



TAUNTON & SOMERSET BONSAI CLUB

Bonsai Newsletter September 2022



A wild and windy Hawthorn styled by Ade

It doesn't seem that long ago that I was writing about our repotting workshop and everyone was looking forward to the onset of spring and all that brings to the bonsai world. Well spring came, trees burst into life and we all got busy with the tools. Then came summer and what a summer, it was scorching heat and all the problems that brings to looking after trees in pots. Now it's almost Autumn. Well some trees have already decided that it is time to close down and there are many reports of "False Autumn" occurring around the country. Whilst I haven't had any trees do this, I have spoken to several people who have had trees, mostly Beech and Hornbeam, drop their leaves and go into early dormancy. Fingers crossed that next spring will see them back fit and healthy.

And so to mark this time of year we held our annual 'Autumn Workshop'. It was great to see so many people bring along trees. Some needed advice, some needed reassurance that they were on the right track and some just needed to sit and work on their babies.



Simon, seen here with Bob, had a couple of shohin size trees requiring post "summer heat" treatment. We have all got some of those! Remove the frazzled leaves, prune any dead shoots and hope everything will be OK next spring.

Brian and Sara were working on a selection of Japanese Maples whilst next to them, Bob had brought along a Juniper Silver Spray. This tree, originally planted in Bob's garden, had grown too large for the site and was thus appropriated for bonsai. The tree has a large amount of dead wood which is very soft and in need of treatment, so a bit of light carving and some wood hardener should do the trick. Growth wise the tree is very vigorous and will develop the required foliage pads, once Bob has decided which branches to keep and which need to go.

Chris and Dave are here discussing David's recent acquisition, a lovely old Japanese Cedar, *Cryptomeria Japonica*. This tree has spent many years as a bonsai and is now in need of restyling.

The nebari is very impressive, however the main branches need work to reduce their length and create foliage pads that are closer to the trunk. This will be done either by promoting back budding or grafting. So watch this space.



It was good to see so many trees - and members.





Pam almost hidden by her Olive, *Olea Sylvestris*. This is a very vigorous tree and requires pruning every month during the growing seasons. Pam is still debating whether to keep this tree styled as a silhouette, the so called "green helmet" look, or create more open spaces around the foliage pads. Either way it is a nice tree and once the trunk is carved it will be ready for next summer's show.

Generational Bonsai! Our youngest member and a couple of our more mature members, all engrossed in the study of bonsai.

Ronnie, our junior member, is quickly building up a nice collection of trees leaving Dad to wonder how they are all going to fit into the garden, something we all have to contemplate on a regular basis.



Next door, two of our more "senior" members discuss the merits of styling Trident Maples and possibly whether the heating will need to go on this winter or will it is a warm one!



Nigel's Boulevard Juniper (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'boulevard')

This tree is another ex-garden plant, "yardori" as our friends across the water call them (yamadori/yard dori)! It also exhibits the same problems as Dave's Cryptomeria, long branches with foliage only at the tips. Getting this species to back bud is a very hit and miss affair, so Nigel is looking at ways of repositioning the tree and wiring the branches in order to hide their length. Good luck, we look forward to seeing the results.



Two of our Richards, discussing bonsai over a cuppa.

Richard P, seen with cup in hand, was working on a Juniper Chinensis that he won in our club raffle a good few years ago. The tree is doing well and produces nice tight foliage so it won't be too difficult to create some excellent foliage pads, to show off the trunk and dead wood.

Richard M, sans cup, brought two trees to our club night. A nice Pine tree, more on that later, and a collected Beech. Just the usual late summer clean up required, plucking needles, removing dead leaves and shortening any wayward shoots. Job done.

Tree of the Month competition - Shohin or smaller

And, so onto our regular TotM competition. This month there were a lot of entries, the most since 2018 according to our resident judge and keeper of the critiques.



Tony's Trident Maple and Alistair's Viburnum



Richard M's Hemlock



Richard P's Cotoneaster



Brian's Cotoneaster



John's Chinese Elm



Michael's Blue Cedar



Nigel's Hemlock



Dave's Spruce

And the winners are:

Advanced class - Brian's Cotoneaster with 5 votes.

Novice class - a tie between Nigel's Hemlock and John's Chinese Elm, both with 6 votes.

Well done to all.



And finally a mystery solved! Whilst wandering around taking photos for the report, I happened to hear Ade and Richard M discussing a Pine that Richard had collected a number of years ago on a club trip. Richard was unsure what species of Pine it was, as it had Scots Pine type needles but the bark was very rough and not at all like that of a Scots Pine. After much thought Ade decided that it was a Lodgepole Pine. I then butted in and thanked them both as I had bought a similar tree at a club auction back in 2016 and had been unable to identify it, the closest I could get was a European



Black Pine of some sort based on the bark. I never thought about this species as I was not aware that they were planted commercially in this country but apparently due to their tolerance of poor soil they are used in some upland areas. So there you go, mystery solved and I have another species in my collection.

It's a Lodgepole Pine!

Next meeting is on Wednesday 12th October and we have a guest speaker. Tony Oswin will be talking about all things bonsai and helping members with their styling issues, trees that is, not fashion!

The theme of the "Tree of the Month competition" is "Autumn colour" so expect lots of Maples.

Till the next time, stay safe and "keep doing bonsai".

Alistair