



COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE WALTER BUCK

RMBS

June 2020

Volume 52 Issue 6

June 2020 President's Message RMBS:
Nursery Stock Juniper Part One

"Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation: now a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper."—Henry David Thoreau, Walden

Our recent update from the Denver Botanic Gardens regarding gathering of plant societies can be succinctly put: they are

taking the situation "month by month." **All gatherings have been cancelled for the month of June**, and DBG has opened to the public with appropriate precautions and limited admittance.

The RMBS board will be meeting this week to discuss our plan for 2020 going forward. We will be considering options for our annual exhibition, as an in-person event seems risky for RMBS members, volunteers and the public. We will be evaluating our slate of guest artist given our inability to meet in person and the persistent difficulties with long-distance travel. We will be considering expanded online programming with updated topics if our guest artists are not available

For our June meeting, I am very excited to have our very own professional artist Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai performing a demo from his nursery via Zoom live stream. RMBS will coordinate with Todd to have an additional camera person there for detail shots, to provide a unique experience to get “up close” while Todd creates a premier tree from his own collected stock. Please join us via the Zoom link on Tuesday June 2nd with a 7pm start time. I’m looking forward it!

This is a great time of year to go hunting at local garden centers and home improvement stores for nursery stock trees that will make incredible bonsai for your collection for only a small financial investment. We have been discussing this some on the RMBS members forum, and a recent blog post on RMBonsai.org outlines my method for selecting this material (huge thanks are due here to Ryan Neil of International Bonsai Mirai for the knowledge).

Happy hunting. Hope you are all well.

Your brother in bonsai,

Andy Berry

(p):303-910-5756 (e): andrbo304@gmail.com

Resources for Members:

For Technical advice and directions on Zoom- see article after the Calendar.

Have something for sale or looking to buy supplies or plant material? Need help with a bonsai problem or interested in offering advice? Please go to the RMBS website and click on “Members” and click on “Members Forum” There you will find a blog of all of the above subjects and maybe a few other interesting topics of discussion.

Rmbonsai.org

Nursery Stock Sabina Juniper Part One: Root work and potting

I happened to be at a large orange-colored box store this weekend to get some gravel for my garden and just couldn't stop myself from picking through the stock of medium sized junipers there for sale. I happened upon a tree that was suitable, and the price was right. \$25 all in. If nothing else, stock junipers are great to get "some turns" for wiring practice and make very attractive trees, even in small size.

I have never worked with *juniperus sabina* before, but I think that the common juniper bonsai techniques will apply. I have seen some Sabina juniper bonsai from Europe that are very desirable specimens.



I chose this tree because it had a single trunk (not a clump) and the trunk made two very distinctive movements that added interest, and an overall style that lends itself to a semi or full cascade (which I have very few of in my garden). Beyond this, there is very little to recommend this tree or distinguish it from the 30 others I reviewed

on the shelf. It will make a good bonsai, not an exceptional one. All told, I will likely have a tree worth a couple hundred dollars from an investment of about one tenth of that.



Looks like every other bush on the rack at the box store.



At least the trunk has a bit of interesting movement. Not much else to recommend this stock.

Step one: Assemble tools and usable workspace. Knock it out of the nursery can and start reducing the soil mass with a chopstick. As will most nursery stock, this

tree was completely pot-bound, with numerous large roots encircling the can. This tends to be easy work, **and you should work starting at the top** and pull radially from the trunk toward the outer ring of the root mass. You should start from the top and work down to identify the true nebari (basal root flare). You will need to remove diminutive roots that emanate from the trunk above the larger basal root flare: this is easily accomplished with scissors. As with many stock juniper, the nebari on this tree was not readily apparent, but I was able to get to some large roots all emerging from about the same area. This was about 1/3 or a bit more down into the nursery can.

Step two: Once you feel you have identified the true basal root flare, start working the bottom and sides down to a reasonable mass

with the same inside-to-outside chopstick technique and removing unwanted roots with a scissor, assuring sharp clean cuts. It was helpful to have identified a usable cascade style pot and to dry fit the root mass periodically to see if I had reduced enough. I think all together, I took off about 50% of the existing root mass, focusing on removing long, stringy roots that were coarse and without a large mass of fine feeder roots.



Root mass after working, prior to potting. Lots of fine roots remain. Basal flare identified.

Step 3: Prepare the pot with drainage screen and tie down wires. This pot posed a problem (which is a common one) with only a single drainage hole at the bottom and no other areas to string tie wires. I will omit the primer on proper potting here but show you how I tied this tree down using a bar of heavy gauge copper wire, clipped to length and stainless-steel tie-down wire (will not stretch). I inserted a chopstick into the root mass above as an anchor to tie half the tree down (again, a topic for another message).



A common tie-down wire problem: remedied.

Step 4: I potted the tree with a layer of coarse aeration soil at the base (same composition as the rest of the soil, just a fraction larger). I tied the tree down loosely, then filled the pot with soil. Pushing the soil first in around the tree with my fingers to "bulk-fill" the spaces. Then I tightened the tie-downs snug once I had the tree at the angle which I thought was suitable for the next 2-5 years of training. After this, I filled the pot with more soil and chopsticked in the rest of the soil to eliminate all of the empty space in the container. I top-dressed the surface with mountain moss (to keep the soil from being displaced when watering). All told, a bit more than one hour of root work and potting done. This tree is now ready for the heavy styling work in the coming weeks. The ability to both pot and style a tree in a single season is a huge benefit of nursery stock.



Ready for styling. After root work and potting.

Look for my July message to see the culmination of this project. This June I will set the primary structure and perform wiring of primary and secondary branches. This will start this tree on a life-long journey as a bonsai. Also, time to buy a new BBQ grill cover it would seem.

Happy hunting. Hope you are all well.

Your brother in bonsai,

Andy Berry

2017 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

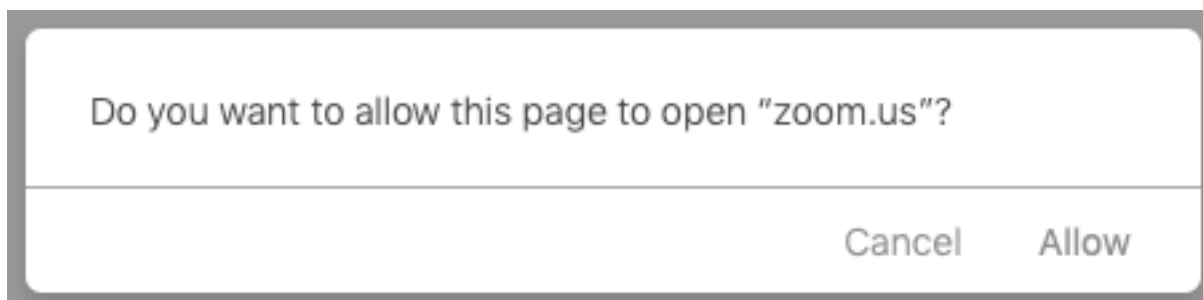
Date and Location	Agenda or Program
<u>June Monthly Meeting via Zoom.</u> Tue Jun 2 nd 6:30 – 9:30pm Live Stream	<u>LONG PROGRAM: TODD SCHLAFER</u> VISITING ARTIST DEMONSTRATION
<u>July Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Jul 7 th 6:30 – 9:30pm Location TBD	<u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: PAUL GILBERT</u> HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF VIEWING STONES AS RELATES TO BONSAI
<u>Aug Monthly Meeting</u> Tuesday Aug 4 th 6:30-9:30 PM Location TBD	<u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: JIM DOYLE</u> THE ART OF BUNJIN
<u>August Workshop</u> Aug 22 and 23 Location TBD	<u>TODD SCHLAFER</u>
<u>September Monthly Meeting - to be held in August</u> Tuesday, August 25 Location TBD	<u>TODD SCHLAFER</u> VISITING ARTIST DEMONSTRATION
<u>Annual RMBS Show</u> September 4 th , 5 th & 6 th	<u>DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS</u>
<u>October Workshp</u> Sunday, October 4	<u>DANNY COFFEY</u>
<u>October Monthly Meeting</u> Tuesday, October 6	<u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: DANNY COFFEY</u>
<u>November Monthly Meeting</u>	<u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: JAN CULEK</u>

How to attend RMBS meeting on-line via “Zoom”

Step 1: On your computer, laptop, or smart phone open your browser and log into your email account.

Step 2: Find and open the email from your meeting host that contains the invite link- from RMBS.

Step 3: Click on the invite link and Zoom will redirect you to a webpage. This webpage will ask you to download the Zoom app on your device whether you are using a desktop or a mobile device.



Step 4: Once the application is downloaded on your desktop, install and open it. Zoom should automatically open the meeting, and if it has not started yet it will give you a message to wait. When the meeting starts you will automatically be joined. If that screen does not open, go back to your email ID and click on the invite link. You will now see a prompt to open the link in the Zoom app. (There is an update for Zoom app that must be downloaded after May 30 and you will be prompted to update before you can join the meeting).

Step 5: Grant the necessary permissions to the Zoom app to use your camera and microphone in order to get started and join the meeting. Allow “Join Audio conference by computer” so you can use the Mic and speakers on your computer/laptop/phone. It also has a “Test audio” link so you can check your speakers and settings, also Test Microphone” to make sure it is working. You can choose to join by video which activates your camera if you have one so you can appear on the screen with the other attendees. If you turn your video off you will still see the screen but no one can see you. (For those advanced techies, in settings you can choose different backgrounds for yourself if you like.)

At the bottom left corner of the screen are two icons. One is a microphone, to mute hit the arrow and choose mute- then you will see a red slash mark through the microphone icon letting you know you are muted, to speak turn it back on. Also is “Start video” which controls your camera to record you if you choose.

Also on the bottom of your screen you will see a few more icons- the only ones you should use are “Chat” where you can write a question to the presenter, and “Response” where you can choose a clapping hands or thumbs up if asked. “Screen Sharing” is just for the presenter. “Participants” will give you a list of who else is also on-line.

In the upper right hand corner are a few boxes or squares which will allow you to change your screen layout. Click them to experiment with your view, you can choose to see all the participants in a “Gallery view”- each one in an equal size box, or you can choose “Active Speaker” where you will see the person who is talking full screen, which will be what you want once the presentation begins.

No speaker or Mic Those of you using older technology that does not have a speaker and/or a microphone can still watch the presentation on your screen but you may not be able to hear it or to ask questions. You can, at the same time, use your phone to access the audio portion. There will be a phone number to call that is below the link to the website on the invitation email. You will call that phone number and enter the meeting ID (also in the email) when prompted followed by #. The sound quality will be improved if you use headphones or ear buds to listen and make sure your microphone is muted most of the time unless you want to speak.

The “Chat” box will be active during the meeting so you can always type in a questions or comment or answer some one else’s question.

We will be on-line starting around 6 pm for anyone who needs some extra time to get set up and make sure everything is working. We will also supply a few phone numbers for a “phone a friend” to help you if you get stuck.

The meeting will begin at 7 P.M. and invite anyone to join for some social interaction starting at 6:30.

We hope you will join us for the meeting and turn on your video- it is so good to see each other’s faces that we have been missing for the past few months! You can bring a drink, take off your shoes, and relax and enjoy the meeting.

Membership Renewal:

RMBS has adopted a policy where all membership renewals occur on July 1, and cover the succeeding 12 months, ending on June 30th.

All memberships renew this summer on July 1st, 2020. Individual memberships are \$35 per year and family memberships are \$50 per year.

You may pay via cash or check at any monthly meeting or mail your check to the address below. If you mail your check please be sure to include your email address and telephone number.

PAYMENT ADDRESS:

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society
c/o Membership Renewal
PO Box 271043
Louisville, CO 80027

Discounts Available to Members:

We have an account established with Way to Grow Gardening Supply in Denver. You can receive discounts on some items up to 15%. You will need to tell them you are a member of RMBS.

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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