



# ROOTS RUN DEEP

## August, 2009

### NVBC Happenings

Monday, August 3rd...Bonsai Fundamentals with James Wagner: "Criteria for the Selection of Bonsai Trees". Bring a tree and we will discuss what to look for when selecting a tree for bonsai.

Monday, August 17th. Curtis on cascade and semi-cascade style, a visual presentation

September 7th...The Senior Center is closed. NO MEETING, Labor Day Holiday

September 13th 3:00-6:00 pm: will be our Club Picnic: Site TBA.

September 21st...7:00 pm Peter Tea: Peter will once again share his expertise with us tonight. Topic of his choosing: TBA. Plan on bringing a tree of your choice for Peter to assess.

#### Apologies

There was confusion regarding the NVBC meeting on 7/6, last month. Apologies to anyone all who were inconvenienced.

The meeting dates for the rest of the year are as follows: 8/3, 8/17, 9/21, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16, 12/7 and 12/21.

Last month's **Summer Field Trip to Bonsai Nurseries** was great fun. Jim Gremel's Deer Meadow Bonsai Nursery has undergone significant development over the past years. Jim gave us a tour, explaining some principles of growing pre-bonsai material in the ground. It is well worth a trip to see his farm. Below are the nursery wanders.



*Let yourself be silently drawn  
by the stronger pull of what  
you truly love*

*Rumi*

**Bonsai is Wiring, Wiring is Bonsai.** (by Rich Lenson) Not everyone agrees with this concept. Many of us use wiring sparingly, if at all in our bonsai practice, and have beautiful trees to behold. In the early development of bonsai wire was not available (there is evidence that bonsai art was practiced in 200 BC). Trunk and branches can be shaped with guide-wires, weights, and with pruning. Wiring gives the most control to shape.

Skill in wiring takes time and practice and patience. Many find wiring to be a relaxing process and a mental exercise. Even, well applied wire has an aesthetic of its

own.

Copper wire is used on conifers (e.g. pines, junipers, cyprus) and aluminum wire is used on deciduous trees. Wire size is about 1/3 the branch diameter for conifers and almost branch

diameter for deciduous trees. The wire size is increased for longer branches.

An attempt is made to not cross wires when applying wire. This makes wire application like a puzzle. Wiring stresses the tree so is best applied to a healthy tree. There is a suggestion that wiring can promote back budding and growth. The reasons offered are injury to the cambium (the growing layer of the tree) which stimulates a healing response, and wiring puts branches in better position for sun exposure, and puts the tip of the branch in an elevated position that stimulates the release of the hormone auxin (also simulating growth).

In practice wiring can damage branches. It can be disheartening look with pride at a newly wired tree only to discover dead branches a few days later. Slow detail to wire application and very gentle bending can help prevent this. Some trees are much more brittle than others.

In applying wire one aims for an angle of the wire coil between 30 and 45 degrees. Wire is best applied by turning the wire around the branch (not using the branch as a fulcrum for wire application).

This takes practice.

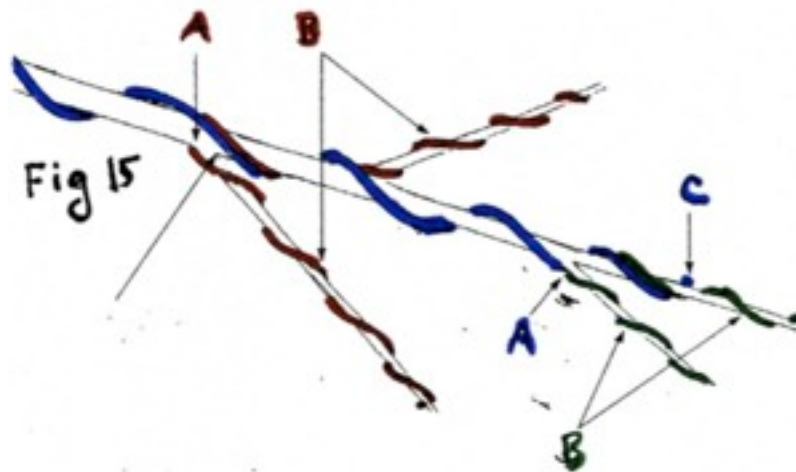
With one hand (usually the non-dominant hand) one holds the wire to the branch, providing a firm anchor. With the other hand one holds the wire in the palm and uses the tip of the index finger to twist the wire around the branch. The index finger gently spins around the branch as the palm rotates from

palm-up to palm-down positions. With this technique one can coil a heavy wire around a drinking straw.

Fig 15, above shows a number of wiring tricks. the main wire (blue) is of larger diameter for a larger diameter branch, and extends 1.5 turns to anchor the next wire (green). Points "A" demonstrate how to wire two branches together. It is recommended to try to wire two branches together, often with another wire wired 1.5 turns into the base of the branch (point "C") to provide an anchor.

At point "A" the wire comes around the main branch and then travels from the outside to the inside of the two branches it is connecting, wired symmetrically into the crotch of the two branches (clockwise on one side and counter-clockwise on the other).

Wiring is not for everyone. Learning to wire can be frustrating and requires patience and practice and wire is expensive. However, wire can give more control to styling, and becomes fun once the technique is learned. A good way to learn is to bring a tree to the NVBC meetings and ask for someone to help learn wiring skills. Or not, the beauty of bonsai is if the practice brings joy it is being done correctly.



### Mono no aware: the Japanese beauty aesthetic

by John Paul Gillespie

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Mono-No-Aware:-The-Essence-of-Japan&id=435418>

Meaning literally "a sensitivity to things," mono no aware is a concept describing the essence of Japanese culture, invented by the Japanese literary and linguistic scholar Motoori Norinaga in the eighteenth century, and remains the central artistic imperative in Japan to this day. The phrase is derived from the word \*aware\*, which in Heian Japan meant sensitivity or sadness, and the word mono, meaning things, and describes beauty as an awareness of the transience of all things, and a gentle sadness at their passing. It

can also be translated as the "ah-ness" of things, of life, and love.

Mono no aware gave name to an aesthetic that already existed in Japanese art, music and poetry, the source of which can be traced directly to the introduction of Zen Buddhism in the twelfth century, a spiritual philosophy and practise which profoundly influenced all aspects of Japanese culture, but especially art and religion. The fleeting nature of beauty described by mono no aware derives from the three states of existence in Buddhist philosophy: unsatisfactoriness, impersonality, and most importantly in this context, impermanence.

According to mono no aware, a falling or wilting autumn flower is more beautiful than one in full bloom; a fading sound more beautiful than one clearly heard; the moon partially clouded more appealing than full. The sakura or cherry blossom tree

is the epitome of this conception of beauty; the flowers of the most famous variety, somei yoshino, nearly pure white tinged with a subtle pale pink, bloom and then fall within a single week. The subject of a thousand poems and a national icon, the cherry blossom tree embodies beauty as a transient experience.

Mono no aware states that beauty is a subjective rather than objective experience, a state of being ultimately internal rather than external. Based largely upon classical Greek ideals, beauty in the West is sought in the ultimate perfection of an external object: a sublime painting, perfect sculpture or intricate musical composition; a beauty that could be said to be only skin deep. The Japanese ideal sees beauty instead as an experience

of the heart and soul, a feeling for and appreciation of objects or artwork—most commonly nature or the depiction of—in a pristine, untouched state.

An appreciation of beauty as a state which does not last and cannot be grasped is not the same as nihilism, and can better be understood in relation to Zen Buddhism's philosophy of earthly transcendence: a spiritual longing for that which is infinite and eternal—the source of all worldly beauty. As the monk Sotoba wrote in *\*Zenrin Kushū\** (Poetry of the Zenrin Temple), Zen does not regard nothingness as a state of absence, but rather the affirmation of an unseen that exists behind empty space: "Everything exists in emptiness: flowers, the moon in the sky, beautiful scenery."

With its roots in Zen Buddhism, *\*mono no aware\** is bears some relation to the non-dualism of Indian philosophy, as related in the following story about Swami Vivekananda by Sri Chinmoy:

"Beauty," says [Vivekananda], "is not external, but already in the mind." Here we are reminded of what his spiritual daughter Nivedita wrote about her Master. "It was dark when we approached Sicily, and against the sunset sky, Etna was in slight eruption. As we entered the straits of Messina, the moon rose, and I walked up and down the deck beside the Swami, while he dwelt on the fact that beauty is not external, but already in the mind. On one side frowned the dark crags of the Italian coast, on the other, the island was touched with silver light. 'Messina must thank me,' he said; 'it is I who give her all her beauty.'" Truly, in the absence of appreciation, beauty is not beauty at all. And beauty is worthy of its name only when it has been appreciated.\*

The founder of *\*mono no aware\**, Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), was the pre-eminent scholar of the Kokugakushu movement, a nationalist movement which sought to remove all outside influences from Japanese culture. Kokugakushu was enormously influential in art, poetry, music

and philosophy, and responsible for the revival during the Tokugawa period of the Shinto religion. Contradictorily, the influence of Buddhist ideas and practises upon art and even Shintoism itself was so great that, although Buddhism is technically an outside influence, it was by this point unable to be extricated.

*The oak tree:  
not interested  
in cherry blossoms.*

*Matsuo Basho*  
(Robert Hass, translator)



- | <b>NVBC Board Members</b> |                              |
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**Developing Nebari on an Olive**  
Doug Philips shares photographs of cutting the roots off of an olive tree stump and then growing new roots with dramatic nebari. This process occurred over a number of years.  
<http://www.dugzbonsai.com/olivehead.htm>

**Bonsai Happenings Around the Bay** <http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/Events.htm>

**July 1-5**

**San Rafael, California**

**Marin Bonsai Club Show:** Bonsai show at the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, Marin County Fairgrounds. Highway 101 (exit N. San Pedro Rd.) Hours are from 11AM-10PM daily. Admission to Fair is \$14 for adults, \$12 for senior and children 4 to 12. For information, call Craig Thompson, 415-472-6685.

**Aug 29-30**

**Santa Rosa, California**

**Redwood Empire Bonsai Society:** 26th Annual Bonsai Show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave. Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM, both days. Saturday features, from Japan Bonsai Master Yasuo Mitsuya. Sunday features Bonsai Master Kathy Shaner. 707-884-4126 [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org). [www.rebsbonsai.org/index.html](http://www.rebsbonsai.org/index.html).

**One of the largest shows in the nation, many vendors for wire, tools, soil and plants and pots**

**September 1,3,4,5,7,8,9**

**Oakland, California**

**GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt:** Edu-Fun Yasuo Mitsuya, a master of Gendai in Japan, teacher of Kathy Shaner, will have workshops and seminars at the Garden. Reservations will be on first come first serve basis

[http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/Mitsuya\\_atBGLM.htm](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/Mitsuya_atBGLM.htm). [bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com)

**Saturday, September 26th 2009**

**San Jose, CA**

**Midori's 48th Annual Bonsai Show** at the Northside Community Center 488 6th St. San Jose, Ca. includes 18 separate 2 and 3 point displays of fine bonsai. Nationally acclaimed artist, Boon Manakitivi-part will style a bunjin Japanese Black Pine at 1:30pm. Trees, tools, pots and bonsai accessories will be offered by Jim Gremel, Shibui Bonsai Inc. and others. Free styling help and advice for the public from "Dr. Bonsai". Contact JT at (408)371-7737 or [jtbonsai@earthlink.net](mailto:jtbonsai@earthlink.net) for more info.

**Our teacher, Peter Tea, is president of this club**



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