

SAIKEI International

Issue **38** January
2012

Magazine of the International Saikei Association

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- Creating a Saikei
- Rock Stabilisation



International
Saikei
Association

Established 1996

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INTRODUCTION

We would like to wish everyone belated happy new year. We would like to apologise for the lateness of this magazine and commit to getting the next one out on time 😊.

Here in the UK we have been experiencing a cold snap with temperatures dropping to minus 10 and so we are jealous of those members in warmer climates. It has meant that our Saikei have been frozen solid for a few days which is a worry.

We are looking forward to the year ahead and wish all our members a good year ahead.

GENERAL NEWS

Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery have invited the association to display Saikei at their 2012 show which takes place in September, dates and times to follow, we hope that as many of our members will attend as this a superb show with a number of demonstrations including Saikei.

We have just been informed that the Sussex Bonsai Group will be holding another show in 2013 at the highly successful K2 Crawley venue. This promises to be another high quality show.

WEBSITE

We are in the middle of a review of the website and we are considering ways in which this can become 'the' website when it comes to Saikei. If you have any ideas please let us know.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The learning opportunities development is taking place alongside the website review as we are seeking to incorporate the website into the learning opportunities program (LOP). There will be a number of resources that are available to students in the LOP through a resource centre on the website, the access to this is yet to be designed but we will keep you informed as we go along.

We are happy to announce that the trial of the new learning opportunities program was completed at the end of 2011 and with some slight adjustments the first and second level will be generally available from March 2012. Our thanks go to all those who took part in the trial and for their feedback that enabled us to assess and improve the course.

SHOWS

Hello to all the members from the show team. As previously mentioned in the general news section we have been invited to put on a display of Saikei at Green lawns bonsai show in September. There will also be a small display of Saikei at the Eastbourne and will Wealden bonsai show in June 2012. The format of this page has changed slightly without the ties months for each show being displayed on this page I hope that you will find this of more use and allow you to access information quicker.

Please don't forget to let us know about any shows that you or your club are putting on and we will be happy to include these within this magazine and inform members of the Saikei Association about your event.

Date	Show Details
16 th of June 2012	<p align="center"><i>Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Show 2012</i></p> <p align="center"><i>June 16th 2012</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Stone Cross Hall</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Nr Eastbourne</i></p>
1 st and 2 nd of September 2012	<p align="center"><i>Green Lawns Bonsai Show 2012</i></p> <p align="center"><i>September 1st & 2nd 2012</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery (See Suppliers Page)</i></p>
	<p align="center"><i>Let us know if you have an event you would like to advertise</i></p>

CREATING A SAIKEI

In this series we will be starting to explore the creation of Saikei from simple compositions through to more complex and technically challenging plantings.

In this the first article of this series we are going to look at a simple planting using common shape rocks and simple trees.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

In order to do this planting you will need a circular container of no more than 2 inches depth preferably a dark unobtrusive colour, three trees that are low and spreading to create the feel of the Windy and storm battered coast. You will also need four or five fist sized and smaller rocks of the same type, sand to provide bedding for the rock, your normal planting soil, grit to provide the beach/sea and finally moss/plants to provide the groundcover underneath your trees.

THE SCENE

This Saikei should give the impression of a small ravine on the coast and trees which have been kept a low by the coastal winds. The focus for this Saikei is the ravine and so it is important to keep the trees simple so that the eyes focus on the shape of the rocks. However as with all Saikei although there is a feature which will draw the eye the balance must never be lost and so each element should be balanced so that it does not become the sole focus of the planting.

STARTING THE COMPOSITION

The first task that must be completed is the preparation of the pot ready for planting one's insect netting is in place carefully study the pot to determine the best front and then place the rocks in loose to determine their best position. You will probably have two adjust and readjust the rocks before you get a pattern that will suit the composition. It is worth remembering that an area between one fifth and one quarter the width of the pot should be left at the front to provide the basis of the beach/sea this will provide a good area of space.

Once you are comfortable with the placement of the rocks you should lay a sand base and bed the rocks into this base, it is worth remembering to avoid the sand covering the insect netting this becomes a necessity when using clay as a bedding material as it will prevent water from draining from the pot.

When this task is completed you can start to add a layer of planting soil in the area where you intend to plant the trees. It is now time to prepare the trees for planting you should now remove the trees from their pots one at a time and work with the root system until it will comfortably fit in the area you wish to plant. During this process you should study the tree looking at the overall size, the size of the trunk, its branches and the surface roots, understanding each piece of material will help you to combine them in a harmonious way taking into account the best features of each tree. Once the trees are prepared you can start to place them into the container, as with the rocks you will probably find that you will have to readjust a number of times until you are satisfied with the shape and their relationships with the rocks, I have provided an outline of the original composition on which this tutorial is based. Once you are satisfied with the position of each tree you should then filling the area

with your growing medium. Remember to blend the soil to the rock as this will improve the naturalness of the planting.

Ultimately it is up to you to decide how high you want the soil to be in relationship to the beach/sea but try to avoid the rocks becoming grave stones ☺

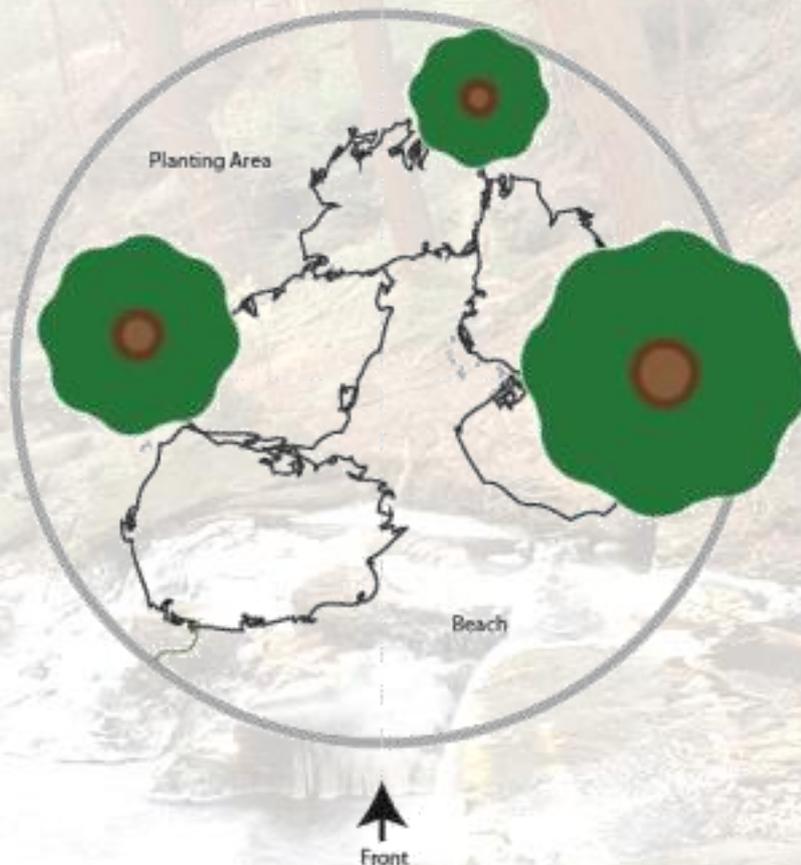
ADD THE FINAL TOUCHES

At this point your Saikei will be structurally complete and now it is time to add decorative elements such as the beach/sea and the under planting, moss, etc.

ENJOY YOUR WORK

It is now time to water your composition, place in a prominent position, pour yourself a cup of tea or something stronger and enjoy your work.

We would love to see some of the compositions when you have completed them and putting a gallery for other member's interest. In the next article we will be looking at an Alpine composition which I've used a number of times to great success.



TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION

We recently received an e-mail from a member in America who was unsure of how to stabilise rocks within his compositions, in light of this e-mail and the article on creating new Saikei we have decided to republish this article as it provides a foundation of the techniques in Saikei.

In Saikei it is important that we stabilise all rocks to prevent movement and the subsequent change from our original image for the composition. During construction of our Saikei we must ensure that the stabilisation is secure and friendly to the planting we will do. Rocks are used in Saikei for their look and their structural capability and we will explore this during this handout.

WHY STABILISE

As mentioned in the introduction stabilisation is important due to the need to produce an image which is fixed, in Bonsai the tree is tied into the pot this is to ensure that the tree does not move damaging roots but also to make sure that the tree once designed remains at the artists angle and it does not shift throwing the design off balance. Saikei artists spend much time finding the face* of the rock and to lose that precious angle July damage the quality and design of the composition which brings us on to the second reason why we stabilise rocks, this reason is purely artistic and it is to change the angle of the rock to suit the composition. This means that it is possible through stabilisation methods to put an angle on a rock that under normal circumstances would be impossible due to balance and that old enemy of Saikei enthusiasts, 'Gravity'. It is important to remind everyone that Saikei are natural so the cutting or shaping of rock is not encouraged, this is due in part to the fact that if you take the planting apart you will have potentially ruined that rock for future plantings. The last reason that we stabilise is to provide a structural element that can be used to provide support for planting. These rocks will not normally have a face but we would warn against using a different type of rock due to the annoying habit of these rocks to end up showing in your composition.

So to recap there are 3 reasons why you use and stabilise rock:

- To ensure a solid design that will not move.
- To overcome the design limitations placed by the shape of the rock.
- To provide a solid structural element to support planting.

STABILISATION METHODS

Because we may wish to take the Saikei apart at some stage we avoid the use of permanent fixing methods favoring those that allow some flexibility. It is worth mentioning that there are 3 levels of stabilisation with 3 methods commonly used for stabilisation.

- Companion rocks that do not require any support.
- Feature Rocks that generally only require limited support.
- Structural Rocks that require full support.

COMPANION ROCKS

Companion rocks are used to support the look of the composition but serve only an artistic role in the Saikei. Rocks of this type do not normally require secure stabilisation and can be placed on the growing medium. Words of caution, always make sure that the rock is partially embedded as this will help to portray the weight of the rock and add to the feeling of age.

Companion Stone

Placed in growing medium showing the correct placement to provide visual weight to the stone.



FEATURE ROCKS

Feature rocks are the face of the rock element in the Saikei they provide the foundation of the image and will often dictate the style of the Saikei. These rocks must be securely stabilised in order to prevent the image from changing due to rock shift, we recommend the use of sand or clay depending on the size and shape of the rock. We make up our own clay composition as follows:

- 6 parts Garden Clay
- 2 parts Organic Compost
- 2 parts Fine Sand

The sand and organic compost is there to help the roots to penetrate the clay. The mix should be gradually hydrated until it forms a sticky but moldable mass, you can now roll into balls ready for use. When you want to place the rock in the tray spray the base of the pot lightly with water then place clay ball in position and push the rock firmly into the clay ball spreading the clay outwards, you will need to firm the clay around the base of the rock to ensure stability.



Feature Stone

Placed in Sand or Clay showing the correct placement to provide visual weight to the stone.

STRUCTURAL ROCKS

Structural rocks are used to form the planting area and July or July not show in the planting it is still important to use the same rock type as often as a composition matures I find that these structural rocks end up being seen. The stabilisation of these rocks is the same as that for feature rocks.

VIEWS FROM A LENS—GALLERY



SUPPLIERS

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Southampton Bonsai Trees	02380 495729	6, Farmery Close, Swaythling, Southampton, SO18 2JX	info@bonsai-trees.com	www.bonsaitreessouthampton.co.uk
Downsview Bonsai	01323 485656	126 Wannock Lane, Lower Willingdon, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 9SJ	info@downsviewbonsai.co.uk	www.downsviewbonsaitreenursery.co.uk
Green Lawns Bonsai,	08700 347765	Hadleigh Road, Boxford, Nr Sudbury, CO10 5JH	enquiries@greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk	www.greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

CLUBS

Name	Telephone	Address	Day of Meeting	Website
Dai Ichi Bonsai Group (Essex)	01277 625 298	Shenfield Village Hall	1st Monday of each month call	
Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club (Sussex)	01323 731 369	Hellingly Village Hall	2nd Monday of the Month	www.bonsai-club.co.uk
Eastleigh Bonsai Club (Hampshire)	01489 789 962 or 07795 187 632		2nd Monday of the Month	

If you would like to have your local club details added to this list please contact the newsletter team by e-mail newsletter@saikei.co.uk

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This E-Magazine is provided to members of the International Saikei Association

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