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Billboard

Newsletter of the Bonsai Society of Upstate NY

From our President

Greetings Friends,

First order of business is a warm WELCOME from the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York to all our newly joined Members ! When I was elected President over 10 years ago one of my first actions was Project Involved with a goal of each member bringing their time and talent to making our Society the best it can be AND bringing a sense of belonging and ownership to all. It is ALL of OUR Club many people contributing is my goal. We have been around for a long time, over half a century and we do many things well and hope to continue however there is always room for improvements and times change and it is in our best interest to consider new ideas. I am not promising everything suggested will be adopted but all suggestions will be given consideration. Just so you are aware, if someone has an idea they feel strongly about there is a very good chance they will be asked to lead or participate in that effort.

Our Suiseki Study Group had our biggest and best Display at The International Bonsai Arboretum with over 70 Suiseki on display in many different styles as well as Bonsai and Suiseki formal displays and a very well attended educational Critique by internationally recognized Suiseki, Bonsai and Display Authority Sean Smith. Many of our members participated or came to appreciate the incredible Exhibition. Many thanks to Bill and Diane Valavanis and all those helped put this display together, it is greatly appreciated !



- - - Mark

Bill's Nippon Chrysanthemum Daisy
"granddaughter" from a cutting from Yuji Yoshimura

Next meeting

Tuesday, October 27

7:00 pm - Bill Valavanis
Presentation and Show and Tell:
How to grow trees for Bonsai from young trees

Carmen Clark Lodge
777 Westfall Road, Rochester
Note: this is not our regular meeting place

We are so fortunate to have Bill Valavanis as our founding member and President, and now Vice President. But we are even more fortunate that he will share his expertise with us on a regular basis. Bill's knowledge of and ability to teach about Bonsai is legendary.

Bring your small auction items for the silent auction - our ongoing fundraiser.

Please help us thank Margaret Cochran for stepping up as our new refreshment manager. Please welcome Margaret to this position, and help her with setting up, bringing a snack now and then, and cleaning up the refreshment area at the end.

If you plan to bring a snack, please let Margaret know at: mar.cochran2@gmail.com.

2026 Programs:

- **October 27 - 7 pm, Bill Valavanis, How to grow trees from Bonsai from Young Trees.**
- **See dates with more info on page 4**

Suiseki Corner

Excerpts from Bill Valavanis' Blog about his Annual Open House and the Suiseki Exhibit by the BSUNY Study Group,
"Our Suiseki Study Group set up an exhibition on fat eyes the U.S. Bonsai Exhibition, (celebrating the 10th Anniversary next September) is not being held. It is mostly our members who also set up the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, which is quite a bit of hard work for our "aging" members, me included".

Bill explained that this year there were about 75 suiseki formally displayed with perfectly matched display tables. Congratulations to the BSUNY Study Group for a great Exhibit! And many thanks to Bill & Diane for allowing the Exhibit during their Open House!



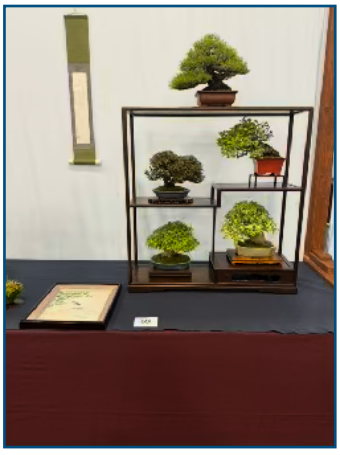






From our librarian, Joe Lentner

As I said last month I will try to post sites where you may see various bonsai pictures, ideas or techniques. None of these are to be considered an endorsement but simply sites that show an interest in the art.
1. Bonsaibarn on Facebook
2. Eisei-en Bonsai on Facebook
3. Wabi Channel on YouTube
Remember if you have any interesting sites that you would like to share, please drop a note off with me at the Library table at our next meeting.



September meeting and workshop - very successful



Our speaker for September was Bob Mahler of Kifu Bonsai in Pennsylvania: www.kifubonsai.com. Robert “Bob” Mahler discovered his passion for bonsai at an early age. By fifteen, he was already apprenticing under accomplished bonsai artist Chase Rosade at Rosade Bonsai Studio in New Hope, Pennsylvania. That early dedication led him to Tochigi-Ken, Japan, where he spent four years studying under the exclusive direction of internationally recognized bonsai master Susumu Sudo.



Following his return to the United States in 1994, Bob served for eleven years as Curator of Bonsai at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, where he helped care for and shape one of the country’s most respected public bonsai collections.
In 2017, Bob founded Kifu Bonsai, where he continues to work with collectors, students, and horticultural organizations. He currently serves as Vice President of the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society.



In the afternoon, from 1 - 4, Bob led a Satsuki Azalea workshop, at International Bonsai Arboretum. It was well attended and extremely informative. And we all now know how to pronounce “Satsuki” and sound like we are “in the know”. (If you weren’t there, you’ll have to ask!)

Bob talked about and demonstrated Satsuki Azalea at our evening meeting. Raffle tickets sold fast and furiously, with Nick Steidl winning the raffle. Congrats, Nick!

Bonsai and Suiseki events around and about

Every year, Bill, Mark and many others find it difficult to stay home, and go trekking across the country in search of additional Bonsai knowledge and camaraderie. Going to other club events and exhibitions is an excellent way to learn something new, gain a new perspective and meet like minded Bonsai folks.

- Winter Silhouette Bonsai Exhibition, December 5 & 6, 2026
  Kannapolis, NC
- 10th US National Bonsai Exhibition, September 11 & 12, 2027
  Rochester, NY

All of these events offer incredible opportunities to learn, purchase, network and more.



Entrance to the inaugural Michiana Fall Fruit & Foliage Bonsai Exhibition which Bill & Diane attended, exhibited , sold and demonstrated recently.

SHOHIN BONSAI FEATURE OF THE MONTH



Shohin Bonsai, Variety: Lantana

The top photo is the original tree, and it's a Slanting style. Because the cascading branch is above the pot, the trunk is angled and moving from right to left and the Apex is extended out beyond the root ball. The Focal Point is usually the flowers, but in this case its the pot's high contrast bold image compared to the subtle color of the flowers. Problem, the Negative Space between the cascading branch and the apex feels like two separate trees. Lower photo shows how to fix, grow more foliage and branches in the upper part of the tree and lower them, eliminating some of the Negative Space. Problem #2, the pot's one leg in front it's a large attention getting detail that looks out of balance, it needs a second leg to visually create a balanced feeling.

Harvey Carapella

2026 - 2027 Program dates:

- **November 24 - 7 pm, Design studio**
- **December 15 - 6 pm, Holiday Party & Auction**
- **January 30, Saturday - 1 pm Harvey Carapella**
- **February 27, Saturday - 1 pm *Note date & time change on a trial basis***
- **March 23 - 7 pm, Bill Valavanis TBD**
- **April 27 - 7 pm, TBD**
- **May 16 - 9 - 4, BSUNY Club Show**
- **June 29 - 7 pm, Club picnic and Auction**
- **July 27 - 7 pm, Open Workshop**
- **September 13 - 7 pm, Shinji Suzuki *Note: day change to accommodate speaker for US National Bonsai Exhibition***

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