



Ponderosa Pine -Logo Tree of RMBS - Bob Kataoka

RMBS

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## President's Message

by Paul Koenning

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### Presidents Message

President's message June 2023

Hello fellow practitioners and artists! This month I am jumping back into the science for the newsletter. Consider this a sneak peek at my Bonsai and Light Gardening presentation that I will be giving at the American Bonsai Convention June 8-11. The convention is lining up to be an incredible event, which will stand in as our meeting for the month of June. Make sure you are registered and ready to attend, as this is a once a decade opportunity.

In order to grow bonsai indoors lighting needs to be considered as that is how plants produce their own food. You may take a casual look at the light coming through your windows and believe you have plenty

of light, but that is most often a mistake. Our eyes adjust to light and will make low lit areas seem brighter than they are. Most bonsai species need higher light intensity for good health, and that will require 4-5 hours of direct lighting through a window without a screen. Window screens cut the light level for plants in half so 8-10 hours of direct light will be needed. To accomplish this typically means putting the bonsai very close to an east or west facing window.

Reflected light through windows is okay for lower light houseplants but will leave bonsai struggling and lead to leggy growth, as the plants will be attempting to reach for higher light. In addition, all new homes built since the early 2000s have Low-E glass which filters out infrared and UV light. UV-B light is very beneficial to bonsai as it creates more branching, shorter internodes, and reduced leaf size, which are all desirable traits for bonsai. Now that

you can see how lighting indoors can effect plant growth it may be time to consider supplemental lighting.

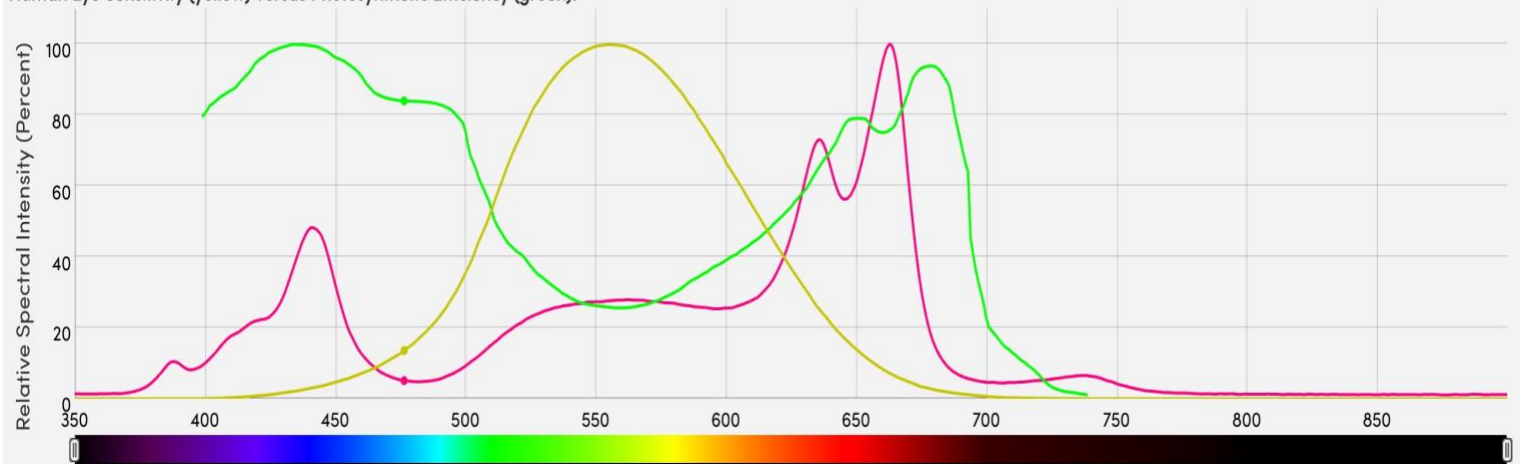
There are a lot of supplemental grow light options out there, and they all have their use. More blue light in the 5000-6500 Kelvin range promotes more vegetative growth, while more red light in the 2000-3000 Kelvin range promotes more flowering. This is a generalization, and most plants will benefit from having both red and blue light. The plants have photo systems for both so why not use them? I prefer to use Black Dog led lights with a targeted spectrum for plants, such as the one shown below in Pink. The green line represents the color of light plants use, and as you can see the pink line does a decent job of replicating the same high points. The yellow line represents lumens, which as you can see does not represent light that plants use much of. Full spectrum fluorescent lights, or a mix of 2500 and 5500 Kelvin florescent bulbs can also provide a good spectrum for plant growth, but they do have other limitations.

Florescent lights need to be placed about a 0.5-1 inches from the canopy of your bonsai to work. Their light intensity is fairly similar to light through a screened window so at least 8-10 hours of lighting will be needed. Now that is at the canopy. Once 4-5 inches away from a florescent bulb the light drops drastically. This is why I try to only grow Shohin, 8-10 inch, bonsai or smaller with florescent lights.

Even Shohin trees lower branches will become weak over time under florescent lights, but hard pruning the canopy can help to keep lower branch vitality in check. Today's powerful LED lights need to be placed at least 10 inches from the top of the canopy as they are too strong any closer. Their light does not fall off quickly, and there is still plenty of light at lower canopy heights given no branches are overhanging and shading the lower. Light movers can help with that issue, but I will save that discussion for my presentation at the ABS convention.

Lighting for plants sure can be a complex topic, but I hope this is helping to give you some basic parameters to use. I will be diving deeper into all of the topics above as well as expanding into long and short-day plants, Day Light Integral, and how to measure and understand all of this together. I hope to see all of you at the convention, and I hope you are excited to see and work on some incredible bonsai!

Human Eye Sensitivity (yellow) versus Photosynthetic Efficiency (green):





ABS learning seminar in conjunction with RMBS – June 8, 9, 10, hosted by Denver Botanic Gardens There is still time to register! Don't miss this rare opportunity.

The weekend schedule is [here](#). Register [here](#). Artist's biographies are [here](#). Register to volunteer [here](#).



Thanks to rocky terrain that stunts tree growth and blustery winds that contort branches, the Rocky Mountains are one of the best places on Earth to harvest bonsais—as long as you have a permit in national forests or permission on private land.

## Tree Pose

Learn the art of bonsai this summer at Denver Botanic Gardens.

Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG) will unpack its bonsais from winter storage this month, which means Larry Jackel will soon resume his accidental espionage. As a bonsai specialist at DBG, Jackel spends much of his days meticulously pruning the tiny trees he's harvested in the Rocky Mountains, and he can't resist eavesdropping as patrons admire his work. He's never happier than when guests liken his diminutive arbors to the full-size versions they've seen elsewhere, whether that's a gnarly ponderosa pine near a trailhead or a giant ficus on a beach. "For me, that means I've succeeded," Jackel says. This summer, DBG will host the American Bonsai Society's annual learning convention from June 8 to 11 (from \$125). Classes include a seminar led by Jackel on how to appreciate bonsais. It's more complicated than it sounds, and even flora sophisticates are sure to gain a greater understanding of the way a twisted trunk, for example, can engender a sense of character. But to Jackel, the most important element to consider is wonder, which is why he will begin his students' educations by asking: "What do you see?" —SPENCER CAMPBELL

PHOTOGRAPH BY SARAH BANKS

## **A Beginning Bonsai artist's adventures, challenges, successes by Darren Jacoby**

I've always found myself drawn to bonsai. Something about their beauty, tranquility, and representation of nature in small form sparked my desire to take up this hobby a few years ago. I thought to myself – I can do this, after all I have a yard I'm proud of and I've kept potted plants alive for years. Like many of you, I jumped in with gusto. I bought books, read blogs, watched online videos, and brought home all kinds of trees. I loved and cared for my trees making sure they had water and fertilizer and figured I was well on my way to having a collection like the stunning trees we see every fall at the Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society annual show and in the Botanic Gardens bonsai pavilion.

Soon reality set in. What are these weird bugs on my trees? Why are these leaves turning brown? How much should I be watering? How and when should I be styling? What fertilizer should I use and when? What do I do with these trees throughout the winter? The list went on and on. Trying to find answers sent me down rabbit holes filled with conflicting information that added to my confusion and left me feeling paralyzed. I did the best I could but often I simply defaulted letting a tree go for another year, missing windows to do work, or even worse just hacking away while watching a tree go downhill and eventually perish. I was frustrated, sad and lost on what to do.

Instead of giving up I'm recommitting myself to learning and growing my skills so I can have healthy, happy trees. I aspire to one day exhibiting one of my trees in our annual show. A bit nerve racking to put that statement into the universe! My goal is to periodically share my experiences in hopes that bits and pieces of my learning and failures resonate with other bonsai novices in the club elevating our collective learning.

As I started, I vastly underestimated the complexities of bonsai. I compounded issues trying to consume the entire breath of each complexity. I would have been better off focusing on building a strong

foundation of various bonsai fundamentals - understanding horticulture, design, basic wiring, repotting, and pruning techniques. There are three avenues I've leveraged to achieve this: 1) online learning from bonsai experts, 2) maximizing the collective knowledge of our club and 3) committing to putting learning into practice.

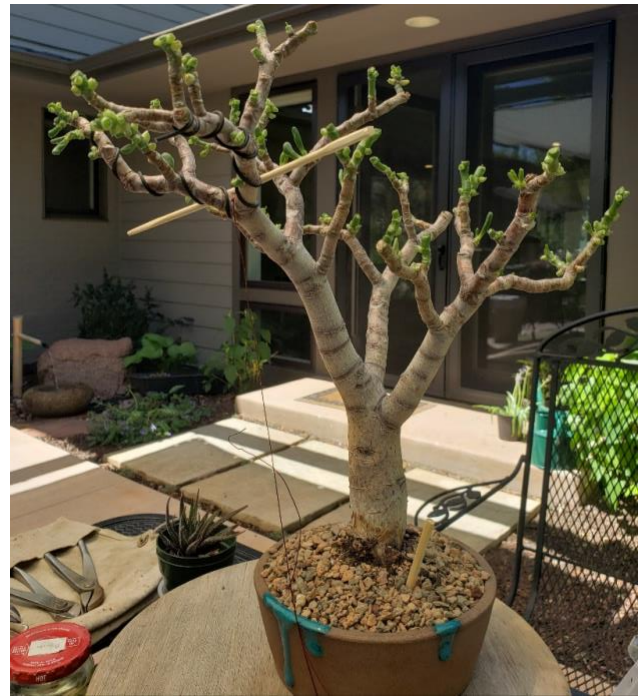
Investing in online learning from a bonsai expert and diving deep into bonsai basics was invaluable for me and provided the solid foundation I lacked. Bonsai Mirai, Eisei-en Bonsai and Bonsai Empire are three respected platforms offering this type of learning. Many platforms have free content and I used those to select a single learning channel that resonated with me. After learning online for just a couple months, lightbulbs started going off for me as I listened to topics in our monthly meetings, watched our club YouTube channel or read through our blog. I feel like I'm grasping the underlying horticulture and design concepts and how they are applied in our front range climate.

I've been able to further expand my education through our club mentor/mentee program. Two members have welcomed me into their gardens, sharing their knowledge and patiently answering my questions. I've tried to focus my questions in just a few specific areas, slowly building on my foundation of knowledge. Each time I've come away with fantastic nuggets and have enjoyed getting to know my fellow members.

All this learning built my confidence enough to bring a tree to work on at the club workshop in May to try and put theory into practice. I've never attended a workshop before and was a bit intimidated going in but the group was welcoming, engaging and so open with their knowledge. Had I not attended, I never would have had the guts to do something as drastic as this full defoliation of my Gollum jade along with some basic wiring. This was the first major piece of work I've ever done on of my trees! I left the



workshop with additional learning, new connections with amazing club members and a feeling of excitement about the direction of my tree (along with a newbie sense of dread after what I did to the poor thing even though I know why defoliation was done and the benefits).



An unintended consequence of my early setbacks was the self-selection of species I seem to be able to keep alive. Juniper and jades now make up most of my bench giving me a built in species focus. The tropical jades also eliminated the hurdle of winter protection. I now look at my trees daily with a more educated eye for growth patterns, watering and fertilizing needs and seasonal best practices.

I have a long way to go but feel much better about where I'm starting from and where I'm going with my personal bonsai practice. In the coming months I'm looking forward to continuing to share some of my journey with you. Next time I'll dive a bit deeper into horticulture fundamentals that were extremely valuable for me and how I'm tackling design as someone who doesn't think of himself as creative. Until next time.



## MEMBERSHIP

*By Patrick Allen – RMBS Membership Chair*

We're continuing to grow. As of this newsletter we now have 180 members. Many are new to bonsai, and others have moved to Colorado and have bonsai collections.

If you meet these new members at a RMBS event, please welcome them and see if they need any help with the Bonsai trees, tell them how you deal with Colorado's weather, or just share with them how you got started. They will appreciate the comradery and help!

Please welcome our new members:

Matthew McDaniel

## RMBS HERITAGE PAGE

*By Patrick Allen – RMBS Membership Chair*

Mr. Hal Sasaki, a chartered member of the Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society works on one of his trees. Photo taken in the mid 1970s.



Harold "Hal" Sasaki

**Membership Dues will start being collected in June.** Renewal date is **July 1, 2023** for a one-year membership that ends **June 30, 2024**. It is very helpful if members would submit membership dues for this time period only. Payment information is on the following page. New dues amount is: **\$50** for single membership, **\$75** for family.

Payment can be made on line via PayPal or Venmo, and we will now be able to take any credit card payment in person via Square. A check or cash is always accepted.

## 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: RockyMountainbonsaisociety

## 2023 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program	Workshop
<b><u>June 8,9,10 2023 ABS Convention</u></b> Denver Botanic Gardens	<b>ANNUAL AMERICAN BONSAI SOCIETY CONVENTION AND SHOW</b>	
<b><u>July Workshop</u></b> Saturday, July 15 Paul Koenning host		<b>PAUL KOENNING</b> FINAL WIRING AND PRUNING
<b><u>July 2023 Monthly Meeting</u></b> TBD Denver Botanic Gardens- Gates Hall	<b><u>TBD</u></b>	
<b><u>August 2023 Monthly Meeting</u></b> Thursday, August 3 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens- Gates Hall	<b><u>TODD SCHLAFER</u></b>	
<b><u>August Workshop</u></b> Saturday, August 19 David McPeters host		<b>DAVID MCPETERS</b> POT CLEANING AND USE OF MOSS
<b><u>September – Annual show</u></b> Friday Sept 1- Sunday Sept 3 Denver Botanic Gardens	<b><u>ANNUAL SHOW</u></b>	
<b><u>September Workshop</u></b> Saturday, September 9 Paul Koenning host		<b>PAUL KOENNING</b> WINTER PREP AND PEST INSPECTION
<b><u>October Monthly Meeting</u></b> Tuesday, October 3 7PM Denver Botanic Gardens- Auditorium	<b><u>SERGIO CUAN</u></b>	







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**Gift Certificates!!** Use them for *anything* (supplies, classes, etc.) and at *any time*.

We're located on the west side of the Denver Metro area, near I-70 and Youngfield.

Email us at: [co.bonsai.ltd@gmail.com](mailto:co.bonsai.ltd@gmail.com)