

RMBS

October 2020

Volume 52 Issue 10

Ponderosa Pine Jim Lantis, Artist of the Year

RMBS President's Message October 2020

President's Message

by Andy Berry

RMBS 51st Annual Exhibition: A first after 50 years! "The expert in anything was once a beginner."—Helen Hayes

Hello RMBS!

Let's take a moment to reflect on a monumental task we have accomplished this year: our very first virtual bonsai and suiseki exhibition. Given the decision to pivot to a virtual show was made only a few months prior to the go-live date, and we had to create the "blueprint" for a virtual exhibition a good deal of imagination and coordination were needed.

Set forth by our constitution and bylaws, we endeavored to "create interest, educate and inspire participation by both advanced and beginning growers of Bonsai and to increase enjoyment of bonsai." We also aimed to "advance appreciation of bonsai through Club participation in exhibits, workshops and shows." I'd like to say that in this regard, this was one of the most successful RMBS exhibitions ever, given our

reach far beyond our local region with significant global engagement.

Given the virtual platform, we also have a unique opportunity to look at how people engaged with our show. Here is the virtual exhibition by the numbers. Let's have a look at the data and see how we did!

Show by the numbers....

Shared 76 bonsai, 15 suiseki, 28 artists, 2 demonstrations, 3 bonsai evolution stories.

Geographic distribution of exhibitors was vast given electronic format (Wyoming to New Mexico).

Virtual exhibition visits 1,666 from 9/20 until 9/27 (we are still getting more traffic on RMbonsai.org).

64% new visitors who had not visited site prior.

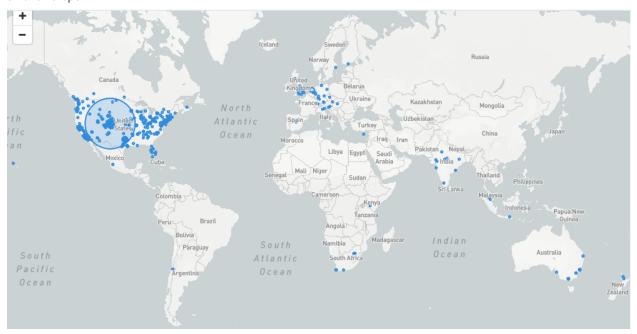
Website Traffic up more than 500% overall for the month of September.

Average website session over 20 minutes!



RMBonsai.org September 2020 Traffic up 500% during virtual exhibition.

Additionally, our show was visited by people on every continent (expect Antarctica, no data to report) with heavy representation from the US, UK and Europe.



Truly global distribution of visits to RMBS virtual show 2020.

But this isn't the entire story. Our show was a big conversation topic on social media platforms and was reposted by multiple bonsai clubs / organizations and individuals.

Thanks to the buzz created by the show, we have over 1,000 followers on Instagram and 2,000 followers on Facebook. These numbers continue to grow. Our virtual exhibition invitation was shared by bonsai clubs from Montana to California to Texas.

In addition to the exhibition, an enhanced social media presence was instituted to increase interest in the show. Here are some screenshots from our Facebook (FB) account that analyze our reach and our audience engagement that I found fascinating and I think you will also (even if you don't use social media)!



Posts ?

6 posts published in the last 28 days.

MOST ENGAGING POSTS

ST ANNUAL BONSAL EXHIBITION SEPTEMBER 20-27	It's show time! Treat Reach	Reach	2.9K
yourself to an at September 20	yourself to an aftern September 20	Engagements	318
	Congratulations to our 2020 artist of the ye September 22	Reach	1.6K
a a		Engagements	229
deal wi	#RMBS can help you	Reach	468
	deal with the unpredi September 8	Engagements	95



Post Regularly to Engage More People

People tend to visit a Page to get updates and see what's new with a business.

Top RMBS FB posts reach and engagement was related to the 2020 virtual show.



Audience Insights

1,924
Total Page Likes

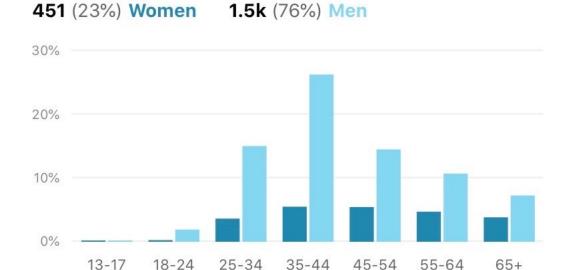
▲60
New Page Likes
Last 28 days



Tim Miller, Phonsavanh Jo Bangphraxay and 1.9K other people like your Page

Age and Gender

People who like your Page are in these age and gender groups. These numbers are estimates.



Here are the demographics for people who "liked" content on our FB page.



Audience Insights

Top Locations

People who like your Page are in these locations. These numbers are estimates.

Cities	Countries
Denver, CO	233
Colorado Springs, CO	44
Boulder, CO	30
Aurora, CO	23
Fort Collins, CO	17
Tehran, Tehran Province, Iran	17
Lakewood, CO	16
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	15
New York, NY	12
Arvada, CO	12

People who liked our FB content come from these cities: Interesting indeed!



Audience Insights

Top Locations

People who like your Page are in these locations. These numbers are estimates.

Cities	Countries
United States of America	1.4K
Vietnam	41
Philippines	39
Brazil	32
Malaysia	29
Indonesia	27
Iran	25
Thailand	23
Spain	21
Myanmar	19

Top countries for engagement in our FB content. Again, very interesting and unexpected!

Given this unique way to engage our local, regional and global bonsai community at the same time, I would submit that some component of our annual exhibition should available virtually for all future shows. We can continue to improve and refine our social media presence and explore how this can better support RMBS in the near and long term. This will increase the reach, reputation and availability of RMBS for a new generation of bonsai practitioner and help us achieve our mission in a way we have not considered before.

Any ideas, thoughts and feedback on these topics are encouraged and welcome. Please feel free to email, call or text me. I'm not on social media;).

Lastly, we are planning for a last-minute educational program change for October 6th. Danny Coffee has not responded to our request for a remote program via the Zoom platform. Instead we will be getting a once in a lifetime tour of the bonsai gardens from our Wyoming members. I am very much looking forward to the behind-the-scenes experience of the Backcountry Bonsai (Dan Wiederrect and Steve Varland's) collection and a look at the magic behind Jim Lantis' work, as a victory lap for our 2020 Bob Kataoka Memorial Artist of the Year. This isn't one that I'd miss.

Stay safe out there.

Your brother in bonsai,

Andy Berry

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The Wyoming Contingent

Several years ago I became aware of Backcountry Bonsai. I had no idea who, or what, Backcountry Bonsai was, except that it was apparently in Wyoming. Then I went to an RMBS workshop with Michael Hagedorn and met Dan Wiederrecht and Steve Varland; and I found out that *they* are Backcountry Bonsai.

I also found that, in addition to being really nice guys, these two are very dedicated and ethical collectors of *yamadori* and serious bonsai artists. I researched their website and was regaled with stories of their being stalked by mountain lions while searching for trees in the mountains.

Later, I met their friend, Jim Lantis, who is the RMBS Artist of the Year for 2020. Jim is also a committed bonsai artist who loves coming to our workshops and pursuing the life-long learning process that is bonsai. In fact, all three of these gentlemen are dedicated to expanding their technical and aesthetic knowledge of bonsai. To that end, they regularly bring bonsai professional Todd Schlafer to Wyoming for hands-on workshops, and it shows in their work!

Given the really fine examples of bonsai design that we have seen from Dan, Steve and Jim in our recent shows, I suspected that this was just the tip of the iceberg. So, I invited this "Wyoming Contingent" of RMBS to put together a presentation for our October 6th meeting that will provide a virtual tour through each of their gardens and will highlight some of their extraordinary collected material, as well as styled trees.

We invite you to tune in to the RMBS virtual Zoom meeting on Tuesday, October 6th, at 7:00 PM for what I am sure will be a stimulating insight into the work of our talented Wyoming brethren!

Tom Anglewicz, Program and Guest Artist Coordinator

Moving a bonsai collection: lessons learned/recommendations- by Mike Britten

Introduction

In September 2019, I moved my large bonsai collection from Longmont (~5,200 feet) to Florissant, Colorado (~8,500 feet). My collection included ~100 bonsai (and pre-bonsai) and many small plants (including shohin bonsai and small succulents). I moved several large trees (some as tall as 4 feet and some wider than 3 feet across). I also moved one large and several smaller bonsai benches and a small (~12X8 feet) hoop house. It was a lot of work and the move itself took several weeks including preparation time.

It was challenging! The schedule was dictated by the closing timeline on our new house. Unfortunately, the weather up until the move was warm and sunny but an early winter storm swept in the day I was unloading trees at the new place. That day, the temperature fell to 16 degrees in Florissant and we got freezing rain and snow the next day. I used a rental truck for the move, and road conditions were so bad, I couldn't return the truck for several days.

So, while the move itself was successful (my trees were well secured in the truck and none were damaged during loading, moving and unloading), I lost ~10 nice trees to the severe weather. It was really painful to lose these trees; I had some of them for 20+ years.

What follows are some recommendations and lessons learned from my experience.

Preparation

Critically evaluate your collection ahead of your **move and only move trees you want**. Moving a large collection takes much time and energy; spend it on the trees you are committed to. I gave away a number of trees before the move (but should have given away more).

Plan ahead and consider timing, help needed, supplies and materials you'll need, where you will put trees upon arrival, etc. This will help make the move as efficient and easy as possible. Hope for good weather but plan for bad weather.

Timing

If possible, choose your timing to match your collection. If you have mostly Colorado natives or traditional Japanese species, I'd recommend moving your collection during winter dormancy. You won't have to worry about watering (e.g., if it is a multi-day trip), overheating, etc. You will have to plan for extreme cold and/or wind (e.g. by having a large protected space to move them into such as a hoophouse, greenhouse or garage).

Of course, if your collection includes **tropicals and/or succulents**, you should move them during spring, summer of fall (pay attention to the forecast regardless) or move them in a heated vehicle (e.g. a van).

Check the weather forecast ahead of your move!

Regardless of the timing, you should have an **appropriate location to place your trees upon arrival**. In winter, a hoop house, greenhouse, warmish garage, or protected outdoor location are all possibilities. If you have a large collection, having multiple locations will likely be necessary (e.g. a protected outdoor location for Colorado natives, a hoop house for traditional Japanese species, and a greenhouse or indoor space for tropicals.

Moving

Make sure you have a big enough vehicle to move your collection. It could be a pickup or a van or it could be a rental moving trailer or truck.

You can maximize your moving space by using makeshift benches to double the capacity of your vehicle or trailer. I used cheap sawhorses and 2X6 lumber to make benches. I screwed the 2x6s into the sawhorses which made the benches very stable. I placed each bench forward in the truck compartment and secured them to the wood side rails of the truck bed with straps (the kind used to secure cargo into a whitewater raft). This nearly doubled space for moving my collection.

I also used **stackable plastic milk crates** to move my small (shohin-size) and medium size trees. I placed rags in the bottom of the crates to protect the pots and keep them from sliding around, stacked the loaded crates, and secured each one to the benches or sidewalls of the truck.

If you have a large collection and/or large trees, **get help loading and unloading** your trees; one slip with a large tree and you can damage or kill the tree and break a valuable pot.

Load your trees thoughtfully. For example, place large trees to the front (in case of a sudden stop they won't fly forward and be damaged (or damage smaller trees)). Secure each tree large or medium sized tree; I used parachute cord to tie each tree to the benches and the wood side rails of the truck. I used "moving blankets" provided by the rental company to protect my nice bonsai pots. I placed blankets loosely on the bench or floor and pulled the material up between pots so they did not touch.

Post-move activities

Once you have moved, realize that you still have a lot of work to do! In the short term, you need to check each tree: does it need water?; is it still secure in the container?; was there any damage that needs immediate attention?.

You need to place your unloaded trees; likely temporarily until you have built benches, assembled a hoop house, etc. A lot depends on where you have moved and what facilities you have at the new location. It would be great if your new place already had a greenhouse and fenced yard with good lighting for your trees. But maybe you will have to build your new bonsai facilities from scratch.

It will take a while to **understand your location**. What areas get the best light for your trees (neither too sunny or too shaded)? What locations are protected from wind? What areas are warm and what areas are cold?

One problem I faced was that our new house is on a 2-acre lot with no fences (and had no greenhouse or hoophouse). I quickly learned that mule deer like to eat conifer needles and had to quickly build a wire fence to protect my trees.

VOLUME 52 ISSUE 10

Another consideration is your watering system. Our new place has well water; I made sure to do a well test before closing on the new house. The flow rate is 10 gal./minute which is great for my needs. Still, I had to purchase several hoses and a new watering wands to get water to my trees about 20 yards from the house. Yet to do: I need to test the water, my trees seem to be doing well but I do get some residue on my pots and leaves. I may consider rainwater collection in the future.

One of the best purchases I made after the move was an "Accurite" digital weather station. It is a simple and relatively cheap (<\$100) set of four temperature/humidity sensors with a small digital screen that sits in my living room. I placed the sensors in different locations in the yard, garage, outdoor shed and eventually my hoop house. This tool really helped clarify the temperature "profile" of my yard and facilities. The results were surprising. For example, I learned that my large detached garage stayed pretty warm well into winter (20-30 degrees warmer than the outside temperature) and was a good location for my less hardy trees. In late winter and spring however, the garage is much cooler and I provide some supplemental heat. Another example, our lot has a ridge (where our house is) and a low area to the east where I put my outdoor bonsai (because of the great light). In winter the temperature on the ridge is >10 degrees warmer than just 20 yards away in the low area.

Final thoughts

It has been a year since I moved my collection and I'm **still not finished**. My recently bought a small water proof heater and thermostat for my hoop house and need to understand and manage the temperature inside. I'm experimenting with insulation (has anyone tried bubble wrap – they make "twin wall" bubble wrap specifically for greenhouses).

The point is that moving your bonsai collection can be a challenge and takes time an energy. It was not fun and I am still bummed about losing some really nice trees. However, once I solved the critical short term needs (understanding the microclimates in my yard and facilities, protection plants from deer, setting up the watering system, etc.) managing my collection was fun again. I feel like (after a year), I'm over the hump and my trees and I have adjusted. Hopefully, we don't move again anytime soon!

2020 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program	
October Monthly Meeting Tuesday, October 6 On Line via Zoom 7PM	WYOMING CONTINGENT DAN WIEDERRECHT, JIM LANTIS, STEVE VARLAND	
November Monthly Meeting	LONG PROGRAM: JAN CULEK	
Tuesday, November 3 On-Line via Zoom	<u></u>	
December Monthly Meeting		

Resources for Members:

Other internet resources:

New RMBS Web Site

Colorado Bonsai Ltd.

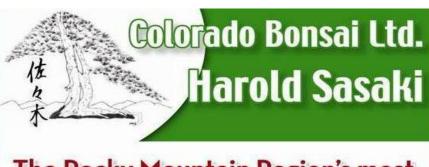
First Branch Bonsai

S&S Bonsai

RMBS Facebook Page

Mike Horine Website





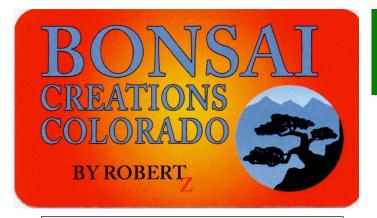
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