



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly
publication of the

BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Upcoming Events

January
2017

- January 15 10am-2pm **Mentorship 102** Milwaukie Center **Cancelled**
January 22 10am-2pm **Mentorship 101A** Milwaukie Center
January 24 7pm **BSOP monthly meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr
January 29 10am-2pm **Mentorship 101B** Milwaukie Center
February 5 10am-2pm **Mentorship 102** Milwaukie Center

Words From Your President

Hello to all! Once again I am at my desk and looking out the window to a Winter *not* wonderland. For a Fall/Winter that started out so warm, we are certainly paying that back big time. But on to better news.

Our January meeting will end the current boards two years and begin the new boards next two years. I won't dwell on that, as I will have a lot to say about the past two years at the general meeting but I do want to say that the board was quite dynamic and the members got behind us and things really have grown in those two short years...GO TEAM BSOP!

I can't express my thanks enough to all of the members that volunteer their time, their trees and other bonsai related items, to that success. I receive regular contacts from other clubs, not just from the USA, but recently from as far away as Australia, wanting information about how they can better model themselves after our club's success.

Some of it has to do with our general meetings and our 10 arenas of activity. Others want information about our outstanding mentorship programs or our Heritage Program and how we are able to grow our membership to such high numbers.

I do my best to send them the documents that can guide them, but I always let them know that the real reason we are doing so well is our members' willingness to fill in every needed task. And that our volunteer rate is very high and that the bonsai community of the greater Portland area is highly enthusiastic about bonsai and the club they represent.

So once again, a huge thank you for creating a club that has earned worldwide respect.

See you on the 24th in Milwaukie. As always, thank you for your trust, *See*

Goodbye & Hello

Wow what a winter! I hope that that my trees are surviving the cold snaps and that I won't lose too many. I guess the spring will tell. I hope everyone had as an enjoyable a holiday as did I, and are looking forward to getting back to work on trees soon. As repotting season approaches, our program for this month will be Josef Leibfried from Seattle giving us a presentation on pot selection and history. Josef is the VP of the Puget Sound Bonsai Association and an avid pot collector.

After two years as your Vice President of Programs, this is my final newsletter article. It has been a great experience. I learned a lot and I hope that I helped make the club better in some small way. The board I had the privilege to serve with is simply the best. Lee, Jan, Eileen, John & Phil...THANK YOU for all your help and hard work!

There are so many others to thank for their help and I could not have been able to be successful without you. Barry, George, Greg, Bill, JoAnne, Ron, Roger, Barbara, Scott, Don, Lyle, Pat, Andy, Liz, Bill, Karl, David, Wayne, Bob, Brian, Tony, Dane, Paula, Brandon, Patty, Debbie, Gretchen, Peter, Dean, John, Arlene, Alan, Scott, Dennis, Karen, Shannon, Robert, Steve, Deb, Jim, Robert, Harold and anyone else I have forgotten to mention, I so appreciate your volunteer help during my term.

I am very pleased that Lime Allen will be replacing me as your VP. I know that I am leaving the position in his very capable hands. I look forward to the exciting new things he has in store for the club.

So as one chapter closes, another one begins. I will still be around BSOP but in a different capacity. Before joining the board, I had begun a bonsai supply business but put it on hold to concentrate on my VP duties. Now I am back to being a vendor. PORTLAND BONSAI SUPPLY is the new name of my business and by the time you read this (or shortly after) my new web store will be live at portlandbonsaisupply.com. BSOP members can shop the store online and then email or call an order into me and either pick the order up at the next meeting or I can arrange for pick up/delivery if you need it sooner. There are no shipping charges for local orders. I'm starting out with wire, tools, soils, and some accessories and pots. I will be adding more items soon. I will also have a vendor table at the meetings for you to shop. Look for more information and specials coming soon. If you need akadama, I have it now. If you have already preordered I will deliver at the January meeting. You can always contact me at stevenleaming@gmail.com.

It's a real honor to be a part of BSOP.....the best bonsai club in the world!

Steve Leaming, VP-Programs

Newsletter Advertisements

BSOP members with bonsai related businesses may place up to half page ads in the TreeLine at no charge. To place your ad, send a properly sized, print ready document in Word format to newsletter editor Peter Pelofske, pelofskepi@outlook.com.

Mentorship Program

Winter 2017 meeting dates

January 22	Mentorship 101A
January 29	Mentorship 101B
February 5	Mentorship 102
February 12	Mentorship 101A
February 19	Mentorship 101B
March 5	Mentorship 102
March 19	Mentorship 101A
March 26	Mentorship 101B

January Haiku
High above grey sky
Dark clouds dancing in the wind
Snowflake passes by
Ron Yasenchak

The New Vice president of Programs

My name is Michael “Lime” Allen and I am your incoming Vice President (VP) of Programs. My journey in bonsai began in 1995 when I took my first Horticulture class as an elective in high school. After moving to Portland in 2010, I attended the BSOP Spring shows each year and in 2014 decided to become more active in the club.

Over the course of my term as VP, I hope to facilitate access to new and inspiring programs. This includes working with Bonsai Mirai to create an online video resource that BSOP and the greater bonsai community can enjoy. Being blessed with such a large club with many active members, we have the capacity to inspire the public’s passion for bonsai. I would like to see a system of programs that will help build a foundation for new members and reinforce interest and learning for current members.

These past few years, BSOP has grown and continues to grow. I believe this growth is due exposing the general public to our art form through The Artisans Cup, Bonsai exhibits at the Japanese Garden and BSOP’s activity in the local community. I would like to see this growth continue, but it’s going to take us actively seeking out new members and making them feel welcome and most of all answering questions they have.

I would like to start Bonsai Appreciation events outside of club meetings where we bring our trees to the community and explain our passion in a non-meeting environment. Such events could be held at pubs, music venues, and coffee shops across our community. If you are interested in participating in such events, please reach out, my contact information is below.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve our community. Please reach out with any ideas or feedback. I am here to support you and BSOP.

Sincerely, Michael “Lime” Allen , VP - Programs 586-879-9526

Lime1299@gmail.com

New Material for the BSOP Library

The BSOP library now exceeds 1100 items, and is truly an amazing resource! Located at the back of the stage at the Milwaukie Center, the library is open between 6pm and 7pm, closing at the start of the program. Books can be checked out by any BSOP member for one month, from one meeting to the next.

We are pleased to announce the addition of *Modern Bonsai Practice, 501 Principles of Good Bonsai Horticulture*, by Larry Morton. The book has 334 pages and about 150 photographs of Walter Pall's trees. Mr. Pall is quoted on the internet as saying about *Modern Bonsai*: "Larry Morton's new book is totally different from any 'normal' bonsai book. Bonsai horticulture is seen with eyes of modern well proven horticulture. It is shown that bonsai horticulture practices are often 50 years behind this openly available set of knowledge and practices. This book will open your eyes. it certainly will cause a lot of discussion..."

We are also pleased to report additional copies have been acquired of the popular and excellent reference book *Principles of Bonsai Design* by Pacific Northwest artist David DeGroot, along with extra copies of *Bonsai Today's Master's Series on Pines*.

New BSOP Website Now On Line

The old BSOP website, www.portlandbonsai.org, has been switched from SquareSpace 5 to SquareSpace 7, with a whole new format. Webmaster Karl Holmes has worked diligently for months to create a new, easy to navigate and functional website that provides information on all BSOP activities, including meeting details, mentorship schedules, bonsai resources, calendar of events, photo galleries and more. An especially good improvement is the system for payment of dues, which is much more straight forward than before.

Within a few days of going live with the new website, you should receive notification of a new user name and password from SentryLogin (our new user credentials manager). Once your account is set up you will have access to a secure Member Services area that provides private information for BSOP members only, such as a member directory, past newsletters, and numerous bonsai related articles. If you don't receive your new login credentials within a week or if you have any problems, be sure to contact me.

Please check out the new website and let us know what you think! janhettick@comcast.net

Jan Hettick

Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Winter Strategies

We recently went through the coldest weather that I can remember for quite some time. What made it so rough on our trees was the duration of low temperatures. We sent out a quick note to remind everyone of the impending doom, but I thought we should go over our winter strategies a little more thoroughly.

Living in the Pacific Northwest is really great for growing bonsai. And it's hard to find a climate much better than Portland itself. We get sunnier summers and believe it or not, drier winters than Seattle, and we don't have the scorching sun of California. Our semi-marine weather allows azaleas and maples grow like weeds, while providing a buffer against hot summers and bitter winters. But not always. We can get lulled into a false sense of security only to be awakened by arctic air in the teens. Such was the case recently.

I haven't found anyone who could identify tree damage due to cold with any reliability. There can certainly be some branch die back, and trees may just up and die. But it is really hard to tell if it was from cold. There are so many other factors that cause damage. But the best defense against cold is a healthy tree, just as it would be for any pest or disease.

And what is cold? That might be a matter of opinion, and when will a tree die or be damaged will vary by species, age, health, how it is potted up, and even where it is positioned in the garden. I personally don't even think about the temperature unless it is going to dip below 25 or so. The first rule of order is to get the trees out of wind. Trees in a pot can be desiccated quite quickly by biting winds.

You can look up the cold hardiness of species online, and then throw it out the window. Or at least add a good 10-20 degrees. Trees in the ground enjoy the warmth of the earth, while our trees on the bench are all on their own. Ground soil rarely freezes more than an inch or two down, whereas the bonsai pot will easily freeze all the way through. A freezing rootball does not prescribe death, so don't be misled. There are many trees that enjoy a good chill. But I can't give you anything to predict a certain outcome. Just like you can't predict a heart attack, but you can work on all the factors that would encourage such an event.

The thing to remember about low temperatures is that timing is everything. 20 degrees in November might kill some trees, but is pretty doable in January. Why? The trees drop into dormancy slowly. They don't just flip a switch. You'll notice some trees dropping their leaves early, and some hardly at all. Those are some clues to pay attention to. While the maples and elms are losing their leaves, many alpine conifers are still cranking away. Their waxy cuticle helps protect the needles so that they can function in more adverse conditions. It also allows them to function over several years. So the conifers are going into dormancy later than the deciduous trees, in general. Note how beeches and oaks tend to hold onto their leaves throughout the winter. The trees use this mechanism to protect next year's buds, and thus these species seem to be among the most winter hardy, and are almost always the last to leaf out in spring.

I have quinces that almost never go completely dormant unless it gets really, really cold. By the time January rolls around, most trees are snugly set for the rest of the cold months and are able to handle cold temperatures much better. Let's not forget that a cold snap can be just as dangerous in spring. My first exposure to BSOP itself was at a PNBCA convention in Beaverton in 1990 or so. The centerpieces for the banquet were all bonsai that had died the previous spring in a freakish cold snap in the teens during March, after many trees had started to leaf out. My rule of thumb is to always be prepared for cold weather by Thanksgiving and stay vigilant through March.

Early on, I had an alcove on the side of my house where sat an unused hot tub. This made a convenient location to cram all of my trees into for the winter. I simply walled it off with some plastic to keep the wind out. (You can tell that at this point, I was unmarried) As time went along, my collection got bigger in number, and the trees much larger. Winter with the hot tub was no longer an option. So I then left all of my trees out on the benches and prayed for moderate temperatures. When low temps came along, I huddled everything together under an open shed and wrapped up the whole thing to shoulder height in shrink wrap – what they use on commercial palettes. Silly, but it must have worked. Now, in our new place, I have nowhere to hide. And to my surprise, I can no longer move all of my trees on the spur of the moment. They've gotten bigger while my muscles have gotten smaller. So they stay out and I put them on the ground, if possible. The medium and smaller trees I move under the generous eaves of our house, where there is very little wind. A small respite, but essential, none the less.

Now, to strategies. If I know that cold weather is coming, I like to water my trees well, knowing that the wind will dry them out. This is especially important for trees undercover that do not receive our copious rain. Then be sure to let them drain well. If you are using good, granular bonsai soil, this is no problem. I then water them again after the cold has past. Since we wire our trees into the pot, some folks worry that they pots will break. This simply is not so if you are using regular bonsai soil. I have had only one pot break in over 25 years, and it was a nice one. The particular pine had not been repotted for 6-7 years, so the roots were packed very tight. And the pot had an incurve lip, so the roots couldn't go anywhere. Add a little freezing water and boom, instant shards. I just taped the pot together until spring, since it was wired to the tree and there was no chance of it drying out.

Next, get the trees out of the wind. Snow is great, as it insulates the trees, but nature never seems to get things in the right order. A cold frame of some kind, recessed in the ground is the best. I wish I had that kind of space. Along the backside of a house is great. Longtime member Anne Spencer used to unpot her trees and place them in bark dust in a covered shed. She then had to repot everything the following spring. It worked for her, but I don't recommend it.

My method is to leave everything out on the bench until I see a big event coming. Then I bundle up and spend an hour or two moving things to safer quarters. Plastic trays really help with the smaller trees and give just a little protection. Okay, call me crazy, but when I have had to leave a large tree on the bench, I sometimes wrap the pot in an old blanket.

Just nesting the trees into the ground will help a good 5-7 degrees, thanks to quantitative research by Mike Hagedorn. It takes some advantage of the earth's own heat. And there you have it. It might seem a bit late, but we have to make it all the way through March, so there is plenty of cold yet to go.

This month marks the beginning of a new feature in the Tips articles. I am calling it Hard Won Truths. These will be just a sentence or two and will feature little tidbits of knowledge and advice that were either earned by costly mistakes, or because it took my dense brain too many words from my instructors before it sunk in. These are the hints that will really make a difference, starting now. If you don't read anything else, read these.

HARD WON TRUTH
No. 1

Light is everything. It is the foundation of all living things. Light is the one ingredient in our bonsai culture that we can't fudge on. It is what a tree uses to make energy. Without adequate light we cannot grow vigorous bonsai. We might keep them alive and even healthy, but without adequate light, we won't be able to generate the kind of growth that we need to create high quality bonsai. This is especially true if you are trying to grow trees like Ponderosa Pines from the rockies. They get over 300 days of wide open sun there, so that means they need everything we can give them here, in gray Portland. Even more fragile trees like Japanese Maples want full sun all the time except 90 degree plus day. So, let 'em soak up a few rays.

Scott Elser

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Welcome to the Village



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The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

The Milwaukie Center

5440 SE Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie OR 97222

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road

Visitors are always welcome!

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