred and fifty trees, ranging from shohin to large-sized trees, were on display along with an adjacent display of approximately sixty viewing stones, mostly local Philippine stones. Bonsai lectures and demonstrations, including basic and advanced bonsai workshops, were held during the exhibition. Activities also included a lecture on stone appreciation and critique of the stones on display.



Scenes from the 41st Exhibition and Awards Ceremony.

Upper left; BCI board members Budi Sulistyio present several awards to outstanding Philippine bonsai artist Roberto Gopiao.

Upper right; Philippines Bonsai Society board member Susan Lee with Taiwanese bonsai artists Tang Chin-Feng and Yen Tzu-Ching,

Middle left; Angusto Rustia, Philippine Bonsai Society president Angusto P. Rustia, Tom Elias, BCI President; and Tatsuo Kitagawa, Counsellor at the Embassy of Japan presenting awards.

Middle right; Madame Filicidada S. Gupit, and artist Jesz Vergara presenting BCI President Tom Elias with a painted Philippine stone.

Lower left; recipient of two awards.

Lower middle and lower right; demonstrations of bonsai styling.

Background photo; the bonsai exhibit.

During the last 100 years, the art and science of bonsai has spread from Japan to the rest of the world. Most bonsai enthusiasts are familiar with the excellent bonsai and well trained artists in Japan, China, Korea, North America, Europe, Australia, with emerging talent in Latin America and southeastern Asia. However, few of us think about the island nation of the Republic of the Philippines as having a significant presence in the world bonsai community. That is changing as the quality of the bonsai and the styling techniques of several outstanding Filipino artists are becoming better known worldwide. There is a robust community of bonsai hobbyists, serious collectors, and outstanding artists in this country of nearly 100 million people.

The 41st National Bonsai Exhibition & Competition was held in Pasig City, one of the highly urbanized cities of Metro Manila, from May 23 through June 1, 2014. This event was organized by the Philippine Bonsai Society led by its current President, Augusto P. Rustia, and a board of directors. This society with its fourteen affiliated clubs from the northern to the southern regions is the premiere bonsai organization in the Philippines. One hundred and fifty trees, ranging from shohin to large-sized trees, were on display along with an adjacent display of approximately sixty viewing stones, mostly local Philippine stones. Bonsai lectures and demonstrations, including basic and advanced bonsai workshops, were held during the exhibition. Activities also included a lecture on stone



Top; Alfredo Manarang, Best Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*, Gold Winner

Bottom; Ming Shen Lee, Gold, Blue Bell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*



appreciation and critique of the stones on display. The outstanding trees and stones were awarded prizes and BCI gave the BCI Excellence Award medals to two trees and two medals to the best stones on display.

The bonsai enthusiasts in the Philippines have maintained close association with bonsai master artists particularly in Indonesia and Taiwan, both neighboring countries. As a result, Philippine bonsai hobbyists have had the advantage of hosting outstanding artists from these two countries. This year, the featured demonstrators and lecturers were Mr. Budi Sulisty from Indonesia and Mr. Yen Tzu-ching and Mr. Tang Chin-Feng from Taiwan. Each of these well-known artists performed a demonstration on one or more trees before an enthusiastic audience. There were many younger bonsai hobbyists among the people observing the artistic talents in action.

Prior to this, other Taiwanese bonsai artists who taught in the Philippines include Amy Liang, Min



Hsuan Lo, Chengkung Cheng, and Chonghong Lee. There is also much respect and admiration for the bonsai masters of Japan. Masahiko Kimura has conducted workshops twice, and Susumo Nakamura, Fukita Isao, who trained under Sensei Kunio Kobayashi and Masashi Hirao, who has the distinction of being the last student apprentice of the late Sensei Saburo Kato, have all shared their mastery of bonsai techniques with Filipino bonsai artists.

Critiques and demonstrations

A day-long series of critiques and demonstrations were held on May 24th. Budi first gave a critique and advice on restyling an *Eleagnus pungens*. He then reshaped raw material of a local native tree known in the Philippines as Bignay (*Antedasma bunius*). In the afternoon, Mr. Yen Tzu-ching conducted a demonstration that featured a restyling a Philippine Ebony (*Diospyros ferea*). Later, Mr. Tang Chin-feng restyled a juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*). Members of the audience showered them with many questions and meandered around the demonstrators for choice photo opportunities.

The bonsai exhibition

The bonsai exhibition was divided into two groups. One was the *Pemphis acidula* group or Bantigue as it is known in the Philippines and the second group was all other trees. The Bantigue is the most popular tropical tree for making bonsai in the Philippines. The best Bantigue in the exhibition was awarded to Alfred Manarang. The best non-Bantigue went to Roberto “Bobby” Gopiao for his Shohin combination. The panel of judges also selected the best trees in the exhibit. This year’s winner of the best

Top left; Ludivina Loyola, Gold, Blue Bell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

Top right; Herden Pedrajas, Gold, Tugas-sa-Bato, *Vitex triflora*

Bottom; Keith Ochinang, Gold, Blue Bell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*





Top; Bobby Gopiao, Gold, Crab Apple, *Malus*
Bottom; Alfredo Manarang, Gold, Bantigue,
Pemphis acidula



tree in the exhibit went to Alfred Manarang for his Bantigue (*Pemphis acidula*). BCI Excellence Award medals went to Alfred Manarang for his Bantigue (*Pemphis acidula*) and to Roberto “Bobby” Gopiao for his Barbados cherry (*Malphigia glabra*). The awards were presented by Philippine Bonsai Society President Augusto P. Rustia. The BCI medals were presented by BCI board member Budi Sulisty and BCI President Tom Elias.

The Republic of the Philippine is located just North of the Equator, thus, it has a tropical climate and flora. Bonsai suitable for these conditions are tropical and sub-tropical trees and shrubs. It was very encouraging to see many species native to the Philippines being used to make wonderful bonsai. Foremost among the native trees used for bonsai is *Pemphis acidula* or Bantigue as it is known locally. These small trees or large shrubs occur next to the beaches in the Ilocos Norte region of the country. These twisted trunk trees make extraordinary bonsai making them favored and sought after by bonsai hobbyists. A shrubby species of *Desmodium* in the legume family is another species that is popular in the bonsai community. They are known locally as Blue Bells due to the shape and color of the numerous small flowers. Other species of trees used and exhibited as bonsai include *Ehrentiamicrophylla*, *Ficus microcarpa*, *Ficus concina*, *Ficus rotundifolia*, *Flacourtia rukam*, *Lagerstroemia indica*, *Maba buxifolia*, *Malphigia glabra*, *Murraya exotica*, *Podocarpus* species, *Tamarindus indica*, *Terminalia fontalia*, *Vitex agnus-castus*, *Wrightia religiosa*, and other species. *Casuarina equisetifolia* is occasionally used for making bonsai.

The stone display

The stone display at this event was organized by the Natural Stone Society of the Philippines. This study group was organized many years ago by Mrs. Felicidad S. Gupit. Mrs. Gupit is an active collector of Philippine stones and has the largest collections of these stones. Mrs. Gupit, who is now in her mid 80s, participated in this major exhibition. BCI President, Tom Elias gave an illustrated lecture on Chinese and Japanese stones to members of this society and then conducted a critique of the stones on display.

The Philippines is blessed with rich mineral resources and a complex geological history. As such, there are a wide range of excellent stones to be found here,



David Lim, Bronze, Balete, *Ficus sp.*



Manuel Lee, Bronze, Blue Bell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*



Rommel Nonato, Bronze, Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*, rock-grown



Fely S.Gupit, Special Award, (Fruiting),
Duhat, *Syzygium cumini*



Cocoy Macanas, Bronze, Blue Bell,
Hyacinthoides non-scripta



Alfred Valdez Jr., Bronze,
Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*



Jeffrey de Guzman, Bronze, Argao, *Premna odorata* (Taiwan)



Michael Santiago, Bronze, Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*



Susan Lee, Bronze, Lemoncito, *Citrofortunella microcarpa*



Alfonso Apostol, Bronze, Texas Balete, *Ficus sp.*



Linus Villanueva, Bronze, Tugas-sa-Bato, *Vitex triflora*



Abraham Mamuad, Bronze, Blue Bell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*



Giovanni Rapada, Bronze, Balete Malapakiling, *Ficus sp.*



Tonet Gedang, Bronze, Mulawin Daga, *Vitex sp.*

some like Japanese suiseki while others are very similar to Chinese Lingbi and Taihu stones. This was a pleasant surprise. The bases for the stones were made by local artist and have a distinct Philippine style. Stone appreciation in this country is still in the early stages of development. However, the Philippines has the potential to produce many outstanding stones in the future as people learn more about the criteria for excellent stones and how to display them. The BCI Excellence Award for outstanding viewing stone went to Anthony V. Gedang.

Philippine bonsai artists

The work of Philippine bonsai artists have been steadily gaining recognition worldwide. In 2006, a cascade *Pemphis acidua* by Bobby Gopiao was designated as the Grand Prize winner in the BCI world bonsai photo contest. The Philippine Bonsai Society successfully hosted the Asia-Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention and Exhibition (ASPAC) in 2003 in Mandaluyong City. Then, in 2013, the society hosted the Asia-Pacific bonsai Friendship Federation Convention and Exhibition in Quezon City. This society has wisely invited some of the world's leading bonsai



Jun Serapio, Silver, Tugas-sa- Bato, *Vitex triflora*



Teddy Lim, Silver, Bantuliniao, *Maba buxifolia*



Teddy Lim, Silver, Bantuliniao , *Maba buxifolia*



Angel "Ogi" Uyehara, Silver, Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*



Top left; Eagle, Alex Lim
Top right; Horizon, Bimbo Vergara
Middle right; Abstractions II, Fely S. Gupit
Bottom left; Cat (Say Meow), Haidee Tica
Bottom right; Ethnic Beauty, Roldan John Abundo





artists from Japan, North America, Taiwan, Indonesia and Switzerland, Malaysia, to participate in their conventions. It is not surprising then, that the level of bonsai art in the Philippines is very high, and excellent, private collections of superior trees can be found in different parts of the country.

The Philippine has also produced several outstanding bonsai artists that are gaining recognition far beyond the boundary of their country. Most notable among these are Vic Ceballos, who conducted a demonstration at the World Bonsai Friendship Federation Convention in Jintan, China in 2013. Another celebrated Philippine bonsai artist is Bobby P. Gopiao, a landscape designer, who has created some of the finest private gardens in the Philippines.

An Emerging School of Bonsai in the Philippines

After the award ceremonies at the exhibition, several members of the Philippine Bonsai Society Board of Directors accompanied the invited guests (Elias, Sulisty, Yen, and Tang and their wives) on a flight to northern city of Batac in Ilocos Norte region. Our destination was the Mariano Marcos State University where a new academic program in bonsai was established in February, 2014. This new program has the enthusiastic support of the Philippine Bonsai Society, and the dynamic university President, Miriam E. Pascua. Their joint vision is helping to develop a small but growing bonsai businesses in the northern Philippines.

The first day in Ilocos Norte was spent visiting several small bonsai growers, stopping to see amazing coastal rock formations, and the native habitat of their

Top left; Mother & child, Alfonso Apostol, Best Suiseki in Show, BCI Excellence Award

Top right; The Falcon, Tony Gedang, BCI Excellence Award

Bottom; Midnite Crawler, Erwin Paulos





Scenes from the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) in the northern Ilocos Norte region of the Philippines.

Upper left; the new MMSU School of Bonsai
 Upper right; Mr. Yen Tzu-Ching illustrating styling techniques.
 Far upper right; BCI president Tom Elias and MMSU President Mariam E. Pascua
 Middle right; Augusto P. Rustia, President of the Philippine Bonsai Society and MMSU President Mariam E. Pascua
 Lower left and lower right; Mr. Tang Chin-Feng conducting a styling demonstration for students and faculty.

Bantigue (*Pemphis acidula*). This native habitat is now protected and several people are engaged in developing propagation techniques for this important species in Philippine bonsai culture. The mayor of Batac City hosted our group for lunch at her home. She and her husband have a bonsai garden that would be the envy of any leading bonsai artist worldwide.

The next day, the university had arranged a day-long seminar on bonsai culture in the University Training Center for students and interested faculty members. The center was filled with people eager to learn more about bonsai. Yen Tzu-ching presented a lecture on bonsai culture followed by demonstration by Yen and his colleague Tang Chin-Feng. This was followed by a demonstration on two trees by Budi Sulistyo. After the demonstrations, Tom Elias presented President Pascua with several copies of *BCI Bonsai and Stone Appreciation Magazine* and informed Madame Pascua and faculty that the new bonsai program would be receiving a year's membership in BCI so they can continue to receive our magazine in the coming year. The delegation then toured the newly designated building and grounds of the new bonsai program.

How you can help

This fledging program in bonsai needs the help of BCI. An important way, we can help is to donate bonsai related books in good condition to the program. A library of bonsai references, including how-to-books will greatly benefit the eager young students enrolled in this program. Please contact BCI president Tom Elias as tselias@msn.com if you would like to donate one or more books for this program.

The combination of the 41st National Bonsai Exhibition & Competition and the visit to Mariano Marcos State University was an eye opening experience. The quality of the bonsai at the exhibition and in private collections is truly outstanding. The enthusiasm of so many young and middle-aged people means a bright future for bonsai in the Philippines. And, the close working relationships with bonsai masters in Taiwan and Indonesia provides them with the instructional leadership needed for their continued development. Finally, the wealth of high quality stones and the eagerness of the stone society to learn more about aspects of stone appreciation translates into an equally bright future for stone connoisseurs worldwide. 🌳

Judging Bonsai The Criteria

By Kath and Malcolm Hughes, UK

Photos by Malcolm Hughes

Part Three.

Part One was published in Q2, 2014 and Part Two was published in Q3, 2014;

Our challenge now is to try and produce guidelines that will be accepted and used by most (I would not dare to suggest all). If we can provide a universal set of criteria/guidelines and the means of using them at ground level i.e. at Clubs and local Shows, and if it is seen to *work* and be treated with respect, then hopefully we can move on to getting the method accepted at National or International level.

These images show trees exhibited at European exhibitions; some attained awards, some did not. The comments accompanying each tree reflect strengths and weaknesses of each indicating how the decision-making process came about.



Larix decidua: Height (max) - 61 cms.

This larch group was considered to have potential in the long term. However, there is no primary tree and no obvious apex—there is too great a uniformity in terms of height. Also no dominant tree; a small sapling has been planted at the front of the group rather than toward the back giving no clear impression of depth.

The surface dressing was poor, with a covering of fine dead foliage together with patchy clumps of moss. Pot is OK, Health good, no sign of disease, has potential, needs time and refinement.

When we are judging bonsai, we first must scrutinise all the trees; we then can make a choice as to which ones will receive an award. It can seemingly be so easy to shortlist a number that stand out above the remainder. Or should I say we can disregard some as not being up to the standard required for awards. If you cannot select to this point, then you should not have been asked to judge at a show. If however you envisage this as a training exercise then what do you look for?

Weeds, dirty pots, unsuitable pots, shaggy and overgrown foliage, dead and damaged leaves, discolored and dead needles, *jin* and *shari* that have gone green, pests or pest damage, bad and crossing wiring, poor shape, lack of *nebari*, general ill health and bad color, inverted taper, poor branch positioning (including T branches), heavy branches at the top, lack of apex or too many apices; there are so many factors by which you can reject trees and this is what you must do before stating to select the good or even excellent.

Having rejected all trees totally unsuitable for showing, and let's hope that are not too many in this category, you can move on to the positive judging for the best. In some instances, the decision can be a relatively straightforward exercise, however at the end of the day, a decision must be reached, a decision where certain trees attain the status of being among the most impressive of all those on display. Their owners can be justifiably proud; conversely, those whose trees did not qualify for judgement beyond initial rejection may be left disappointed yet asking the question, what's wrong with my tree?

This can be difficult to accept, these owners have put so much effort into getting their trees to what they considered a high standard, worthy of their bonsai being exhibited. Perhaps a little basic training by the club is required for members before they even consider exhibiting, even at beginner level. Have you ever questioned why many beginners consider entering starter

trees or novice trees without performing basic cleaning and tidying tasks? Would you go to a party in your gardening clothes?

Now this brings us to trees we are truly judging to win Awards or to be best in their Class. The main question is, on what basis do judges of bonsai justify their decisions as to what constitutes certain trees being viewed as *the best* out of all those displayed on any particular occasion?

Bonsai judges have to be able to justify their decision, and not just for bonsai, but in any competitive scenario. An exhibitor is fully justified in asking the judge why their tree failed to get an award. Hence, the need to explain on what basis and by what criteria decisions are made.

When viewing bonsai, the aim in judging is to narrow down the criteria on which a judgement is formulated. Essentially we are taking into consideration the following features:

Suitability of species for bonsai. People make some very strange choices—large palmate, e.g. horse chestnut, and large pinnate, e.g. mountain ash—are all equally unsuitable for their refusal to reduce in leaf size.

General health and wellbeing of the tree.

Trunk; was the front of the tree chosen showing the trunk to its best? Bark; does it show maturity and plating? Is it clean and free from algae?

Branch positioning, including ramification.

- Are the primary and largest branch and the counterbalance branch well defined?
- Are the main branches correctly placed without interfering or covering each other? Was it correctly pruned leaving no stumps? Are pruning cuts well finished?
- Is there enough negative space between the branches?
- Does the form of the branches logically coincide with the style and the trunk movement?
- Is the apex well defined?

Surface roots or Nebari; (if appropriate to the species) one of the most important factors to observe for styling a good tree, and also the one that is difficult to correct. It plays a crucial role in defining the front of the tree.

Foliage; leaf color and size; there should be no obvious blemishes or evidence of wind burn.

Deadwood effects, if any, should be well defined (*jin*, *shari* and *uro*), without excessive carving marks or evidence of revolving tools. Should show natural aspect of the work.

Wiring; correct wiring, not excessive but strong enough to hold branches in place without damaging the bark of the tree. Where possible, wiring should be discrete.

Surface dressing; use of moss and appropriateness of surface material, lack of weeds.

Absence of pests or diseases.



Acer palmatum: Height - 55 cms.

An impressive tree which highlights good autumn color. Not really obvious from the photo, but branch development and positioning is good as well as the form of the trunk. The faults were two branches, both forward growing and consequently prevented a clear view of the trunk line.

The pot was suitable if slightly small in relation to the tree. Also the stand was too dominant in terms of height and length. The surface had a good natural moss covering. A good tree but with fundamental branch structure faults, it will never be a true winner.



Juniperus chinensis: Height - 44 cms.

Still in the early stages of development. This tree needs much more work to have it ready for exhibiting. The basic style is there but it has clear faults lacks refinement. The apex requires considerable thought as strange, unnaturally shaped branches mar its basic structure. It needs a lot more growth and development. The branches on the left had side lack form and are too heavy in terms of balance. In contrast, the pot and surface dressing is very good.

It is clearly a well cared for tree but the owner must recognise its inherent faults.



Pinus sylvestris: Height - 31 cms.

As a basic concept, this Scots pine, could in time become an exceptional bonsai, but at present it needs to develop greater foliage in relation to trunk and branch structure. The pot, stand and trunk blend together in a dramatic fashion. It is let down is by the lack of foliage. The foliage part of the tree could afford to be lifted to reveal the branch formation, there is a need for more needle development. Once that is ultimately achieved, we will have a dramatic tree but perhaps not a truly great tree.



Juniperus sabina: Height - 90 cms.

An award-winning tree which beautifully reflects the semi-cascade style. Effective use of deadwood; branch positioning and refinement excellent. Good balance of tree, pot and stand.

The effect is accentuated by the use of a sickle pot as well as the use of a mix of ground cover. Foliage mass is neat and well styled. Already an award winning tree, that will develop into a memorable tree with just a little more foliage.

Pot; to include the appropriateness of the pot (shape, color, texture) and the position of the tree in the pot.

Stand where used; appropriateness of size, color and design.

Aesthetics, general impression; is it presented at the correct angle thus showing that the balance of the tree is correct? Are the respective volumes of foliage and branches, compared to each other, in harmony and are these volumes in proportion to the tree? Is the tree styled in such a way that it gives a strong impression of depth? Styling a tree can create an artificial appearance. Is the work on the tree done in such a way that it still gives the impression that the artist merely interfered in the natural appearance of the tree.

Often, on being invited to judge bonsai at a society show or exhibition, you are presented with the society's own set of judging criteria, including a points system for scoring each set of criteria. These can prove highly detailed and comprehensive, to the extent that an enormous amount of time can be spent 'ticking all the boxes'. While the purpose behind such judging may be well intentioned, it can prove a very time-consuming exercise if faced with judging a large number of trees. On occasion I have been confronted with the task of judging over 150 bonsai at National and International level. Time is a luxury one does not have on these occasions. Lists like the one on the facing page are perhaps put to better use as teaching aids for those hoping to become bonsai judges. Then they are able to look at *all* possible variables necessary in assessing a *good* bonsai from one which stands out as being *exceptional*.

In reality, developing an eye for evaluating a bonsai stems largely from experience. This is based upon a clear awareness of which features of each individual tree stand out and make the greatest impression.

I have created a list of the most significant criteria a judge should consider when examining a bonsai exhibition. The list encompasses a range of features, not all of which would apply to every tree. This list was designed initially as a score sheet, marks having been allocated for each of the points listed. For the purposes of this article, the idea is to draw upon this list as a learning tool rather than as a score sheet. Hence, the marks allocated for each feature within each section have been removed. This list, which includes items not originally listed such as *jin* and *shari*, and also includes the use stands on which it is exhibited, covers features on which judges must reflect in making their decision.

Judging, be it a floral display, paintings, dog or cats, or in this case bonsai, is not just a matter of arriving at a numeric score; it is rather a case of distinguishing between a number of bonsai that are all good and arriving at a conclusion based on which is First, Second and Third, and maybe, which ones we consider to be of such a standard that would warrant, an Award of Merit.

TRUNK	
Shape:	Shape according to style
Bark:	Well developed or not
Marks:	Wire and other marks / unsightly cuts
Tapering:	Lack of inverted taper as well correct tapering
Shari:	Appearance appropriate to the tree
BRANCHES	
Distribution:	Groupings
Development:	Positioning of branches
Bark:	Condition of main branches
Ramification:	Extent of fine branch development
Marks:	Avoidance of wire marks
Jins:	As appropriate to the tree, give aged appearance
FOLIAGE	
Leaves:	Horticultural perfection
Blemishes:	Evidence of disease, windburn etc.
Size:	In proportion to the tree
Distribution:	Not hanging below branch unless weeping variety
SOIL / SURFACE DRESSING	
Well finished:	Clear of weeds:
Surface:	Appropriate surface cover e.g. moss
ROOTS/NEBARI	
Visibility:	Well or badly distributed as surface roots (nebari)
Buttressed:	Shape of buttress at soil level
Other cover:	As appropriate to the tree(s)
Rock planting:	Roots give natural impression of having grown naturally (clasp) to the rock.
POT	
Shape & Style:	Appropriate to the nature of the tree (species and style)
Placement:	Tree correctly positioned within pot
Appearance:	Cleanliness
Size:	Good proportion to the tree(s), not over- or under-potted
Color	Appropriate to species
STANDS	
Shape & Style:	Appropriateness to tree/pot combination.
AESTHETIC QUALITY	
Could be a subjective judgement but reflecting overall impression of the tree(s) within the pot or displayed on a tray. Overall sense of balance and harmony.	

Recognizing the elements that make a bonsai—from the tree (species and style) to the pot and the manner it is displayed—all contribute to our judging processes. Through experience of having worked in creating bonsai, we learn by trial and error what ultimately constitutes a tree that reflects a *good* bonsai, a tree of which you feel justifiably comfortable in displaying.



Juniperus chinensis 'Itoigawa': Height - 44cms.

In this instance, the question is whether the tree is back-to-front. Sadly, a superb trunk with good movement and beautifully created *shari* is masked by the lowest branch. The remaining branches are not clearly defined due to the lack of refinement of the foliage pads. Very dense foliage on upper part of the tree including apical region. Once these factors are remedied, we will have a prize-winning tree. Overall balance between tree and pot is very good, with tidy surface dressing.



Pinus sylvestris:

Height - 78 cms.

Not quite there yet, but another tree with considerable potential. The basic design concept is good with the position of the tree in its pot well placed to counter the outward movement of the trunk beyond the periphery of the pot. Work needs to be done in wiring and refining the branch structure; also with further back-budding, there could be an excellent foliage mass in due course. The primitive-style pot reflects the ruggedness of the trunk, bark and *shari*.



We have here 3 trees, a *Crataegus*, an *Ulmus parvifolia* and a *Juniperus chinensis* that I dismissed on my first stage of selection.

Apart from a complete lack of styling to the branches, the *Crataegus* was dismissed immediately on the condition of presentation; algae on both trunk and pot, heavy overgrowth of moss, possibly trying to mask the extraordinary overhanging root. Take it home, do a lot of work and you could have a nice tree.

The *Ulmus* is far too immature for showing. The branch structure has yet to develop, the branches all starting from the same point are all of equal thickness and choices need to be made on how many you require. A nice pot, a healthy tree but it needs time and development

Oh dear, what happened to the apex on the Chinese juniper? You refined all the lower branches quite successfully but did you get tired before you reached the top. Take it home and thin out and shape the apex and then we will look again.

The adjacent images are of the same *Juniperus chinensis*. *Left*; Initially, the tree was rejected for award winning at exhibition as the foliage mass needed to be opened more and refined.

Right; A few years later, the whole image was clearer, the foliage pads were better defined and tidier resulting in an award for its quality.



Pinus pentaphylla: Height - 58 cms.

Left; A superb example of a semi-cascade style with a well developed trunk, neatly positioned branches and well developed foliage pads. Good healthy color of the needles. The whole image is of a tree, groomed and superbly styled, complimented by a rugged pot which reflects the contours of the tree. Needless to say, this specimen was one of the top award winning trees in a recent British bonsai exhibition.





Daniel Robinson

A Unique American Artist



By Victrinia Ridgeway, USA

Photos by Victrinia Ridgeway and Will Hiltz

Top inset; Daniel Robinson and detail of a Shore Pine, Pinus contorta "Contorta"
Background; Eagle flying over the bay at Elandan Gardens.
Bottom inset; Elandan Garden Entrance





If one were to visit Elandan Gardens for the first time, you might hear a light crunching of the gravel path behind you and a warm voice asking, “How do you like my garden?”

It’s the opening line of an invitation to explore the small world of natural delights which Daniel Robinson has created from an old abandoned landfill. Elandan is many things. It is a garden and museum, a shop and a place of creation. Many of these facets reflect a fascination for venerable beauty and the forms which only nature can produce in her long patient span of years, but all of them reflect the brilliant creativity of one family, and most of all Daniel. Elandan is the culmination of many moments of opportunity and inspiration, a living record to the continuing work of a lifetime.

A natural bonsai guy and his fellow sojourners in the art:

The bonsai world is mad for the new young artists burgeoning out of the US, Japan, and Europe. It was so in Daniel’s earliest years as well. He

Bottom; Korean Hornbeam, Carpinus koreanensis



Top; Ponderosa Pine, *Pinus ponderosa*

Bottom left; Alpine Hemlock, *Tsuga mertensiana*

Bottom right; Daniel and student, Eric Ridgeway.

was shocking in his approach, with a flair for showmanship, making more than one person gasp as they watched him do seemingly impossible things to strangely beautiful trees. Even more than his actions, his words were new and challenging to many. A “maverick” in every sense of the word, Daniel moved with the same creativity and vigor he does now, though maybe not all the wisdom his many years of pursuit has granted him. To be frank, you were either excited

by his work, or you were not. To some small extent, passionate enthusiasm or perplexed dislike still follow his efforts. But in truth, he wouldn't have it any other way; being passionate about the art is what matters. Daniel has a keen understanding of himself, his artistry, and what he has accomplished. He never rests on his laurels, but instead moves with the confidence of a man with nothing to prove and everything to share. He regards every day as an opportunity to create or refine something unique.

As his student, I spent years under his guidance, dutifully taking on any task that was asked. When early in our time together he tested my resolve against a 20-foot prostrate *Cedrus atlantica* ‘*Glauca Pendula*’ perched precariously on the top of a steep hill, I was quite certain he had lost his mind. I couldn't understand the relationship between creating something lovely out of this great reaching tree, which looked more like ‘Cousin Itt,’ the hairy character from the *Addams Family* series, than any tree I had ever seen, and bonsai. But he told me, if I could do this... I could do anything. He was teaching courage, and throughout my years that was a central theme; the courage to do a thing. He explained that it was one of the greatest things which held people back from the depth of their potential, aside from the essential visual record which would help people design truly ancient and venerable trees. Courage and understanding... those were the key ingredients.

Once, when looking over a lovely rhododendron with his signature multiple apexes, he said, “If a girl were brave, she would take out one of those crowns.” I did it without hesitation, and from that moment everything changed. It didn't matter that as soon as I had done it, he grunted and said it was not necessarily the one he would have chosen. He was pleased by the willingness to engage as a creative partner with him in his garden. Consensus was not needed; it was the willingness to do a thing that mattered. He never called me student, and I never called him master. He would introduce me to people as his equal, which always made me laugh, but is still held by me as the highest praise I could have asked for.





Top left; Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Top right; Daniel pruning a larch.

Middle right; Mugho pine, *Pinus montana mughus*

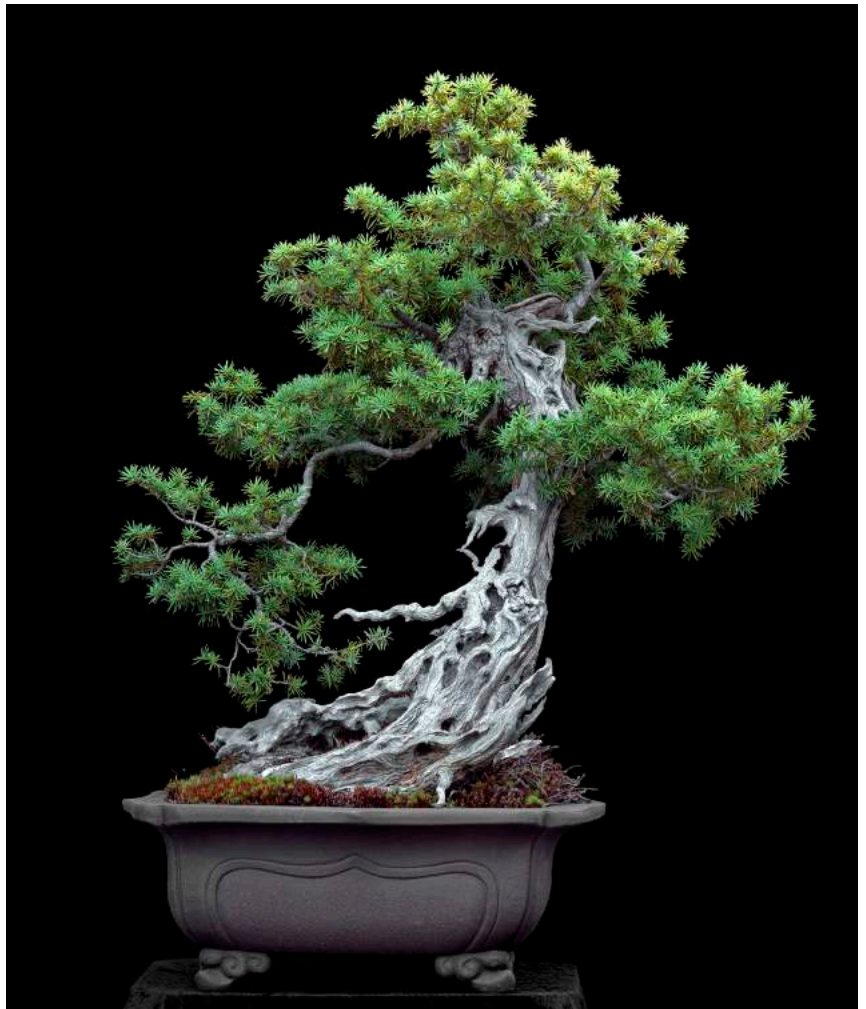
Bottom right; Alpine Hemlock, *Tsuga mertensiana*



There is something of steel in me, I think, and every student after, which sharpens him and spurs him on with delight, and there is something in him which takes the willing and launches them into the air like a catapult past the restrictions of their self-imposed limitations to fly like the eagles he believes us to be. That line of instruction continues, to my joy. Daniel and I joke often as we watch the young men currently under his tutelage working on great Japanese Black Pines in the garden, how such works are a lesson as well as test of resolve. After all, if they can do that, they can do anything. That these years of teaching cost me nothing but the sweat of my brow and a commitment of my time still hold me in awe of his great generosity. There are no words to describe the measure of the gift he gives so freely to those who come seeking to be a fellow sojourner in the art.

A principled man:

There was a time early on when Daniel was called unprincipled by some. People looked at his avant-garde work and could only see what they perceived as a complete lack of regard for the traditional way things were done. The carving of trees would not come into common acceptance for many years, except on the oldest of *yamadori* where it already existed. So in response to this, thinking it might be a good idea to have some principles people could use to understand his work, Daniel outlined his treatises on Focal Point Bonsai Design, and still abides by those same principles today. (The full *Robinson Addendum* can be read at www.elandangardens.com.)



For Daniel, the focus of the tree is the trunk. He is fond of saying, “Show me a great trunk, I can grow a top.” But to bring it all together, to make it work in the magical way which sets apart his work from so many others, he keeps some simple principles in mind to guide his work.

Deadwood is an essential part of the story of long life and struggle. Even as we humans bear the marks of our lives, so should trees speaking of mature and venerable life. The willingness of trees to forsake all, back to the root itself if need be, is a story of constancy in a changeable world. Deadwood shouldn't be added carelessly, but with thoughtful consideration to portraying the story of the tree's life.

Opportunities should never be wasted when designing a tree. For trees in nature, losing a limb would rarely be sheared off clean. The usual result would be a stub of the lost branch remaining to become what we call *jin*. Even better, if the wound is severe, a tear would likely result causing hollows over the slow course of time that we call *uro*. But the clean sawn and callused marks so often used would not be a common occurrence in the natural life of a tree and so should be avoided. Instead, leaving stubs from unwanted branches leaves opportunity of *jin* and *uro* to further bespeak tales of age and survival.

There is an almost wild dance to the forms that Daniel's trees can take. That movement translates itself to the very tips of branches. Crooked, gnarly, undulating branches are a hallmark of his hand. Someone familiar with his work can walk into a



Top; Ponderosa Pine, *Pinus ponderosa*

Bottom; Sierra Juniper, *Juniperus occidentalis*



display hall full of beautiful work, and know a piece as his by the simple principles he follows when combined with his distinctive style.

When it comes to the manner in which Daniel creates his art, he keeps his tools to essentials. Wire is applied only where it's needed, and is considered a temporary measure. Within that, he uses aluminum wire as a preference, though he, like everyone else, used copper for decades. He amusingly remembers how excited everyone became when aluminum wire was first made available, and finds humorous now the tendency by some to hold an almost religious insistence on the use of copper over aluminum. Any aid, no matter how humble, is used to assist him in the creation of his works. It is a means to an end and for Daniel, only the end matters.

Beyond these original four principles, believing with humor that *four* is generally a good number to have when it comes to something as essential as principles, he has nonetheless added depth in the pursuit of expressing what inspires him most in nature. As time progressed, it became apparent to him that if one treated each branch as its own crown, the overall image would be pleasing, no matter how you approached the tree. He has often mused that he would

enjoy having a slowly rotating turntable which would allow people to appreciate each degree of the tree's image, rather than just appreciating one side. It certainly goes with his great love of round or many-sided pots, which let viewers shift their view, granting them the ability to choose their own favored 'front.'



Top; Korean Black Pine, *Pinus thunbergii*

Bottom; Rocky Mountain Juniper, *Juniperus scopularum*



Top row, left to right; Secreted waterfall that fills the central pond.
 Daniel under his Pond Cypress, *Taxodium ascendens*
 Raw beginning in 1993 of Elandan Gardens.
 Middle; Central pond view.
 Bottom left, Cormorant, stone sculpture by Will Robinson
 The Gargoyle (Lava stone)
 Bottom right; Garden Shop side courtyard.
 Facing Page
 Top left; Daniel with a juniper snag.
 Top right; Korean Black Pine, *Pinus thunbergii*
 Middle left; The juniper snag by the pond.
 Middle left, lower left and right; Natural stone lantern and an Alaska eroded stone.
 Bottom left; Main garden path.
 Bottom right; Japanese Maple, *Acer palmatum*

When Daniel's ideas are combined with visual inspiration, courage, and a great trunk, beauty happens. A venerable image is produced and the viewers are transported to ancient forest groves inside their own imagination. A sense of awe for the struggle of life can be felt, and a profound respect for the will of the tree and its personal story of survival. That story and the ability to evoke emotion are the things which he has pursued for over 55 years.

A garden of surprises:

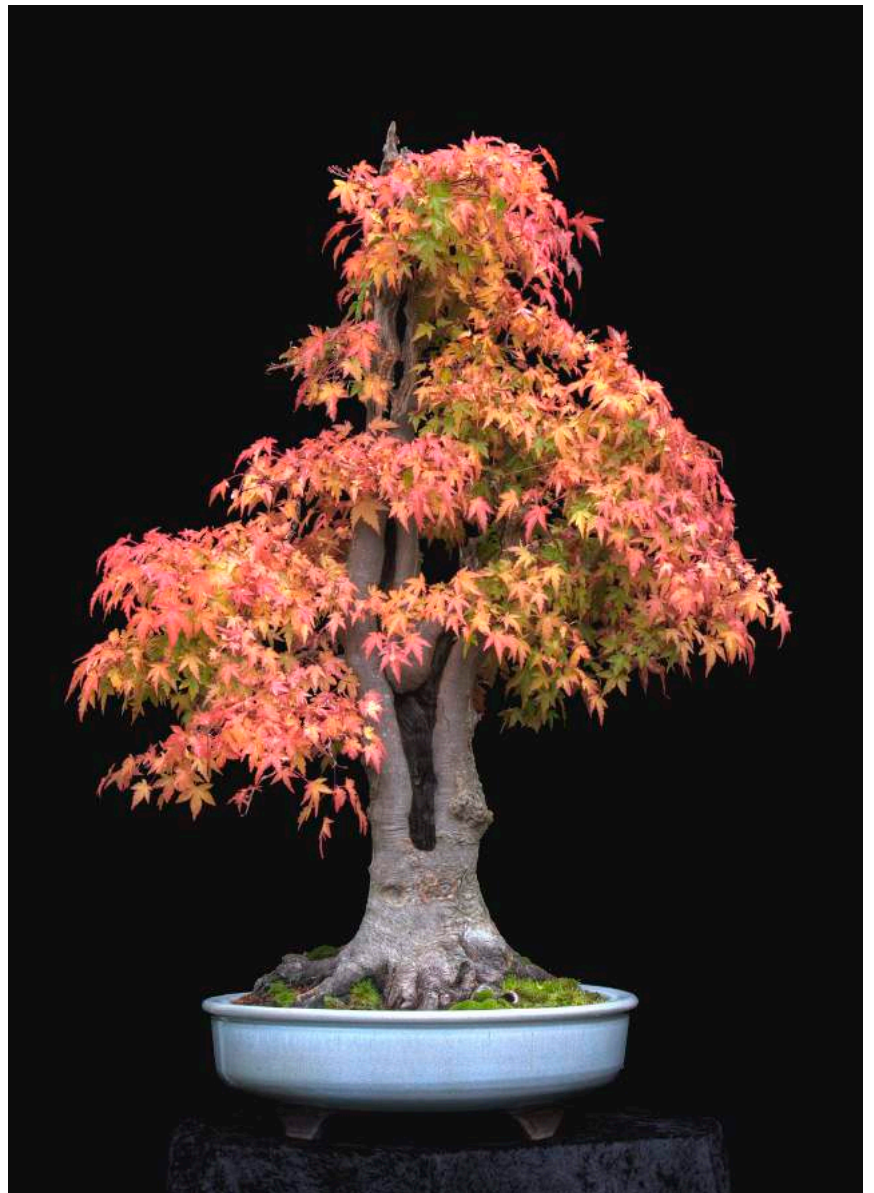
It's impossible to separate the artist from his creation, and Elandan is a creation like no other. To introduce you to a closer understanding of Daniel Robinson, who he is, and why he works and thinks as he does, I have to introduce you to Elandan where the heart of this artist is on display every day for all to see.

The garden itself is such a tremendous collection of individual articles that there is a great dissonance; there's the lack of tying together, other than its all natural kinds of things. What's the most wonderful thing is to have surprises. Surprises in life are wonderful. It's how you surround yourself with them that is really kind of terrific, because so many things are just mundane. So for me, I'm surprised when I find some ingredient, and then I'm surprised again when I inject it into my garden, and have people come around a corner and say, "Wow, look at this!"



As Daniel's work has evolved over time, an essential concept became apparent from tree to tree, be it the ones he collected, grew from seed, or acquired from a nursery. His pursuit of expressing ancient looking trees always reflected a history of cataclysm. This has become the tie which binds together the various approaches to his work. For Daniel, tree design should in some way express the cataclysms of the tree's life. Be it fictional or just enhancing what truly happened decades or centuries before, that history is essential.





It's the 'wow' thing that is so exciting about bonsai itself, as opposed to the commonality of designs we've seen before. I know what an s-curve is; I know what a triangle is. I've seen those before. So that's what this garden is to me, it's an opportunity to have great events at every vista and as you visit upon them, you turn a corner and there's another. That's the excitement, that's the surprise.

— Daniel

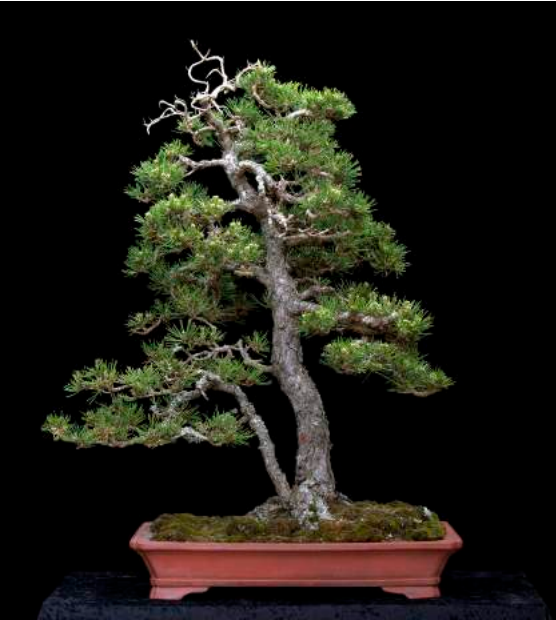
In the way that Daniel approaches his bonsai, he approaches Elandan with the same vision of taking greatness and bringing it together in a single space. Giant snags, hollowed trunks, trees, stones and water



Pond Cypress, *Taxodium ascendens*

greet you along every step. Those of us who have been with him for a while say that Daniel's motto should be 'Go big or go home.' Everywhere is presence and attention to detail so great you can barely believe the photos of the desolate flattened ground that was the canvas of this beautiful place. Great mounds of earth create hills, topped with varieties of maples and other trees, which nestle you along paths that seem to have been there for an age. Everywhere is stone from far off places to delight, given equal billing to the hundreds of posts planted into the ground showcasing bonsai.

There's nothing that says museum about the garden, but many things which speak of learning and process. Sometimes trees will have a line draping to another tree to show you where an air layer, having become its own lovely bonsai, was removed and then artfully sculpted. Or the round flat cut of a stub is left precariously connected at the tip of a trunk to show just how much wood was sculpted away to make the elegant lines below. Even when he's not there to shepherd people about the garden, Daniel wants guests to be able to see for themselves what is possible and be inspired.



Like Daniel's bonsai, Elandan is a continual evolution of beauty. There is no finishing a place like this, only nurturing and development. Every season has its magic, changing vistas of beauty to delight and surprise the eye.

The bright future:

Recent years have seen the rising star of naturalistic bonsai around the world. To that end, the demand for Daniel to come and share the wealth of his knowledge across the United States has risen greatly also. He can be seen at various conventions and club tours. His life story was written in 2010 by Will Hiltz in *Gnarly Branches, Ancient Trees: The Life and Works of Daniel Robinson – Bonsai Pioneer*. This book is available from Elandan Gardens.

The story is far from over though; the creative energy of the man continues to express itself in everything he touches. He has his seedlings growing in beds inconspicuously around the gardens of Elandan, and distant hills still beckon him in the hunt for great and ancient trees. That he beats all of his friends up and down the mountains at the age of 75, pry bar in hand and trees slung over his back, is an endless source of amusement and a testament to the undiminished drive of this unique and truly American artist. 🌲

About the Author: Victrinia Ridgeway is a bonsai artist who has studied with Daniel Robinson since 2006. Having learned to dive deeply early on, Victrinia has shown trees in two US National Bonsai Exhibitions and had a display of her and her husband Eric Ridgeway's work at the Pacific Bonsai Collection. She was also a contributing photographer for Daniel's biography, *Gnarly Branches, Ancient Trees*.

Top left; *Bougainvillea glabra*
 Top right; Hinoki Cypress,
Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Nana'
 Bottom left; Korean Black Pine,
Pinus thumbergii



Elegance & Grace **Bamboo Bonsai**

By Kunfang Su, Founding President,
Nantou County Bamboo & Stone Association, Taiwan

Translated from Chinese by Katie Chen

Bamboo and Chinese Culture

Bamboo has played a major role in Chinese culture, and carries a close relationship with ancient Chinese civilization. Shennong, a legendary ruler of ancient China, tested hundreds of herbs in order to learn their medicinal qualities, and discovered that bamboo has various remedial attributes. He also began to use bamboo to make farm tools. Leizu, the legendary Chinese empress who discovered silk, and created sericulture and the silk loom in the 27th century BC, used bamboo trays to raise silkworms. Cang-jei, one of the sole pioneers behind the creation of Chinese characters, who claimed to be an official historian of the Emperor, used a bamboo notebook to record historical events. It is apparent that bamboo has always been an integral part of the development of Chinese culture. Su Dongpo, a Chinese writer, poet, and painter of the Song Dynasty, once said: “I eat bamboo shoots, shelter under bamboo roofs, am transported via bamboo rafts, cook with bamboo utensils, wear bamboo-woven clothes, read bamboo books, write on bamboo paper, walk in bamboo shoes—I truly cannot live a day without bamboo.” Bamboo grows tall and straight, and the innermost regions of the stem are hollow, symbolizing uprightness, tenacity and the hollow heart (“humble” in Chinese) of human character. In Chinese culture, the bamboo, plum blossom, orchid and chrysanthemum are collectively referred to as the “Four Gentlemen” in Confucian ideology. The pine, the bamboo and the plum blossom are together known as the “Three Friends of Winter,” due to their perseverance under harsh winter conditions. Su Dongpo advocated that plum, bamboo, and stone, instead of pine, are the “Three Good Friends.” We can clearly see that bamboo plays a prevalent role in traditional Chinese culture. From the ancient Chinese poets who wrote poems about bamboo to all the people who plant bamboo in their gardens to enjoy the natural beauty of life, bamboo has shaped much of the history and civilization of the Chinese people.

Genus and The Geography of Bamboo

There are total of 65 bamboo genera that are divided into about 1,250 species. Different bamboo species are mainly found in the region between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. In Taiwan (Formosa), there are 28 kinds of native species. With the introduction of alien species, there are now more than 120 species of bamboo, with forest area rounding out more than 130,000 hectares. The main bamboo species are Makino Bamboo (*Phyllostachys Makinoi*),

"I eat bamboo shoots, shelter under bamboo roofs, am transported via bamboo rafts, cook with bamboo utensils, wear bamboo-woven clothes, read bamboo books, write on bamboo paper, walk in bamboo shoes—I truly cannot live a day without bamboo."

— Su Dongpo

Giant Timber Bamboo (*Bambusa oldhamii*), Moso Bamboo (*Phyllostachys pubescens*), Long-shoot Bamboo (*Bambusa dolichoclada*), Ma Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus latiflorus*), Thorny Bamboo (*Bambusa stenostachya*) and other economic bamboo species. *Yushania niitakayamensis* is a special bamboo species distributed in mountain areas as high as 3,300 meters which is the highest altitude bamboo species occurring in the Asian West Pacific region, next to the Himalayan bamboo. The upper portion of bamboo has stems, or culms, branches and leaves. A culm base is connected to underground stems or rhizomes. Rhizomes divide into nodes, the elongated internode on the underground roots is called the fibrous root, which is the real root of the bamboo. Bamboo can be classified by the flowers, underground stem (rhizome), bamboo sheath, bamboo stalks, bamboo leaves and growth conditions.

A relatively simple and common classification of bamboo is based on the underground stems (rhizome); it is divided into two categories:

The bamboo cultivated in tropical or subtropical areas are called **Tropical Clumping Bamboo**. The rhizome of this particular bamboo is closely connected and is formed like a ball. In this category, there are Ma Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus latiflorus*), Giant Timber Bamboo (*Dendrocalamopsis oldhamii*), Long-shoot Bamboo (*Bambusa dolichoclada*), Hedge Bamboo (*Bambusa multiplex*), Naibun Bamboo (*Arthrostylidium naibunensis*), Greenstripe Common Bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*), Purple Bamboo (*Phyllostachys nigra*), etc.

Bamboo cultivation in temperate zones creates bamboo with very long underground rhizomes that are relatively resistant to harsh, cold weather. This bamboo is called dispersed culm bamboo, or **Running Bamboo**, such as Moso Bamboo (*Phyllostachys edulis*), Makino Bamboo (*Phyllostachys makinoi*), Golden Bamboo (*Phyllostachys*



aurea), Square Bamboo (*Chimonobambusa quadrangularis*), Black Bamboo (*Phyllostachys nigra*) and Japanese Red Bamboo (*Phyllostachys iridescens*). Japanese Bamboo is good to grow for bonsai or landscape designs. Taiwan and Mainland China have both bamboo categories. America is also a country with both temperate and subtropical climate zones, where two types of bamboo can be grown well.

Simple Steps to Pot Bamboo

Bamboo, as we know, are some of the fastest-growing plants. They easily grow into large bamboo plants, but it is rather difficult to plant small bamboo into pots. However, there are a few steps to follow to ensure the planting is relatively manageable. Once you master these tactics, you will be able to appreciate elegant and high quality bamboo bonsai plants in just a short amount of time.

Potting Soil (medium):

When planting bamboo bonsai, the soil must possess the ability to retain water, while still providing porosity and free drainage. Sandy loam is the best choice, and clay loam the next, while akadama is also a solid choice. Basic nutrients and continuously

following up with nutrients are both very important to successfully planting a bamboo bonsai. As far as soil pH is concerned, slightly acidic soil is preferred.

Seedlings:

Avoid the winter time when planting bamboo, all of the other seasons are fine for young plants as long as the soil is attached. Generally speaking, March through April (spring time) is the best planting time for tropical clumping bamboo, and September and October (autumn season) are the proper time for hardy running bamboo. The methods are as follows:

Rhizome Propagation: For the running species of bamboo, their underground rhizomes can be propagated directly, however the culm should be no less than five nodes. By using underground rhizomes with culms one or two years old (rhizome should have at least three nodes and culms with roots) to plant into soil, be sure to place the plant under shade and maintain moisture. Some leaves must be removed in order to prevent evaporation.

Offshoot Propagation: This method is commonly used for the tropical clumping bamboo with offshoots. Plant at least three offshoot culms with fibrous roots together into the soil, prune the roots if they are too



long. Keep the newly planted bamboo in a cool, shady place and properly water the plant. Remove the extra leaves.

Cutting Propagation: We may use cut bamboo culms to plant directly into the soil. Since the failure rate of this method is high, we do not suggest that beginners try this method on bamboo propagation.

Seed Propagation: For some clumping bamboo, we can directly sow the seeds into the soil. Bamboo should first develop shoots that grow into culms, and then produce roots. The bamboo seeds need to be properly cleansed (sterilization) before planting. Bamboo seeds should be immersed in a rooting hormone solution, (Naphthalene Acetic Acid or NAA), to facilitate rooting. Soak overnight and remove from the solution to place in a cool, dry environment during the daytime, repeat 2 to 3 times.

Air Layering Propagation: This is another propagation method for bamboo bonsai.

Cultivation Environment:

For the tropical clumping bamboo, the best growing environment is from sea level to an altitude of 500 meters, with an average temperature above approximately 25°C.

For hardy running bamboo, the best growing environment is 500 meters above sea level or higher, with an average temperature of about 15° to 25°C.

Both types of bamboo require an environment with good air circulation; if the circulation is poor, the plants are prone to infection by pests and diseases.

Watering:

In general, bamboo grows best with ample water, but the root is not efficient in water retention. Therefore, watering the plant is very important, especially for bamboo grown in pots and containers that do not retain moisture as well as bamboo grown in the ground. As long as the soil allows for drainage, overwatering is not a concern.

If the potted plant is placed outdoors, it needs to be watered at least once a day in the winter, and twice a day in the summer. If the potted plant is placed indoors, it needs watering once every two days in the summer season, and once every three days in the winter. For indoor plants, good ventilation is the key.

In order to grow healthy and strong bamboo, it is necessary to adequately control the water content in the soil, otherwise bamboo culm will grow thin and long. Spray water on the soil to keep appropriate moisture in the pot. We can always use liquid fertilizer dissolved in water, because adding fertilizer to bamboo can allow the plant to grow vigorously and yield vibrant leaves, while keeping the moss green and lush.

Sunlight:

Essentially, bamboo is a semi-sunshine plant, but when bamboo grows new, young shoots, sufficient sunlight is important to promote new culm growth. Lacking sunlight will cause the bamboo culm to grow



slim and distorted. Usually, if the potted bamboo is placed indoors for four to five days, it ought to be moved outdoors to gain a bit of sunlight for several days. Tropical clumping bamboo needs 20% to 30% shade, temperate hardy running bamboo needs 40% to 50% shade.

Fertilization:

Potted bamboo does not need much fertilization, but an adequate amount of fertilizer will promote healthy growth and development. In the early planting period, mix a small amount of compost into the soil as basic fertilization to increase soil nutrients for the growth of the plant. Fertilizers high in nitrogen and potassium content are very well suited for top dressing application. The best time to apply fertilizer to bamboo is in spring and autumn. Summer and winter are not appropriate times.

A Brief Introduction to The Nantou Bamboo & Stone Association

The Nantou County Bamboo & Stone Association was founded in February 2011, just over three years ago. It is the first organization to be associated with bamboo bonsai in Taiwan. In the beginning, the association was derived of a group of people who were enthusiastic about bamboo bonsai, plant bonsai and ornamental stones. Currently, the number of members has increased from the initial 30 people to more than 60 active affiliates. The members are from all different professions and fields of work, however, most members are residents of Zhushan in Nantou County. Zhushan, literally translated to "bamboo mountain" in Chinese, uses 80% of their land to grow bamboo. QingSan Bamboo Cultural Park in Zhushan, boasts more than 120 bamboo species, and provides local resident members an excellent environment for creating bamboo bonsai. About one third of our members have devoted themselves to bamboo bonsai creations. Every year, we hold an exhibition of bamboo bonsai works that our members have made throughout the entire year. The purpose of this annual event is for our members to discover and recognize each other's works, and to promote the culture of bamboo bonsai to the public. We hope that through the high-quality and high-level bamboo bonsai creations, we can enhance society's living standards, thereby promoting social harmony. 🌿

Pots and Moss:

When choosing a pot for bamboo, long (about 20 to 30 cm in length) and deep pots are recommended for beginning cultivation of the plant. You might consider oval and shallow pots when repotting to display the bamboo. The presentation pot size is usually 30 to 45 cm, plain in color and simple in design. For an indoor display, use shallow pots without drainage holes, that is covered with moss atop the soil for a neat presentation of the bamboo bonsai. When we water the plant, we not only keep the moss green, but we also add moisture and nutrients to the soil. The moss spores will germinate and grow again, if we nurse it well.

Presentation and Pruning:

In order to increase the overall aesthetic of the bamboo bonsai and to enhance the artistic goals, we may decorate the pot with some natural stones, small accessories and cover the soil later with moss. However, it is important to keep the entire arrangement simple and elegant, avoid over-decorating.

Bamboo plants are not originally produced as small plants. It takes a reasonable amount of time and technique to grow them into the size we want for bamboo bonsai. Also, pruning is necessary to maintain miniaturization, in order to keep the bamboo shoots from growing in different directions or sizes during shooting season in long term cultivation. These shaping techniques are very important in the bonsai cultivation for an overall natural and elegant appearance.

Pests and Diseases:

Bamboo is often infected by pests and diseases. The most common pests are most likely biological and come in the form of insects such as scales, mites, aphids, etc. Once the pests are found, they need to be quickly controlled. We strongly suggest regularly monitoring the bamboos with vigilance for any pests, and spraying non-chemical treatments commonly used in horticulture. 🌿



less is more

Recipient of the BCI Award of Excellence; *Cryptomeria sp.*

By Francesco Damini, Italy

Introduction by Massimo Bandera, Italy

Translation by Joe Grande, Canada



At the recent Arcobonsai exhibition, a Japanese Cedar that I saw for the first time had an incredible impact on me, so small and yet so much a *tree*, so suggestive.

When you experience particular emotions from a bonsai, whether the tree is strong and formal, elegant and refined, or informal, you can try to analyze the aesthetic values and delve into the emotional experiences that a bonsai masterpiece can provide.

What comes to mind with this tree is what the Japanese literati describe as a “suggestion of feelings,” a world of innuendo, relationships and evocations, where “less is more,” where a suggestion is enough to spark the emotional imagination of the viewer. This suggestive power is a poetic ideal that evokes by implication.

Francesco Damini’s Japanese Cedar has an amazing force, yet the absence of its large size is obvious: it is very small! A small tree that suggests a cedar of great size. This is the tree I selected for the BCI Excellence Award.

Afterwards, I asked Francesco about the tree’s history and following, in his words, is the story of this small wonder.

In 2000, I purchased a beautiful Japanese Cedar, *Cryptomeria sp.*, a big bush about 60 cm high, in a training pot from Shozo Tanaka, one of the many dealers at the Arcobonsai event. I was attracted by the beautiful surface roots, the taper in the first part of the trunk and above, the extremely compact and miniature foliage, ideal for making small branch pads to create a small bonsai that would please me.

The idea I had in mind was to use only the first two opposite branches, eliminating the apex to a height of about 8 cm, and train them to become the first branch, and by straightening the second, to become the new apex.

Carlo Oddone, our teacher at Arco Bonsai Club and under whom I had the good fortune to get closer to the world of bonsai, suggested this approach, and to repeat it at different heights, to get more taper to be able to manage the plant according to the concept. It’s definitely a slow process but it results in a very



natural bonsai, or as Carlo says, give your plants a tree-like quality.

The following year, in spring, I placed the plant in another training pot and took the opportunity to clean up the roots by cutting away the larger ones close to the trunk. I carried out the removal of the apex and the straightening of the second branch to build the future apex.



Top; Francesco Damini and his prized Cryptomeria

Bottom, left to right; photos from 2006, 2008 and 2013.

In the 4 years following I fertilized regularly, began forming the primary branching and giving structure to the first branch, wiring even the tiniest twigs.

In 2006, on the occasion of the second transplant, I could not resist the temptation to see the plant in a nice pot and, after making sure that the root ball was well-formed, it was repotted in a container that would host the tree until 2012, during which time I slowly continued to refine the branch pads.

I never used scissors unless it was to remove a few woody shoots growing beyond the intended shape. Instead I continued to pinch the annual growth to the desired length with my fingers to shape the branch pads a little at a time.

In late winter I would remove dried needles from internal twigs by passing every branch between my

fingers to loosen the old needles. This makes the structure of the pads more visible and allows light to penetrate and stimulate the formation of more buds inside, which ultimately will replace branches that outgrow the intended design.

Two years ago I repotted the plant in a pot that fits the current structure well but is not yet the final pot, and I continued training the back because I had overlooked this side (an error which I tend to make with other plants also).

In the future I will work to strengthen the apex, which today is not well defined, and to better refine the small branches that make up the main foliage pads, thinning them to increase the transparency of the structure.

I've never had any problems with pests and I always use an organic fertilizer. The potting medium consists of 60% pumice, 20% akadama, 15% potting soil and 5% humus, irrigation is rather intense (but the plant has also endured dry periods).

I do not know what variety of Cryptomeria it is because I have not come across others so compact and with such a clear color to the new growth. Unfortunately many of the cuttings that I tried to root so far, only one has rooted and I cultivate it jealously, hoping to create another small bonsai. I regret not having the patience to air layer the top instead of throwing away 50 cm of the plant when I first acquired it.

The satisfaction of receiving an award from BCI and BCI Director, Massimo Bandera, at Arcobonsai 2014 makes me very proud of my work, but I share this with all my club and in particular with Gabriele Sbaraini, president of Arco Bonsai Club without whom our wonderful event would not exist and maybe not even the club itself.

It is only because of the serenity, friendship, stimulation and advice of fellow club members that I was able to cultivate my passion and experience the joys that bonsai has to offer. 🌲



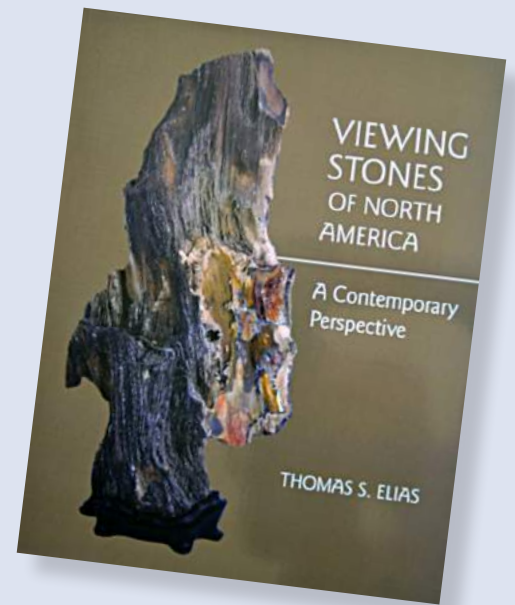
An Invitation to Discover *Viewing Stones of North America*

By Michael Collins McIntyre, Canada

Viewing Stones of North America by Dr. Thomas Elias has recently been published by Floating World Editions. Floating World is the creation of Ray Furse who continues to lead this high-quality, specialty press and provides deft editorial guidance. A quick browse through its catalog leaves no doubt about its niche. Floating World focuses, with but one exception, on East Asian culture. The Asian passion for stone collecting finds its way into the Floating World catalog standing proudly along with other forms of artistic expression—poetry, literature, painting, drama, myth, and history. Floating world has published two classics on stone collecting by Kemin Hu: *The Romance of Scholars' Stones* and *Modern Chinese Scholars' Rocks*. It has also published Tom Elias and Hiromi Nakaoji's wonderful work, *Chrysanthemum Stones—The Story of Stone Flowers*. Now, what about the one exception? It is of course *Viewing Stones of North America*.

North America! That is indeed a departure. In a recent conversation with Ray Furse, who is himself an East Asian scholar, I asked about this departure. Ray replied that a focus on North America and North American stones was in one sense indeed a departure for Floating World but in another sense it was not. Every art form has a history that provides a foundation for evolution of new and different—sometimes radically different—expressions. North American stones themselves and the means of displaying them can be very different from Asian stones and their display. Both types of stone are, however, imbued with the same ability to evoke and to represent nature. They have the capacity to reveal the power of nature, of flowing water, of blowing sand, and of geomorphological force. They share, as Tom Elias remarked in an earlier work, the power to “awaken... the soul.”¹

Both the publisher and the author are kindred spirits. Ray Furse describes himself as an informal stone collector. He confesses that, on every family trip that allows for the possibility, he returns with a stone. He admits that he may spend a little too much time gazing downward! These informally collected stones have deep and multiple meanings. They evoke the natural world to be sure but they also evoke the time when and the place where they were collected. They evoke shared memories. For Tom Elias, stone collecting is fully encompassing as is the scholarly work that serves to spread understanding of stone culture. He has devoted his life to the study and promotion of Asian culture. He was formerly Director of the U.S. National Arboretum, which houses the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. In addition to its superb collection of bonsai that includes, for example, John Naka's masterpiece, *Goshin*, the museum also has an astonishing collection of viewing stones. These are beautifully described in the book published by the National Bonsai Foundation with Tom's participation: *Awakening the Soul*. Tom is presently Chairman of the Viewing Stone Association of North America and President of Bonsai Clubs International.



Thomas S Elias 2014.

Viewing Stones of North America A Contemporary Perspective

Published by Floating World Editions, Inc. 276 pp.

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\$50 USD



Figure 2; *Unnamed*
Caledonia Mine, Upper Peninsula, Michigan
Rick Stiles Collection
13.5 x 6 x 4 inches (35 x 15 x 10 cm)

Figure 3; Tom Elias with veteran stone collector, Ken McLeod searching for stones in a California riverbed.



The positions that Tom has held and currently holds have afforded contact with the most accomplished stone artists and authorities in the world. He also has contact with many stone collectors in North America who specialize in the collection and artistic display of indigenous material. He has witnessed a deepening frustration that arises from futile attempts to force North American material into Asian forms. The geomorphology of North America is varied in the extreme. Consider the sand carved stones of the desert, the stones of the Canadian Shield, and mineral stones. They are very different from one another and very different from most Asian stones. Cultures borrow from one another, but not in slavish imitation. For cultural sharing to be viable, both adoption and adaptation are necessary. Consider the stone depicted in Figure 2. It is a piece of copper ore from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. While it has a form similar to that seen in Chinese scholars' stones the material and the display of cast bronze clearly constitutes a powerful

Figure 4; *Sitting Bison*
Eel River, Northern California
Brent Wilson Collection
12 x 17 x 10 inches (30.5 x 43.2
x 25.4 cm)



adaptation of Asian forms and display. North American stones are not compromised exemplars of Asian stones. They are integral—having an élan and a form that reflects their origins. They have their own aesthetic. A perfect example is the striking piece of petrified wood from Tom's own collection that is displayed on the book's cover. He notes that all of the organic material in this specimen has been replaced with minerals. It evokes the American West and does so prepossessingly. The purpose of this wonderful book is to further the understanding of the beauty and spirit of North American stones. It is a warm and generous invitation to discover the indigenous stones of North America.

In this context, "discover" has two meanings and this double entendre is quite intentional. The first derives from the astonishing array of viewing stones presented in the book. They are beautiful, moving, and evocative, they do indeed awaken the soul. "Discover" also reflects the fact that the stones depicted are, quite literally, underfoot—underfoot and waiting to be discovered. In this sense the book is an invitation to activity. Figure 3 shows Tom Elias with veteran stone collector, Ken McLeod searching for stones in a California riverbed.

How does *Viewing Stones of North America* accomplish its objectives? I have already touched on the synergy shared by the author and the publisher. It seems that synergies are often at the heart of complex, successful undertakings. The book is divided into two parts. The first is a set of essays by several authors who are expert in different areas of stone appreciation. Tom Elias writes about stone appreciation in the East and West. In so doing he applies, adapts, and transforms criteria by which Asian stones were judged to North American stones. Paul Gilbert provides a fascinating historical piece on the role that stones and stone appreciation had for the native peoples of North America. Rick Stiles examines the foundation of North American viewing stones in Asian cultures and proceeds to examine the transformation that inevitably occurs when a cultural tradition is first adopted and subsequently adapted. Richard Turner provides a fascinating piece titled "Viewing Stones and Contemporary Art." The essays are lively, informative, and well-illustrated. They pair well with the second part of the book, which consists of 151 splendid color plates that illustrate the range and beauty of indigenous stones. When Tom Elias was preparing to write the book, he sent a letter asking noted stone collectors to consider contributing photographs of their stones. He expected that approximately twenty of the invitees would respond and that, at most, he would receive 175 photographs. In actuality, sixty-three collectors responded and submitted well over 300 photographs. These represent an astonishing variety of stones collected from very diverse environments. The breadth of participation allows for a visual course in stone appreciation that is exceptional. Synergies do indeed underlie excellence.

The variety and aesthetic appeal of the displayed stones is a strength of this book and deserves further comment. Some stones reflect North American themes. The *Sitting Bison* (Figure 4) depicts a theme of importance especially to the Native Americans of the Great Plains. *Arch at Rattlesnake Canyon* (Figure 5) represents a North American location—Rattlesnake Canyon in Colorado—that contains nine arches. It is located within the area known as the Black Ridge Canyons. The stone is displayed in a distinctively modernist, minimalist fashion that in no way competes with the ruggedness of the stone. Other stones represent Asian themes. *A Thousand Cranes* (Figure 6) presents a distinctively Asian theme. The title has double significance as it may refer to the fabled displays of one thousand origami cranes. It also is the title of a novel by Yasunari Kawabata that contributed to his receiving the Nobel Prize for literature. *Field of Peonies* (Figure 7) is a river stone from the Colorado River yet it bears a striking resemblance to Asian Chrysanthemum stones so aptly chronicled in Tom and Hiromi's earlier book.

There is quite a striking form of synergy found in the book. It is a form of synergy that Richard Turner points toward in his essay that elevates the harmony between a viewing stone and its display to the level of compelling art. It is a form of synergy that is much more than simply additive. Consider the copper ore stone and its cast bronze display depicted in Figure 2. The powerful artistic impact that Rick Stiles has created derives both from the stone and from its display to be sure; however, it is the harmony, the synergy



between stone and display that elevates the combination to high art. The whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. I find the same harmony and synergy in the *Arch at Rattlesnake Canyon* (Figure 5). There is a unity between the stone and its modernist display that, at one and the same time, creates artistic depth and marks the combination as distinctively North American. The good news is that the jury, which, with Tom, chose the stones for *Viewing Stones of North America* have created a treasure trove of viewing stones at their most artful.

Figure 5; *Arch at Rattlesnake Canyon*
South Park, Colorado
Larry Jackel Collection
5.5 x 8 x 3.5 inches (14 x 20 x 9 cm)



Figure 6; *A Thousand Cranes*, Northern California. Peter Bloomer Collection.
8 x 6.5 x 4 inches (20.3 x 16.5 x 10.2 cm)

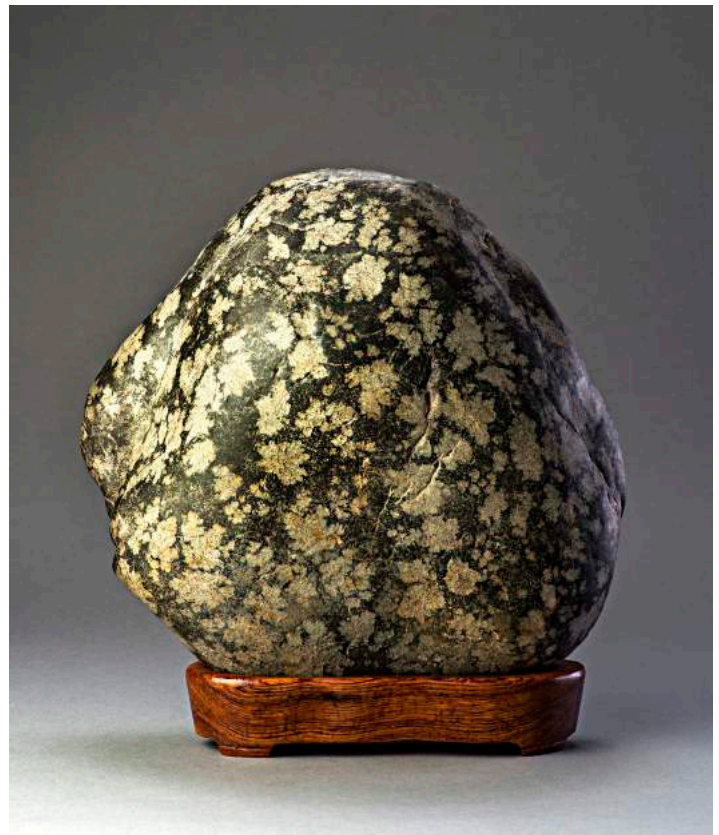


Figure 7; *Field of Peonies*, Colorado River, Colorado. Paul Gilbert Collection.
12 x 12 x 5 inches (30 x 30 x 13 cm)

I can't resist giving a bit more of a preview to whet the appetite. Figure 8, *Grand Duchess*, depicts a stone collected from the northern shore of Georgian Bay on Lake Huron by Tony Ankowicz. He also created the

wonderfully simple and complementary display. His work was recently featured in *BCI Bonsai and Stone Appreciation Magazine* and is characterized by an understated harmony between stone and display. His displays, in their simplicity and reverence for wood, magnify the impact of the stones they hold. His work brought to mind the aesthetic that informed the work of the famous designer of wooden furniture, George Nakashima. In a manner reflective of the “adopt and adapt” theme articulated earlier, the desert stone presented in Figure 9 captures the sculpting power of windswept sand. The impression created by this stone is enhanced by the understated elegance of Cliff Johnson's display. The power of *Water Poem* (Figure 10) is palpable. It was carved by the flow of the Cache la Poudre River in Colorado. The elegantly simple mahogany base enables the stone's magnificence to shine.

In closing, I would like to return to the twofold invitation to discover and to discover. *Viewing Stones of North America* provides all that the reader needs to discover in the first sense. It presents an art form that shares a historical foundation with Asian forerunners but is transformative rather than derivative. It provides expert background to allow the collector proceed with informed confidence and a personal sense of the earth and its history. The second sense of discovery falls to the reader although stones do their part. This message is universal—it applies to all environments and cultures where stones are collected and create meaning in the lives of those who cherish them. Larry Ragle writing in *Awakening the Soul* tells us: “Rocks, it would seem have a voice. They speak to us. They beg us to pick them up. On occasion they convince us to take them home.” He goes on to quote Richard Ota: a stone “should evoke memories of the day you found it, the difficulty of the search, the heat, or the cold, even the mood you possessed at the time.” This quotation is very much in the spirit of the invitation to collect that is implicit in *Viewing Stones of North America*. It sits happily with the view of collecting described in conversation by Ray Furse and is charmingly evident in the face of the author, Tom Elias, in Figure 11. Tom has found a stone that interests him. Alive in the stone is much more than its aesthetic appeal. It holds the company of Ken McLeod, the beauty of the day and the location, the sound of the river, and the smell of the surrounding forest. Discovery of stones allows one to know everything about the origin of the stone. Discovery also allows the opportunity for the aesthetic and personal to fuse seamlessly in giving great meaning to the stone. Let the hunt begin. 🌲

Notes:

1. The phrase “Awaken the soul” derives from the title, *Awakening the Soul*, a work produced by the National Bonsai Foundation in 2000.

All figures and figure captions derive from *Viewing Stones of North America* with the exception of the two personal pictures supplied by Dr. Elias.

Figure 8; *Grand Duchess*
Northern shore of Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, Ontario, Canada
Tony Ankowicz Collection
23 x 5 x 4 inches (58.4 x 12.7 x 10.2 cm)



Figure 11; Tom has found a stone that interests him.





Figure 9; *Unnamed*
Desert, Southern California
Hanne Povlsen Collection
5 x 15 x 11 inches (12.7 x 38 x 28 cm)



Figure 10; *Water Poem*
Cache la Poudre River, Rocky Mountains, Colorado
Darrell Whitley Collection
12.3 x 16.5 x 9 inches (26 x 42 x 23 cm)

Hard Wood, Easy Bonsai

Carpinus orientalis

Also known as **Oriental Hornbeam** and **Ironwood**.

Text and Photos by Danilo Scursatone, Italy

Translation by Danilo Scursatone and Joe Grande



C*arpinus orientalis*, or hornbeam, a deciduous tree, can be found in eastern and southern Europe and in some regions of Asia. In Italy, *Carpinus orientalis* is present in the center and south in clusters, mainly in hilly areas. The soil that hosts the *Carpinus orientalis* is neutral to neutral-alkaline and in some cases also siliceous. Its morphology, typical of *betullaceae* (Birch), is evident in its elegant manner with heights reaching up to 5 to 8 meters. The light gray trunk presents very interesting grooves and ribs, its green foliage in the spring becomes bright yellow in autumn. In winter, after the leaves drop and the tree is completely bare, you can admire and appreciate the perfect architecture of this spectacular deciduous species.

From the point of view of the bonsai, this species is a particularly suitable starting material because it possesses all the qualities necessary to miniaturization.

Both cultivars or specimens collected from nature, *Carpinus orientalis* is well suited to the environmental conditions that occur in the transition from the hill-sides to containers. Plants in bonsai pots experience extreme temperature changes over the course of the seasons that impact heavily on the root of the tree and then on its health and survival over the time. These

extreme conditions mean that many species are not suited to bonsai pots, but not the *Carpinus orientalis*, which grows without any problem.

It is this excellent adaptability that allows you to successfully apply bonsai techniques appropriate to the shaping the tree.

In shaping a bonsai, it is possible to start with only the trunk. Depriving the tree of its branching, stimulates the activation of latent buds present in the trunk, which in turn generate new branches. With proper pruning, the apical trunk can promote the release of latent buds in an area useful for the formation of a new apex.

A careful selection of the primary branching produced, will lay the foundation to build the entire crown of the tree in a few years.

But it is precisely in refining and finishing secondary branching that *Carpinus orientalis* expresses its best features. With targeted pruning, well-distributed and fine branching will form, and the foliage becomes miniaturized (1 to 3 cm in length) in a completely natural way.

In refining the shape, we must keep in mind that the *Carpinus orientalis* grows vigorously and to highlight its elegant architecture, even in periods of foliage, it is necessary to prune in order to create gaps such as to enable a view of the trunk and branching in a perfect balance of branches, trunk and leaves.

It is often said that the best aspect of the hornbeam is visible in the winter season, because it is possible to appreciate their fine texture, the ash-gray trunk and the very fine and light branching. Although I agree with this statement, the other seasons, such as spring and autumn, are definitely important in capturing the charm of this particular broadleaf.

In spring, little buds emerge, which in a few days give rise to light green foliage that clearly emphasizes the concept of rebirth, an invitation to catch every detail of those tiny leaves with serrated margins that characterize this species.



In autumn, the season of transition, you can appreciate the color of the foliage, a beautiful bright yellow that attracts the viewer's attention calling to mind the imminence of winter and its quiescence. But as soon as all the leaves drop and the tree is bare, seed heads appear with numerous nutlets covered with leafy bracts. Close-up they look like inverted ears, hanging down from the bare branches ready to release the seeds that when mature, will create new subjects to colonize more territory.

A comparison between the many varieties of *Carpinus* in our ecosystem, I would place the

Carpinus orientalis in first place for bonsai, along with the well-known *Carpinus turczaninowii* of oriental origin (China/Japan/Korea), that in autumn expresses its most interesting feature—pink-orange-red leaves, unique to this species.

Considering that the *Carpinus turczaninowii* is difficult to find and normally comes with a high cost, *Carpinus orientalis*, more available in Italy, is recommended as starting material. Surely this choice will not be second class to a *turczaninowii* and will repay the bonsai artist, providing full satisfaction that grows day by day, as it has been for me over the years. 🌲

Some species suitable for bonsai:

Carpinus betulus: hornbeam, European hornbeam, European ironwood. Its autumn color is yellow-green, and it has grey bark. Hardy in zones 5-7.

Carpinus caroliniana (C. americana): American hornbeam, blue beech, water beech. Native to eastern North America. Nice orange and yellow autumn show. Hardy in zones 3-8.

Carpinus coreana: Korean hornbeam. Has very twiggy branching and a spectacular fall display with leaves that turn yellow, orange and red, sometimes in bands on the same leaf!

Carpinus japonica: Japanese hornbeam, Japanese carpinus. Nice flowers in spring. Smooth pink-grey bark.

Carpinus laxiflora: Japanese hornbeam, Loose-flowered hornbeam. Smooth, grey-beige trunk, small, glossy leaves.

Carpinus tschonoskii: Yedoensis hornbeam, Yeddo hornbeam

Carpinus turczaninowii: Korean hornbeam, Turkish hornbeam. Yet another hornbeam offering a wonderful fall display. Has very small leaves.

Bibliography: see <http://www.bonsai-bci.com/files/Hornbeam.pdf>



BONSAI TRIENNALE 2014

Three nations One passion

Text and photos by Gudrun Benz, Germany

Additional photos by Marcel Drechsler



Top; Pillnitz Castle: Riverside Palace seen from the Pleasure Garden side with fountain.

Bottom; Numerous visitors came to see the bonsai show held in the natural light of the orangery.

Bonsai Triennale is the name of a collaboration between two national bonsai clubs, the Polish Bonsai Association and the Czech Bonsai Association as well as the regional bonsai club of middle-eastern Germany, the “Mitteldeutsche Bonsai Regionalverbände. V.” (MBR).

Since 2011, they have organized a three-day exhibition each year, alternatively in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. The goal is not only to show quality bonsai to specialists and the general public but also to win new members for this fascinating hobby.

This year's Triennale, for the second time, took place at the orangery of Pillnitz Castle near Dresden/Saxony. Pillnitz is one of the baroque residences that August the Strong (1660 – 1733) had built in and around Dresden, the capital of his electorate. This summer pleasure palace is located several kilometers upriver on the Elbe River and surrounded by various gardens. In 1717 the castle was transformed into an oriental

Awards, Nominations and Prizes of the Triennale 2014

Triennale Award: *Pinus sylvestris*, Bunjing of Wojciech Nawotka, Poland. This award went to Poland for the first time.

Nominations:

Crataegus laevigata of Uwe Krötenheerdt, Germany

Larix decidua of Agata Wawrczyniak, Poland

Juniperus Sabina of Oldrich Kaspar, Czech Republic

Zelkova nire of Marcel Drechsler, Germany

Rhododendron indicum of Marcel Drechsler, Germany

Acer palmatum of Jürgen Denk, Germany

Shohin display (mini bonsai on a shelf) of Andrea Schröder and Klaus Mönch, Germany

Carpinus coreana of Falko Schubert, Germany

Pinus sylvestris of Milan Karpišek, Czech Republic

The special prize of the host,

Mitteldeutscher Bonsai Regionalverband:

Pinus sylvestris of Włodzimierz Pietraszko, Poland

The special prize of Czech Bonsai Association:

Larix decidua of Vladimira Komurkova, Czech Republic

EBA Certificate of Merit:

Tilia cordata of Uwe Krötenheerdt, Germany



Left; Winner of the Triennale: a *Pinus sylvestris* of Mr. Wojciech Nawotka from Poland, photo by Marcel Drechsler.



Middle row, left to right; demonstration by Tony Tickle, England; demonstration by Marek Gaida, Poland, left; demonstration by René Kloss, Germany,

Bottom row, left to right; demonstration by Pavel Kowalik from Poland (in the middle), assisted by Włodzimierz Pietraszko (right); demonstration by Michal Bural and Libor Slatinca, Czech Republic.

Photos by Marcel Drechsler



palace, the roofs of which clearly show Chinese influence, fashionable at the time.

The orangery of the huge garden is well lit up by day light, favorable for a bonsai show. There were about 80 specimens on a table top display, 46 conifers and 34 deciduous trees. In contrast to many other international bonsai exhibitions in Europe, there were only 20 imported trees from Asia, indicating there was a great variety of species indigenous to Europe. Native bonsai are easier to keep in good health because of their adaptation to our climate. Many visitors came mainly on Saturday and Sunday to see many fine bonsai.

Along with the exhibition, a supporting program full of variety with bonsai demonstrations and lectures

Top left; Nomination:
Crataegus laevigata of Mr. Uwe Krötenheerdt, Germany

Top right; Nomination:
Larix decidua of Mrs. Agata Wawrczyniak, Poland

Middle; Nomination: *Juniperus Sabina* of Mr. Oldrich Kaspar, Czech Republic

Bottom left and detail of nebari;
Nomination: *Acer palmatum* of Mr. Jürgen Denk, Germany





Top left; Special prize of Middle-eastern Bonsai Regionalverband: *Pinus sylvestris* of Mr. Włodzimierz Pietraszko, Poland



Top right; *Juniperus chinensis* of Barbara and Herbert Obermayer, Germany

Middle left; *Juniperus chinensis* of Mr. Antonin Ondraš, Czech Republic

Middle right; EBA Certificate of Merit (European Bonsai Association): *Tilia cordata* of Mr. Uwe Krötenheerdt, Germany

Bottom left; *Carpinus coreana* of Mr. Marcel Drechsler, Germany

Bottom right; *Bougainvillea glabra* of Mr. Miroslav Horský, Czech Republic





Top left; Nomination: *Zelkova nire* of Mr. Marcel Drechsler, Germany

Top right; Nomination: *Rhododendron indicum* of Mr. Marcel Drechsler, Germany

Middle left; *Larix decidua* of Mr. Václav Novák, Czech Republic

Middle right; *Pinus sylvestris* of Mr. Włodzimierz Pietraszko, Poland

Bottom left; *Olea europea* by Mr. Josef Valuch, Czech Republic

Bottom right; *Potentilla fruticosa* of Mrs. Jirka Novák, Czech Republic



was offered. As special guest, Tony Tickle from England, gave a stimulating demonstration and lecture on bonsai. In addition, visitors could purchase bonsai and all kind of bonsai related items at the traders' area. At an information station, newcomers and advanced bonsai practitioners could get into contact with bonsai work groups in their area or get advice with problems how to take care of a bonsai.

The program included a bus tour to the Castle Hohnstein, about 20 km up-river on the Elbe. It is spectacularly situated on a rock ledge and therefore a popular tourist spot.

The date of the social evening with a rich buffet and award presentations was changed from Saturday to Friday because of the football match, Germany – Algeria, for the world championship in Brazil. The evening meeting under the motto “Get Together” gave the opportunity for a chat with friends and to get into contact with other bonsai enthusiasts. There were about 50 participants so an intimate atmosphere was possible.

To sum up, Bonsai Triennale 2014 was a successful event. 🌲

The Bougie Man from Koloa, Kauai

Sam Lee, Hawaii, USA

Sam Lee, a long-time BCI member, first came to our attention when he entered photographs of his beautiful Bougainvilleas in a recent BCI Photo Competition. Both the quality of his trees and the photos were exemplary. After exchanging a few e-mails regarding the photo competition, we learned that Sam has over a hundred trees in his collection, including many more bougainvilleas of substantial size. Other species under development include *Casuarina*, *Pemphis*, *Premna microphylla*, *Juniperus procumbens nana*, *Vitex rotundifolia*, *Ficus microcarpa*, Brazilian pepper, Guava, Lantana, Hibiscus, Tamarind, Olive, Acacia, Chinese privet, Paper bark, Baobab and more.

Now retired from the work force, Sam started bonsai in 1997 when he joined the local club, Kauai Bonsai, a 40-year-old society dedicated to promoting bonsai on the small island. Sam's mentor was William Kaneakua who has been practising bonsai on Kauai for over 50 years. "His kindness and willingness to share his knowledge was singularly important to my developing a passion for bonsai during the early years," says Sam. After a short five-year period, Sam had soaked up all that Kauai Bonsai had to offer and wanted more. Soon after, Sam and five other bonsai enthusiasts looking for a more intense approach to developing bonsai, organized a study group called Kauai Bonyu Kai, a name given to the group by Kenji Miyata. The group meets monthly, mounting exhibits two to three times a year and spends considerable effort preparing the exhibit spaces such as painting the interior and whatever else has to be done to present a beautiful exhibit. One of the group's most interesting exhibit venues is the Lawai Peace Garden at the annual Day of Compassion Festival.

There are no bonsai nurseries on Kauai so sourcing material is difficult. Sam's training material comes from digging trees from old landscapes or from the wild, supplemented by occasional imports. Sam has become an expert in the process of importing trees from Indonesia, Taiwan and Japan, learning to navigate the complex maze of import permits, transport manifests and border crossings. His trees are trained with wire, and clip and grow methods. He is fond of the deadwood look, so carving is an important part of his practice. Sam spends as much time on bonsai activity as he can—literally hours per day, enjoying the rewards of his hobby and passion. 🌳

Top 3 photos; *Bougainvillea glabra*. Top right is Sam's first Bougie. Inset; *Vitex rotundifolia*. Bottom left; some of Sam's carving projects. Bottom right; *Juniperus chinensis*.



The 2014 BCI Distinguished Service Award

Recipient, Pauline Muth, USA

BCI Director and Executive Officer

American bonsai artist and instructor, Pauline Muth, was awarded the 2014 BCI Distinguished Service Award at the awards banquet during the recent convention in the Gold Coast, Australia August 23, 2014. Pauline first became active in BCI in 2001 when she helped with a convention. The following year, she joined the board of directors and served in varying capacities during the next twelve years. She has served as the Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Executive Director and most recently as Treasurer, before leaving the board in late August of this year. Pauline worked with past BCI President Linda Brant to bring BCI and the American Bonsai Society (ABS) together as they held several joint BCI/ABS conventions in North America. Muth has been a leading figure in American bonsai for many years and been an important contributor to BCI. She is the owner of PFM Bonsai Studio in West Charlton, New York. BCI is pleased to recognize Pauline Muth for her many years of valuable service to BCI. 🌳



Pauline Muth, bonsai artist, and two trees in her collection; a Trident maple, *Acer buergerianum*, left, and a *Bougainvillia glabra*, above.

A Strong Supporter of Bonsai

Soeroso Soemopawiro, Indonesia

Bottom; Soeroso with his *Premna mycrophylla* landscape

Committee Chair, Grand Indonesian Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition 2014



Mr. Soeroso Soemopawiro has been trading in oil and gas since the 1970s. He has grown his business by entering the mining industry in 1991 and real estate in 2011.

Soeroso has been active since 1979 in HiswanaMigas (Association of Indonesian Oil and Gas Entrepreneurs), an association that unites the oil and gas entrepreneurs throughout Indonesia. Soeroso was first appointed the Head of HiswanaMigas Region 3 (covering the Jakarta and West Java areas), and a couple years later was appointed as the General Secretary of HiswanaMigas. Soon after that, he was appointed as the Chairman until 2001. Since 2001 to the present, Soeroso has served as Chairman of the HiswanaMigas Advisory Board.

Soeroso also served as a member of the Advisory Board of Kadin Indonesia (Indonesian Chambers of Trade and Industry).



From an early age, Soeroso has been fond of plants. In the early 2000, he started collecting rare plants, supporting many botanical organizations. One of them is an organization who collect *Adeniums*, comparatively rare and high value succulents commonly known as Desert Rose. He is the founder and one of the patrons of Jakarta Adenium Association.

His love for bonsai started in 2002 when he attended a bonsai exhibition held by PPBI (The Indonesian Bonsai Society). He then joined the organization and later appointed as the Advisor for Jakarta Chapter. He then started to collect bonsai and learned how to take good care of them. Bonsai, since then, has been his major hobby and a way to relax from the daily stress of business activities. Although he has many bonsai in his collection, he is very selective in choosing good specimens. Many of the bonsai in his collections have placed among the top ten category in many bonsai contests in Indonesia. A few of them even won the Best in Show in some national bonsai exhibitions.

He likes to go to international bonsai conventions abroad to compare the quality of bonsai in other countries. He has been the member of BCI for some years. His *Celtis* and *Plectronia horrida* were published in *The Best of BCI, 50 stones/50 trees/50 years*.

His strong support to The Indonesian Bonsai Society earned him an appointment as the Vice President of the 9th ASPAC (Asia Pacific) Bonsai & Suiseki Convention and Exhibition in Bali in 2007, a very successful convention that was appreciated by many participants.

Due to his strong commitment to Bonsai, The Indonesian Bonsai Society and his strong leadership, The Indonesian Bonsai Society and The Indonesian Suiseki Association decided to appoint him as the Chairman of The Grand Indonesian Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition in 2014. 🌲

Top left; *Juniperus chinensis*

Top right; *Plectronia horrida*

Bottom left; *Casuarina equisetifolia*

Bottom right; *Ixora coccinea*



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New Venue for the Noelanders Trophy XVI, in 2015

For the 16th time in a row the Bonsai Association Belgium will organize the “Noelanders Trophy” on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15, February 2015. What started more than 15 years ago as a local bonsai show has become possibly the best bonsai show in Europe!

The number of participants at the exhibition, annex contest, and traders increased over the years and the previous location didn't provide enough space anymore.

A new location in the city of Genk will allow the Trophy to continue to expand. This event hall, the “Limburghal”, has two halls: one is 4,000 square meters, the other is 2,000. Moreover the entrance hall, called “Agora”, is another space of 900 square meters where the bonsai vendor stands will be located.

About 50 vendors will have a booth at the Trophy. This will be a huge supermarket of bonsai, pre-bonsai, tools, pots, etc. Bonsai professionals and amateurs will find all items they need for their hobby. About 100 bonsai will be selected for the show.

Demonstrators: Ryan Neil (US), Salvatore Liporace (IT) and Seok Ju Kim (Korea) will show their skills in the new auditorium on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. On Saturday evening, the awards ceremonies and gala dinner will take place at the same location;

Catering is provided: there is a self-service restaurant and a brasserie at the exhibition hall. The parking facilities will hold up to 1,000 vehicles and many hotels are close by. 🌳

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Noelanders Trophy

XVI



IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

- **NEW DATE** February 14 - 15 2015
- **NEW LOCATION** LIMBURGHAL GENK

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Ryan Neil (USA)

Salvatore Liporace (IT)

Seok Ju Kim (Korea)

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BONSAI ASSOCIATION BELGIUM

NEW!

BCI 2015 PHOTO COMPETITION & ALBUM



The finalists of our new 2015 BCI Bonsai & Stone Photo Competition will be published in a high-quality hardcover book. Photos will be exhibited at the grand BCI Convention in Guangzhou, China on September 18 to 21, 2015.

Reserve your copy now!

Best of BCI 2015:

Viewing Stones and Bonsai

Hard cover, est. 200 pages, full color,
12 x 9 inches/305 x 228 mm
limited edition.
Pre-publication cost: \$50.00

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

Eligibility:

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

Formats:

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

- Make sure your photos are clear, well-lit without harsh shadows so that the judges can appreciate the quality and details of your trees and stones.
- Tips from photographers for taking good photos of your stones and trees are available on the BCI website. www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015
- An official entry form must accompany entries. Entry forms and instructions are available at www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015 or by request from Competition Committee Chair: Budi Sulisty; budisulistyo22@gmail.com
- The file name on the form must match the file name of the electronic files.
- Entries can be uploaded to the BCI website at: www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015.
- Entries that do not meet all criteria will be eliminated from the competition.
- Deadline for submission is April 30, 2015. No entries will be accepted after this date.

Entry forms are available on the BCI website
www.bonsai-bci.com/bestofbci2015

**Entry
Deadline
April 30
2015**

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

Budi Sulisty,
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