



# Yama Ki Newsletter



*Happy New Year to All!*

January 2013

**Happy New Year Everyone!**

Yama Ki closed out 2012 with our annual Christmas Party and Auction. Many hands were involved in the project and I would like to thank the members who brought food, helped set-up/tear down, donated auction materials etc. As you may or may not know, the auction is an important source of revenue for the club.

Your newly elected Board has been in office since July. As I reflect over the last few months I am reminded of all the positive change. The newsletter was overhauled and has taken on entirely different look, including; a Yama-Ki meeting calendar that allows our members plenty of advance notice on up and coming meetings and events, a classified section that was created so members can buy and/or sell bonsai related stuff and much more. In addition, a membership directory was mailed out in September so everyone could reach out and connect with fellow members. On a side note, several members have made positive comments concerning the changes...**thank you for noticing!**

2013 is shaping up to be wonderful year for Yama-Ki and its membership. Bonsai Artist(s) Colin Lewis, Marty Schmalenberg and John Romano, to name a few, will present and educate members on the finer points of Bonsai. Marty Schmalenberg will present a three season workshop. Each member will have the opportunity to work a tree(or two), in the Spring, Summer and Fall with Marty. New to Yama-Ki this April is Young Choe, a Japanese trained Kusamono Artist. In addition to her presentation, each member can create and take home an accent planting.

In our February newsletter you will hear from Layne Rodney, Yama Ki's Show Coordinator. He will present details for the 2nd annual Stamford Museum Bonsai Show to be held in April. This is a great opportunity to present the fruits of your labor to fellow Bonsai enthusiast and the public. I am sure he will be looking for volunteers as well. If you have not already done so, jump in.

As many of you know, 2013 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yama-Ki...**kudos** to everyone that worked hard to achieve this club milestone. In recognition, the board is discussing the idea of an anniversary dinner. More on that subject another time.

That's all for now...see you soon,

Mark Toepke

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## CONNECTICUT FLOWER SHOW!



The Bonsai Society of Greater Hartford has invited Yama Ki members to participate in their bonsai exhibit at the Connecticut Flower Show.

This event will be held Feb 21-24, 2013 at the [Convention Center in Hartford](#) (100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford CT 06103).

Visit these websites for more detail:

- <http://www.ctflowershow.com>
- <http://www.ctconventions.com/events-2/event/32nd-annual-connecticut-flower-garden-show-2013/>

Participation could be exhibit set up and/or take down, providing trees and/or staffing the exhibit. *Trees need to be exhibition quality.* The bonsai exhibit and flower show are first class. People from all over Connecticut visit it. If you have an interest in participating in the exhibit, contact Bob Neems at [rhneems@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rhneems@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

Please contact Norm ([normc21@aol.com](mailto:normc21@aol.com)) or John Cotoggio ([ronin812@gmail.com](mailto:ronin812@gmail.com)) so that they have an idea of Yama Ki's representation.

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## *Classifieds*

This service will be free to Yama Ki members in good standing, and please remember it is for bonsai and related items only. Buyer and seller will make arrangements for payment and delivery.

Please submit your classified text to Lavanya ([lmuller@optonline.net](mailto:lmuller@optonline.net)) by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next month's newsletter.

*Nothing advertised this month*

## *International Bonsai Colloquium*

Everyone is invited to attend the **International BONSAI Colloquium** on **June 6-9, 2013** in **Rochester, New York**. This promises to be of exceptional educational value featuring some of the finest bonsai educators and artists in the United States and The United Kingdom.

Each instructor, in addition to **demonstrating** their artistry, will present information in a **technical seminar**. They will each have only one hour to teach you "the" most important element of their topic. See what our stellar artists feel are the most important factors in *aesthetics, light-water-soil, pruning, wiring, potting and growing areas*. This is of significant importance to beginners as well as a good review for more experienced hobbyists.

**Unusual workshops** where the artists will actually *teach* information on their topic will start off each session featuring bonsai material which is of normal size and not huge and unmanageable. Vendors from around the country will bring their finest material so you can add to your collection.

Additionally a special **private exhibit** of some of my best bonsai created during my past 50 year passion and study of bonsai will be on display and my newest book on classical bonsai art will be released.

Please consider joining us for a stimulating weekend of bonsai education and fellowship with bonsai enthusiasts. Please contact me if you have any questions.

**Happy Holidays!**

Bill Valavanis

William Valavanis

[WNV@internationalbonsai.com](mailto:WNV@internationalbonsai.com)

NOTE: The registration form is available on the main page of the [Yama Ki](#) website.



*This month's article by Sean Smith:*

### Suiseki - the Personal Art

Several months ago in Japan I was viewing a suiseki displayed in a tokonoma; it was your typical formal display with table, accent and a scroll. It was explained to me as a distant mountain, the scroll showed a few birds that migrate at this time of year in Japan, and the accent plant was of a plant that grows in the bogs below the mountain. It was wonderful so I thought, it was very elegantly done and I was very grateful for the time and effort that this person prepared this display for me. Then I scratched my head and thought to myself do I really understand what this display really means....then it came to me, why should it, this is not my suiseki. This was created by one man's thoughts and to him it was wonderful and meaningful. Why is it that the western approach is always to point out the negative and not the positive? I came away feeling bad having only focused on me! I should have asked many questions about the suiseki and the display, and what his approach was about the stone. That way we both could have shared our feelings of the display.

For me suiseki should invoke a feeling, almost like a personal relationship so to speak, a sensation that gives me pleasure or sadness, something that stirs my heart of a recollection good or bad. Suiseki should have an importance to the enthusiast in some way, a connection that gives an emotional feeling. Even when one purchases a suiseki from a reputable dealer, it should move that person in some way. Quality is of the up most importance; never say it's good enough. Always look for quality.

Stones of high quality, either purchased or found, have the ability to move a person; they are of high aesthetic and emotional value. For me, a quality stone is one that in a sense is perfect, without blemishes, cracks or chips; it's the quality of the suiseki not the quantity that counts. This recalls the story from Japan that you will only find 3 suiseki in your life time. This art is very difficult, not only is finding good, high quality suiseki hard, but also displaying them.

There is an old story from Japan that tells of a samurai returning from battle stopping at a river to water his horse. As the horse was drinking the samurai looked into the water a saw a stone that looked like a mountain, he reached for it and picked it up looking at it, it reminded of the mountain valley in which he had just done battle. We all know that war is pain and suffering, bloodshed and loss of comrades; when looking at this stone it invoked just such a place, where he lost his comrades and inflicted pain and death onto others. He took the stone and slipped it into his kimono sleeve, and returned to his village, and shared his experiences with others. How many people would really understand this stone without being at this battle? No one. However to this samurai it moves him emotionally of what happened that one day. He would remember everything of that day by viewing this suiseki. Even by sharing this story with others and explaining what happened could they obtain the same feeling from the stone as he would? Although they could try to empathies and perhaps develop their own interpretation of the stone.

To help share his feelings, there would perhaps be some kind of written record about the stone in order to help tell its story. This is something we also overlook; keeping a written record about a stone we find and keep. Many times I have gone to auctions of bonsai enthusiasts and so many items that they have collected for many years have a heritage which is unknown. Often the person passes away and no one



knows where the item came from or where it was collected. This could be preserved the traditional way with kiri bako (wooden box) where the information about the suiseki is written on the back side of the lid or just on a sheet of paper kept; another way would be to have exhibition catalogs where stones are photographed for some type of publication. This would provide a valuable record of the suiseki in years to come. Our suiseki will way out live us, so we need to preserve this information for generations to come, by doing this we will have a suiseki history in the West.

Too often here in the West, we collect with no feeling or emotion; we look for that Doha or Toyama along the rivers why? Because we have seen photographs of them in Japanese books? Sure we do, because this is a Japanese art form; we are copying them just as we do in bonsai, there is nothing wrong with that, we enjoy it and it brings pleasure to us. There is however a more important aspect to collecting than simply accumulating a massive quantity of Japanese style rocks.

I shared a story with a good friend the other day, it's nothing special to anyone but me, a few summers ago I was vacationing with my family in Atlantic City New Jersey, my daughter was 7 years old at the time, swimming at the pool after a long day at the beach. Show off Dad was jumping into the pool trying to impress his daughter with big splashes I slipped jumping into the pool, unknowing to me; I had torn a ligament in my knee. Despite being in great pain I continued to play with my daughter without letting on, so as not to ruin a family memory. The next day I flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico to do a demonstration, the following day I was collecting stones on the beach and in immense pain, I came across a magnificent sugata ishi. I carefully bent down and picked it up, wow this is very nice I told myself, but my pain was too much to bear and I had to return to the car to rest, as I looked at the only stone I picked up, I realized that this stone had all the great Japanese guide lines. It was not until I returned home, and had my knee operated on that I realized that this stone has a story behind it. However in the same way as the returning Samurai, it was just my story, special to me, and when I display this stone I remember all the pain I was in, my daughter telling me to "jump higher Daddy make a really big splash this time." Yes I know this is story for some may seem lame, nevertheless to me it means the world and I will never forget that time.

Another story is about my late Father in the early 90's as we walked in the forest together I came across a little stone that followed the Japanese guidelines for a good suiseki I picked it up and showed my Father the stone, he said it's just a black stone, I laughed and slid it into my pocket, returned home and placed it out side with many other stones, it blended in like all the rest "nothing special".

7 years later my Father past way from cancer, that day I looked at the stone and cried for hours holding it in my hand, again to others it may look like just another stone, to me it brings back memories of my Father and that day we were together, it moves me every time I see it or touch it, for me this is what suiseki should do, invoke a emotion, a personal feeling. However displaying it and conveying that feeling could be almost impossible, as the stones power and history only relates to me? As time passes and I give this suiseki to my daughter and tell her the story, perhaps she will take it and cherish it as I do.

Display is a deeply personal act and I feel should not be criticized in a negative way, we have to keep in mind the personal feelings of that display, we should ask questions, to help get a better understanding of the suiseki and the intentions of the person displaying it. Some displays are obvious scenes in nature, others slightly more abstract. Even the obvious scenes can have a hidden, unique and personal depth to them which can only be appreciated through an open minded approach to the art. Rather than take a detached attitude to your suiseki, I urge you to attach a personal importance to it and look to record it when important; strive for quality over quantity and above all else, do it with an open mind. And enjoy what someone else is giving.





## *Holiday Party Pics~ Dec 8, 2012*

Many thanks to all who helped to make this event a success!

What a pleasant way to spend the afternoon - with other bonsai enthusiasts!



## Other Bonsai Events

2013

### FEBRUARY

The Bonsai Society of Greater Hartford has invited Yama Ki members to participate in their bonsai exhibit at the Connecticut Flower Show

Feb 21-24, 2013

at the Convention Center in Hartford

(100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford CT 06103)

Visit these websites for more detail:

<http://www.ctflowershow.com>

<http://www.ctconventions.com/event-s-2/event/32nd-annual-connecticut-flower-garden-show-2013/>

### APRIL

Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies

The Thirtieth annual Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies will commence Friday evening, April 19, 2013 and will continue through Sunday afternoon, April 21, 2013 at the Harrisburg/Hershey Holiday Inn in Grantville, PA.

The artist lineup for the 30th annual event are:

From Japan Kunio Kobayashi and two rising superstars stars Ryan Neil and Peter Warren

\*New for 2013 are workshops held on Friday\*

[www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com](http://www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com)

Holiday Inn Hotel Contact info:

Ph # 717.469.0661

604 Station Road, Grantville, PA

2013

### JUNE

International BONSAI Colloquium on June 6-9, 2013 in Rochester, New York

Hosted by Bill Valvanis

[WNV@internationalbonsai.com](mailto:WNV@internationalbonsai.com)

### JULY

Yama-Ki has reserved a table for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County 4-H Fair

July 27-28, 2013

Location: Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park, 201 Gipsy Trail, Carmel , NY, 10512

10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Yama-Ki Contact - Layne Rodney (Show Chairperson) & Charlie Muller

### OCTOBER

(a must go show)

*American Bonsai*

REFORGED & REFINED

October 4th - 6th, 2013

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon

Hosted by Ryan Neil

[www.artisanscupofportland.com](http://www.artisanscupofportland.com)





# Yama Ki Activities 2013

## JANUARY

Don't forget to keep an eye on your trees  
They need water in the winter (though not  
as much)

## FEBRUARY 2013

Yama-Ki Meeting at Mike Pollack's  
new studio  
**Saturday February 16th**  
From 12-4

Yama-Ki is proud to host a workshop with  
Colin Lewis - Larch/Deciduous Focus  
[www.colinlewisbonsai.com](http://www.colinlewisbonsai.com)

## MARCH

Yama-Ki Meeting at the Connecticut GEC on  
**Saturday March 9<sup>th</sup>**  
From 12-4

Join **Marty Schmalenberg** in a three session  
workshop (March, June, September)

Each member has the opportunity to work a  
tree (or two) in all three seasons with famed  
artist  
Marty Schmalenberg

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Queens, New York  
Chapter  
at the Queens Botanical Garden  
([www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org))  
**March 13<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**  
43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355  
Meeting Agenda TBD

## APRIL

Yama-Ki Meeting at the GEC on **Saturday,**  
**April 6<sup>th</sup>**  
From 12-4

**Young Choe;** Kusamono Artist  
Spend an afternoon learning about the art of  
Kusamono (accent plants)  
With Japanese trained  
**Young Choe**  
In addition, each member will get the  
opportunity to make an accent plant

## APRIL (continued)

2<sup>nd</sup> annual Yama-Ki Bonsai Show  
**April 26<sup>th</sup> – April 28<sup>th</sup>**

Where: Stamford Museum  
39 Scofieldtown Rd, Stamford, CT  
06903

[www.stamfordmuseum.org](http://www.stamfordmuseum.org)

\*Layne Rodney will provide  
additional details\*

**The Queens, New York Chapter  
meeting**

**April 10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

The meeting of the Queens, New  
York Chapter

43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY  
11355

[www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org)

Meeting Agenda TBD

## MAY

**Yama-Ki Meeting at the  
Connecticut GEC**

Date, Time and Agenda TBD

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**The Queens, New York Chapter  
meeting**

**May 8<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

The meeting of the  
Queens, New York Chapter  
43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY  
11355

[www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org)

Meeting Agenda TBD

## JUNE

**Yama-Ki Meeting at the  
Connecticut GEC on**

**Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>**

**From 12-4**

**Workshop #2**

**w/ Marty Schmalenberg**

Each member has the opportunity to  
work a tree (or two) in all three  
seasons with famed artist Marty  
Schmalenberg





# *Yama Ki Activities 2013 Con't*



## JUNE (continued)

### **The Queens, New York Chapter meeting June 12<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

The meeting of the Queens, New York  
Chapter

43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355

[www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org)

Meeting Agenda TBD

## JULY

### **Yama-Ki July Auction and BBQ**

#### **Saturday July 20th**

**From 12-5**

Where:

Jim & Sharon Glatthaar's house

Details and directions to follow

### **The Queens, New York Chapter meeting July 10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

The meeting of the Queens,  
New York Chapter

43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355

[www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org)

Meeting Agenda TBD

## AUGUST

### **Yama-Ki Meeting at the Connecticut GEC on Sunday**

**August 11<sup>th</sup>**

**12-4**

Yama-Ki is proud to host a day  
with

**John Romano**

Meeting agenda to follow

\*

### **The Queens, New York Chapter meeting**

**August 14<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

The meeting of the Queens,  
New York Chapter

43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY  
11355

[www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org)

Meeting Agenda TBD

## SEPTEMBER

### **Yama-Ki Meeting at the Connecticut GEC on Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup>**

**From 12-4**

Workshop #3

**w/ Marty Schmalenberg**

The final session in a series of  
workshops that provided each  
member an opportunity to work a  
tree with Marty Schmalenberg

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For updates and the latest information, check your email or our website: [www.yamakibonsai.org](http://www.yamakibonsai.org)

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