



RMBS

October 2019

Volume 51 Issue 10

PONDEROSA PINE STYLED NATURES WAY

October President's Message

by Andy Berry

"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."—Albert Camus

Many thanks are due to everyone who helped to make our 50th anniversary bonsai and suiseki exhibition a huge success! DBG attendance numbers for the first weekend in September were nearly 7,500 people. Our show increased appreciation of bonsai for all of those in attendance this year. Our Friday evening event was very well attended by RMBS members and invited guests, including VIP attendees such as the CEO of the Denver Botanic Gardens Brian Vogt and Japan's General Counsel in Denver Ms. Midori Takeuchi. Both had wonderful wishes for the next 50 years of RMBS. Congratulations are also due to our 2019 artist of the year Adam Johnson, as his excellence in bonsai was clear in his

presentation of native Rocky Mountain Juniper bonsai specimens and his unique triple trunk sub-alpine fir (which was perhaps my favorite tree in the show). Our heritage trees and RMBS history display added richness and context to our exhibition and received much interest from the public. I look forward to perusing the professional photography of the show provided by Mike Green (who was so inspired he purchased a bonsai from the auction and joined RMBS). I thoroughly enjoyed seeing the nearly 100 bonsai and over 30 viewing stones on display this year, but **what really made the weekend amazing for me was seeing all the RMBS members and families that volunteered to conduct show logistics, demonstrations, guided tours and be general ambassadors of RMBS and the art of bonsai.** I was able to catch up with friends

I had not seen in some time and enjoy a wonderful weekend. My most warm thanks to you all, as you are the heart of RMBS.

Fall is a magnificent (and busy time) for the bonsaiist. Many deciduous species are starting to transition to their displays of fall color. Pines and elongating species are developing vascular growth and setting buds for the following year. **This informs the scope of work required to advance your bonsai at this critical time of year. Autumn work sets them up for success during winter dormancy and to come out strong in the spring.** Given that most species have hardened off their growth for the year, this is the main season to make pruning decisions on **deciduous species**. Attention should be paid to taper from trunk to tip as well as proportion of branches in relationship to overall composition. Cutting back to an area of bifurcating growth from multiple shoots emanating from the same area will increase ramification in the subsequent growth cycle and correct structural flaws. It is a reasonable time to prune maples, but I tend to wait until leaf-drop over the winter when structure is best visualized, and wire can be applied without damaging tender foliage. If maples are clipped, make sure cut-paste is applied. **This is the optimum time of year to work on pine bonsai.** It is time to set primary structure of branches and execute seasonal wiring as well as cleanup of old needles. The yellowing and drop of these third-year needles are the signal that your established pine bonsai is ready for this season's work. Additionally, major pruning decisions can be made at this time. **Our elongating species are putting on a large amount of vascular growth** this time of the

year. This tends to manifest as existent wire biting into tissue, which should be checked frequently this time of year and removed as needed. For our native spruce and fir bonsai, cleaning up areas congested with growth and buds at this time is paramount (taking everything back to two areas of growth to correct future structural issues). Again, major styling, wiring and pruning may be executed during this time.

Interestingly, early autumn is the second-best time of the year to repot bonsai trees (bud-swelling prior to the first push of spring growth is the safest time). As the weather cools, and trees start to amass vascular growth, they transition energy from this year's photosynthesis to the root tissue for storage for the period of dormancy. We can identify a new container and improve soil conditions, while working with the tree's natural horticultural intention. Many species are amenable to this work currently, but the later in the fall one attempts this operation, the chancier the situation becomes. In this case, the tree may not have enough time to recover prior to freezing temps and winter dormancy. I tend to be more conservative this time of year when it comes to root pruning and less aggressive about trying to fit the tree into a smaller container. **I think it is good practice to make plans for trees that were repotted in the fall, or those that underwent heavy work (wired and pruned) to have expanded winter protection.** I tend to put my trees that meet these criteria into my unheated garage (garden shed might also work), or into my cold frame where they will be protected from large snow loads, desiccating winds and large temperature fluctuations.

And if that's not enough to consider this fall; it pays dividends at this point to start planning for protection of your trees for this winter. Oh, and by the way, it is also the time of year to clean up the rest of the plants in your garden and prune your *niwaki*...

If you can make it away from your bonsai, please join us for the October meeting where our show chairmen David McPeters and Mike Britten will be providing a recap of our 50th annual exhibition and feedback discussion with the membership. Our long

program will be conducted by the 2019 Bob Kataoka Artist of the Year, Adam Johnson. Adam will provide you with additional information regarding the fall fundamentals of bonsai for our "artist of the year program". Come and get tips on how to finish the year strong!

Your Brother in Bonsai,

Andy Berry

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2018 - 2019 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program
<p><u>Monthly Meeting</u> Oct Tue, Oct 1st 6:30pm – 9:00pm DBG Plant Society Building</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM: SHOW RECAP / SURVEY / AND FEEDBACK – DAVID MCPETERS & MIKE BRITTEN</u> <u>ARTIST OF THE YEAR PROGRAM</u></p>
<p><u>Monthly Meeting</u> Nov Tue, Nov 5th 6:30pm – 9:00pm DBG Plant Society Building</p>	<p><u>LONG PROGRAM: AEROBIC PLANTS SOILS & MICROBES - PAUL KOENNING</u></p>
<p><u>Annual Holiday Party</u> Dec Sun, Dec 1st 10am – 2pm Hillcrest Condos 9968 Appletree Place Thornton, CO</p>	

The entire yearly calendar is online [here](#).

2019 BOB KATAOKA ARTIST OF THE YEAR



WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSION

During and after college I was self-employed, and I discovered that I enjoyed the numbers side of the business more than the work itself. At that time, my father-in-law was my business advisor and I decided to follow his path as a CPA, later working in public accounting. Currently, I'm working in finance, in the oil and gas industry.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO BONSAI?

This was about 12 years ago. I began landscaping with maples and succulents in my yard. Soon after, I began experimenting with bonsai, together with my friend Patrik DeCicco. I didn't know much about it and didn't know anyone in RMBS.

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

The first bonsai teacher that I met was Hal Sasaki, at his garden. He opened my eyes and it led me here to DBG to a volunteer day with Friends of the Japanese Garden. There I met Larry Jackel and was inspired by the beautiful ponderosa pines. That was my introduction to the wild native trees of Colorado. Hal and Larry introduced me to the idea of collecting these wild trees for bonsai.

Then in 2009, at my first RMBS meeting, I met one of the world's most accomplished collectors of dwarf conifers, Mr. Jerry Morris. He took me on a trip to the mountains and it changed my life forever. It was one of those days that I'll never forget. It was magical. Patrik and I spent the next 5 years running around in the mountains with Jerry, or off on our own, chasing that magic.

I have learned a lot from attending different bonsai workshops and exhibitions, especially the 2012 ABS/BCI conference here in Denver and the 2015 Artisans Cup exhibition in Portland, Oregon. This year I was able to attend the 20th anniversary of the Trophy, Europe's signature bonsai exhibition, held in Belgium.

I am currently in my 4th year of study with Ryan Neil at International Bonsai Mirai, exploring the very technical aspects of the art form, while also building out my garden and my own collection of approximately 150 collected native American trees.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON BONSAI?

Have fun. Explore. Stick with it. I am an America artist focused on developing American trees. I prefer the use of native materials, especially trees of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, for bonsai.

DO YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTS OR HOBBIES BESIDE BONSAI?

Once I discovered bonsai, it replaced all other hobbies, leaving little time for anything besides my career and my family. That said, carpentry has always interested me. Collecting trees means building boxes and building benches and structures to display them. Building a bonsai garden is very rewarding and carpentry is integral part of it.

JAPANESE OR WESTERN STYLE, WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE

In terms of style, I prefer the naturalistic style of bonsai that has been popular in Europe for some time and is currently driving what has been referred to as the American Bonsai Movement. I am focused on creating trees that represent the American landscapes that I am familiar with.



HERITAGE TREE PROJECT – by Pat Deutschman

Heritage Trees – Connecting history to the present.

I hope you had a chance to visit the Heritage Tree exhibit at the RMBS 50th anniversary show this year. Not only did it feature bonsai from some of the most significant early members; (Bob Kataoka, Jim Robinson, Dick Meleney and Kai Kawahara), it was clearly evident that many of the other trees in the show had definite similarities in style, use of material and sophistication to these Heritage Trees.

RMBS truly has its roots embedded very deeply in the memory of those early Japanese members of the Denver Bonsai Club who passed on their legacy to the “Junior Denver Bonsai Club” members, now RMBS. Their study of bonsai and innovation using native Rocky Mountain material set them apart from other trends that were rising elsewhere in the US and the world at the time and continue today.

While RMBS is recognized as a truly unique club with a very talented pool of bonsai artists, it is no coincidence that the training and lessons taught by these early Japanese men in Denver, many recently released from internment camps following WWII, is what continues to fuel the knowledge and expertise exhibited in the masterpieces that were on display in 2019- some 50 years later!

No one knows what the next 50 years will bring, but a commitment by current members to remember the history of this club, continuing to honor its founding members, sharing with each other as they did their passion about bonsai, and holding in the highest regard any remnant of that legacy that lives on. Heritage Trees are a living testament to such a rich history, and we will continue to search for and find ways to preserve them for generations to come

Happy Anniversary RMBS!



NEWS FOR MEMBERS

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, 2018. 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](#)

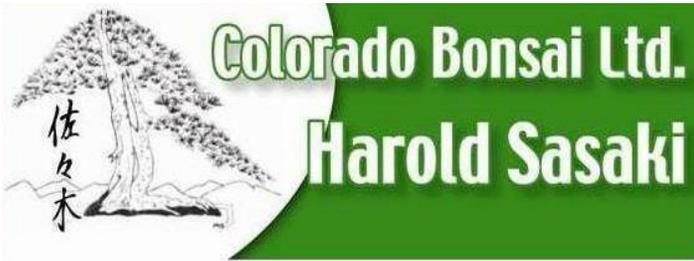
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