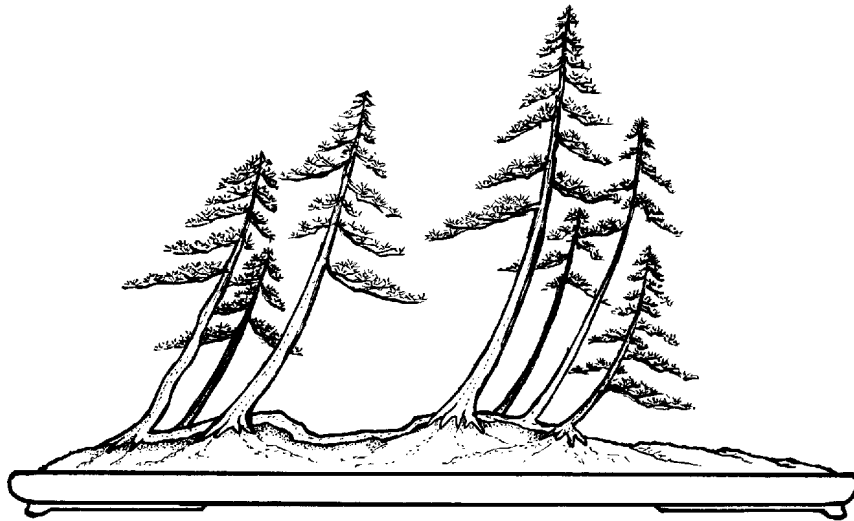


INTERMEDIATE BONSAI

A COURSE SYLLABUS



NH

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N.H.

Intermediate Bonsai - A Course Syllabus

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PREFACE

The principal use of this *Syllabus*, is as a workbook to accompany hands on learning sessions for the intermediate student of bonsai. Instruction is offered on the basic art and aesthetics of bonsai, the design and maintenance of various styles of bonsai, the practice of several special techniques used in creating a bonsai, and finally on the effective display of finished trees.

One group instructional technique which I have found to be effective is to begin with the students becoming familiar with the *Syllabus*. I encourage them to thumb through it, then I cover the highlights of aesthetics in Chapter 1. This is followed by a slide/tape presentation on *Harmony*. After a break, I show bonsai from my collection as examples of the various styles covered in the *Syllabus*. The students are then instructed to place on the table before them the plant they brought and to study its structure with a view toward deciding the style for which it is best suited. Students refer to sections of the *Syllabus* while instructor(s) circulate and gently guide the student's decision making until an appropriate style is agreed upon. Then the students are asked to read the chapter pertaining to the agreed upon style and instructor(s) provide detailed guidance in the completion of the styling.

Often bonsai artists use words from the Japanese language when referring to bonsai styles or unique features on bonsai. Because this *Syllabus* is written in English and is intended for use by English speaking persons, Japanese language terms are used sparingly. For the curious there is a glossary of terms in the Appendix which includes translations of some of the more frequently used Japanese bonsai terms.

There are various audio visual presentations which may be used to supplement this text and to reinforce learning. A list of these materials is included as an Appendix to this *Syllabus*.

Specific credit for materials in this text include:

The drawings of bonsai styles on the Title Pages and in illustrations 3-1, 4-1, 5-1, 5-4, 5-5, 6-1, 7-1, 7-3, 7-4, 8-2, 8-4, 9-1, 10-1, 11-2, 12-1, 13-1 through 13-3, 14-1, 14-2, 15-1, 16-1, 16-2, the grass on page 19-5 and illustration F-2 were created by Norman Haddrick and are reproduced with his permission.

All other information in this *Syllabus* was acquired over a period of years of studying, learning, teaching and practicing the art of bonsai.

My thanks go to my many teachers and students who have so willingly shared their time, knowledge and talents.

By Definition

By Definition

Bonsai is the art of creating a miniature replica of a mature tree or group of trees which could be found in nature. The bonsai artist attempts to create that replica by changing normal plant material into a miniature tree which exhibits the illusion of maturity.

In Review...

In order to accomplish this, the artist must understand that both horticultural principles and artistic principles must be followed.

Introduction to Bonsai - A Course Syllabus discussed the horticultural aspects of bonsai as well as basic techniques, rules and principles used in creating a bonsai. When doing more advanced bonsai work, keep these rules in the back of the mind, but do NOT be a slave to them. Approach each new piece of material with an open mind. Do not force the tree into a style, rather give it style. Use the basic rules as needed. Let the material tell you how it may best be treated.

This Intermediate Syllabus takes the student more into the artistic realm of bonsai, discussing the creation of styles other than the basic informal upright bonsai.

Imagination...

Imagination, we all have it, to some degree or other. But in styling a bonsai we all too often don't call on our imagination and attempt to recreate a bonsai in the image of some basic bonsai icon, stoically following styling traditions which came from Japan some 50 years ago. These basic "rules", or principles, ARE important and ARE essential in getting one started on the road to creating good bonsai; but they are only the beginning of the journey, they are not the end all to bonsai design. The Japanese do not continue to copy the Chinese; they took what China had to offer and, using their imagination and skills, created their own bonsai based on what they see growing in their own land. If we are to progress in our chosen art, we too must evolve, develop, digress, deviate, exercise free thinking and adapt the best history has to offer and use examples in our own landscape on which to build.