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The only magazine dedicated to the art of Saikei
and the landscapes in a pot

International Saikei Association **Saikei International**



Index

General News

New Members

Eastbourne Show Great Success

Website

Call out to Members

Back to Basics

General Care in the UK in JULY and August

Windswept style in Saikei

In The Workshop

Juniper Care and Training Techniques

GENERAL NEWS

This section covers general news from the International Saikei Association, details of upcoming shows, show reports and any other news.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome a number of new members from around the world.

It appears that year-on-year we increase our membership drawing new members from all corners of the globe which is a welcome sign that Saikei continues to grow in popularity with individuals practising this art using different tree material and reflecting the landscapes that they see around them.

Eastbourne Show a Great Success

This year as in previous years we accepted an invitation from the Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club to put on a small display of Saikei as part of their exhibition. When we arrived on the Saturday morning to set up a small display it was clear that this year the quality and number of Bonsai trees on display would surpass that of any previous exhibition.

Once we set up we were able to have a look around the display of bonsai and I have to say that the sheer quality of some of the trees on display was breathtaking. I was also delighted to see contributions from members less experienced but no less enthusiastic about their chosen hobby, what was also delightful to see was trees in various stages of development which really helped the general public to get an idea of the process of bonsai and to maybe dispel some of the fears that bonsai can only be practiced over long periods of time.

We also had an opportunity to see some Saikei created by members of the Eastbourne and Wealden bonsai club all of which were of a good standard having been composed with care and thought. Unfortunately due to the rush of organising our display in getting it packed into my vehicle I forgot to pack my camera and so was unable to take any photos of the Saikei on display. Our display included three Saikei one of which was peaceful gorge created in 2007 at the green lawns bonsai show, this Saikei is commonly known by those members who assisted in the transportation of this composition as hernia one this is due to the size and density of the rocks used.

I would like to thank Eastbourne and Wealden bonsai club for their invitation and look forward to seeing them all next year.

The pictures attached to this article were taken by Ian Wright of the Eastbourne and Wealden bonsai club and I thank him for the use of these pictures.

Website

We continue to do work on the website and would like to encourage members to visit the pages regularly for updates. We are currently investigating the possibility of e-mailing members directly to indicate when new items have been placed on the website. If you are able to contribute anything to either the magazine or to the website we would like to hear from you and we can be contacted on the e-mail address newsletter@Saikei.co.uk we look forward to hearing from you with any contribution you are able to make.



Callout to Members

This is a great opportunity for you as members to have a say in how you wish to see the international Saikei Association in the next two years.

We are seeking feedback from members about the future of the Association and would like to invite all the members to be involved in the planning for the next two years in particular we are looking at what we can provide to you as members in the way of information, support, events, etc, we would also like to hear from members who have any advice/ideas on how we can increase the membership particularly in areas such as India, America and Europe where we know that there are individuals practising Saikei who are not yet members of the international Saikei Association.

We are also interested in hearing from members about their experiences on joining the Saikei Association, we would like to hear about good and bad experiences as this is the only way that we can hope to improve what we do.

We would like you to contact our president David penny on his e-mail which is David.penny@Saikei.co.uk he will treat all correspondence from members as confidential and will only provide details of ideas and criticisms as part of a discussion document for the board.

Please, please, please take part and send your comments so that we might understand what we need to do to improve the service offered to members.

On behalf of the membership team I would like to thank you in advance.

BACK TO BASICS

This section covers the basics from general care issues through to basic styles and how to create them. It is primarily aimed at those who are new to Saikei but will also assist experienced members in refreshing their knowledge of Saikei.

General Care in the UK during July and August

JULY

Reduce the nitrogen in your feeding for compositions with trees like maples and zelkovas if you want the best autumn colouring.

Do not leaf prune now except for badly scorched leaves, as once they are brown they are not working anyway. Constant watering will encourage moss, whilst this will enhance the presentation of the Saikei, do not allow it to completely cover the pot. Liverwort will also take a hold in poorly drained soils; this is always unsightly and will quickly spread, so weed out as quickly as possible.

At this time you will probably be spending a lot of time in the garden, with the compositions in full leaf and at their best, now is the opportunity to sit and study them from all angles. Plan their future development by making sketches etc. Make notes, however trivial, as to the various happenings to your Saikei, so you can look back and compare. You will soon know their likes and dislikes and what position they do best in etc.

Photograph your compositions to maintain a complete chart of progress. You will be surprised when you compare photos what a difference a year makes. Watch for caterpillars as they can strip a tree quickly if undetected.

AUGUST

Continue your fertilising programme and watch the weather carefully. Do not apply fertiliser when the soil is bone dry. Always give the soil a soaking first before applying fertiliser; otherwise it can burn the roots. Remember, heavy rain can wash fertilisers out of the soil.

Pines will need far less fertiliser now than the deciduous varieties, fruiting trees require fertiliser high in phosphorous. Azaleas and pines would benefit from a feed of Sequestrine which provides a good dose of iron to green up the foliage.

Soil will soon dry out with strong sun, even more with strong warm winds, so watch the watering.

Continue to turn trees to obtain even growth. Keep spraying regularly for red spider mite and aphids etc. Inspect any leaves that may be stuck together as this invariably means young caterpillars and much damage can be done.

Watch your wiring as, with your Saikei now building wood being in full growth, the branches expand and could lead to the cutting wires leaving bad scars.

Willows do well with their pots set out in shallow dishes of water in really hot weather.

With the reduction of activity in your trees pinching out leaves is no longer necessary.

Windswept Style

What Constitutes a Windswept Style

Using the standard formula the windswept style has:

- A sloping trunk,
- Branches that are considerably longer on the leeward side,
- Radial roots with stronger and thicker roots on the windward side.

The windswept style should never appear to be imbalanced and it is for this purpose that the roots extend strongly to the windward side of the tree. By this simple visual aid, it counteracts the leaning trunk and balance is restored.

Definition of Terms

- Windward - direction facing the wind
- Leeward - direction facing away from the wind.

Creating a Windswept Style From Nursery Stock

This style has many of the same properties as the slanting style therefore the selection of trees is almost the same.

As surface rootage is such a predominant feature in this style the selection of a tree for windswept style must start with the surface rootage, you must therefore search for trees with a strong surface rootage with powerful roots on the windward side of the tree. Branches are of a lesser consideration as the branches are generally much more sparse but there must still be a good branch structure on the leeward side to provide the necessary flow.

Creating a Windswept Style From Cuttings or Seed

This is a good way to start with this style as a very natural movement can be created early and then maturity developed whilst it is in the Saikei planting. Start by gently arranging the roots of the tree in a radial pattern and then plant the tree in a pot with the trunk slanting at an angle, I have found that if you position the tree towards the leeward side of the pot this will give the roots on the windward side room to grow and will consequently give them a head start on thickening. You must control branch growth on the windward side so that the tree does not become too heavy, it is best to let the branches on the leeward side grow freely so that the effect is one of dramatic movement.

Roots

Just like the slanting style roots provide an important visual anchor for the stability of the tree especially as all the movement is in a leeward direction. Because of the need to create a strong visual anchor the roots on the windward side

must be visually strong therefore we must allow these to thicken to ensure that the roots have sufficient visual weight to stabilise the design. The same techniques can be applied to the windswept style as that with the slanting style ie planting the tree on the leeward side of the pot to allow maximum growth of the roots on the windward side.

Trunk

The elements of roots, trunk and branches are intensively linked to create a good image in the style. In the picture below you can see a common windswept style, notice how far the trunk is away from the centre line and how the roots add stability to the tree. The lean of the trunk will denote whether the tree falls into the windswept or windblown style.

Branches

The branches all extend to the leeward side of the tree and all the secondary branches should have a natural movement to the leeward side as though bent by the wind. The nature of this movement in the branches will denote the intensity of the wind and whether the tree is a windswept or just windblown style. I often encourage students to look at windswept trees and study the movement, the internet can provide a good source of pictures.

Foliage

The foliage will need to reflect the amount of wind that you believe the tree is subjected to for obvious reasons the more wind the tighter the foliage pattern. Use pruning techniques to create the foliage patterns required with more intensive pruning needed to create a tighter foliage pattern. The amount of foliage required will depend on the style of the landscape and your imagination as to the elements and events that have caused the landscape.



IN THE WORKSHOP

This section covers more advanced information from advanced styles and how to create them to detailed pruning and tree development techniques. It is primarily aimed at those who have a reasonable experience level in Saikei but will also help less experienced members in increasing their knowledge of Saikei.

Juniper training technique

Following communication with AJ from the United States requesting information on junipers we are re-running this article. Hope this helps.

Junipers are the second most used conifer in my Saikei compositions. I like Juniper's because they are easy to train, very hardy, have beautiful bark and a small foliage pattern, in fact I would say the Juniper is by far the best tree to start composing Saikei with.

Care

Juniper's strong trees there are important differences when they grow in a pot as opposed to when they grow naturally in the ground.

Location

Juniper tolerate cold well, but if you have repotted or created a new composition in the spring it is a good idea to provide winter protection in the first year. Once the roots are fully established the tree will be able to tolerate the cold more effectively. During spring and autumn Juniper's are best in full sun as this will lead to compact foliage growth and a more pleasing shape, during the summer however you should keep them with some shade to avoid needle burn in excessive sunlight.

Watering

In nature you will often see Juniper is growing in poor soil with little moisture, however junipers actually like dampness as long as they do not become waterlogged. Regular misting of the needles increases the vigour of the tree and prevents the spread of red spider mites. Placing the Juniper in the correct location will help considerably with the care and watering of Juniper, when watering you should always wet the needles.

Fertilising

Junipers like a lot of fertiliser and will benefit from being fed throughout the entire growing season. In addition to a standard soil feed a foliar feed will prove to be most beneficial to the styling of the tree.

Pruning

The pruning of junipers as with many conifers falls broadly into two categories I have outlined these below:

Pinching back-Metsumi

In the spring junipers produced buds which then extend to form a pineapple shape just before they open. At this stage you can pinch them back to their base with your fingers, the objective of this is to hold back the development of the shoots and keep the layers of the branches dense. This technique is primarily designed for completed compositions where maintaining the growth is the most important task, this technique also has the effect of pushing growth back along the branch and care must be taken to avoid too much density in the foliage pads.

A second version of this technique is to partially pinch back the new growth removing half to 2/3 of the shoot this is done slightly later when the shoot has opened and extended slightly. The main aim of this technique is to increase slightly the size of the foliage pad whilst maintaining a dense structure.

It should be said that a Juniper will bud several times during the growing season and so this technique will have to be repeated a number of times during the year.



Pinching back shaped shoots-Mekiri

Pinching back tender shoots is essential for maintaining the shape and density of branches. Trees in the training stage that are starting to ramify, that are strong or have small dead branches due to neglect, cannot be arranged simply by using the pinching back technique.

With trees in a training phase or where the composition has been made in the spring you can use the pruning technique to encourage strength in the tree. Let the buds form and allow them to grow into shoots until the middle to the end of spring then reduce to leave about 5 to 8 pairs of needles, a second budding will immediately urge at the base of the needles that have been left. Let the second shoots grow freely eliminating only the strongest or those growing in poor direction, this will improve the density and shape of the foliage pads. With this technique it is important to feed regularly.



GALLERY & CONTACT

This section includes a gallery of Saikei and Saikei Related photos and contacts for Clubs and Suppliers



Cryptomeria 'bandai sugi' in alpine style



A very interesting windswept Saikai



A true survivor



An Interesting submission by a member in the UK

SUPPLIERS

Bushukan Bonsai

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bushukan-bonsai@ic24.net

www.bushukan-bonsai.com

Southampton Bonsai Trees

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info@bonsai-trees.com

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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, Suffolk, CO10 5JH

enquiries@greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

www.greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

CLUBS

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

St Mary's Church Hall, Decoy Drive, Hampden Park, BN22 9PP

2nd Monday of the Month

www.eandwbonsaiclub.co.uk

Eastleigh Bonsai Club (Hampshire)

01489 789 962 or 07795 187 632

2nd Monday of the Month

Kent Bonsai Club kentbonsaiclub@blueyonder.co.uk

Rough Common Village Hall

2nd Wednesday

www.kentbonsaiclub.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

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