

Billboard

Newsletter of Bonsai Society of Upstate New York Inc



After our usual very brief business meeting on **December 17th**, our Vice-President **Bill Valavanis** will show photos from his recent multiple trips to Japan for Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition, Tokoname pots, Omiya Bonsai Art Museum, Kyuka-en, Seiko-en, & Manseien Bonsai Gardens, Nippon Bonsai Taikan Exhibition, Kokufu suiseki exhibition, and Pacific Bonsai Museum in US, Zhongguo Fen Penjing Exhibition in China. You will not want to miss Bill's great pictures and interesting information about his travels.

Come And Enjoy The Holiday Party & Auction!

Appetizer and Dessert Treats: Please bring a tasty treat to the **December Holiday Party** to share with others. This will be an appetizer and dessert party. You may want to have dinner before you join us, but save some room for the treats.

Please Label your Dish: Print a label **describing** what you bring to share and note if it contains any known allergens such as **peanuts, nuts, milk, eggs**, etc. As always, the society will provide liquid refreshments thanks to **Rick Marriott**.



Be prepared to eat and have a good time!

There are to be no sales tables at the Holiday Party meeting.



NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, December 17, 7:00 pm

Holiday Party & Auction

William N. Valavanis' photos of travels in Asia

Brighton Town Lodge at Buckland Park.
1341 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14618
near corner of Westfall and Clinton.



Mystery Auction

Following the slides and treats, **Jason Henderberg** will be auctioneer for our mystery auction. Each member is asked to bring a gift or two to be auctioned for the benefit of our society. It would be nice if the gift were bonsai related.

Please **label your gift "BONSAI"** if it is bonsai or garden related. Some very nice gifts have been purchased at bargain prices in the past. Some of the great items which our members generously donated in the past include: plants, pots, calendars, soil, fertilizer, wine, cookies, a wreath, Suiseki stones, and bonsai stands. The items are donated with the wrappings still on, so that those bidding don't know what is in the package. Sounds looney, but it's a lot of fun.

Special items should NOT be wrapped.

Bid high, and bid often! All proceeds from the auction go into the society treasury so that we can continue to bring world class speakers to our meetings to increase our knowledge of the art of Bonsai.

Be generous with your gifts and no gag gifts please.



Billboard is brought to you by:

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Happy Holidays!



November Highlights

Mark Arpag, Harvey Carapella, and Jim Dolce offered a **Design Studio** on trees brought in by the members of the society. Over 25 members listened to recommendations about what to do with about a dozen trees. This turned out to be an educational give-and-take about bonsai design by the presenters. Each tree received three somewhat different approaches as to how they could be changed and/or improved. All three even agreed on the changes for a couple of the trees. Those who attended came away with many new ideas and tips from three of our more experienced members.

It was lots of fun, and everyone listened intently and hopefully enjoyed it. This is always an interesting meeting and helpful to the beginners in the society who attended.

A large group of pots donated by the wife of deceased member **Philip Waasdorp** was raffled off at the end of the presentation. Thanks to all who bought tickets.

*Thank you Mark, Harvey,
and Jim for your very
instructive program,
and for sharing your expertise
with all of us.*



Bill Valavanis at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum in Japan

On November 19th **Bill Valavanis** presented a program on Yuji Yoshimura at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum in Saitama, Japan. *“Memories of Japanese Father, Mr. Y”* was limited to 40 people by advance reservation but had over 50 in the room, with standing room only. It featured the life work of Yuji Yoshimura's pioneering bonsai education. Nine members of Yoshimura's family including his youngest brother, Kazumasa and two daughters Yoko, and Emi were in attendance.

This was Bill's first program to be presented in Japan: **Bonsai, Beyond the Border: Yuji Yoshimura, a Bonsai Artist Across the Ocean Exhibition**, a special one month exhibit commemorated and highlighted the life of the Japanese bonsai artist who spread bonsai to the United States. The exhibition featured historical photographs, documents, a video, and other items illuminating the lifetime work and passion of Yuji Yoshimura and his 37 year career in the United States and abroad. His life's goal was to introduce the appreciation, artistry and practice of elegant classical bonsai art.

Bill stated: *“I'm quite pleased that the Japanese bonsai community has now, 60 years later, recognized the contributions Yuji Yoshimura has made to expand the Japanese art of bonsai across the ocean.”*

Congratulations Bill!! Great tribute, and no one better than you to present it!

How and why do bonsai trees grow tiny leaves?

Reprinted from various articles and authors



Image from Bonsai Empire

Bonsai trees do not grow tiny leaves on its own just because the plant is kept in a small pot. The leaf size will be the same as that of the mother plant. But there is a technique called **Defoliation** wherein all the

leaves of the tree **are removed**. There can be **partial** or **total** defoliation depending on the health of a tree. The new set of leaves that grows next will be of smaller size than the original.

Defoliation can be done two or three times a year and it should be done on healthy plants. By this repeated defoliation technique, the leaves of a bonsai tree can be reduced substantially. In my experience I have found out that if I add a Nitrogen based fertilizer, the leaves tend to grow a little bigger. So while using NPK fertilizer ensure that the N ratio is smaller than the P and K.

The reason that we require small leaves on a bonsai tree is because the height of the tree is small and it is potted in a small pot. So the leaf size should be proportionate to the height of the tree. A bonsai tree with 3 or 4 big leaves only does not look nice and aesthetic, but if the same plant has lot of small leaves then it is considered to be a good one.

From Lyju Kuruvilla

There are a couple ways of doing this to get tiny leaves. For me on most species I defoliate one or two times in the year. All the leaves leaving no normal sized leaves.



This must only be done with very healthy trees. You can go from two or 3 inch long leaves two 1/2 inch doing it this way. Also go a little easier on the Nitrogen fertilization. I find pruning of roots and branches does not seem to make leaves smaller. It does of course make the tree look prettier :-) also look for different varieties and even 'sports' which are trees that naturally have smaller leaves than normal. I have a nice Trident Maple that never has leaves bigger than 3/4 inch max. Much smaller yet when I defoliate by the way you should CUT not pull the leaves off ... when you pull you can take the new bud along with it just trim the stem, it is healthier.

From Rick Marsh

The leaves are reduced to a maximum 1/10th mature size by constant pruning of branch growth every three or four leaves and root-pruning, initially, by a third every year. This is only the basic method and varies slightly by species of tree.

From Geoff Carpenter

A Florida bonsai artist grows *Premna* and this is photo of his bonsai with small leaves and the original leaf beside it. *This is not a joke!*

From Mary Miller



2020 Programs

- **Jan. 28:** Harvey Carapella-5 Styles of Bonsai
- **Feb. 25:** Mark Arpag, Bonsai display & Accent plants
- **Mar. 24:** Bill Valavanis, TBD
- **Apr. 28:** Suthin Sukosolvisit, TBD
- **May 16-17:** BSUNY Spring Show
- **June 23:** BSUNY Picnic
- **July 28:** Bring Your Own Tree Workshop-Part 1
- **Aug. 25:** BYOT Workshop-Part 2

It's that time of the Year...

If you have not put your bonsai away for the winter yet, you should have. The freezing weather has arrived and will brought the snow as usual. Winter winds can be very hard on some varieties of trees. Bonsai will need watering from time to time when they are not frozen, even though they are dormant. Be sure to water until water runs through the drainage holes. Clean snow is also good for a light watering during winter. It might be a good idea to spray again with a contact fungicide such as Captan.

This is a good time to begin studying tree silhouettes around town and in your own garden (exercise caution when driving). Note that the overall silhouette is different for each species. East Avenue is an excellent place to study large mature Beech, Weeping Beech and Ginkgo. Highland Park and Mt. Hope Cemetery are also good locations for large Japanese Maples and Paperbark Maples. A warmer winter project is to study books and magazines. Work schedules often prohibit studying during the active growing season. Keep warm and study bonsai styles in nature and in books and tapes, because..... **It's that time of the year again.... W.N.V.**



Why Create A Bonsai Forest?

Reprinted from North Florida Bonsai Club newsletter, February 2018

While individual bonsai specimens can take a number of years of training to create a strong visual image, well designed group plantings can be far more instantly satisfying. Successful groups can be created using young, thin trunked plants with little taper, that would otherwise have little use as individual bonsai specimens without considerable training. Successful group plantings are not so reliant on the material used; it is the artist's creativity that makes for satisfying results.

What's the difference between a forest and a raft?

Group plantings replicate a number of trees growing together and reflect the interplay between the trees as they compete for light and nutrients. A Single Root System (Raft) and Multiple Root System are two approaches to forest bonsai. The single root system involves taking a single tree and laying it down and training branches to grow as individual trees. The primary tree is still shown and the appearance is of a tree that "fell over" and kept growing.

What makes a good forest?

Outstanding forest arrangements can be compared to a large extended family with each member having a different appearance and unique personality. The ability to recognize individuality while combing them into a harmonious composition is the challenge. In nature all forests start with one tree and grow from there. That initial tree will be the primary tree and is the tallest and thickest one in the planting. If a larger tree is not available, two trees can be

planted close together to appear as one large specimen. Alternatively, the primary tree can be raised and planted a bit higher in the container. Medium size trees are then used around the larger specimens working toward the container rim. The further you get from the primary tree the younger and smaller the trees will get. The youngest trees should be at the edges of the forest as if they have sprouted there in the warm sunshine.

Key Point: *No natural forest is made of trees that are all the same size so it's important to pick plants of different size and age even if you have to find several sources for material.*

Branches should be positioned so they grow towards the outside of the forest. The silhouette of the group is a scalene triangle and plantings follow the branch selection rules we know for singular trees. However, the rules are applied to the group as a whole rather than each tree as an individual. Branches should grow out from trunks uniformly, this creates cohesion to the composition and reflects the fact that all the trees would be subject to similar growing conditions.

Things to remember

- Use mostly upright trees, a composition could look unnatural when using different shapes of trees.
- The distance between trees in the group should vary giving a natural appearance rather than a planned grid planting.



- Trees should not be placed directly behind or beside another tree.
- Trees at the front of the group should have branches that start higher up the trunk to allow the viewer to be able to glimpse through the planting. Trees at the back should have branches that start to grow from a lower position.
- The primary tree should incline slightly forward at its apex to create a sense of height.
- It is recommended that forests are made using young deciduous seedlings that can be positioned closer together than potted specimens with a larger root system.
- Negative spaces add to the balance and beauty of the composition.

What kind of container

Use large containers and leave enough empty space to simulate the vastness of land. Selecting the right Bonsai pot is very important; choose a large shallow pot and take into account the normal guideline for deciding on color etc. Containers without prominent feet are better since a flat base provides a solid visual anchor.