

BONSAI TIMES

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BONSAI TIMES

Bringing you the inspiration,
motivation and encouragement to
create remarkable Bonsai.



Cover: Atlas Cedar by Martin M.

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Keith Lowe MNZM

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Les Simpson
simmys369@gmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Tony Bywater
tonyandjude1@outlook.com

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lynn.slobbe@xtra.co.nz

TREASURER

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carlcrosado@gmail.com
Arthur Park, Fees Treasurer
arthurpark@xtra.co.nz

COMMITTEE

Kelly O'Meara
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Please include your name/club as reference and advise the treasurer of your payment.
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EDITORIAL

Enquiries and information:
The editor - nzbamag@gmail.com

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Les Simpson (simmys369@gmail.com)
or the Editor (nzbamag@gmail.com).



FROM THE EDITOR

Hello there!

Differing from the norm, but since we're churning out the next few issues out in an effort to play catch up, it was a bit soon for the President's Report! Instead, I thought I'd take the chance to introduce myself as the new Editor of the Bonsai Times.

I'm Michelle, from North Canterbury, and I've been mucking around with small trees for the last three years - So still pretty new on the scale of things! I'm a graphic designer by trade, and though I don't have much in the way of proper bonsai experience, I was keen to help the wonderful bonsai community how I could.

I've been a keen gardener for a long time, and love propagating, to the point where my partner and I have recently bought 10 acres to turn in to an orchard and a small plant nursery eventually. Hopefully, I'll be able to include production of a few bonsai species in there as well. If you have a favourite species of tree for bonsai, or even a particular bonsai tree in general, we'd love to share your passion in the Bonsai Times.

You don't have to write a novel, even just a short page with a few photos will do, or you can shoot me an email at nzbamag@gmail.com and I can work with you to put something together.

We also appreciate those who are keen to share photos of their trees in the NZBA Club Members Gallery! It doesn't have to be award-winning or perfectly styled, or decades old. Send them through to the magazine email - As long as you're pretty chuffed with how it looks, then we'd love to see it. All photos in the gallery are posted without names to keep our members and their trees safe.

I've added some photos of a few of my young trees, some I've started myself from garden nursery material, and others I've been lucky enough to receive from those more experienced and skilled than I am.

Happy bonsai!

Michelle Whimp

Bonsai Times Editor



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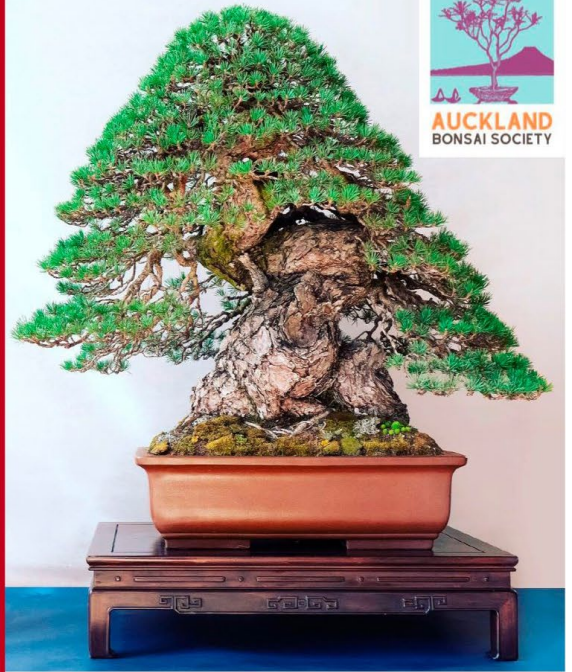
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15TH AND 16TH JUNE 2024

The Domes, Auckland Zoo
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Credit: Mauro Stemberger

Featuring Special Guest

Mauro Stemberger

For the first time in New Zealand, the Auckland Bonsai Society is proud to present multi award winning, internationally acclaimed Bonsai artist Mauro Stemberger!

Mauro will be on stage for two days of demonstrations, working on extraordinary material and hosting two days of intensive workshops.

Also Featuring

- Demonstrations and workshops from locally renowned artists
- Trading area full of trees, pots, tools and accessories
- Exhibition of New Zealand's best Bonsai Trees



NATIONAL SHOW PREPARATION

Robert Allaway, Two Islands Bonsai

A series of articles where we discuss what we may be actioning or contemplating in preparation for submitting a tree for the National Bonsai Exhibition in June 2024. Each article will discuss various actions or decisions required for a couple of months ahead, aligning similarly with the upcoming season.

With just under a year out until the next National Show, you may be thinking surely there's nothing to think about now! You'll be surprised how just important timing is, even a year out!

Vessel and Display Stand:

You may be repotting your tree late winter or early spring and will be looking at changing the vessel the tree is currently in. This may require you to research and commission a



Dwarf Hinoki Cypress rock tower composition

ceramic now in order for it to be ready by repotting time. Alternatively you may look at purchasing a ceramic for your tree. I suggest if you are purchasing something already made that you don't leave this to just before repotting time for two main reasons.

The first; the ceramic you choose might when arrived not suit the tree for whatever reason and second; is availability. The demand of ceramics always increases around repotting time and you might not find what you looking for.

Much like the ceramic, the same goes for the display stand. Although not required for repotting time, we know that sourcing a stand or commissioning one or building it yourself is not as straightforward as a ceramic and ultimately may require a bit more time, yet incredibly important!

Substrate:

Depending on what you use in your potting mix. It's best to be prepared and have the necessary mixes purchased, prepped and ready for repotting time.

Design (Planting angle/ front):

An extremely important step that once done you're stuck with it until you repot again. There's nothing more disappointing than getting to display your tree and you just wish you could turn the pot a few twists to the left!

So what can you do now? Really study the tree, take the time, make notes or even enlist the help of fellow club members or the services of a Bonsai Artist to ensure you have that exact planting angle dialed in.

Repotting day:

If you are repotting your tree and you feel you need the help with the work. Either get in contact with a Bonsai Artist and secure a rough date, so he/she has you booked in or discuss with your club and ask your fellow



club members if they can help. A great tree repotted poorly can make a massive difference when displayed at a show.

Season comparison:

Thinking about displaying your deciduous tree? With the show being in early winter that means the last of the fall colour or full winter silhouette will be on display. What about a flowering tree, will it be at the peak of flowering? Conifers, in winter colour?

You have the opportunity to compare how the tree looks now at the same time of the year. Take notes, detailing what might happen the following year and most importantly what you may need to do to ensure you get the best out of your tree.

A tip would be to take the tree you wish to display and do a test display at the same time of year. Look for ways to improve and don't be afraid to get critiques, it'll only help you move forward.



Pruning & wiring.

Depending on the species you may be doing some wiring and pruning before spring. Approach these tasks with the mindset of how it effects the tree for the upcoming show.

General tasks:

Lastly we can't forget about the general tasks and most importantly the health of the tree! The last of the fertiliser should be on, removing any wire that has done its job. Cleaning the moss off the bark, sprucing up the deadwood or doing some weeding, the list goes on. Taking the time now will pay you back tenfold when it comes to displaying your tree next year!



Your local specialist

BONSAI

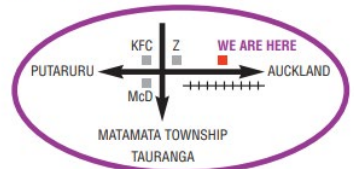
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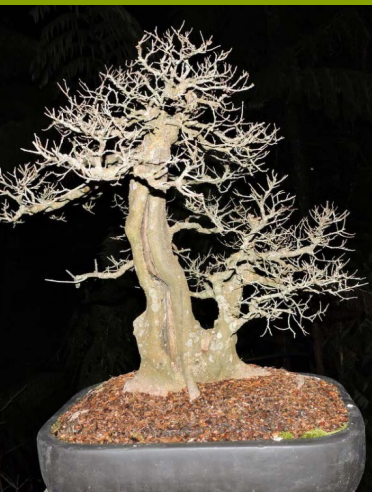
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THOUGHTS ON WINTER CARE, REPOTTING AND AFTERCARE

Dirk Götze, Bonsai Affinity

When we talk about trees going into dormancy, it means that the tree's metabolism is slowing down. It doesn't stop. If it stops, that means the tree is dead. It is similar to when a tree isn't performing well and some might say it's stagnant. It may not be stagnant at all, it could just be busy doing something we can't see. For example, fixing issues around the roots, or dealing with parasites. The best way we can support the tree out of this "stagnant" mode, is to get the growing conditions right.

Most problems with trees are caused by root issues. Too dry, too wet, or too root bound. The remaining problems are usually bugs that are bugging the trees - And usually bugs are an indication that a) our trees are loaded with nutrients or b) our tree is sick, and the problem is usually root related. A healthy tree is usually well capable of holding pest and disease in check.



Let's keep that theory in mind - that trees are always metabolically active. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter... It doesn't change the fact that trees don't stop living! Adding to this, the theory of the faster a tree moves water (sap), the slower it works in its dormant state. And the opposite, if the tree is a slow water mover, it's more active during the dormant period. Our only real concern must then be new emerging growth from the branches or roots which is susceptible to frost damage.

Well, if you ask me, that risk is always present, even if we don't repot, or prune, simply based on the seasons, the changing climate conditions.

Question: What is perpetuating a tree growing roots in winter?

Answer: The stored resources in the vascular system.

Question: What's more important, photo-period or temperature?

Answer: Generally 50/50 equally.

But, and here comes the big BUT. I differentiate trees into two categories; Alpine trees and Coastal trees. Alpine trees are by far more responsive to day-length than coastal trees. So they will start up sap flow right after the shortest day of the year, 22nd of June.

These two facts have to be kept in mind. Especially when we talk about collecting Yamadori. There's seldom the wrong time to collect a tree, only the wrong aftercare.

There's seldom the wrong time to repot a tree, but so often the wrong aftercare. It can take a tree up to 3-4 years to exhaust its sugar and starch storages entirely. We can sometimes take advantage of this fact by giving the tree a decent rest period of at least a year to recover to full strength before pushing any further. The general rule of thumb is to only work on healthy trees, put the sick ones on the back burner, find out what's wrong, nurture them back to health.

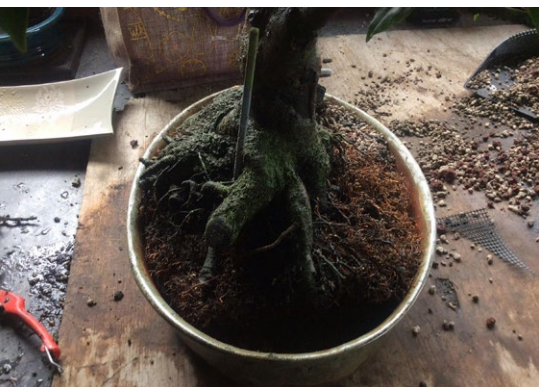


So, getting into winter, I make sure to check all of my trees and containers. Pulling the last leaves off from my deciduous trees and doing the last pruning. Deciduous trees that have not shed their leaves can be pruned harder, in my theory, as they are still moving sap and are better able to fix damage.

In the case of broadleaf evergreens and conifers, I do the same - remove old damaged foliage, do the last pruning and wire applications. If the trees are not getting repotted, or I'm not removing any old wire, at least now I can see it again. On the other hand, this time of the year is undeniable awesome to do structural pruning decisions on especially trees like Larch.

And most important here, I'll be checking all trees for bugs that possibly munch on my tree trunks. Particularly around the exposed roots and tree bases, along the trunks, but also in the canopy - and do any treatments if needed, such as diatomaceous earth, dish-washing liquid and some vinegar in a spray solution.

At the same time as checking my trees, I also want to know which of my containers are holding too much moisture and which are generally too dry. The only way that



works for me, is a moisture reader. You can buy them for around \$30 at any hardware store. You can also lift your trees and gauge by the weight, or hold them sideways to see if they release any water. You can try to gauge by looking at the soil surface, but I find that insufficient. The only thing that works for me is the moisture reader.

Checking the moisture in the containers is the biggest indicator to me which trees are desperately waiting to be re-potted - and in which order I do my re-potting this year.

Keeping in mind that Alpine trees awake first from their dormancy period and coastal trees last, I always follow the same repotting order. I'm starting with my conifers, as most conifers are Alpine trees. I continue with my broadleaf evergreens and by the time I've done all that, I'm usually right in the window for my deciduous trees showing bud swelling. Now, if you have few trees, you can wait longer, until it's warm with almost no frost expected.

Question: Why am I repotting in Winter?

Why am I starting so early?

Answer: I know my trees, and know I can. Also, because I've have so many trees.

But also, (and this is most important to me) I want to be able to push most of my bonsai in spring with slight to moderate fertiliser application. By the time we hit spring most of my compositions have been re-potted for at least 2-3 months, and I can begin to apply fertiliser. It's absolutely not recommended to add fertiliser on freshly re-potted trees!

Most of my trees just need a slip repot, with a slight clean-up around their roots. By a



slip repot, I mean trees I repot every year on a schedule. They are already in the final pot size, or on a slab. I physically can't reduce the root mass any further to squeeze them in an even smaller pot.

However, because they are in, or on the smallest growing space possible, I feel I have to repot them annually. I will pop it out of its pot, tidy up the roots, removing any running roots, and put the tree back in the same pot with a new layer of growing medium. I will remove at most 15-30% roots in a slip repot, as it's done annually.

If I do a full repot, I may change a collected yamadori from its collection box into a real bonsai pot, or at least a training pot with more drainage holes, before putting it into a bonsai pot the year after. If I choose to reduce the pot size of a tree, I maybe

remove more than 40% of the root mass. If the tree is ready for refinement, I'll change the particle size of the growing medium from 6-13mm to 3-6mm, to enable the tree to grow finer roots. If the tree is young and fresh from a nursery, I might take it out of the container, reduce the roots by more than 60% and put them in a group planting. Or I bare-root a tree and set it on a rock. Or I comb out roots of a tree.

In those cases, if I do heavy root work, or cut away heaps of roots, I will make sure to place the tree in a very sheltered spot afterwards, to keep it protected from wind and frost. Slip re-potted trees, I will put back out in the open. I always aim to work with only healthy trees.

However, if I have a tree that is truly unhappy in its container, and I'm basically watching it die, and if I know I can guarantee



I can create better conditions in a new environment, I will repot the tree regardless of the time of the year, and ensure success by providing the right aftercare.

Question: Are we doing repotting because a) we want to see the tree in another container, or b) the tree is suffering under its acute growing conditions?

If your answer is a, it's an egotistic decision by us, the tree may not like it! If your answer is b, go ahead.

To give the right aftercare when repotting in winter means I will make sure to water the composition thoroughly, and then not water again for 7-14 days, depending on the overall humidity. When repotting in summer, I avoid watering the trees for at least 3-5 days between the first and the second watering. I found with this to cause much less problems with root rot after repotting, or after collecting yamadori. I will continue to check regularly with the moisture reader. I don't want the container to entirely dry out, I aim to just tip below moist when





going through the root mass. And I will always check at the same two spots in the container, to not poke the roots everywhere each time I'm checking.

Watering in thoroughly after repotting will also help to wash small soil particles into empty cavities. Letting the tree slightly dry out afterwards helps the roots to heal the damage quicker, as the roots will have to stretch out, after around a week to find water resources. It has to be understood, that roots can physically not grow in a too wet environment. There are few trees that grow happily in a swamp!

After repotting, I like to group my trees in terms of health. All small and vulnerable trees go close to the house out of the weather. All trees that hold too much water are placed out of the rain, and all that require heaps of water even during winter are placed together. This way, I can keep on watering the groups base on their needs.

I use all 4 sides of the house to find for each

tree the right growing conditions. The one that love sunshine, go on the north and west side of the house out in the open. Freshly collected yamadori and fragile compositions and trees will go on the south side of the house. If you were really worried about root damage after repotting, you can always take the tree off the bench and put it on the ground. Well sheltered or in a glasshouse for sure works too. If it gets quite cold where you live, you can always put the trees on the ground and surround them with loose mulch as insulation.

Important final note, I'm in an area of the South Island with, on average, very mild winters. We may get morning frosts, but because I'm so close to the coast, it never falls much below zero and never for very many days. I've got very forgiving growing conditions.

Still, whatever works for me maybe doesn't work for you, in your area, climate or aftercare. I can assure you I have killed many trees over the years. I did heaps of research and developed my own experience on what works for me.

While my success rate has become quite good, still I'm always very gutted when one of my trees dies and will investigate my failure.

Trees are made to outlive us - that's the fact we use to our advantage. More often trees die because of human intervention.

Enjoy bonsai everyone.

NZBA MEMBERS GALLERY

Readers are invited to send photos of their trees for publication in the Gallery to the editor at nzbamag@gmail.com. Photos may be single photos of a tree, or sets of the same tree for example in different seasons, or at different stages of development.

Please include the common name of the tree, its height and number of years in training. Owner's names will not be published to protect your security.



Mountain Beech forest, in training 5 years.



Suiseki from the Dart River, SI. Recycled rimu daiza.



Pohutakawa, in training 1 day.



Hinoki Cypress Nana, 3 hours from nursery stock.



Pinus Patula, in training for 6 years.



Juniper Media Blauw forest, in training 40 years.



Swiss Mountain Pine, in training 40 years.

Hornbeam Forest, in training for 5 years.



Oregon Fir on slate rock, in training 1 year.



Japanese Maple, in training 27 years.



Juniper Media Blauw, in training 40 years.



Lonicera, in training 2 years.



Suiseki from Rees River, SI. Recycled rimu daiza.



Corokia, in training 27 years.



Schefflera Arborescens.



Hornbeam Forest, in training 8 years.



Trident Maple, in training 32 years.



Sticky Wattle, in training for 3 years.



INTRODUCTION TO SUISEKI

Mark Fredric, Fredric Bonsai

What is Suiseki? From the Nippon Suiseki Association 2021 - *“Suiseki is a general term referring to a stone that captures the poetic beauty of natural landscape scenery. In a single stone, one can sense the whole of the universe, making suiseki the most spiritual and culturally rich pursuits celebrating the art of Nature.”*



My introduction into suiseki and viewing stones was with bonsai, such as seeing suiseki in many exhibitions online and in New Zealand bonsai conventions.

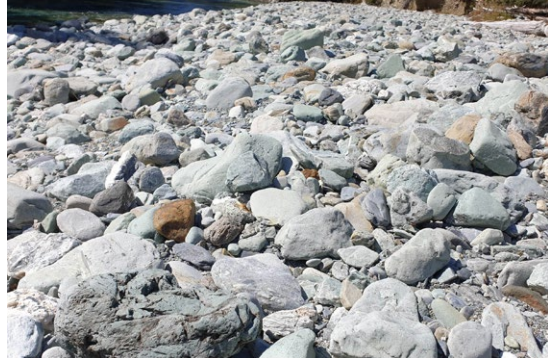
Around 2016 or 2017, I started hunting and traveling around local rivers, then long day trips into the Southern Alps (Sub-alpine). I found a few good stones for my collection, and even gave making the base (daiza) a go myself using up-cycled rimu.

With thousands of kilometers of travel under my belt searching for stones of unique patterns or shapes, I found there is an extra bonus to suiseki hunting... which is when you go off the beaten track in to areas with few other humans, you find yourself enjoying the experience more.

Plus, the scenery is always spectacular even if you don't find any suiseki at all.

I now have about 40ish suiseki in my collection, with about 75% being stones I have found myself and have created the daiza for. I have also imported some stones from Vietnam, and they are fantastic, inspiring me to find better stones and make better daiza for them. The stones range from 23kg all the way down to a few hundred grams, and I now have many on display in my lounge and living area to enjoy.

I really do think suiseki is exciting, as it encourages you to hunt/search/fossick around in special areas of New Zealand, and with the combination of fresh air and scenery (plus the possibility of finding that one good stone!) makes it all worth it.



Okatsune Bonsai Scissors

Established in the 1940's, Okatsune are a Japanese manufacturer of high quality secateurs, snips and hedge shears, and also a beautiful range of Bonsai scissors. Their tools are made from special high grade forged carbon steel and are uniquely heat treated, tempered and precision ground to produce incredibly sharp blades that keep their edges longer. Okatsune have 3 key points to their success;

1 - Razor Sharp. Okatsune tools are razor sharp because the steel of the blades have a very high hardness, and this keeps the blades sharp for a long time, giving a clean and precise cut.

2 - Simple. Okatsune tools only consist of a few parts which ensures high stability and ease of use, and they're light-weight and require very little maintenance.

3 - Robust. Okatsune tools are very robust, which allows them to cut through branches without you having to worry that the tool will give way or break.

Okatsune have two styles of tools in this range - Bonsai and Ikebana.

Bonsai scissors are ultra-lightweight and designed for the accurate shaping and maintenance of your Bonsai. This range includes the traditional large handle scissors with short pointy blades, and the narrow scissors with long blades which help with precision pruning.

Ikebana scissors are designed for the Japanese art of flower arranging.

There are several models available in each style.

For more information go to www.silkystore.co.nz and visit the Okatsune page or phone 03 547 6874.



www.silkystore.co.nz



SPECIES PROFILE: LARCH & SPRUCE

Sean Heseltine, Otago Bonsai Club

Around Southern New Zealand, Larch grows prolifically in high country dry semi alpine areas. Larch in the wild is a tall pyramidal tree with small branches that hold drooping foliage. For bonsai, the branches remain more upright and stiff, but are very flexible and easy to shape.

Larch – Larix Decidua & Larix Kaempferi

Ramification of Larch can be challenging, depending on what you are trying to achieve. For most of us that are looking at developing tertiary ramification, that is not too hard to achieve, but it is hard to maintain without increasing branch length.

This is for 2 reasons.

Firstly, Larch is stubborn when it comes to producing back-budding. For the most part it won't happen at all, but occasionally swampy Larch might throw weak inner buds that take many years to mature. Nick Lenz in the US has made some progress with back budding, but generally you won't get new buds on old wood.

Secondly, buds can remain active for several years, producing small flushes of growth from the same bud each year. If pinching is not done well, then ramification occurs in the wrong places. And if you remove the bud, you lose that growth altogether.

To explain – when we maintain ramification on a tree, we are always looking for back budding. If we get back buds in close to the

trunk, then we can maintain the shape of ramified branches by removing the bulk of the old branch and growing a new branch from the inner buds. This stops branches from getting out of scale with the trunk and means that we can maintain the overall shape of the tree over many years.

If there are no back buds, then the ramification gets progressively further out from the trunk, meaning the shape of the tree extends. That leads to long branches with growth only at the ends. That can only be controlled by wiring the branch and making big bends to reduce its length, and that results in unnatural looking branches.

Pinching Larch happens in 2 ways. Firstly to build ramification, we let the spring growth flush out to 8-10cm and then pinch back to what we think is a suitable branch length. As the pinched branch hardens, it sets buds that we can then use to make ramification. We use this technique when we are making branches, and this normally happens late spring. If you really want reassurance of where the buds will form, then let the new growth harden off in late spring and prune when the buds become obvious. This will work equally as well but does result in slightly thicker branches due to the hardening off process.

To maintain a branch that is already ramified, we need to pinch much earlier, before the branch starts to elongate. This happens just after the bud has opened out to the shape of

an egg at the start of spring, but before the bud begins to turn into a branch. To do this we pinch out the center of the bud, leaving about 1/3 of the needles. Because we have interrupted the growth of the branch, we get a cluster of buds on just a short stub. When the buds on that stub start to become evident, we pinch off all but 2 buds that are growing in a lateral plane, and opposing each other. That way we get short branches that ramify quickly. If you don't pinch back to 2 buds then you get ugly swellings where the cluster of buds forms.

Generally you only need to pinch buds once a year, but I have had a second flush of growth from time to time and if that happens then the process is the same.

Once the branches are formed, they can be easily held in place by wiring. Larch responds readily to wiring and will usually remain set in position after just one season

with wire. Usually wiring is best done in early winter. Needles drop in autumn, and you can see the branch structure clearly after that point. However, this time is too early to wire, as the branches will swell significantly late autumn causing wire marks.

Once all the saps have risen to protect buds etc in early winter, you can wire safely. Those wires will start to bite mid spring and can usually be removed by summer once the tree goes in to summer dormancy. Don't wire once the buds have started to swell in early spring, because it is almost impossible to place the wire without damaging the buds, which are quite delicate at this stage.

You can be quite aggressive when bending smaller branches. They will bend easily into a full circle if you want. They also twist well, and you can use this to turn branches so that the buds face upward to get more sun. Thicker branches are harder to bend if they



Larch branches before pruning.



Larch branches after pruning.

have woody centers, and deadwood will not bend unless you apply steam.

To make natural looking Larch bonsai, you get good results if you try to mimic the high-country trees with their long sweeping branches. Snow loadings on Larch cause the branches to be swept downwards on dramatic angles once leaving the trunk. The higher up the trunk, the shorter the branches and the steeper the angle of slope. The trick is to ensure you get the downward bend in the branch to happen right at the trunk – easy with small branches but not so much for the thicker ones. When wiring the branch, anchor the wire to the trunk or another branch, and then begin the first turn of wire to run over the top of the branch right at the trunk. This helps to force the branch against the trunk and gives a natural branch angle. If you run the wire under the branch at the trunk you get a hoop in the branch because the wire holds the branch out from the trunk and doesn't support the first part of the bend in a downward way, causing a hoop in the branch which looks unnatural. Wire right out to the tips of the branches and make sure you don't trap any buds under the wire. Put plenty of small bends and twists into the branch for interest, but make sure the overall line of the branch has a downward sweeping flow with slightly upturned branch tips.

Spruce – Picea Abies

Spruce and Larch are pinched and pruned much the same way, with one notable exception. Whereas Larch don't back bud, Spruce is a prolific back-budding species. If your tree is healthy it should be no trouble to get a wealth of buds closer to the trunk

just by pruning length out of the branch-tips. In fact, Spruce will often throw buds right at the trunk when pruned, which means you can often grow new branches completely from scratch.

Bud pinching is necessary with Spruce to maintain ramification. Like Larch, you pinch Spruce buds when they have opened enough to look like a small bright green egg. Take about 2/3 of the bud away and this will ensure that the branches don't get too long. If you want to build a different branch structure, then let the buds extend out a bit. Then pinch away about half the length and that will stop the branch growing out. Once the soft foliage hardens up you will see the next seasons buds forming and you can then prune to where you want the new growth to go. Try to prune back to buds which will flow in the direction you want the branch to grow, eliminating upward and downward buds and just concentrating on buds that will grow out sideways.

Spruce is similar to Larch, in that you often get clusters of buds forming in one spot. Unless these places are pinched back to 2 lateral buds, you will get ugly swelling at that point, or lots of branches radiating out from there. Wiring Spruce is necessary to hold branches in shape. Ideally winter is a good time for this as well. Spruce will swell during autumn just as Larch do, but this swelling is usually confined to thicker branches. Thin branch tips can hold wire for over a year before it bites in.

The frustrating part of wiring Spruce is that once you take the wire off thicker branches, they usually spring back into their original



Spruce branches before pruning.



Spruce branches after pruning.

position. The best method for this is to use anchor wires to another point on the tree to hold branches in place. These anchor wires can be left on for much longer, several years in some cases, and they don't bite into the bark as the tree grows.

You also need care when wiring larger Spruce branches, because the bark platelets can easily be knocked off while applying the wire. These platelets are the large chunks of bark that give the tree its aged look, so knocking them off can leave brighter coloured bark showing, which takes a long time to develop an aged look. Spruce branches can also break easily when wiring.

Wintering Larch & Spruce

Both Spruce and Larch need overwintering. This means some exposure to frost. This is one of the reasons you don't see Larch in the upper North Island.

Frost damages leafy plants by expanding the water content in the leaf cells and rupturing them. Water expands when it becomes ice. Both species protect themselves from this in winter by replacing the water with sap. This happens in mid-autumn which is why the branches swell. The sap doesn't freeze so buds remain safe ready for the next season. Both species will benefit from frost, but you must be careful not to water trees when it is frosty. This can cause root damage. If you can have your trees in the sun during frosty weather, then the temperature changes in the soil will be gradual and not cause damage. Generally Spruce and Larch don't need much water during winter, so you can allow the pots to just stay moist. There is still root growth at the start and end of winter so be careful watering at these times. Over-watering in winter can lead to poor aeration of the soil and fungal infections, or even root rot.

Remember that both Larch and Spruce are trees that are found in extreme climates, so can tolerate a bit of stress. In the mountains, the sunlight is intense, far more so than at sea level, so leave your trees in full sun to get the most out of photosynthesis. In fact Larch will have better autumn colours if given lots of sunlight during the growing season. Just make sure you manage watering properly. Both species can grow in poor soil, and in fact Larch are often found in boggy/swampy areas where there is a lot of peat moss, providing slightly acidic conditions. Boggy conditions do not suit Larch bonsai. Both species can tolerate snowfall and freezing. But freezing winds are an enemy. They can desiccate trees causing bud loss and branch die-back.

Both species suit a variety of styling shapes, from windswept to lightning strike trees. Make sure to train branches downwards and outwards from the trunk to give the tree a more mature look, just as if the snow had forced the branches down with weight. Both species suit jin and shari well.

The photos in this article show various aspects of pruning for each species. You will have seen two pictures that show Larch branches before and after pruning. Both side branches are long before pruning. This allows the tree to build vigour. Healthy trees growing strongly respond best to pruning. After pruning you can see that the branches have been shortened back to outward growing buds, and the branches are both the same length. This means they will develop the same strength.

The Spruce branches get pruned the same way, but can be pruned before the buds develop. You can see in the previous photos that extra branches are removed leaving just two lateral branches which are the same length. Removing the extra branches means that the main branch won't develop unnatural swelling at the point where the secondary branches come out. You can see that I have chosen the two stronger branches and pruned away the longer lateral branches. This is a way of keeping the ramification closer to the trunk. Once the two remaining branches are pinched back you can see the ramification (internode length) will be much shorter than the original ramification which was pruned away

The Larch bonsai photo (below) shows the downward sweep of the branches when



leaving the trunk. It also shows the natural habit of Larch to grow a new trunk from a side branch when the original trunk is damaged by wind or lightning.

The Spruce bonsai picture (right) shows a less common form, because it is more rounded and not so pyramidal as high mountain Spruce. It is more similar to the Spruce that I have seen above the snow line in Canada – shorter and compressed by snow, spreading closer to the ground. I have included this photo to show the resilience of Spruce. Each branch on this tree was grown over 3 years from single buds right at the trunk. The original branches on this yamadori were completely pruned away after collection because they would have been impossible to style naturally. Once the tree was established after collection, it produced many buds at the bases of the existing branches, and so each bud could be shaped into a new branch very easily because there was no heavy bending required.

Display of Larch and Spruce is similar. Taller trees suit long/wide shallow pots which have a rugged natural appearance. Glazed containers only suit Larch if they have similar



colour to the bark, or perhaps creamy coloured pots. Stone trays or rocks suit well. Reds and browns are too strong in colour and compete with the trunk and foliage. Spruce can be potted in blue pots if the glaze is not too vibrant. There are a number of cascade Spruce bonsai throughout New Zealand, so using taller natural coloured pots with a rugged look really works well. Display taller Larch/Spruce bonsai on ji-ita slabs, and heavy trunked squat ones on stands which are just a little taller than the depth of the pot. The pot should be roughly the same height as the width of the trunk just above the nebari. Place windswept bonsai at the upwind end of ji-ita slabs to allow the downwind end of the slab to visually ‘catch’ the foliage part of the bonsai.

Good Luck!



RAKAU ITI

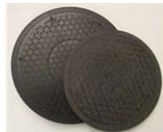
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aucklandbonsaisociety@gmail.com
Secretary: Ross Phillips

Meetings: 2nd Thursday 7:30 pm, Auckland Horticultural Council, 900 Great North Road, Western Springs, Auckland.

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President: Jane Bodle
cluckmed@yahoo.com
Secretary: Esther Meadows
esther.bonsai23@gmail.com

Meetings: 2nd Monday, 7.30 pm, The Kiosk, Christchurch Botanical Gardens, Rolleston Ave, Christchurch.

BAY OF PLENTY BONSAI SOCIETY

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jvercoe@xtra.co.nz
Doreen Taylor, jdagp@xtra.co.nz
Phone: 027 5664440

Meetings: Last Sunday of the month.

BLLENHEIM BONSAI GROUP

John Simpson - 029 4783 464
Rod Wegener - 021 755 100
Ainsley Vincent - 03 5728335

Meetings: 2nd Sunday, 1:00 pm, Islington Gardens, Blenheim

BONSAI STUDY GROUP

Bob Langholm - 09 629 3662
bonsaiville.nz@gmail.com
41 Taumata Road, Mt Albert, Auckland

CHRISTCHURCH BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Tony Bywater
Secretary: Kate Ladley
chch.bonsai.society@gmail.com
Treasurer: Carl Crosado

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:30 pm, Cotswold Preschool, Colesbury Street, Bishopdale, Christchurch.

EASTERN BONSAI CLUB

President: Kelly O'Meara, 027 263 7444
Secretary: Trevor Bond, 027 675 5584

Meetings: 3rd Thursday of the month, 47 Aviemore Drive, Highland Park, AKL.
Time: 6:30 -7:00pm for beginners, 7:00 - 9:30pm for main body of the meeting

FRANKLIN BONSAI CLUB

Gerry Boy - 021 0236 1499
gerry2013@yahoo.co.nz

GORE BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Sarah Baldwin - 027 508 8739
Secretary: Lisa Anderson - 03 207 1856
beak.lisa@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Saturday or Sunday after.
Phone for details of time and venue.

HAMILTON BONSAI CLUB

President: Steven Loveridge
- 0224738894
Secretary: Gordon Bowers - 07 868 6787

Meetings: 2nd Sunday 2.00pm,
St Francis Church Hall, 92 Mansel Ave,
Hamilton

MANAWATU BONSAI

President: Greg Tuthill
manawatubonsai@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 pm, PN
Community Leisure Centre, 569 Fergusson
Street, Palmerston North

NELSON BONSAI CLUB

President: John Addington
jeaddington@gmail.com
55 Templemore Drive, Richmond, Nelson.

Meetings: 1st Monday, 7:30 pm,
members house (Apr to Aug); Stoke Garden
and Landscapes, 59 Saxton Road (Sept to
Mar).

NEW PLYMOUTH BONSAI CLUB INC.

President: Paul Urbahn -
paulurbahn@xtra.co.nz
Secretary/Treasurer: Nicola Stevenson
nicola@omahanui.co.nz - 027 464 2022

Meetings: Last Sunday, 1.30 PM,
Disabled Citizens' Rooms 83 Hine Street,
New Plymouth.

OTAGO BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Sean Heseltine
Secretary: Ludwig Jansen
bonsaiotago.obs1@gmail.com

Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7:30 pm,
Mercy Hall 42 Macandrew Road,
South Dunedin, Dunedin.

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President: Selwyn Hatrick - 07 348 5353
selwyn_h@slingshot.co.nz
Secretary: Rick Merrington
rick@gargoyles.co.nz - 027 4808 141

Meetings: 2nd Sunday, phone for details

SOUTH CANTERBURY BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Dave Geddes - 027 616 0172
Secretary: Barbara Finney -
finz1948@gmail.com

Meetings: 1st Wednesday,
(February to November), 7:30pm,
Arts Centre, Gleniti Road, Timaru.

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President: Harry van Enckevort
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P O Box 48064, Upper Hutt
info@bonsai.org.nz

Meetings: 1st Sunday (except January),
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Tramping Club rooms, Philip Evans Reserve,
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