

## **Jim Lantis**

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society's  
**2020 Bonsai Artist-Of-The-Year**



### **WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSION**

I have been retired for almost 13 years. I was a power plant mechanic at Dave Johnson Power Plant near Glenrock, Wyoming for 35 years. About the last 10 years of my career I started doing bonsai and have enjoyed it ever since.

### **HOW DID YOU GET INTO BONSAI**

The first time I ever saw a bonsai was in 1971 while I was stationed on a ship in Japan. When I came home after the service I watched a lot of old movies and noticed bonsai in several of them. My wife bought me one for x-mas one year and that was the start of the best hobby I have ever had.

### **WHO TAUGHT YOU – HOW DID YOU LEARN SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES USED IN BONSAI?**

My wife and I went to Denver for Father's Day one year to go sight seeing and eat at a really good Mexican restaurant. We wound up at the Botanic Garden and that is where I met Harold Sasaki. He had his stand set up and was selling trees. He talked to me a lot about how the trees were styled, potted, and taken care of. Harold told us of the show and suggested we go in and look around, it was fantastic. I meet Larry Jackel there, and he told me a lot about the Ponderosa Pines. After that I would go to Denver at least 1 or 2 times every summer. Larry had some work shops at his home, and I went to those as much as I could. I also went to Harold's garden all most everytime I got to Denver. I bought a lot of books and read everything I could find. It wasn't until about the last 10 years or so that I had the time I could go places like Micheal Hagedorn's and take some 2 or 3 day classes. There have been several work shops in Denver, Chicago, St. Louis, and Douglas, Wyoming that I have gone to and learned from several different bonsai professionals. It has been great, and I have learned a lot from all of them. I learned a lot by trial and error, but probably learned the most from Todd Schlafer during the many trips he has made to Wyoming to do work shops for our little club in Douglas.

### **WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON BONSAI**

If you kill a tree don't take it personally, get another one and do things a little different. There are a lot of other people out there you can talk to, and most of them are very willing to help. You will learn patience!

### **DO YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTS OR HOBBIES BESIDE BONSAI**

I love wood working. Building boxes and display benches is a lot of fun, but the best is building display tables and slabs. I have built several of each and hope to keep building them as long as I have trees to put on them.

### **JAPANESE OR WESTERN STYLE, WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE**

With deciduous I prefer the Japanese style because of the elegance you get from your tree when you get it to a stage you feel it is ready to show. With conifers I prefer the western style because of all the wild yamadori that is available. These trees have a very rugged, ruff and twisting growth pattern that makes you think a lot more on how to style them and have them look natural, yet very special.

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