

A Touch of Japanese Tradition

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Japanese Botany

日本の植物学

Nature's Influence in the Tale of Genji

Sojin Fadavi

Pg. 1

The Value of Imperfection

Nao Donuma

Pg. 3

Living in the Land of Ikebana

Jeanne Holy

Pg. 5

Keeping the Vision Alive

Benjamin Chu

Pg. 7

To Blossom and Scatter

Dave Lowry

Pg. 10

Bonsai

Glenn Pauly

Pg. 12

Nature's Influence in the Tale of Genji

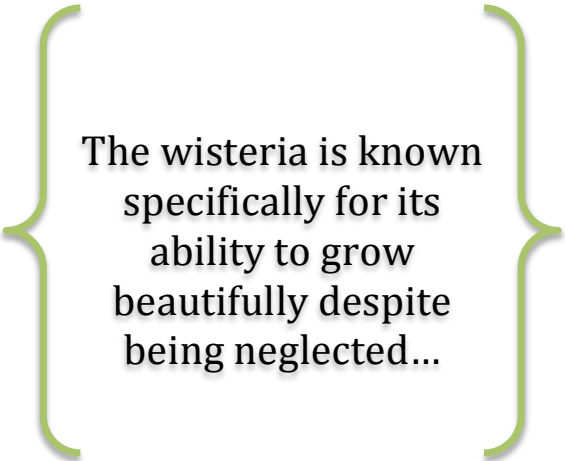
Sojin Fadavi

A branch of cherry blossoms lightly swaying up and down as a light breeze blows past. A turbulent river overflowing and sweeping destruction over the nearby lands as a storm rages. Japanese culture has always held the beauty of nature close to its heart, both in real life and in literature. The term *mono no aware* seems designed specifically for the purpose of delighting in the delicacy and beauty of nature from a viewer's stand-point. Even in times past, a certain respect for the power of the elements had been established, with many of Shinto's sacred *kami* taking the form of natural elements or animals. Thus, it is no surprise that as Murasaki Shikibu wrote her landmark novel, *The Tale of Genji*, she found various ways to implement the power of nature into her story. One character in particular seems intertwined with nature: The Safflower Princess. When discussing this character, Shikibu seems to pay extra attention to the nature around the princess and the specific plants that relate to her. Through the use of natural imagery, namely plants in The Worm-wood Patch chapter, Shikibu manages to create the basis for The Safflower Princess's character as well as reveal her personality and inner

feelings.

The Safflower Princess suffers from both teasing and desertion in the novel, and it is through these jokes that she gains her name. If one looks into the safflower that Shikibu names the princess after, they will find that it is prized in Japan for creating red dye. Shikibu seemed to take this high status into account, making this character into a princess. However, she also used the flower's red color in a negative portrayal of the princess's nose. This unfortunate safflower coloring leads the princess to become the butt of many jokes, including her nose's pitiful description as "that of the beast on which Samantabhadra rides, long, pendulous, and red. A frightful nose."^[1]

While the Safflower Princess's character is based on the flower, this is not her only tie to nature. In her chapter, *The Wormwood Patch*, the Safflower Princess's inner turmoil is explicitly expressed through the nature around her. In describing the setting, Shikibu writes, "Her gardens, never well tended, now offered ample cover for foxes and other sinister creatures, and owls hooted in



The wisteria is known specifically for its ability to grow beautifully despite being neglected...

unpruned groves morning and night."^[2] This description can be taken both at face value and in a more symbolic sense. Looking at the more obvious meaning, Shikibu's description of the overrun garden shows the Safflower Princess's disregard for anything besides Genji after he leaves her. She doesn't want to maintain the plants, yet she doesn't want to leave the place, and thus they overgrow and create a habitat for menacing creatures. On the other hand, the gardens could be interpreted as a reference to the Safflower Princess herself. She, who was never well tended to by Genji, has become overtaken by her desires — the sinister creatures — to see him again. Shikibu writes that, "the rushes were so thick that one could not be sure whether they grew from land or water. Wormwood touched the eaves, bindweed had firmly barred the gates."^[3] Similar to her use of Safflower, Shikibu encodes a message by using wormwood. Upon a bit of research, one finds that this plant is known specifically for its bitter taste. It is certainly no coincidence that the chapter is named "*The Wormwood Patch*" then, as the Safflower Princess is consumed by an aura of bitterness about being forgotten. Similarly, the bindweed that bars the gate from visitors suggests the Princess's desire to refrain from contact with the outside world, lest it be Genji.

Although all of the plants up until this point have held negative meaning, the chapter finally starts to turn around upon the arrival of Genji at the house. Even though Shikibu continues to describe the house as horribly downtrodden and dilapidated, she shows signs of improvement through the plants. Shikibu writes, "Wisteria blossoms, trailing from a giant pine, waved gently in the moonlight."^[4] This quote is one of the most important hidden messages of the whole chapter.

Upon researching wisteria, one will find that the plant is actually symbolic of the heart's ability to endure even through rejection. The wisteria is known specifically for its ability to grow beautifully despite being neglected and living in harsh environments. Thus, this subtle insertion of wisteria by Shikibu is actually a momentous moment for the Safflower Princess that shows her ability to overcome the odds. Indeed, as Genji descends from his carriage and heads towards the house, Koremitsu "beats at the grass with a horse-whip," effectively mowing down a bit of the Safflower Princess's internal baggage as her savior moves closer and closer to her. It is important to note that none of these internal feelings are directly expressed by the Safflower Princess herself. Many of the emotions that the reader grasps from this chapter are actually embedded in the wild life that Shikibu specifically selected.

The plants play the role of revealing the Safflower Princess's true feelings throughout this chapter. The prominence of the garden and nature throughout The Wormwood Patch chapter is a testament to its symbolic importance, and the ending where the garden is finally rejuvenated is what really completes the chapter.

Sojin Fadavi graduated from Washington University in May, 2015. This paper is a shortened version of the paper he wrote in the course titled, "Masterworks of Japanese Literature: The Tale of Genji and Its Legacies," in 2014.

^[1](*The Tale of Genji*, p. 124)
^[2](*The Tale of Genji*, p. 291)

^[3](*The Tale of Genji*, p. 291)
^[4](*The Tale of Genji*, p. 298)

The Value of Imperfection

Nao Donuma

There is an aesthetic idea to put a value on imperfection in Japanese culture. The value has been cultivated through a history of people living together with nature in Japan. With four clear seasons, people have perceived nothing stays the same. With natural disasters, which often brought us burdens, we have understood nothing is perfect for us. The Japanese garden is also made based on this idea as it represents nature itself.

There is a famous Japanese garden called 'Ryo-an-ji' in Kyoto. In this garden, there are 15 stones placed in white sand. Wherever you stand, you cannot see all 15 stones at one time. Thus, you always miss one piece. Spaces in Japanese gardens





are often partially hidden by means of curved paths, trees, or fences that are placed in front. Because of these “obstacles,” you cannot see every part of the spaces perfectly. But somehow, this special concept encourages you to wonder what is left unclear behind.

I would use this aesthetic notion in my garden by putting a water basin in a corner, where it cannot be seen clearly because of a few plants planted in front. Even though it is set in a hidden place, the water sound, coming from the basin, still draws your attention toward it. Not all flowers are in full bloom when they are first installed. Instead, they can be shown from time to time as the season changes. Time adds another axis to three dimensions in the garden. Thus, decaying flowers are also acceptable as the time passes. It is also a part of life. Leaves scattered in the garden inspire you to imagine that the leaves just fell off a tree. This is how I would express the concept in my garden. Accept the change, and leave a space imperfect.

Silent symphony

The core idea of my garden is to find nature and bring peace, happiness, and thoughtfulness through the garden. Despite the variety of garden styles, this is what the Japanese garden has been fostering for the past 1,000 years. I always find a peacefulness from nature, which is why I dedicate myself to represent it in my garden. How it can be represented is the most difficult and challenging part. Few colors are added because you find it more special when you capture a hint of colors or small movement in a static landscape. In my garden, I would like you to find a wonder of nature, combine your heart and the garden together. This is why a shape of the planting bed means “heart” in *kanji* (Japanese characters) (心 : kokoro). The garden changes over the period of the exhibition. A few different flowers bloom at a different time. The day the garden is built is the beginning of the symphony.



Dr. Naoaki Donuma is a professional artist, gardener, and CEO Executive Director of Yoshoen Corporation in Niigata, Japan. He publishes his work in academic journals and magazines, teaches about Japanese gardens at schools, local communities, and the NHK cultural center. He exhibits his art work internationally. This article is based on the author’s exhibition at the Ikebana and Contemporary Plant Art 2014, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Living in the Land of Ikebana

Jeanne Holy

I have been studying and teaching Ikenobo ikebana for twenty five years and every so often a Sensei will say something in their lecture that miraculously turns into a gold nugget lodged in my mind.

My aging brain will soon forget the name of the Sensei, or the place and time of the lecture, but somehow the words become part of me. I remember the image.

A white board with two large circles – one labeled *hontō*(本当)TRUTH, one labeled *uso*(うそ) LIE. They neatly intersected creating a third space, a slender slice in the middle. The professor put his finger on it. “This is where ikebana lives.”

In my garden I am the Queen...LIE. I am not the Queen that would be Mother Nature... TRUTH. She rules with no

malevolence nor benevolence, just truth. I am but another inmate serving a life sentence at the pleasure of Mother Nature. But in the Land of Ikebana, I am the Queen, as well as caretaker, matchmaker, executioner, liar, and lover.

I was born here, and grew up just like all of my loyal subjects, playing in the black dirt

of Central Illinois. Each morning, I travel my lands, banishing strangling vines, solving droughts, and assessing damage done by the vestiges of winter or the ravaging hoards of wee furry beasties. We are a diverse population living in harmony, expensive perennials next door to certain *zassō* of my liking.

Zassō (雑草) means weed, but the

Japanese sounds so exotic to my American ear. I scrutinize all and many turn their face to me imploring; *is this the day? will you pass me by? will you take a photo of me? will you take my life?* But the May apples are shy and playing hard to get, hoping for me to make the first move. It is a strategy that works. After all, it is May.

Each season brings new symphonies and this morning lilac, crab apples, red bud, and dogwood are

competing for my eyes and nose. They are enthusiastic kindergarteners waving their hands overhead, begging to give the answer, *pick me pick me ooh pick me!*

Summer temps crashed Spring's party and cattails are shooting up like ... *zassō*. My ikebana heart skips between this glorious





fleeting moment and the promise of next season.
Not to worry. I am the Queen. I can have it all.

The Queen makes her choices and I prepare the ikebana mise en place. May Apple has not been invited before, so there are always questions. Does she like warm water or cold, with perhaps a touch of scotch or sugar to spice it up? There is a distinct possibility that she just won't survive too far outside her natural environment... LIE. She is already gone...TRUTH.

But I dare myself to showcase her *shusshō* (出生), her inner beauty, her expression of life for a day or two more in the Land of Ikebana. I want to create the opportunity for her to be more than a shy woodland bloom hiding under a verdant canopy. I want her to be noticed the way I know her and love her.

Deai (出逢い) is one of *those* words, difficult to translate. Lucky for me, as an American, I freely translate as my Western mind chooses. I choose to think of *deai* as a

rendezvous, a meeting, a good combination of time and place, personalities and possibilities. Ikenobo *shimputai shoka* style is all about *deai*. The tradition and simplicity of *shoka* with an unexpected surprise of cast members, uniquely talented and fabulous individuals, but when they come together... oh my!

Under the watchful eye of the matchmaker, Cattails facilitate the introductions; *May Apple meet Lilac, Lilac – May Apple*.

The cotillion begins. I can hear the gentle rhythm of the waltz and feel the rise and fall of the breeze as the unlikely pair face one another for the first time. Is it a LIE, is it the TRUTH? I don't know. It's just another moment Living in the Land of Ikebana.

Jeanne Holy has been studying and teaching ikebana for twenty-five years and holds the degree of Sokako, Professor first grade in the Kyoto Ikenobo School. She is president of the Illinois Prairie Chapter of the

Keeping the Vision Alive:

Caring for *Seiwa-en*, the Japanese Garden at Missouri Botanical Garden

Benjamin Chu

Japanese gardens are nature-based gardens developed with centuries-old traditions. They provide a calming and contemplative space in which to sit, stroll, and relax. The ability to provide such a peaceful environment is achieved through the thoughtful arrangement of Japanese garden elements and landscape plants, and the skillful use of Japanese garden design principles. Garden designers and builders give special

consideration to the garden site, observing environmental conditions that include sun exposure, water movement and ponding, air movement, and the prominent locations from which the garden will be viewed.

The garden's life begins with the placement of stones. Stones are considered the 'backbone' of the garden and are individually selected and set in the landscape with consideration given to ensure the most attractive face is presented to the viewer, and to

provide a sense of stability and longevity in the garden. Stones in *Seiwa-en* were quarried from various US locations: bluish-green stones from Colorado; blue stones from Pennsylvania; dark purple stones from Iron County, MO; sandstone for stepping stones from Missouri quarries; and milky-quartz, dry-garden gravel from Arkansas. As plant material grows, care must be taken to prevent them from covering stones in the landscape. Stones were meticulously set by our



designer, Dr. Koichi Kawana (professor of Japanese architecture and landscape designer at UCLA), and are considered permanent in the garden. The flavor of the

garden would change if we were to constantly move stones to accommodate the plants. In many Japanese gardens, plants are considered accessories to stones.

Plant material is selected and placed in the landscape to asymmetrically balance the physical elements and provide a positive



The staff pruning in the Japanese Garden

element to balance the negative space. Plants are useful to provide screening of distracting views or framing of garden vistas. In the design principle of *miegakure*, or "hide and reveal," plants obscure distant views, thereby creating a sense of mystery and enticement for the garden visitor. Plants contribute through seasonal flowering effects from the early spring into the early summer. Leaf color and texture lend a cooling effect during hot summer months. Autumn foliage sets the garden ablaze during the fall. And structural quality, enhanced through skillful pruning, adds dimension during the winter months.

Well-executed designs and impeccable plant selection are useless if there is a failure to successfully develop a long-term garden maintenance program that includes adequate

numbers of well-trained staff and volunteers. Pruning is critically important to maintain healthy plants and maintain them in proportion to allowed garden space. Pruning ensures they coexist harmoniously with other plants within the composition and don't cover and obscure stones. Early garden apprentices in Japan were not considered adequately trained to prune for the first 25 years of their apprenticeship. By the 1960's, fearing the loss of young gardeners, garden masters lessened the time requirement to 15 years. Today, gardeners begin pruning nearly immediately.

Shrubs are selected based on their ability to affect the garden scene with foliage texture and varying shades of green, and with seasonal bloom effect. Shrub selection is also based on how well they tolerate and recover from annual

pruning. In most Japanese gardens, shrubs are sheared into very tight hemispherical shapes. At *Seiwa-en*, shrubs are pruned to achieve their rounded form through the use of hand pruners one cut at a time. Although this is a more meticulous and time-consuming practice, it benefits the plant by creating a canopy open to sunlight and air circulation. Enhanced sun penetration allows new buds to develop on the plant interior, providing new growth to which to prune back in subsequent years. Good air penetration lowers the incidence of insects and disease. The horticulturally sound practice of hand pruning ensures the health and longevity of plants in the garden.

Deciduous trees are pruned to maintain proportion in the landscape and with other plants within the composition. Shape is maintained to follow the plants' natural forms. Crown density is managed to allow for adequate sunlight for the plant itself and for others in the surrounding area. Tree forms are enhanced by the removal of extraneous parts in order to allow the essence of the tree to be more apparent, particularly during the winter.

Pines are synonymous with Japanese gardens. The predominant pine in our Japanese garden is *Pinus thunbergii* (Japanese Black Pine) and *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots Pine). Black and Scots pine are hardy in our zone, tolerate and recover from regular pruning, and have graceful forms with good character. In the recent past, we have planted our native pine, *Pinus echinata* (Short Leaf Pine), to evaluate its ability to be pruned and sculpted in the Japanese style. Pines are

pruned annually to maintain the size, form, and character of mature trees, and to develop form on young trees. Unlike *bonsai*, pine trees in the landscape are sculpted through pruning and not through artificial manipulation with wire.

Garden trees do not have to undergo root pruning. Within our 14-acre Japanese Garden, three full-time horticulturists are responsible for assigned areas of the garden. Assigned areas make it possible for staff to prune the same pine tree year after year and to consider long term goals for trees in their care. Those goals might include aggressive size reduction, drastic reduction of crown density, or the re-direction of a branch to fill a void or balance a negative space. This process requires great vision, skill and patience.

Dr. Kawana's design remains successful and enjoyed by many as a result of the dedicated staff and volunteers. Much appreciation is due to Greg Cadice, Senad Duracak, and Dave Gunn for understanding the role of *Seiwa-en* as a garden of pure, clear harmony and peace, and for maintaining Kawana's vision.

Benjamin Chu is a horticulture supervisor of the Japanese Garden and the South Garden at the Missouri Botanical Garden. He started at the Missouri Botanical Garden in 1982 and worked closely with Dr. Kawana.

TO BLOSSOM AND SCATTER

Dave Lowry

Flowers blossom and scatter.

It is their blooming and scattering that is their essence.

--Giken Honda

The student of *ikebana* is corrected by her teacher. The buttery heads of daffodils she's arranged needs work, her teacher insists. The blossoms stand erect. She's told they need to be bent. When she asks why, the teacher explains: It is late March. Daffodils in nature at this time are likely to bear a load of wet spring snow, bowing them. The composition of her flowers must reflect the season. The moment.

This is the lesson of *ikebana*, the matter at the heart of it all, the spirit that underlies the art—and forms the essence of much of traditional Japanese sensibilities toward nature.

Ikebana is also known as *kado*, the “Way of flowers. *Kado*, its transmission, concepts, and structure as an art, is consistent with a variety of other Ways, or *do*, that are a part of classical Japanese culture, such as *budo* (martial ways), *shodo* (the way of calligraphy), and *chado*, (the way of tea).

On the surface, *ikebana* seems directed solely at “making a pretty arrangement.” What is underneath that superficial appearance, invisible to all but those who have the sensitivity or take the time to see it, is what is important. It is what elevates *ikebana* into a

Way, not just of flowers, but of life.

Shussho, a term used often in *ikebana*, refers to the most natural form of a flower or plant. It is *shussho* the arranger attempts to recreate in his compositions. This is difficult. In fact, it is probably beyond the ability of all but a very few *ikebana* masters to recreate the element of *shussho* deliberately or consistently in their arrangements. Consider trying to make an arrangement of iris that perfectly captures the true nature of that flower. What is the “perfect iris?” For most of us, even for most average *ikebana* practitioners, the approach would be to gather some iris and plop them in a container upright, to make them look as if they are growing naturally. But that is not really the *shussho* of the iris. The *shussho* is its elemental, most basic form.

The more talented among us might respond by taking only a single blossom and presenting that as the iris's *shussho*. But which one? There are, of course, no two irises alike and none are “perfect.” This one might have a petal drooping. That one might have a crooked stem. When you look at it this way, the process of bringing out the *shussho* of an iris is

extraordinarily challenging.

The art becomes more difficult when we consider: While “ikebana” means literally “living blossoms,” paradoxically, the materials used for flower arranging are not “living” at all. They are always dead. They have been severed from their roots. Left alone in nature, their demise would scarcely be noticed. Plants wither and die by the millions every day. As they droop, curl up, fade away in the garden outside, we are barely aware of their passing from our world. Once purposely cut, however, their death is highlighted. It is the beauty of the masterful arrangement of ikebana we appreciate, certainly. Yet a more poignant sense of their beauty is found in the ephemerality that has, through their positioning in a container, been brought to our attention. This aspect of ikebana’s fleeting beauty causes us to pause. We linger, recognizing, appreciating, the impermanence it represents.

As with all art, Japanese art takes two forms. Some, like sculpture or bonsai, aim to be enduring, to deny the temporal. Other arts, like ikebana, celebrate it. Ikebana flourishes by accepting the limitations of the moment.

Ikebana, the tea ceremony, *Noh* drama, *haiku* poetry; all last for an instant or for the briefest span of time. They captivate us with their momentary beauty, offering a glimpse. Then they are done. This is the lesson of ikebana. At least some of the beauty of flowers and plants, like life itself, rests in their transience.

The phrase *ichigo; ichi-e*, or “one

encounter; one chance,” was used by Naosuke Ii in a treatise he wrote in the 19th century on the tea ceremony, *Chanoyu Ichi-e Shu*. Ii used the idea to describe what he called the true spirit of the tea ceremony. The temporal quality of the art of tea, he said, “gives a feel of the exquisite evanescence of nature.” When people gather for a tea ceremony, there is inherent in the event the recognition it cannot replicate any previous ceremony, nor can it ever be repeated. The host has but one chance to prepare tea for his guests in a beautiful way, with not a single clumsy or wasted motion. The guests have only this one opportunity to appreciate it. Whether they succeed or fail, the moment is gone. Yesterday’s efforts do not matter. Tomorrow’s are a concern for tomorrow. What matters is right now. *Ichi-go; ichi-e*. The expression of arranging a work of art that will quickly be gone is what defines ikebana.

Mono no aware is an aesthetic concept that goes quite far back in Japanese thought. It is one of many phrases used to convey the thought that in a “recognition of life’s impermanence” we come to develop an appreciation for how wonderful life is. The headmaster of the Urasenke ryu of the tea ceremony, Sen Soshitsu XV, was talking about the meaning of arts like ikebana and tea ceremony being realized when they “excite us to do our best to realize each precious moment.” In ikebana the practitioner has the flowers of the season and only a moment to create something of beauty with them. In days, they will wither. The chance is gone. It must be

taken, now. In this, ikebana is a metaphor for life.

In *Kaze no Kokoro*, Nishitani explains what an arrangement of flowers does in a room. “The space of the entire room about them is drawn taut by the presence of flowers, as if it were charged with electricity. The air there is dynamic. While emanating a faint coolness from within and fathomless composure—like a person who has eradicated all attachments to life and abandoned all expectations fundamental to our mundane existence—through a complete silence they communicate that which is eternal.”

Among “that which is eternal”—some of it anyway—are some changeless truths. We are not going to be around forever. The only way to *carpe diem* is to recognize that the day will pass, whether we make the effort to seize it or not and so we may as well give every effort to make

the most of it. From the greatest of events in our life to the most ordinary, these matter mostly in what we make of them. To arrange flowers and to display them is not only a way of bringing some beauty into this place where we spend so much of our lives. It is as well a powerful ritual in connecting with the timelessness of form, the fleeing nature of all the life that fills that form.

More than a thousand years ago, in the collection of poetry, *Kokin-shu*, this spirit was summarized:

This much I have learned:
The blossom that fades away, its color unseen
Is the flower of the heart
Of one who lives in this world.

Dave Lowry is a writer and a dedicated student of Japanese martial arts. He has published widely, from the Japanese traditional arts to food.

Bonsai

Glenn Pauly

Bonsai is an ancient horticultural art form that is mainly enjoyed by viewers for the impression of great age and compositional balance between the tree and ceramic container.

The art of Bonsai is usually linked with Japan, however the Chinese were growing miniature trees and landscapes during the Tang dynasty around 600-900 AD. Scrolls and

paintings from that period depict the emperor and nobility with *penjing*, miniature trees and landscapes in trays. A scroll found in a tomb from that same period also referred to a monk who



had learned the art of creating the illusion of immensity and age in a small space and contained all in a single pot. The Chinese thought the miniature trees and landscapes provided a link between heaven and earth, and were regarded as too spiritually enriching for the masses. Because of this belief, only royalty, nobility, and monks were permitted to have *penjing* for many centuries.

During the twelfth century, *penjing*, *bonsai* (pronounced "bone-sigh") to the Japanese, started to appear in Japan. The art form of miniature trees is said to have been brought back to Japan by diplomats, merchants, and monks. From the twelfth century until the end of the Edo period in 1868, *bonsai* expanded throughout Japan. During this period of about 700 years, *bonsai* as we know it today was refined and defined. The Japanese love of nature, their increasing artistic awareness, and the minimalist teaching of Zen Buddhism combined to influence the future evolution of *bonsai* to the sophisticated art form of today.

Bonsai appeared in Europe in the fourteenth century due to the opening of Japan to traders, who brought it back to Europe. The interest in *bonsai* however died out in Europe until after the Second World War, when servicemen brought miniature trees and an interest in *bonsai* back to their countries. In the United States, the large population of Japanese

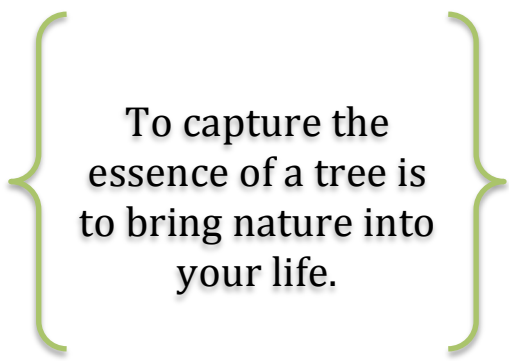
Americans was a major source of information and encouragement in promoting the hobby of *bonsai*. Today, throughout Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia, China, England, South Africa, and, of course, Japan, there are *bonsai* societies made up of thousands of hobbyists, *bonsai* artists, and master instructors.

Two thousand years of miniature trees has brought us *bonsai*, ordinary living trees that have been miniaturized by sound horticultural techniques. In the process, they have been

shaped by artists so that, in their entirety, they express the beauty of a tree growing in a natural environment. To capture the essence of a tree is to bring nature into your life. Watching a maple tree,

small enough to hold in your hand, sprout its tiny buds in the spring, fill out with its deep green foliage in the summer, turn bright red in the fall, and drop its leaves in the winter, is to experience the wonder of life.

The science of horticulture provides the basic guidance for all *bonsai* artists to produce and maintain their *bonsai*. The most important horticultural information required is the knowledge needed to keep the *bonsai* alive. In reality, this is no mystery. *Bonsai* are like any other living plant. Provide them with the correct environmental conditions of sun, water, nutrients, soil, and your time, and they will thrive. In fact, *bonsai*, when properly cared for, will live longer than their counterparts growing



To capture the
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few. Both artistic vision and horticulture techniques are required to produce, from starter material, the illusion of an old, windswept mountain juniper growing on the side of a mountain, or a pine tree that has withstood nature's fury growing along the sea shore, or perhaps an old elm growing in a field. A *bonsai* artist will create this illusion in a *bonsai* only inches tall in a small pot

or tray. Since *bonsai* artists, by necessity, work through the seasons and years to develop their *bonsai*, it can take years to accumulate the experience, knowledge, and patience to create the character of an ancient tree only inches tall living in a ceramic pot.

out in the woods or on a mountain top. All *bonsai* artists use the science of horticulture far more extensively than to just keep their *bonsai* alive. By understanding the growth habits of the plant, the artist can manipulate and harness those characteristics to create a particular *bonsai* shape.

Most starter material for *bonsai* comes from local garden shops, is collected from the woods, or in some cases consists of old-growth plant material from your back yard. Many trees and shrubs can be used to start a *bonsai*: maple, pine, ginkgo, hornbeam, crabapple, elm, cypress, juniper, cotoneaster, privet, azalea, boxwood, and many tropical plants, to name a

Participation in this fascinating hobby provides a person involved with an opportunity to achieve happiness that money cannot buy. *Bonsai* allows a pause in life's relentless pace, a contact with nature's great calm, and a means to express one's creativity. This is the essence of *bonsai*.

Glenn Pauly is the Past President of Bonsai Society of Greater St. Louis.

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