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Show Updates

Green Lawns Bonsai 6th and 7th of June 2009

The preparations are going well with a number of Saikei all ready accepted for display.

We have a space which will accommodate around 16—18 Saikei plus accents.

David Penny will be demonstrating a large Alpine Saikei throughout Sunday the 7th of June.



Sussex Show Hove 8th and 9th of August 2009

As yet we have not been able to confirm the total space we have been allocated for display but we believe the area will be slightly smaller than Green Lawns.

Saikei shown at Green Lawns will be displayed at Sussex with additional local Saikei.

David Penny has been approached to demonstrate so watch this space.

Saikei Workshop

Recently a very successful workshop was held with 4 members of the Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club.

During the day the participants learnt about the different "styles" of Saikei and the preparation of trees.

They then had the opportunity to watch the creation of 2 Alpine Saikei by the individual participants under the watchful eye of our international executive chair David Penny.



The 2 Saikei were very much a group effort but they were very different. One was a mountain gauge the other a rocky outcrop.

We are pleased to say that both owners were delighted with the results and have promised to show them at future events.

Help Needed

We are in desperate need of help manning the stands for our 2 shows this year.

Please contact Brian Dale with any offer of help.

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The 5 elements of Saikei

I have decided to write about the 5 elements of Saikei these can also be applied to Bonsai.

There are 5 basic elements to a successful Saikei these being:

- Harmony**
- Scale**
- Balance**
- Interest**
- Consistency**

I actually use these principles when I judge a Saikei (so be warned).

Harmony

Dictionary Meaning – “A consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts; congruity”.

Harmony is one of the easiest of the 5 to feel, I say feel with good reason for you are more likely to feel that a composition is wrong than you are to see it. How many times have you approached a bonsai and FELT that something is wrong, I use this feeling all the time as some of you will know it is a good indicator that something is not right.

Harmony is difficult to explain it is easier to illustrate to you with a mental image, imagine that you are looking at a Saikei it is a windswept setting with the wind moving left to right, now, one tree is leaning to the left, into the wind, this would disrupt the harmony of the planting because the tree goes against the flow.

All the materials of the Saikei must come together to form a harmonious whole.

Scale

Dictionary Meaning – “A proportion used in determining the dimensional relationship of a representation to that which it represents”.

This is simple to illustrate, I always use a phrase that attendees to my Saikei workshops know only too well “a blade of grass is rarely as tall as a man”.

For a beginner to Saikei this is a concept which can be difficult to grasp if you decide in

advance what scale you are going to do your landscape in and select materials with that in mind you will be half way there.

I always find that the trees will define the scale of the composition once you are able to visualise the trees scale you will be able to define the under planting height and foliage size. For example a heather or thyme might become a rhododendron growing under a tree.

Balance

Dictionary Meaning – *“composition or placement of elements of design, as figures, forms, or colours, in such a manner as to produce an aesthetically pleasing or harmoniously integrated whole”.*

Balance is another that is difficult to describe. The dictionary description is quite good in that it explains that balance is a compositional/visual issue a balances Saikei is where the viewer does not get a sense of instability. Looking at bonsai for a moment try to imagine a tree with a large branch on the right side of the tree with a surface rootage that is also only on the right this would lack balance, and so it is with Saikei a composition with the rock up against the right side of the pot and the trees gathered around the rock will lack balance, now if we move the rock in from the right side and add a small area of gravel then we can create balance.

Interest

Dictionary Meaning – *“something that concerns, involves, draws the attention of, or arouses the curiosity of a person”.*

A good Saikei should capture the imagination of the viewer and transport them to another place it will only do this if it has interest. This might be a river that curls round the back of the composition and leads the viewer to lean in closer to see if they can see round the corner, or it might be a overhang in a rock under which a small alpine grows.

In Saikei we try not to include any ornaments or paths as I have covered in previous articles for this reason all interest in Saikei is created using natural elements.

Consistency

Dictionary Meaning – *“agreement, harmony, or compatibility, esp. correspondence or uniformity among the parts of a complex thing”.*

Consistency is closely linked with harmony but is more involved with the physical elements. If we achieve consistency then we will be 80% towards harmony in the composition.

How do we achieve consistency? Consistency could be through the strata on the rock all going the same way or even the same type of rock. It may be the type and shape of plants that are consistent (I did see a composition once that had conifers and cacti together). So consistency will help you to achieve harmony.

In summary if you are achieving all 5 in a positive way the Saikei is likely to work.



Suppliers

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Affiliated Bonsai Groups

Dai Ichi Bonsai Group (Essex)

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