

# Billboard

Newsletter of The Bonsai Society of Upstate New York



Photograph source: National Bonsai & Penjing Museum website.

## Jack Sustic Japanese Bonsai Studies

At February's meeting **Jack Sustic** will be here to speak to us about apprenticing in Japan, and tell us what it is really like. This will be an interesting meeting for all of us who have wondered what it is like to spend part of our lives learning something we love.

Sustic's interest in bonsai began while stationed in South Korea in the early 1980s. In that country he came to know and love the beauty of bonsai.

On his return to the United States this love led him to pursue a degree in horticulture from

Michigan State University. Thus began his bonsai career that led to the **National Bonsai & Penjing Museum** at the **National Arboretum** in Washington DC. Sustic

apprenticed with Saburo Kato in Japan. He also has had the opportunity to study under several other masters including John Naka, Harry Hirao, and Warren Hill, and other California bonsai artists. Jack says the art form has taught him patience and humility.

During this tenure as curator at the museum he also served as Co-Chair of the 5th World Bonsai Convention that was held in Washington D.C. in 2005.

The **National Bonsai & Penjing Museum** began when Japanese bonsai enthusiasts in the **Nippon Bonsai Association** donated 53 bonsai and 6 viewing stones to the people of the United States to commemorate the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.

The collection has grown steadily with the addition of pieces from American bonsai masters and Penjing from China. Today, three pavilions house about 150 plants. In its collection are a 200-year-old red pine donated by the Emperor of Japan, and a Japanese white pine that has been cultivated for almost 400 years!

You can read more about the **National Bonsai & Penjing Museum** and take a virtual tour at the website: <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/bonsai.html>



Bill V. caught at Bonsai Museum last summer



Bill Valavanis with Jack Sustic at National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, Washington, DC

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday  
February 22nd, 2011  
7:00 pm

**Jack Sustic**  
Japanese Bonsai Studies

Brighton Town Lodge at Buckland  
Park. 1341 Westfall Road,  
Rochester, New York  
Near corner of Westfall and Clinton.

BILLBOARD IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**PRESIDENT:**

**Harvey Carapella**

[President@bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org](mailto:President@bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org)

**CO-EDITORS:**

**Tom Friday**

**Irma Abu-Jumah**

[Billboard@bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org](mailto:Billboard@bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org)

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

**Mark Arpag**

**William N. Valavanis**

# January Highlights

At our January meeting, **Harvey Carapella** talked about the **Literati style of bonsai**. Harvey discussed this unique style and demonstrated on two trees, one Evergreen, a **Juniper**, and one Deciduous, a **Wart Bark Elm**. There was a handout relating to the topic as well as examples of this style on display for the 46 members attending. Harvey answered quite a few questions as he worked. The two finished Literati trees were raffled at the end of the demonstration. The Elm tree was won by Richard Murphy, and the Juniper went home with Rick Marriott. *Thank you Harvey for another great interesting and informative program!*



1. As usual we had a full house with 46 members attending the Literati demonstration
2. Harvey discussing different types of Literati
3. Member trees and stones on display table.
4. Harvey working on the Juniper
5. The Wart Bark Elm before and after the demonstration
6. The Juniper before and after Harvey's great work.
7. Harvey with Rick Marriott, the winner of the Juniper Literati demonstration tree



## Fertilizer - By the Numbers

In order to get the best results you can from your fertilizers for your bonsai you should try to be aware of the numbers on the package and what they stand for. Have you ever wondered what the 5-10-5, the 18-6-12, or the 10-52-10 stands for? If you're like most people you do not understand these numbers, and presume what it means when it comes to choosing the right plant fertilizer.

In order to understand how to choose the right fertilizers try to remember these three letters, N-P-K. The numbers are the percentage by weight of the Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium contained in the fertilizer. The first number represents the **Nitrogen** that increases growth or foliage. The middle number is for the **Phosphorous** that helps with root development, and an added benefit of promoting more flower growth. The third number, **Potassium** has beneficial effects all around. It offers a little bit of everything the plant needs to stay healthy.

Now that you know what the numbers do for your tree, you need to use common sense when applying fertilizer. For example, if you are going to disturb a plants root system when **repotting or transplanting**, make very sure that the middle number (**P**) is the **highest** and the first number (**N**) is the **least** amount, something like 10-50-20. This will help **to promote new root growth while reducing the plants desire to grow new foliage**. If you have a well-established tree and **want to see it get bigger** concentrate on a more basic fertilizer that has a **higher first number (N)**. The fertilizer you choose should offer the essentials that the tree needs. Do some research on your trees before you fertilize. **Do not fertilize plants that are under stress**. For best results use a couple of different types of fertilizers like an organic of fish emulsion, and a liquid fertilizer, then alternate them between feedings. In addition to having a typical N-P-K analysis of 5-2-2, the fish emulsion adds micronutrients. Remember to always read the directions on the product and never over feed as this can be worse than not feeding at all.



**Bonsai Society of Upstate New York**  
**P.O. Box 92215**  
**Rochester, New York 14692**

