



RMBS

January 2020

Volume 52 Issue 1

BOB KATAOKA, PONDEROSA PINE LOGO TREE

January President's Message

by Andy Berry

"Some have practiced bonsai for 30 years, while others have practiced bonsai one year, 30 times."—*Bonsai words of wisdom, attribution unknown*

Belated best wishes and congratulations on making it through the whirlwind of the holiday season and another year in bonsai! Happy New Year to everyone. ***I am excited at the prospect of what 2020 will bring for RMBS and our collective growth in the art of bonsai.*** I am certain I will not be the last person to use "2020" to invoke clarity (like the optometrist's exam chart), but this year we will codify the focus of RMBS to align with our mission and vision and advance the art and appreciation of bonsai for our

membership and our community. This will be accomplished in various ways. In the most literal sense, RMBS will provide educational and technical opportunities with greater emphasis on fundamental horticulture for bonsai, and seasonally appropriate scopes of work to advance our skill to keep us from practicing bonsai for a single year without change. For those who have attained a high level of practice in bonsai, most of our educational programming in 2020 will be focused on advanced and nuanced topics (species specifics, specialized technique and formal display).

To that end, January is a wonderful month to consider how formal display can elevate your bonsai art. This is an interesting topic. ***I have met quite a few folks who have attained a stunning level of bonsai practice (impeccable horticultural technique and a beautifully designed and diverse collection), who have absolutely no interest in displaying their work formally.*** I suppose they are content with admiring their collections during daily care. Perhaps I am being too reductive. When I ask these artists if they are going to display their trees, they invariably answer that they aren't into tree shows. "I do bonsai for myself (don't we all?)". They say they're not interested in accolades or competition. They're not sure any of their trees are worthy or will be in a show ready state when the designated weekend rolls around. Reflecting on this further, my thought is that they aren't far from the mark. Bonsai is a personal pursuit, and therefore displaying one's bonsai for others to admire is an intimate act. I suppose it is not unlike the fear some get during public speaking. Nerve-racking. Sheer terror. But here is the secret: none of that matters. ***It is the synergy of nature and humanity that creates the unique beauty of bonsai and provides opportunity for contemplation on the natural world and our place within it.*** So, I say, display your trees. Use a *nom-de-plume* if you must. Just do it.

Perhaps the most misunderstood element of the traditional 3-point formal display of bonsai, scroll, and kusamono is this accent planting or "grass-thing". Although she has a great affinity for them, my mother refers to these arraignment as the "bonsai sidekick." In Western culture, I think many

would echo this sentiment and include these elements as an afterthought. I have been guilty of this for sure. I have the bonsai I wish to display identified months in advance, and scramble around last minute finding suitable pots and material for my accent plantings in a rushed fashion. I often lose sight of the fact that in traditional display, accent planting is intended to harmonize with the tree. It should impart a feeling, in conjunction with the hanging scroll, of seasonality and location or emotion to the work. In short, elevate the bonsai composition, rather than ride its coat tails. Meticulous preparation and planning must go into well-executed accent plantings. The size, species, position and container choice must be considered and appropriate. Kusamono must not be garish or overpowering. It should be a thing of beauty in a stand-alone fashion. Not generally something cobbled together last minute. I cannot do such an expansive topic justice in this message, but I have done a little reading on the subject and identified a few resources that are thought provoking and might be used as a primer prior to our meeting.

- 1) Valavanisbonsaiblog.com/2019/12/01/using-accessory-plantings-for-displaying-bonsai/

A great blog post from Bill Valavanis about how the accent planting should be conceptualized and considerations for proper pairing with bonsai including container glaze, shape, size of species. I like this article because it demonstrates how the accent planting accentuates each bonsai rather than just admiring them on their own, which has less utility in my mind.

interpretation on how to achieve such excellence with a local feel.

2) [Bonsai.wordpress.com/the-art-of-display/](https://bonsai.wordpress.com/the-art-of-display/)

From your friends at California Bonsai Art, a good commentary on formal bonsai display including scroll and table considerations, preparation for display and a good section on accent planting. Very nice reference article to save on your home page. As a brief aside, I think we should have more RMBS members strive for the “3-point” display at our shows, rather than the 2-point standard we have become accustomed to. Mike Britten did a nice job with this in 2019.

3) [Bonsaimirai.com/node/832](https://bonsaimirai.com/node/832)

From Bonsai Mirai, a blog entitled “kusamono selects” written by Young Choe. Here, 10 of Young’s amazing creations considered as stand-alone pieces. These works are truly magnificent and a cut-above the usual accent planting we see on display. She talks about how inspiration from the containers informed the planting, and special considerations based on species. Many of these works are not appropriate for most RMBS members trees. However, a couple years ago she visited RMBS and did a wonderful workshop on making such plantings with Colorado native plants (material provided by Harlequin gardens in Boulder) which was fascinating. This blog is inspirational and should be considered a jumping off point for our

Further internet searching on the topic will bear fruit, but these are a nice starting point. One way for you to avoid winter dormancy while your bonsai enjoy it.

Lastly, please join me Tuesday January 7th for our first meeting of 2020. Dave Regan will be presenting our fundamentals topic on the foundation of design in bonsai. A relative newcomer to bonsai, Dave has been an artist in multiple mediums for more than 20 years. As a professional tattoo artist Dave trained in Japan and specializes in traditional Japanese aesthetic works. Line, form, shape, balance and harmony are his passion. Larry Jackel (who needs no such introduction), will be discussing the accent planting in formal display and giving us the necessary tools to take our bonsai compositions to the higher plane of communicating the spirit of the tree and the artist. Come if you’d like to move past “doing kusamono one year, thirty times.”

Your brother in bonsai,

Andy Berry

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2020 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program
<p><u>January Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Jan 7th 6 – 9:30pm Plant Society Building, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM: DAVE REGAN</u> FOUNDATION OF DESIGN IN BONSAI <u>LONG PROGRAM: LARRY JACKEL</u> PROPER SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACCENT PLANTS (SHITUKASA) FOR BONSAI DISPLAY</p>
<p><u>February Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Feb 4th 6 – 9:30pm Plant Society Building, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: MIKE BRITTEN</u> SYMMETRY, ASYMMETRY AND BALANCE IN BONSAI DESIGN</p>
<p><u>March Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Mar 3rd 6 – 9:30pm Plant Society Building, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: WILL KERNS</u> DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT OF COLORADO SPRUCE AS BONSAI</p>
<p><u>April Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Apr 7th 6 – 9:30pm Mitchell Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: ADAM JOHNSON</u> SPRING CONCEPTS – PREPARING BONSAI FOR A NEW SEASON OF GROWTH</p>
<p><u>May Monthly Meeting</u> Tue May 5th 6 – 9:30pm FNC Auditorium, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: TOM ANGLEWICZ & ANDY BERRY</u> PINYON PINES (PINUS EDULIS) AS BONSAI</p>
<p><u>May Workshop</u> Tue May 30th & May 31st</p>	<p><u>TODD SCHLAFER</u></p>
<p><u>Jun Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Jun 2nd 6 – 9:30pm FNC Auditorium, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: TODD SCHLAFER</u> VISITING ARTIST DEMONSTRATION</p>
<p><u>Jul Monthly Meeting</u> Tue Jul 7th 6 – 9:30pm FNC Auditorium, Denver Botanic Gardens</p>	<p><u>SHORT PROGRAM:</u> <u>LONG PROGRAM: DARRELL WHITLEY & PAUL GILBERT</u> HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF VIEWING STONES AS RELATES TO BONSAI</p>

RMBS MEMBERS – REMINDERS

If you ordered Pumice or Scoria, it is in! Please remember to pick it up.

RMBS HISTORY – ARCHIVES- AT THE BEGINNING

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DENVER BONSAI CLUB

GEORGE T. FUKUMA

WE ARE ONE BIG FAMILY
MAY CALLED SENIOR AND JUNIOR
THE INTERESTS ARE THE SAME
OUR IDEALS ARE EXQUISITE,
BUT, AGES GAP, UNLEVELED.

BOTH, FORWARDING SAME PASSAGE
WORKING TOGETHER FOR FUTURE,
WITH TACKLING PRESENT ADVANCEMENTS
HAPPY, HAND-SHAKING, WITH WARM HEART
LET'S, WALK TOGETHER IN THESE STEPS

WITH GRATEFUL THANKSGIVING, YOUR KINDNESS
THIS BANQUET, BEAUTIFULLY EXPRESSED
LIKE CHILDREN TREAT THEIR PARENT
OF COURSE, WE ARE ONE BIG FAMILY!
LET'S, ENJOY THIS UNPARALLELED OCCASION.

YOU, JUNIORS, OUR FUTURE'S SUCCESSORS
FOR BONSAI NEW WORLD, AHEAD!
'73: ARE NEW FASHION OF "MAME" CREATION
RENOWN MR. ZEKO NAKAMURA BONSAIS.
LET'S ALL UNITE, FORWARD NEW HORIZON.

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, 2020. Individual memberships are \$35 per year and family memberships are \$50 per year.

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

PAYMENT ADDRESS:

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

Discounts Available to Members:

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

Resources for Members:

Other internet resources:

[New RMBS Web Site](#)

[Colorado Bonsai Ltd.](#)

[First Branch Bonsai](#)

[S&S Bonsai](#)

[RMBS Facebook Page](#)

[Mike Horine Website](#)



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