



RMBS

February 2023

Volume 55 Issue 2

Photo- Dan Wiederrecht, Wyoming

## President's Message

by Paul Koening

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### Presidents letter February 2023

February marks a great time of year to begin planning for all the changes and excitement that the coming growing season will have to offer. I find it great not only for bonsai planning, but also for planning out gardening, annual flowers, landscaping, and even my own calendar. I like to think that using the late winter for planning falls into a rhythm similar to a farmer, and in that respect, it is critical that planning happen now, as there will be no time once the spring arrives.

Plant health is number one when it comes to bonsai, or any horticultural planning. I take time inspecting my plants and bonsai throughout the winter to identify and treat pests as needed. I also pay attention to the current state of growth or lack thereof on each bonsai. Of course, the hardy bonsai are dormant, but their annual growth, as well as

vigor compared to previous years is easily seen given regular observation and experience. I have come to find that reduced water infiltration into the bonsai pot, typically corresponds with reduced vigor, and more leggy growth. I really try to key into this, as I have found I can manage these issues for a year but going beyond without a repot and fresh soil can really set a bonsai back.

Working through all the plant health care issues, leads me to having a list of trees needing to be repotted. To repot them, I need to be sure I have enough bonsai soil, or components to create bonsai soil on hand. While in school and before becoming more settled, I was content to keep my bonsai in the same pot year after year, and even downsized a few bonsai pots. Part of this was simply due to available funds, but to be honest it also helped me ensure

that I could fit the bonsai into my ever-changing living situation, and that I could handle moving everything on my own. This marks the first year in a while that I am also re-assessing my bonsai containers. Part of this change is due to me finally having some funds that I can put into better bonsai pots, and part of it is because I finally have some more time to dedicate to the art of bonsai.

I am also wiring trees as I am able this time of year and taking rough inventories on available supplies including wire. Much of this happens naturally for me after several years of going through the same seasonal planning and actions, and it represents a gift our art holds that many other art forms do not.

The art of bonsai requires a large amount of continual maintenance for the bonsai to live and thrive. While this can be a burden from time to time, such as when you would like to travel and need to find a plant sitter, it is a gift because it keeps you connected to your art. It is easy to close the door on an art studio for example, and it can remain closed and locked for long periods of time with no changes other than the accumulation of dust. While I do dream of self-autonomous bonsai in levitating robotic pots, that is far from reality. Without our regular attention, bonsai will die. That on its own makes bonsai so much more precious to me, but there is a deeper gift as well.

Every trip to water your bonsai represents an opportunity to be inspired, or re-inspired. Chartreuse spring leaves are always great at knocking off the dust that has settled on my own personal vigor and inspiration, but sometimes it is as simple as seeing a trunk line in a piece of bonsai stock that has finally sat long enough to become inspiring. This year for me, it was very inspiring to find a great tree and pot combination, and then the newly freed up pot became an inspiration as I searched for which of my other bonsai might be ready for a new home. Without fail, each year I am pulled back to being thrilled for my bonsai and the year of care to come for them.

I am also learning now that this farmer type seasonal planning, is also a gift. Being and staying organized is challenging, and as life hands you more

and more responsibilities, the challenge becomes more and more multi-faceted, and the intricacy of the challenges also increase. Without proper organization we would waste countless hours and our resources in the process. I had to run to the hardware store too many times this last year, but if I somehow had the foresight to pick up everything I needed for the year in one trip I might save a few weeks of time throughout the year. It is probably far-fetched to think I could make one hardware store trip a year, but it sure would be nice to never need to make multiple visits in one day. Every time a cashier asks me if I found everything I need, I state "yes, but do I know everything I need? I'll let you know next time I'm here how that worked out." The point being, if I plan and organize myself properly, I will be the most productive I can be.

This organization and productivity translate directly into real life value too. The more practiced we are in both organization and productivity the better asset we can be to a company, for example. I have found the majority of management to involve planning, organizing, communicating, and executing. Who knew bonsai could help us to become better managers?

Given these gifts of learning to plan and organize in more and more intricate ways, I would like to reach out to previous artists of the year, and emerging artists of the year in search of a 2023 show chair apprentice. We do have a few new members interested in taking the role on, but I feel it would be good if they had the experience of a more senior member to lean on. To elucidate the show chair role involves creating the following: a vision for the show, organization of subcommittees to execute the vision, delegation of needs as the show is planned, and your own unique spin on the show should you choose. Connie Garrett so kindly volunteered to again take on the show chair position, and Darrell Whitley volunteered to co-chair along side her. What we are seeking now in a show chair apprentice is a member knowledgeable in bonsai that is interested in training with Connie and Darrell to one day take on the show chair role. We are very excited to help raise the value of our

membership and teach the skills that we have learned along the way.

I hope that everyone is enjoying their wintertime planning and organizing for the coming year! Will this be the year you take the opportunity to put your own unique twist on the show? We are already kicking around the idea of making this year a smaller show given the ABS convention, as well as tailoring the show to our new members, but those decisions are very much open to the show chair and their team of apprentices. I hope that I have helped to inspire some interest in helping RMBS with the show this year and ask that you reach out to me with any inquiries, or interest.

Thank you so much to everyone who has and continues to help RMBS with all its efforts! I am so excited to help in all the planning, organizing, communication, and execution of this year's many events. Please join us for as much as you can this year, and I hope I get a chance to see and speak with all of you as we admire tiny trees with incredibly passionate owners!

Notes from Pat Deutschman, Secretary

Our February meeting will be via Zoom and will be presented by "Back Country Dan"- our own Dan Wiederrecht, who was the RMBS Artist of the Year for 2022. As you know, Dan lives in Wyoming and with all our snow and unpredictable weather events this time of year we hope you will enjoy his program from the warmth and comfort of your own home!

We will meet again at the Denver Botanic Gardens in March for a live presentation. See the accompanying calendar for all our meeting dates and workshops that are scheduled for 2023.

The program chair and leadership team continue to work on booking guest artists, programs and workshops for 2023. We have a few conflicts in dates with Denver Botanic Gardens for space we had requested so are looking for alternative arrangements. We will keep updating the Calendar as final dates and times are secured.

Please take note of our new mailing address:  
**PO BOX 2095 Littleton, CO. 80161**

Please also note that any payments made to RMBS for dues or other items via PayPal or Venmo should be selected as "Friends and Family" payments so we do not incur a service charge.

## Natures Bonsai by Paul Koenning

Learning the stylistic rules of bonsai can be a difficult pursuit to master, and each tree also adds its own unique challenges to be sorted through during development of the tree's overall style. As an arborist I always take time to seek out natural examples of trees styled by nature, and I hope you do the same. My work takes me to a lot of varied places and environments, and I wanted to share a great example of a Ponderosa pushed by nature that we can all enjoy and study to help guide our vision when we work on our own bonsai.



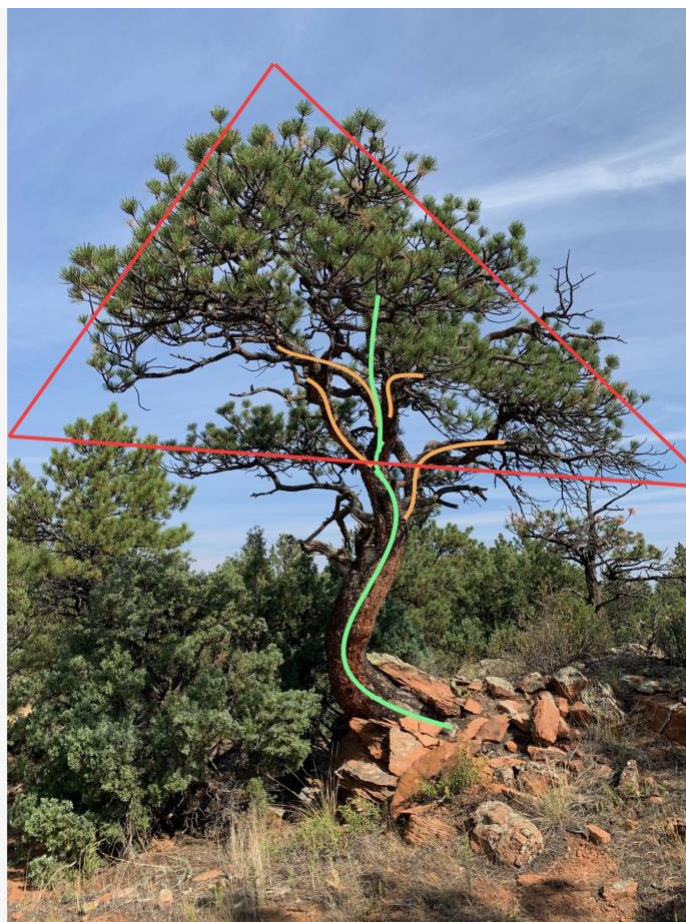
This Pine has endured similar hardships many yamadori pines do, in that it began live growing



from a small rock crevice. Given that the tree is currently 18-20 feet tall it is safe to say that the roots have expanded well beyond the original crevice and into deeper soil. Despite overcoming the small volume of soil that stunts the growth of yamadori this

tall Ponderosa pine has graceful curves in the trunk line, and twisted and gnarled branches.

The canopy also forms a scalene triangle. Branches additionally originate from the outside of curves in the trunkline. This happened naturally and fits into several of the rules we try to use in bonsai!



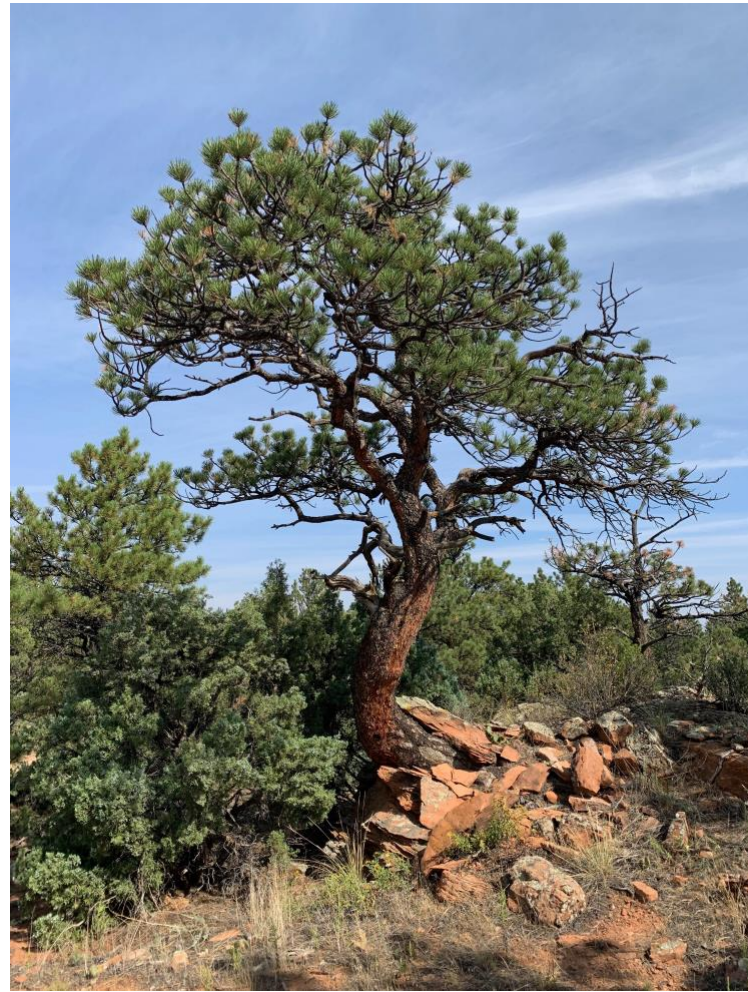
Did the old bonsai masters happen upon their rules by chance, or did nature guide their approach resulting in the formation of rules that nature tends to follow? As an arborist I can only theorize about the graceful curves in the trunk line, and I see reaching for sunlight in the tree's early life, and snow and wind loading contributing to additional twists and turns. Ponderosa pines are known to shed shaded branches as they age, and any branch originating from the inside of a curve will naturally be shaded out via the branches originating above them/ higher on the same curve. The conventional thought about a pine tree's canopy is typically a narrow isosceles triangle. That reflects the canopy of juvenal and often adolescent pines, but most old growth pines do develop a rounded canopy that is much broader. While asymmetry is desired in bonsai and Japanese aesthetics, it is also very rare that any tree canopy would be symmetrical. So... most old

growth pines should exhibit a more broad, asymmetrical canopy that has a flattened bottom partially due to the shedding of lower branches that have been shaded out.

For me this helps to bridge the rules of bonsai with the natural growth patterns that can be seen in older growth trees. So many answers to bonsai design can be found by simply observing the trees out in the world. While this tree exhibits several good examples of what we work to reproduce in bonsai, there are so many trees with a trunk, or branch, or canopy, etc., that are worth pausing to study and enjoy. They even provide some shade for you to enjoy, so take your time and enjoy the journey!

In the coming months I will continue to share tree and bonsai inspirations with everyone. If you feel inspired to share a similar story, please join me in submitting an article or blog post to share with everyone. I feel some pride in having the opportunity to stumble upon this tree, but it's really too beautiful to keep all to myself. I have a feeling you are the perfect group to enjoy and take in some of the same beauty and attributes that attracted me to this tree while in the Colorado mountains.

Paul Koenning



## RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society | Facebook](#) Post and view photos from RMBS members, post questions, comment

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society Forum](#) RMBS website forum has articles of interest

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society \(@rocky\\_mountain\\_bonsai\\_society\) • Instagram photos and videos](#) View or post photos

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society - YouTube](#) RMBS meetings recorded appear here, other videos of interest including RMBS show

[Rmbonsai.org](#) RMBS website – headers: News & Events, Galleries, Join, Blog, Forum, Education

Other resources

[Colorado Bonsai Ltd.](#)  
[First Branch Bonsai](#)  
[RMBS Facebook Page](#)

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society Dues info.

Annual membership renewals were due July 1. Individual membership is \$35 per year, a family membership is \$50 per year. Since we are currently following social distancing measures, please send a check to:

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society

c/o Membership Renewal **PO BOX 2095 Littleton, CO. 80161** **This is our new mailing address.**

Please be sure to include your phone # & email with your check so we've up to date contact info for you.

To pay electronically you must have your own **PayPal** account or **Venmo** account set up and linked to a credit card or bank account. It's very easy to do on their websites.

With **PayPal**, you can send money or make a payment to anyone with an email address or mobile number.

From your **computer**, Smart Phone or iPad here's how to send money:

Log onto your PayPal account.

1. Click [Send & Request](#) at the top of the page.
2. Enter rockymountainbonsaisociety@gmail.com
3. Enter the amount, choose the currency, add a note (if needed) and click **Continue**.
4. Select "Sending to a friend."
5. Select how you want to pay and click **Next**.
6. Review the information and click **Send Payment Now**.

**Venmo** is an APP available only for smartphones or iPads. You can set up a Venmo account through the app and pay directly from there.

The name of the account in Venmo to send to is: Rocky Mountainbonsaisociety

## 2021 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program	Workshop
<b>February 2023 monthly meeting</b> Tuesday, February 7, 7PM On Line via Zoom	<b><u>DAN WIEDERRECHT</u></b> BONSAI EDUCATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES	
<b>March Workshop</b> Dates to be announced		<b>KIRK FIESELER</b>
<b>March 2023 monthly meeting</b> Tuesday, March 7, 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens Auditorium	<b><u>GRAFTING PRESENTATION</u></b> <b>KIRK FIESELER</b>	
<b>April 2023 Monthly meeting</b> Tuesday, April 4, 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens - Gates Hall	<b><u>DARRELL WHITLEY</u></b> <b>SHIMPAKU</b>	
<b>April Workshop</b> Date and Location TBD		<b>TOM ANGLEWICZ</b> REPOTTING WORKSHOP
<b>May 2023 Monthly meeting</b> Tuesday, May 2 7PM Virtual- on Line/ Gates Hall	<b><u>BJORN BJORHOLM</u></b>	
<b>May Workshop</b> Saturday, May Darell Havener host		<b>DARELL HAVENER</b> REVIEWING BONSAI TO CHOOSE FOR SHOW
<b>June 8,9,10 2023 ABS Convention</b> Denver Botanic Gardens	<b>ANNUAL AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY CONVENTION AND SHOW</b>	
<b>July Workshop</b> Saturday, July 15 Paul Koenning host		<b>PAUL KOENNING</b> FINAL WIRING AND PRUNING
<b>July 2023 Monthly Meeting</b> Tuesday, July 4 Denver Botanic Gardens- Gates Hall	<b><u>TBD</u></b>	
<b>August 2023 Monthly Meeting</b> Thursday, August 3 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens- Gates Hall	<b><u>TODD SCHLAFER</u></b>	
<b>August Workshop</b> Saturday, August David McPeters host		<b>DAVID MCPETERS</b> POT CLEANING AND USE OF MOSS
<b>September – Annual show</b> Friday Sept 1- Sunday Sept 3 Denver Botanic Gardens	<b><u>ANNUAL SHOW</u></b>	
<b>September Workshop</b> Saturday, September 9 Paul Koenning host		<b>PAUL KOENNING</b> WINTER PREP AND PEST INSPECTION
<b>October Monthly Meeting</b> Tuesday, October 3 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens- Auditorium	<b><u>SERGIO CUAN</u></b>	



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