

BONSAI TIMES

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BONSAI TIMES

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



Cover: Scots Pine by Mauro Stemberger



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Subscription is NZ\$20 per year and due the 1st September each year. Includes an emailed PDF copy of the Bonsai Times 4 times per year plus the NZBA newsletter and access to the members page on the website, with bonsai photo galleries and previous copies of the Bonsai Times.

Pay an additional NZ\$25 per year for a colour hard copy of the Bonsai Times 4 times per year, posted to your home (add NZ\$15.20 if overseas, for postage).

CAPITATION

Capitation Fee for affiliated clubs with 4 members or more is \$2 per member, due annually on 1 st September.

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Advertising space within the Bonsai Times is available at the following rates

\$100 /year. Full page advert.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings,

As our first issue of the Bonsai Times for the year was not until late July we have had a lot of catching up to do. To catch up we need to issue 5 copies of the Bonsai Times in total for the year. Since late July we have now issued 3 copies including this one so you can see we are doing our best to catch up.

The Christchurch Convention held in April was a great success. Because we have not had a convention for several years this added to the high attendance.

The venue selected was first class with good parking and the catering was very good. The display area for the local show and national show were ample although the lighting was poor in some areas. The trading areas were enticing and the programme that the Christchurch Bonsai Society set up was very good.

There were one or two hiccups that were probably not noticed by most attendees, but over-all, the Christchurch Bonsai Society needs to be congratulated for good planning and a great event.

Our AGM this year is scheduled for Monday 7 November at 7:30pm. It will be an online meeting via Zoom. The new constitution will be sent out prior to the AGM and Clubs will be required to vote on its adoption.

Another item that will appear on the agenda is the subscription for a hard copy of the Bonsai Times. As postage and printing costs have increased, we will unfortunately have to increase the subscription fee for those that receive a hard copy of the Bonsai Times.

For the Bonsai Times, we could do with a few more articles from clubs. Articles on visiting tutors and demonstrators are always a good read. If you have a Bonsai Show or a public display of Bonsai, we always like to hear about those occasions. We are also interested in normal club activities. What is your club doing?

The club I am involved with had two normal club meetings recently both worthy of a report. One involved splitting into 4 groups with each group designing, drawing and styling a big tree. The other one involved making a group planting tray out of light weight materials. I raise these examples as my guess is that most clubs have some activities worth reporting. If you do wish to forward an article please send it to nzbamag@gmail.com

Les Simpson
President NZBA

HOSTED BY THE
AUCKLAND BONSAI SOCIETY

2024 NATIONAL BONSAI CONVENTION

AUCKLAND

15TH AND 16TH JUNE 2024

The Domes, Auckland Zoo
Western Springs



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





DREAMING A BONSAI DREAM: AN INTRODUCTION TO MAURO STEMBERGER

Editor

Mauro Stemberger, an acclaimed Bonsai artist, will be the international demonstrator for the 2024 National Bonsai Convention. His lifelong passion lies in replicating nature's aesthetics through Bonsai, balancing his artistic pursuits with horticultural excellence.

Mauro's journey into the world of Bonsai began at the age of 14 when he became fascinated about the art, leading him to join the local Bonsai club in Feltre.

His drive for learning saw him participating in workshops by renowned Bonsai artists between 1994 and 2001. During this period, he studied under artists such as Hotsumi Terakawa, Marc Noelanders, Horst Crekler, Edoardo Rossi, and Salvatore Liporace. The invaluable tutelage he received from these seasoned Bonsai teachers allowed him to refine his techniques continually.

In 2005, Mauro founded the Italian Bonsai Dream, an innovative workshop and hub for fellow enthusiasts to immerse themselves fully in the art of Bonsai. This visionary initiative was a testament to his commitment to nurturing and sharing his love for Bonsai with a community of like-minded individuals.

Scots Pine, collected in France 2014



Pine tree roots in the Dolomites.



Mauro working on a juniper.

In 2008, Mauro was officially recognised as a Bonsai Instructor by the Bonsai Club International (BCI), as well as taking on the role of President of the Italian Bonsai Association (UBI) from 2008 to 2010.

Mauro has made appearances at events such as the Noelanders Trophy, Certrè, bonsaiautumn, UBI Convention, Ginkgo Award, Franchi Bonsai Competition, Shooman Bonsai Competition, and many more. His articles have been featured in notable publications, including Bonsai Focus, UBI Bonsai Magazine, and BCI Bonsai & Stone Appreciation Magazine. Currently, he dedicates his time to conducting demonstrations and workshops for Bonsai Clubs and Associations around the world.

He particularly loves to work with conifers, Pines, Junipers (Itoigawa, Sabina) and especially Larch. These species are common around his home in the Dolomite Mountains, Italy.

“I love to come to the mountains to get inspiration for designing my trees. Especially, in late spring, when the snow is melting and sliding over the trunks of the trees, creating the features we look for in bonsai, the serene environment that we aim to replicate in the aesthetics of our trees.”

When Mauro designs a conifer, he will imagine the weight of the snow pushing against the branches, bending them down to shape the trunk. The base of the pines stand on rocks for centuries, preserving themselves by anchoring their roots to the

rock and battling the elements. Pushed to the limit, mountainous trees are confined to small spaces against the rocks and the environment.

To Mauro, bonsai trees are similar, in that they are confined to small containers with limited space, yet with water, nutrients, air, and sunlight, we as bonsai artists can make them thrive and transform them into beautiful natural works of art.

“I want to capture the essence of these magnificent trees. When I go home and work on my trees, I aim to bring a piece of that essence into my bonsai and the way I design them.”

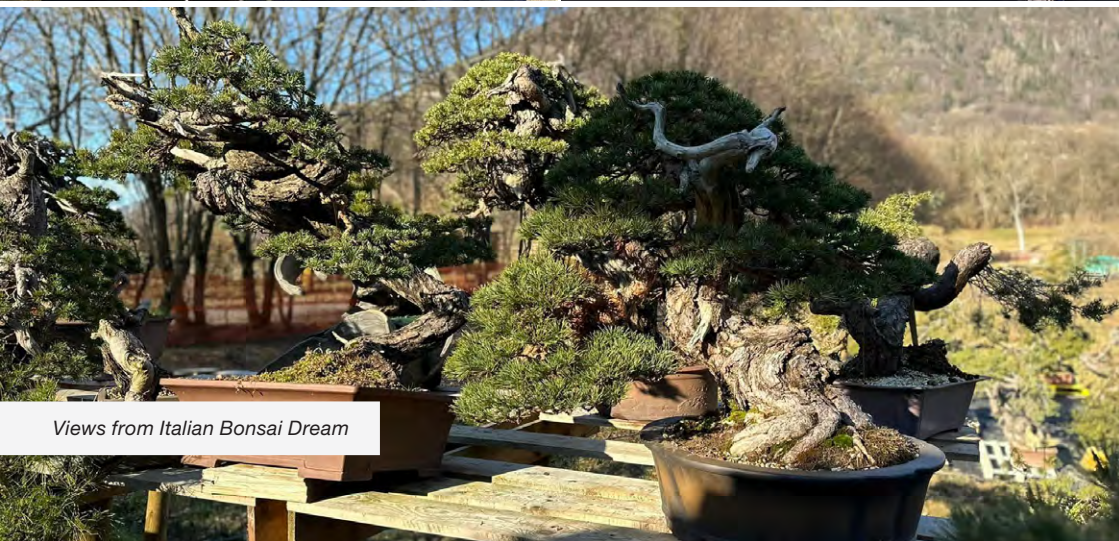
One of Mauro’s most well known trees is the great *Buddha*, a Scots Pine collected 30 years ago in a mountain valley between France and Italy. Mauro has worked on the tree for the last 20 years, making it more compact and bringing it to a nice advanced stage of refinement.

Mauro Stemberger will be the guest international demonstrator for the 2024 National Bonsai Convention, hosted by the Auckland Bonsai Club. The event will be on the 15th and 16th of June, 2024, at Auckland Zoo in Western Springs. Mauro will be doing live demonstrations at the convention, and will also have two days of intensive workshops, providing enthusiasts with a unique opportunity to learn from a true master of the art.

Follow Auckland Bonsai Society on Facebook for ongoing details.

Buddha, the Scots Pine, 30yrs of training.





Views from Italian Bonsai Dream

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



THE EMOTIVE RESPONSE TO BONSAI DISPLAY

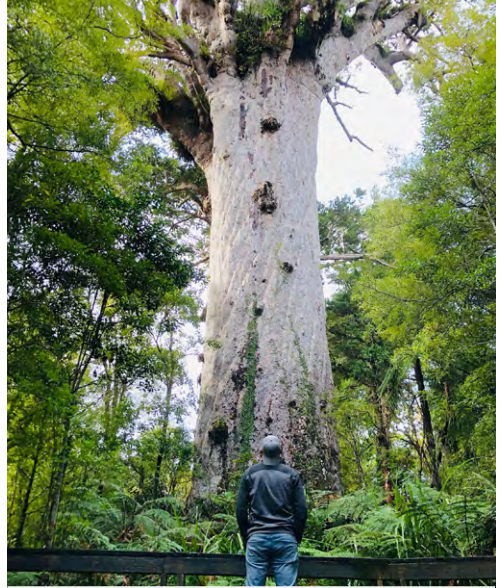
Robert Allaway, Two Islands Bonsai

Have you ever considered why we generally have our bonsai displayed on a bench or pedestal rather than just randomly on the ground in our gardens? Why we risk the randomness of mother nature or life in general of a bit more exposed site? Or why we don't use the much-discussed health benefits of trees placed on the ground? That might seem like a straight forward and strange question to offer up for discussion, but stick with me for a bit longer.

Have you ever experimented by placing your bonsai on the floor and viewing it from a few feet away and then lifting it to the correct viewing height (approximately eye-level into the top third of the canopy) and viewing it?



Poor viewing angle verses correct viewing angle.



Viewing angle can make a lot of difference in our perception of a tree.

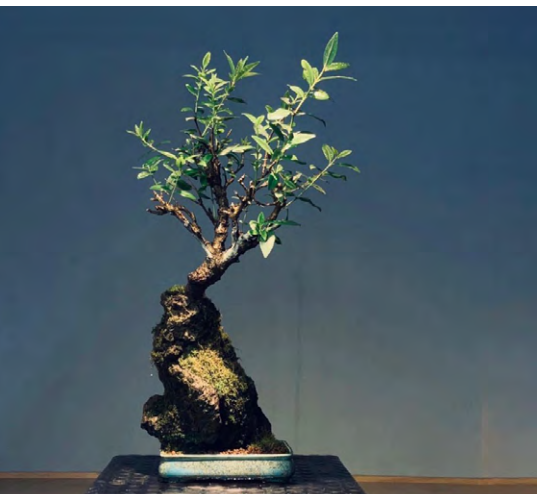
Yes, your obvious response should be that it looks 1000 times better! As to why? Well, that's straight forward, however, I'm more intrigued with how it made you feel or lack thereof when seeing it on the floor. If like me, your response should have been quite dramatic! Every evoked emotion for the tree when viewed at the correct height is not present.

Strange, it's still the same tree, isn't it?

One could easily draw a parallel to having a beautiful painting leaning against the base of a wall in your home rather than hung up on the wall, displayed for all to see and enjoy. It may be a great painting for various reasons but to anyone walking past it, its beauty will mostly likely go unnoticed and even if it does grab their attention, would they understand the underlying meaning or would you have to explain it to them? So, where am I going with this?

When it comes to Bonsai exhibitions, we display our trees static and what I mean by that, is that the location where we place our tree (on that table or stand), is the exact location that the viewer is going to view it. So, if the tree is displayed too low, the viewing angle is down onto the canopy and you don't see the branching, trunk or any other special features of the tree. If for example you are the owner of a beautiful deciduous tree with fantastic ramification, you are going to want the viewer to see and more importantly enjoy this. The same goes for that special feature of your tree that evokes an important feeling, which is a major factor in the ultimate display of the tree, but is consequently hidden from the viewer at the incorrect display height.

Now, I know what you are thinking, we can't expect the viewer or judge to bend down, squint with one eye open, lean slightly to the left etc... to find the beauty of the tree that is there, but not seen or felt at first glance.




Viewed from the correct angle.

my closing thoughts, we must not underestimate the viewer's first sight, that immediate emotion felt and how this affects the viewers overall response to the display.

To tie this in with the title (got there eventually), we know that the human mind is extremely complicated and our emotions are no different. For me, it makes logical sense that the emotion felt when viewing a tree in an exhibition is directly linked to how it is displayed and, particularly in this article, affected by the height of a display. If we want the viewer to feel the same emotions we have for our trees, then we need to give them every advantage to do so. Ultimately, we need to be aware as bonsai hobbyists and practitioners alike, the importance of display height in the overall art of Bonsai display.

In closing I'll be the first to agree, bonsai stands are not easy to come by nor cheap, but I wonder if the sacrifice of a tree's beauty or meaning outweighs using other means of lifting the tree to its correct viewing height. This may be the use of standard side tables or bedside tables converted or a wooden frame that is then covered with a fabric cloth that may be the same colour used by the exhibition. Speaking generally, it comes down to the principle that the tree is the core focus and that in itself gives direction to bonsai display.

**Learn more about Robert Allaway
& Two Islands Bonsai via:**

 **Instagram: @robert_allaway_bonsai**

 **Facebook: @RobertAllawayBonsai**

HAMILTON BONSAI SHOW

PLACE:

Hamilton Gardens Pavilion

DATE & TIME:

16 & 17 December | 9am to 4pm

ENTRY:

Adults \$5 | Children (under 12) Free

There will be a range of traders selling pots, trees, tools & wire.



Please check the website or Facebook pages for the most up to date information.

W www.hamiltonbonsaiclub.co.nz

f [hamilton bonsai club](https://www.facebook.com/hamiltonbonsaiclub)



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NEW TROPHY FOR “BEST OVERSEAS SUISEKI”

Ross Dixon & Michael Adams

When Michael and I decided to make and donate this trophy, Lynn, our secretary for New Zealand Bonsai Association, requested a “light” trophy. With this in mind, I wanted to create a simple and natural design. The dimensions are 16cm high, 20cm wide and 8cm deep, and weighs just 500gm.

The stone is marble which I found on a very rocky beach in Punta Kriza on the Island of Cres in Croatia. I say “found”, as only a small part was visible but the shape drew my attention to it. So with my trusty little

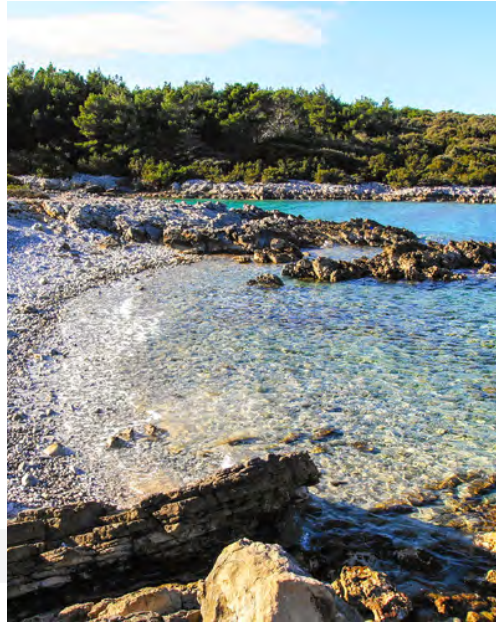
wire pick I dug around it and eventually was able to extract it from the other surrounding rocks. The dark blue on the trophy represents the intense deep colour of the Adriatic Sea. I have purposely left the rough sawn top of the stand to indicate gentle waves approaching the shore.

Croatia has many ideal beaches to find these treasures, some are tiny, some can weigh several kilos and some are unfortunately too heavy to carry back home. Put me on a rocky beach and I will explore for hours and hours, just ask Michael! When customs ask me why my luggage is so heavy, I honestly say that I have rocks in them. They usually

give me a funny look and tell me to proceed straight to the green exit. Sometimes, they do want to check further and all the rocks get unwrapped and x-rayed as if I was hiding something inside them! All the while, Michael is waiting impatiently outside the exit for me.

All my life I have been collecting rocks and stones from all over New Zealand and overseas. I appreciate rocks and stones for their natural beauty and now it is time for me to acknowledge my passion for suiseki.

Punta Kriza, Croatia



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NZBA MEMBERS GALLERY

Readers are invited to send photos of their trees for 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 species and the number of years in training. To protect your security, owners' names will not be published.



Japanese Maple forest, in training for 27 years.



Azalea, in training for 34 years.



Siberian Elm, in training for 13 years.



Dawn Redwood, in training 8 years, from cutting.



Manuka, in training for 1 year.



Wisteria, in training 15 years, from root cutting.



Radiata pine, in training for 2 years.



Box Honeysuckle, in training 5 years, from cutting.



Swamp Cypress, in training for 4 years.



Calliandra blushing pixie, in training for 8 years.



Juniper procumbens nana, in training for 3 years.



English Oak, in training for 3 years.



Suiseki from Rees River, SI. Recycled rimu daiza.



Plum Red Salton, in training for 33 years.



Pyracantha, in training for 5 years.



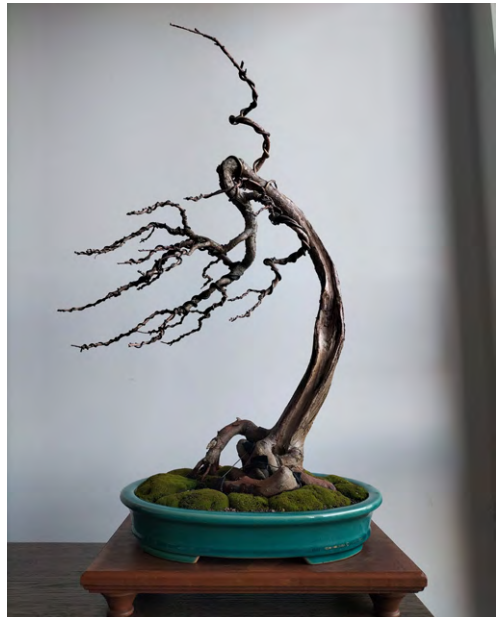
Red bougainvillea in training for 5 years.



Blue cedar, in training for 2 years.



Suiseki from Rees River, SI. Recycled rimu daiza.



Swamp Cypress, in training for 3 years.



THE GENERATION GARDENER

Someday Stories 7, RNZ

‘The Generation Gardener’ is a short form documentary on the life and bonsai passion of Steven Yin, of MiniGardens Bonsai in Wellington. The film was created by Someday Stories, as part of a six episode series made by emerging young New Zealand film-makers.

Directed by Luke Ross and produced by Alice Youngquest, the film explores the art of Bonsai and its unique place here in New Zealand culture.

Most in the New Zealand bonsai community will have met, or know of, Steven Yin from MiniGardens Bonsai Nursery. Steven has been the president of the Wellington Bonsai Club, is a current committee member for NZ Bonsai Association, and is also a founding member and administrator of the Bonsai NZ Facebook community group.

He is the driving force behind MiniGardens becoming the largest bonsai and penjing nursery in New Zealand, boasting over 5,000 stock plants and a kaleidoscope of bonsai varieties and species. His trees have become the first steps for many newcomers to the hobby.

Steven’s journey into the world of bonsai is a testament to the power of unexpected discoveries. As a child, Steven came to New Zealand with his family, carrying a strong sense of responsibility instilled by his parents, always wanting to create his own business he could be passionate about. A chance encounter during his college years would set him on that path.

“When I saw my first bonsai tree, it had a little tag that said it was a New Zealand native, a Corokia. It wasn’t for sale, but I convinced them to sell it to me. Sometimes, we find the best trees when we’re not looking for them.”

For Steven, bonsai isn't merely about cultivating trees; it's about crafting living narratives. Bonsai, with its emphasis on scale and negative space, requires attention to detail and a discerning artistic eye.

In his journey as a bonsai artist, Steven underscores that it's not solely about the trees themselves. Every design decision constitutes a poetic expression, utilising rocks, moss, and other elements to create miniature worlds that capture the essence of nature.

Working on trees, for Steven, is a form of mental liberation. It provides an opportunity to escape the demands of everyday life and connect with the enduring beauty of nature.

“Looking after something is truly beneficial for the mind and the soul. It enhances my sense of well-being.”

With so many trees at the nursery, the daily tasks are numerous—fertilising, watering, and meticulous weeding. Yet, Steven finds contentment in the process. His mother has



been a steadfast presence, supporting him in the behind-the-scenes work. He admits that working alongside his mum took some time to get used to, but the two have since found the right fit together.

The nursery is more than a business; it's a labour of love that Steven shares with his mother. “We never truly own bonsai; we are merely custodians of them, caretakers,” he says. The connection he shares with the trees is evident in his commitment to their long-term health, his aim for every one of his trees to one day out live him.

Steven's journey in bonsai has been a labour of love, a journey filled with both challenges and triumphs. He reflects on a cherished wish: “I always wanted my dad to see me successfully running the bonsai nursery as a full-time job, unfortunately, it didn't happen until after my dad passed away.”



As well as raising and creating numerous bonsai trees for retail sale, Steven also puts time aside to teach bonsai beginners in small workshops. In these, he covers the basics of bonsai care, before guiding his students through the process of designing nursery material into their own bonsai tree. He enjoys watching others exploring bonsai their own way.

“Some people think there’s only one way to do bonsai, but I strongly disagree with that... Everyone’s story that they’re trying to tell throughout the tree is different. We all see nature differently.”

Steven has become a special part of the New Zealand bonsai culture, offering both a gateway for beginners to the art form, and continuing to expand the availability of trees for the hobby. As he continues to cultivate the art of bonsai, every tree he nurtures is a testament to his dedication and passion for this art form.



“The Generation Gardener” is available on Youtube by The Outlook for Someday, or Someday Stories by Radio New Zealand.

If you are reading this digitally, click here to view.

Credits:

Director: Luke Ross

Producer: Alice Youngquest

Production Mentor: Zoe McIntosh

Story Consultant: Julia Parnell



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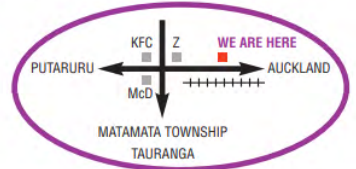


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THE WHAT, THE WHY AND HOW OF YAMADORI COLLECTING

Serena Dawson

Yamadori, for those not “in the know,” is bonsai material collected from the wild. Many of the finest examples of the art of bonsai began life on a mountainside.

In Japan, this practice has basically ceased, as the mountainous areas where it was popular have now been protected by law.

In New Zealand, however, the practice of collecting yamadori is very much alive and thriving. There are many private individuals finding outstanding material to develop into bonsai. Others, such as Eudai Bonsai, are even making recovered yamadori available for purchase, to those not able to collect their own. However, if you are physically able, I highly recommend the experience of collecting your own trees. As a bonsai enthusiast, there's no thrill quite like it.

Why collect yamadori?

There are two great reasons, the first being ecological. If done in a thoughtful manner, taking yamadori can actually benefit the

environment. New Zealand is a battleground between native and invasive species. By taking out wildling pines, Douglas firs, privet and so on, we are helping to tip the scales in our forests against these invasive species. There are times when natives would otherwise be destroyed and can be saved for bonsai. Most of my natives I have saved from farms or developments, or from an unwanted position in people's gardens.

The second great reason is the “bonsai potential” of what's out there. The wilds of New Zealand contain a wealth of amazing material not found in garden centers. Trees with character, big chunky trunks, interesting shapes, lovely surface roots, and other fascinating characteristics. When you can have the thrill of collecting your own high quality pre bonsai material, and help our native environment at the same time, it's a win-win.

Ok, but how?

The first challenge is spotting your yamadori, and if necessary, getting any permissions required to collect it, either from the private landowner or from your local council if on public land. Trespassing or stealing is bad form for yamadori collecting!

First you need to have an idea of what you're looking for. What makes the material "worth collecting" to you? Personally, I look for large, mature looking trunks, or specimens with a story to tell.

Are you searching for something specific or hoping to find some hidden treasure? Part of the thrill of collecting is you really don't know what you might find.

A bonsai collection based off yamadori will always have more variety and interest than one developed from nurseries alone, in my biased opinion.

You can save years or even decades of development, by collecting a more mature specimen. An unusual trunk may inspire a future design you would not have envisioned.

Where to look

Edges of forest clearings, forestry tracks, and road verges can furnish some great material which may have been damaged, mown or trimmed by deer. Such trees may

have a good start on some ramification, nice low branching, natural Shari or Jin's, or even hollow trunks from rotted trunk damage. If you're after specific species, look out for areas under large trees of that type, sometimes you'll find great trees nearby.

Another fantastic source of material is farms and their hedges/windbreaks around orchards and the like. Having been constantly nibbled by stock or hacked back by mowers, they can yield some amazing trees.

Making a plan

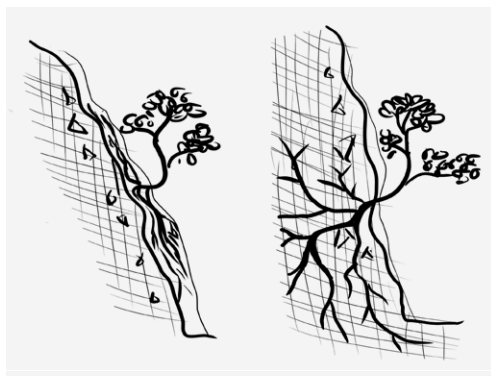
Assessing the conditions the tree is growing in can help to estimate the size of the rootball you will need to extract. Is the ground hard and clay based? Or sand, gravel or loam? Is it in the side of a bank or entangled in the roots of a larger tree?

A root hook is my favorite tool to start with, as I use it to assess the dig by doing some careful scraping around the trunk. Are there any fine roots close to the trunk? Or will I need a larger rootball than expected to make sure there are enough feeder roots?

Are there any large rocks or roots from other trees that will make extraction difficult? Is the rootball much lower than expected, as dirt has accumulated over the rootball from slippage on a bank or road works?

Tools and techniques

A basic tool kit for collecting is essential. A digging tool, whether large such as a good quality spade, or small such as a hand trowel, is the most basic part of your kit. Secateurs, a saw and perhaps some loppers



When collecting from banks, two situations are most likely. One (shallow roots against rock) is easy, the other (deep roots between rocks) is nearly impossible for collection.

are really useful. Some kind of root hook is very helpful. Gloves are wise. Didn't say I was wise!

Next, tools for the cutting of roots and overlong branches. For best results, you want to leave nice clean cuts on any trimmed roots, to prevent rot setting in, and encourage healing.

A good saw saves a lot of sweat and angst. If you can get in there, loppers are pretty brilliant for roots. A good sharp spade is good for smaller roots, for bigger roots you're better to use a different tool as it's pretty jarring and another possible way to hurt yourself.

The dig

To protect the fragile roots, we dig a channel all the way around the rootball, cutting thick roots and removing rocks as we go. Once we have room all around the rootball, we can start to dig under the rootball, cutting any remaining thick roots. Gentle rocking at this point is ok, to check you have got all the big roots holding it down. Once it's free, either



Large oak removed from roadside after receiving council permission for collection.

slide a sheet of plastic under the rootball bit by bit, or if it's very solid, you can lever the whole rootball out of the hole with a spade or shovel. This is the bit where it's easy to hurt your back if you're not careful.

If the soil is sandy, or soft and loose, (such as rotted leaf litter under a large tree, above a hard soil pan), my experience has been that a better rootball can be extracted by actually pulling instead of digging. You end up with a whole, or nearly whole rootball with this method, if the tree is not too large. Slow, steady and careful pressure will allow the roots to lift out of the sand/soil without harm. When I have attempted to dig in such conditions, the long running feeder roots mean a standard "ten times the trunk diameter" rootball is insufficient and most of the fine roots are further out, because they haven't grown downwards in the usual way.



Collecting a garden privet.

The time of year

While coniferous trees can be safely collected in late summer/autumn, the traditional time of collecting most species is late winter to early spring. This is because at those times, the trees are dormant or semi dormant and will be less shocked. At the same time, they are soon going to be putting energy into new growth, so will more quickly recover from being collected. (In autumn this growth is mainly of roots). It is possible, however, to collect at any time of year, given a sufficient rootball, minimal damage and good aftercare. For beginners I recommend starting in late winter/early spring.

After extracting your rootball, wrap it in plastic to protect from drying out.

Coniferous trees cannot be barerooted. If your tree was in loose soil or sand, grab some “native soil” in a bag to add to the pot when you pot it up. Many trees are dependant on the root biome, (beneficial fungi and bacteria), to survive. If in doubt, always add some native soil to be safe.

Some species such as privet, and some deciduous trees such as maples or elms, can be washed out and root pruned hard if they are healthy and vigorous. Some natives such as beech hate drying out, and most don't like hard root pruning. Manuka and kanuka are a special case, which are near impossible to collect alive. Don't torture yourself. Try a totara instead, if you find a friendly farmer with a likely stock-eaten hedge, you might find a real beauty, and they respond to training very well.

Generally speaking, natives require a bit more care and respect, keep roots moist and don't prune too hard first time.



Stock-pruned totara, recovering in pure pumice.

Aftercare

When you get it home, only gently rake out the outermost edges of the rootball so as to leave the inner roots undisturbed for now. At a later repot, all the inner soil should be replaced with free draining mix to prevent rot and root death, the timing of which depends on species and strength of tree. Secure well into pot to prevent root damage caused by rocking. Aluminum wire is best for this, as copper can kill off the biome of the soil.

Newly collected trees must not be allowed to get dry roots, but also must be guarded from overwet conditions which lead to root rot. Keeping a close eye on the moisture levels in your soil/substrate is essential, watering to a schedule does not allow for the differing conditions in the real world, such as very hot or windy days. A sheltered spot for your new yamadori, with partial sun, is a big help.

A soak in “Seasol” solution is an important step in many yamadori hunters aftercare routine. The seaweed-based mineral solution is a tonic which helps the overall health of the tree. Just don’t confuse with fertiliser, as newly dug trees aren’t ready for fertiliser yet.

Pure pumice can be used for potting up any yamadori, and I definitely recommend it for pines and trees vulnerable to rootrot. But my experience is that some species, such as Douglas fir, actually perform better in a mix such as Tui seed raising mix, which is about half pumice.

Pumice’s unique ability to hold moisture, while simultaneously allowing healthy air flow for the roots, is unparalleled. All substrate used to pot up your tree should have the dust sieved or washed out beforehand, to prevent a hard “pan” of compacted dust forming, which will prohibit the safe passage of air and water.



Privately collected NZ beech, preferring wetter collection soil.

I am a huge proponent of the use of sphagnum moss as a top dressing on vulnerable trees. It is more than the moisture retention; it is the unique structure of sphagnum moss that changes the nature of the water that passes over it, invigorating the tree. Sphagnum is the only thing I have found to be able to save trees that “should” otherwise have died.

There is not space in this article to go into it, but if you’re interested in new science, I highly recommend the book, “The Fourth Phase of Water,” by Gerald H Pollack.

The hardest thing - Waiting!

Ahh. Now we wait. You’ve potted up your amazing tree. You’re keeping it watered carefully. It’s been alive for a month or more. Soon you can start with some gentle fertilizer. But you really just want to get in there with some wire, some pruning scissors, improve that jin, pinch back that new growth, get it into a real pot...

But you must resist. Don’t ruin your hard work. Be patient. That tree will be worth the wait. When it’s ready, it will respond, it will develop, it will thrive.

It will be beautiful.

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AUCKLAND BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Matt Hutson
aucklandbonsaisociety@gmail.com
Secretary: Ross Phillips

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

AVON BONSAI SOCIETY

President: Jane Bodle
cluckmed@yahoo.com
Secretary: Esther Meadows
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Meetings: 2nd Monday, 7.30 pm,
The Kiosk, Christchurch Botanical Gardens,
Rolleston Ave, Christchurch.

BAY OF PLENTY BONSAI SOCIETY

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

Meetings: Last Sunday of the month.

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

ROTORUA BONSAI CLUB

President: Selwyn Hatrick, 07 348 5353
selwyn_h@slingshot.co.nz
Secretary: Rick Merrington
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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.

WELLINGTON BONSAI CLUB

President: Harry van Enckevort
Secretary: Garth Lippitt
P.O. Box 48064, Upper Hutt
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Meetings: 1st Sunday (except January),
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