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The President's message

By Art Phelan

The beautiful colors of Fall are all gone now. We have raked the last of the leaves. I love the fall its a great time of year to be outside experiencing the glory of nature. The seasons change in a slow cycle that we know and understand intellectually.

I find myself always a step behind expecting to experience the season that has just passed. My kids tell me that's because I am old! Perhaps they are right but it always seems to be that time goes by too quickly I can't keep up.

The first night we had a hard frost, I was caught by surprise thinking of Labour Day. On Labour day I was thinking of going to a beach to enjoy the sun and warm water. Somehow I need to get back on schedule and finish cleaning up the yard and put my trees away. Nature is slowly shutting down for another season. I am not sure I am ready for the colder days of fall but I know that whether I am ready or not it is on the way.

Now I must take advantage of the nice clear day to put away the patio furniture and clear the yard, even though I feel we should be able to eat outside for another month. Time to move the trees to their sheltered spot for the winter. By the time of our next meeting we will have had a snow fall that makes driving miserable. Ah the changing seasons.

Our 'Taste of Japan' day was a great success. We raised over \$700 for the Canadian Cancer Society. Many thanks to Ron Charlebois for all of his work and thanks to all of the people who loaned trees and assisted in

setup, worked at the event and the final clean up.

We started a new workshop at the October meeting. The workshop will be a continuous exercise to style and develop a mugho pine. The idea is to go through each stage of the design and development of a small pine bonsai from selecting a tree at the nursery, picking the style, wiring and potting. Each meeting we will have a short lecture on the process, a demonstration and then time for each participant to do the work on his or her tree. The cost is \$10 and there are still lots of exciting trees to style. A great chance to develop your eye and practice your skills with the help of experienced Bonsai enthusiasts.



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The Ottawa Bonsai Society Meeting

Next meeting/ Prochaine rencontre: **November 19, 2001**
Time/ Heure: **7:00 pm**
Location/ Endroit: **RCMP Building/
Édifice de la GRC
155 McArthur Road, Ottawa
(at the Vanier Parkway)**

*Park behind the building, buzz the intercom at the front door to get in
Sign in with the Commissionaire at the front desk*

At this month meeting/ À la rencontre de ce mois-ci:

Design Workshop—Workshop to develop a small pine bonsai. This will be a continuing workshop taking place sequentially over the next 4 or 5 meetings. The purpose is to teach and demonstrate the techniques and processes used to design and style a bonsai. There will be time for each participant to work on his/her tree under the guidance experienced Bonsai Club members. A chance to learn and practice the techniques used to create a Bonsai. The one caveat is that this is not the best time to work on trees, some of the trees may not survive being worked on during a time when they are in a state of dormancy. The cost is \$10 to cover the cost of materials.

A slide show or video of Bonsai techniques will be shown.

At every meeting/ À chaque rencontre:

- *The Show Table > Bring your tree(s); get a free ticket to the raffle/ Apporter votre/vos arbre(s); recevez un billet gratuit pour le tirage.*
- *The OBS Library/ La librairie de la SBO*
- *A unique opportunity to network with the OBS members and share ideas/ Une opportunité unique de rencontrer les membres de la SBO et d'échanger idées et conseils.*

The OBS Web site/ Adresse Web

<http://www.ottawabonsai.go2click.com/>

- People who would be interested to receive the Journal through e-mail instead of mail are welcome to ask and send a note to me at Aylmer58@videotron.ca
- Les personnes intéressées à recevoir le bulletin sous forme de e-mail sont bienvenues de le demander et de m'envoyer votre demande à Aylmer58@videotron.ca
- Suggestions on topics and subjects that you would like to see appearing and discussed in the Journal will also be welcome and well appreciated.
- Les suggestions sur des points précis et sujets que vous aimeriez voir traités et discutés à l'intérieur du journal sont encore une fois bienvenues et seront bien appréciés.

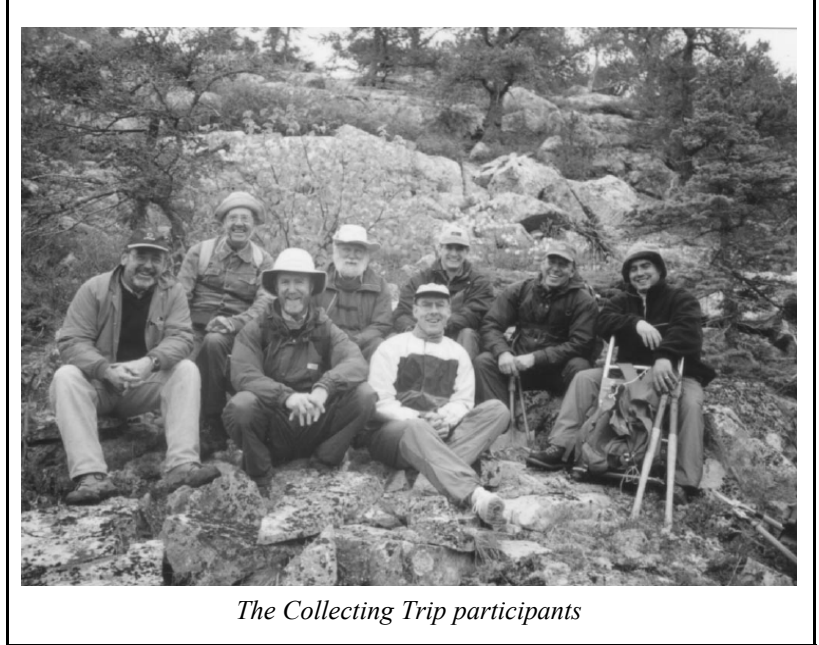
The Collecting Trip of May 18-20 2001 in Kamouraska, Québec

By Mike O`Connor

Art Phelan, Remi Lagace, Vianney Leduc, Arne Ojaste, Claude Laprade, Yvon Bernier and Mike O`Connor participated in the collecting trip. It was led by David Easterbrook, the curator of the Japanese and North American bonsai collections at the Montreal Botanical Gardens.

This site is likely one of the best for collecting on this continent. Mr. Easterbrook is eminently qualified to lead such a trip. This is an account of my collecting experiences in Kamouraska and planting the trees back in Ottawa. Anything that I have to say of value probably comes from observing and listening to Mr. Easterbrook. Any mistakes would be my own.

The site is seven hours of driving from our homes. We stayed in a local motel and ate our meals in restaurants.



The Collecting Trip participants

There were three actual collecting sessions; Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning.

The terrain is quite rugged and mountainous. We had permission from a landowner to park on his land. In spite of our proximity to the site, the carries were strenuous. It made sense to work in teams for mutual assistance and safety.

My plan was to collect one tree per session and that was easily accomplished. On the Saturday morning, I was privileged to assist Mr. Easterbrook in collecting a tree for myself. This black spruce, once collected, was 79 cm (31 ") high, 1 m 22 cm (48 ") wide and having a 15 cm (6 ") trunk base. I envision this tree in semi-formal upright style. I hope it lives.

My black spruce was found relatively high up on the mountain, off by itself. Even from a distance one could tell that it would have good taper because it was very wide compared with its height. Using a piece of burlap with which to grab the moss covered trunk, we were able to shift it a bit. This is significant because it means that the tree is growing, at least in part, in a pocket of soil. A tree that cannot be budged probably has major roots firmly lodged in the quartzite and is not a good bet for survival if one attempts to collect it in one step.

A full size shovel, full size crow bar, by-pass pruners, burlap and strong cord were all that was needed to collect this tree. We were careful to collect as much root as possible and especially the fine feeder roots. Some roots disappeared down cracks in the rock and had to be cut. Mr. Easterbrook insisted on a generous amount of soil along with the roots. The collected roots were 2 m 6 cm (6`9 ") long and rigid. Consequently, the package ended up being long and narrow.

Mr. Easterbrook twists the corners of the burlap tightly and then ties the corners crosswise. This is then tied tightly with strong, thick cord which prevents the roots from moving and will not cut the hands while carrying the tree. He lightened the branches to correspond to the root mass but was careful to not remove too much end growth.

One must always consider the challenge of bringing the tree down off the mountain. This black spruce was too heavy and awkward for one person. Fortunately, Mr. Easterbrook assisted in carrying the tree down.

On the Saturday afternoon, I found an eastern white cedar, quite low on the same north side of the mountain. I collected this tree alone and took my time. Once collected, this cedar was 82 cm (32") high, 76 cm (30") wide and has a 10 cm (4") trunk base. The trunk is hollow at the base and has lots of dead wood. There is very little foliage left as the result of a fairly brutal design critique by Mr. Easterbrook back at the motel. I envision this tree in a literati style.

One must be careful collecting cedars at this site because they tend to grow close to other trees, bushes and plants. One must locate the roots at the base of the trunk and then follow them out to the fine, feeder roots. Simply digging a trench around the tree could well result in lots of root from neighboring trees but very little belonging to your cedar. One advantage with cedars is that they have comparatively less root and consequently are relatively light and easier to carry than the other species.

On the Sunday morning, I collected a jack pine on the southern side of the same mountain range. This tree was also collected alone and consequently I was able to take my time. Once collected, the jack pine was 46 cm (18") high, 56 cm (22") wide and having a 8 cm (3") trunk at the base. I envision this tree in a semi-cascade style.

The jack pine was growing as a tall specimen having a damaged, previous apex which would serve as the only branch collected. The new top was formed by what served as a sacrificial branch when the tree was collected. There was a surprise encountered while collecting when it was discovered that my tree was connected to the one beside by a thick root which had to be cut. Fortunately there was lots of root, including fine feeder roots on the other side of the tree. I was able to collect about 2 m 6 cm (6' 9") of root which was pliable enough to wrap in a ball.

It is worth noting that jack pine root, like that of the black spruce, is heavy compared to that of the eastern white cedar. This made for a very grueling hike back to the vehicles.

Mr. Easterbrook recommended planting the trees in a very coarse, neutral material which would provide excellent drainage. He also recommended spraying the trees with dormant oil spray to control scale. Later, when the trees came out of dormancy, he recommended spaying the trees with Sevin.

I planted my trees in river gravel and coarse sand ranging in size from 5 cm (2") to .5 cm (1/4"). They were planted in boxes made of standard 15 cm (6") spruce construction boards. Given the roughly equal length of the roots of the black spruce and jack pine, I decided to plant them in the same box. I am told that the neighbors were speculating on the fate of my wife when they saw me making a 2 m 6 cm (6'9") long and 66 cm (26") wide "casket". The box for the cedar is 61 cm (24") by 62 cm (24 1/2"). The boxes will be reduced in size in subsequent years when the roots are reduced.

I made a new discovery in planting these three trees. In the past, I had always bore large drainage holes in the boxes. This is a lot of work, even with power tools. This time I simply nailed the bottom boards to the floor leaving spaces and forming a series of slats. Plastic drainage matting was stapled over the spaces.

This article was written four months after the collecting trip and the cedar and pine seem to be doing very well. The jack pine is so happy in its new home that a seedling is growing in the gravel near its base. In contrast, the spruce is really struggling. Some of the branches are dead and that tends to limit one's design options. If it lives, a strict minimalist design with lots of deadwood will be an obvious choice.

There is something special about collecting a tree in the wild and bringing it home to your yard. My trees from Kamouraska have a certain character that makes them special. They evoke images of old trees that have struggled in a harsh environment. These trees are twisted and stunted. They could become remarkable bonsai with some consistent care and a lot of work. With a little luck, one or more of these trees will survive and remind an old man of when he was younger and more vigorous.



The Kamouraska Collecting Trip



Picture of one of the collected tree by the group prior to collecting

Picture of the tree dug out with the root mass as intact as possible and well wrapped, ready to take home

