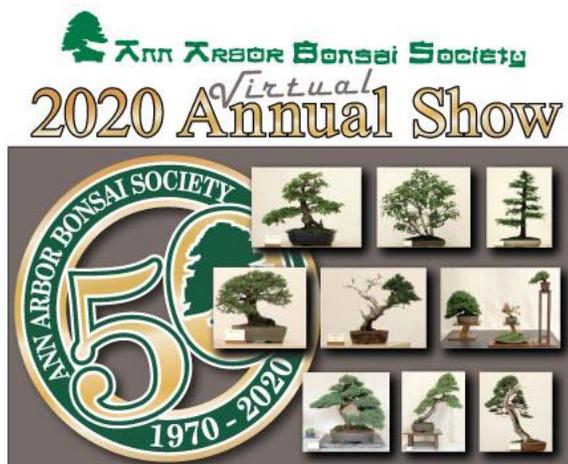


## AABS 2020 Virtual Bonsai Show

This year, due to the current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 situation, our show will be held virtually. The show will begin on Saturday, August 29th and voting will be open through Sunday, August 30th. There will be a People's Choice Award, an engraved American Bonsai concave cutter, for the photo that receives the most votes.

Once live, the show will be viewable at the following page: [AnnArborBonsaiSociety.org/2020AnnualShow](http://AnnArborBonsaiSociety.org/2020AnnualShow). You may take the photograph of the tree yourself or [book a photography appointment](#) for Friday, August 14 or Saturday, August 15.

All entries must be submitted by 5:00 pm EST on Friday, August 28th to be entered into the show. To submit an entry or view the rules for submission, please see [this page](#).



VOTE ONLINE: [www.AnnArborBonsaiSociety.org/2020AnnualShow](http://www.AnnArborBonsaiSociety.org/2020AnnualShow)  
 Saturday-Sunday, AUGUST 29-30

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## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

### Ron Milostan

August 2020

Thank you, Carmen, for the excellent Zoom show and lecture on Junipers.

Below is a compilation of info from several different sources on volcanic soil or pumice.

Japan is selling pumice called Akadama and Kanuma.

'Due to volcanic activity, Japan enjoys rich volcanic resources. After volcanic eruptions, volcanic rocks and pumice accumulate near the volcano. Using these unique resources, Japan has developed rich horticultural products. Akadama and kanuma soils are two representations.

According to the different kinds of cultivated plants, Akadama can not only be used alone, but also be mixed with other collocation substrates, such as other types of pumice, stone, peat etc. Medium particle size is suitable for all kinds of potted plants, especially for cactus and succulent plants.

Kanuma is a granular Japanese Potting Medium used for (Acid Loving) plants. This particular material comes from the Kanuma Area of Japan which is basically the center of Azalea Bonsai Growing. Again, you must understand as with Akadama, that this is the stuff that the Japanese have out in their back yards ... it's their "dirt." Kanuma facilitates fine hair root growth. It retains moisture and can absorb more water than its weight and yet allows for air space. Its PH varies from 4.5 to 5. Both Akadama and Kanuma simplify the repotting chores since roots are fibrous rather than hard. This material is dug out from 10 feet down, allowed to dry, crushed and then sorted as to grain sizes.

1. They drain perfectly if prepared correctly (see below).
2. They allow air to be drawn into the mix when watered.
3. They maintain near perfect moisture retention for plant health.
4. They are granular in character and aid root/nebari development.
5. Allow greater control over fertilizers in the potting medium.'

With that said, in the USA we just call it pumice. All of it, just different kinds. The Flower Market sells a white pumice from Idaho. This, with lava rock or any other mixes you might want to add, works quite well.

I sometimes feel in the Bonsai world that what is developed in Japan is touted as the must go to. Which type of soil to use is a lot like deciding which wire to use, copper or aluminum; both work. It often boils down to using what is available to us at the time we need to use it. If Japan had aluminum when bonsai started, I wonder if they would be using aluminum wire now.

Well these are my thoughts on the 'Pumice for Bonsai Craze' in the news.

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## **Notes from July's meeting: Chris Kehrig**

Bill Struhar is looking to sell some trees from his collection.

Dana Hermann set up a location on Facebook with one of his trees for sale.

Virtual show is coming up at end of the month.

Pictures taken Aug 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> at Flower Market.

Junipers Presentation by Carmen Leskoviansky

Junipers can be challenging, but many are cheap home store half-dead trees.

They are a very versatile tree with red bark contrasting with the green foliage. Junipers can have lots of deadwood that can be styled into a strong looking tree.

There are 2 types of Juniper: Scale and Needle  
The most popular scale type is Shimpaku, with non-picky needles. San Jose is a needle type with shorter/spikier needles.

5 routine tasks:

1. Remove old yellow shoots – pull off old yellowing foliage
2. Remove berries – they use energy
3. Clean and protect deadwood – clean using a soft brush / protect with lime sulfur
4. Remove flakey bark – exposes red bark, helps against borers, needle bark left on
5. Trimming – scale and needle are different

DO NOT PINCH FOLIAGE OFF A SCALE JUNIPER!! Use scissors

Need shoot extension to develop energy  
Remove foliage that extends past foliage pads  
Some trees require more trimming / some 2X year

Trimming needle Juniper

Cut June/July back to small stub  
2X per year June/July and Fall

Repotting

To be done in April/early May  
Leave a bit more root  
Avoid holding the trunk as it can separate the lifeline from the trunk

Wiring

Any month of the year  
Large bends in Summer  
Copper is great on Junipers as the wire can stay on for awhile  
Fertilizer  
Regular fertilizing with single digit numbers  
Some mature Itoigawa are not fertilized  
Rocky Mountain can become over needled with too much

Grafting

Veneer graft – Scion material and bonsai cut to cambium on branch

Approach graft – Use a whip plant with grafted material staying connected to root system

#### Pests and Diseases

Spider mites

Oil spray (not in summer), Miticide

Tip blight which is fast moving. Use Prophylactic spray and sanitize tools

Avoid wetting foliage when watering / Junipers like it dry between watering

#### Display

Consider using a viewing stone rather than an accent plant

Scroll can be a moon, hawk, or any mountain type scene

Should be in an unglazed brown to red pot

## Up For Debate: Aaron J. Binns

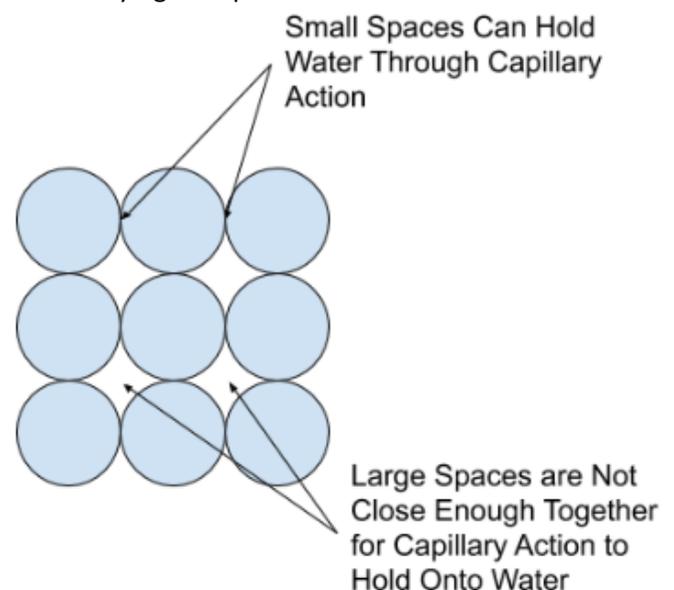
### A Step Back on Soils

Let's talk about dirt... again. First though, I would like to take a moment to give Jack Wikle a head nod. After my last article on bonsai soil constituents, Jack sent me a slew of information that did indeed help me collect my thoughts. So now, I would like to take a step back and cover some basics on soils before we move forward. First, soils as we use them really serve two purposes. First, the soil gives the plant's roots structure; an anchor if you will to hold the tree in the pot. Second, and most importantly for this article, the soil needs to hold sufficient amounts of nutrient, water, and air to allow for healthy plant growth. Nothing I have read tells me anything about how well the soils we use for bonsai hold on to nutrients and we are going to need to save that topic for another time. Let's concentrate on how well soils hold water and air.

First, let's build a physical model in our minds of the soil itself. Let's imagine our favorite soil constituent. For now, only one type please. You could be imagining akadama, or surface, or lava, but let's avoid imagining akadama with surface and lava... no mixes for now. I'm going to imagine lava. Think about the soil type bone dry in a cup. What's in the cup? (Silly question, right? Follow me for a while, complex physics ideas always start small.) The answer is simple the cup is holding lava and air. Now add water; fill the cup with water all the way to the brim in your mind's eye. What's in the cup? The cup has lava and water. You

are probably saying, I still don't get what you're driving at Aaron. The cup has lava and water but no air. That's important. Where did the air go? The water took the place of the air and pushed the air out of the cup. Where was the air hiding? The air was hiding everywhere the lava wasn't...right? And where was that? The answer to that question takes you a long way to understanding what makes a good soil. If you imagine the lava in the cup as little spheres it's easy to understand that there are gaps between each particle. The air or water hides there right? Yes. Air **OR** water. The or is also very important. Let's keep thinking. Our cups now have lava and water. Let's put a drainage hole in the bottom of the cup and watch the water come streaming out. What's in the cup? Lava, air, and water. Now where is the air and where is the water? This is a more interesting question right? If we only consider the space between the particles, which is what you should be doing right now, don't jump ahead... then you should find water where the capillary action of the lava is sufficient to hold the water back and air in voids that are just too big to hold the water in. Figure 1 below shows the situation. Take a look at Figure 1 now or this will get confusing.

What else do we know now? We now know that when you consider a single type of soil, if you use a smaller particle size you will hold more water! Think about the situation just a minute longer, if your particle size goes down there are more locations where particles are touching or almost touching. It should be noted there is also less room for air because the volume of the voids between particles is also going down. In fact, you will lose room for air faster than you are gaining room for water. Now look at Figure 2. That will help you picture what I'm trying to explain.



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Figure 1: Locations for air and water in a soil with large particles.

There is one more place water or air can hide in the cup of lava. When you pictured yourself pouring water into the cup taking the soil from wet to dry what did you notice about the soil that was dry? It changed color right? It got wet. That's more than just filling spaces between particles. The particles themselves have many pores in which water can be absorbed. Some materials like lava are very porous and will absorb a great deal of water while some, like grit or river rock won't. Imagine your cup was full of glass beads. Glass has no pores and would absorb no water, although some water would still be trapped between the glass beads as demonstrated above in Figure 1. It is because different soils absorb water to a greater or lesser extent that I insisted on only imagining a single soil in our mind experiment above.

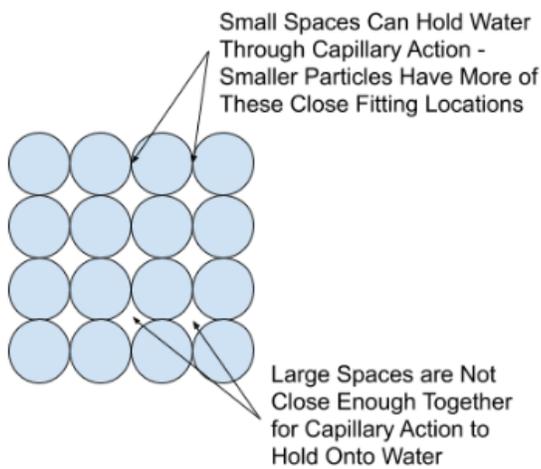


Figure 2: Locations for air and water in a soil with small particles.

Now we know something else. We can define the following:

**Total Porosity** = The total volume available for either air or water. (This is the amount of volume that was available to the water before we poured it into the cup, when the lava was bone dry. Note that this is a combination of the volume between particles and the volume of the pores internal to the particles.)

**Air Retention** = The total volume available for air before any drying has occurred. (This is a measure of the air in the cup right after we punched a hole in the bottom and let what water would drain out drain away. I am going to assume for now the majority of internal pore are small

enough that once filled with water, there won't be room for air. So the air is only located in the voids between particles.)

**Water Retention** = The total volume available for water before any drying has occurred. (This is a measure of the water left in the cup right after we punched a hole in the bottom and let what water would drain out drain away. This consists of both the water being held between particles and the water that was absorbed into the particle.)

My original experiments that I reported in this article were a calculation of water retention and an attempt to determine which soil constituents would hold onto water for longer. Jack Wikle has been conducting similar experiments for years, with the exception that he also calculated total porosity and air retention. If the theories of where and how water and air hide in a soil are correct then I should be able to show that a smaller particle size of a single soil type has a higher water retention and lower air retention than a larger particle size of the same soil type. I will attempt to run this experiment for the next article - Wikle style. It may also be possible to predict which soils will dry more slowly. Here is why, if we pick two soils of different types but screen them to roughly equivalent sizes then the voids between the particles will be similar. Any differences in water retention must therefore be accounted for by absorption into the particles. It stands to reason that moisture internal to a particle will take longer to evaporate away.

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## **Tree Photography Arrangements** **Jay Sinclair**

AABS members may sign up to have their trees photographed for the virtual show on Friday 8/14 and Saturday 8/15 at The Flower Market, 8930 S Custer Rd, Monroe, MI 48161.

Masks should be worn, and social distancing observed. Members should sign up for a 30 minute time slot. If you can make it on Friday, please try to do so, in order to leave Saturday open for those who are working during the week. As of this writing there are still openings on both days.

It would be helpful to have volunteers to assist with unloading and moving trees. Contact Jay at [sinclair.jay@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sinclair.jay@sbcglobal.net) to volunteer.

Plan to arrive early, in order to unload and move trees to the staging area, and to fill out paperwork.

Please bring no more than 3 trees with stands and accessory plants, in order to have time for setup and photography. A multi-tree shohin box setup counts as 2 trees for this.

You can sign-up for an appointment on the AABS website. There is a link on the home page or you can go directly to the appointment calendar at:

<https://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org/membership/photographyappointment/>

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## ***Bonsai Heresy by Michael Hagedorn***

Club members may be interested in this new book now available by Michael Hagedorn. The following introduction to the book is an edited version of the one found at stonelantern.com, one of many places you can purchase the book.

Bjorn Bjorholm bonsai artist and educator, who like Michael Hagedorn apprenticed in Japan wrote...

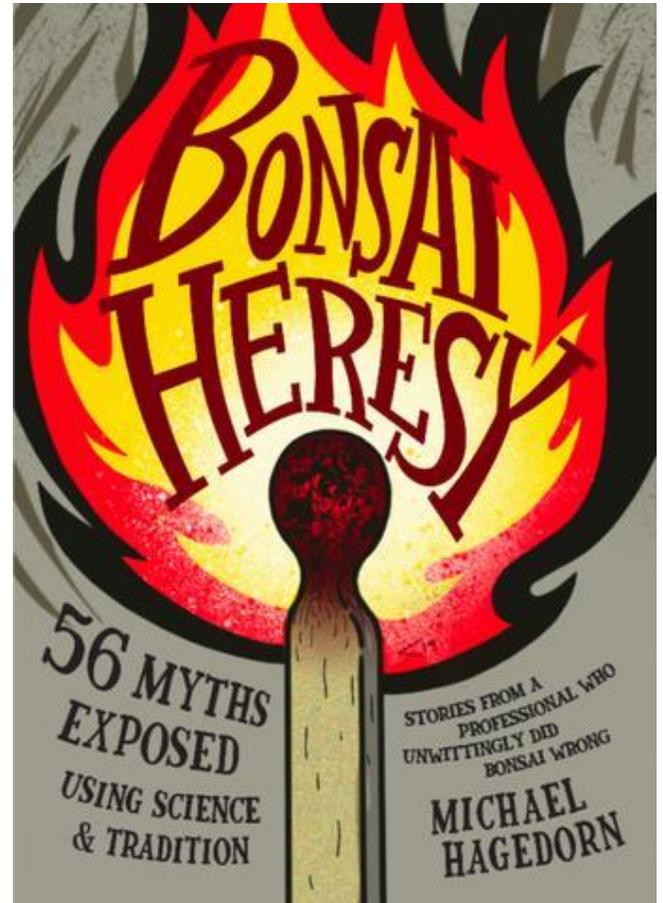
"Not only does Michael dispel long-held bonsai myths, but he wonderfully weaves personal, often self-deprecating anecdotes into the mix. Well written, deeply researched, and perfectly timed, *Bonsai Heresy* is a must-read for every bonsai enthusiast."

Michael Hagedorn has long been our go-to source for accurate and clear advice when it comes to bonsai and bonsai related questions. His skill and depth of knowledge, as well as his on-going innovation in the art of bonsai, place him among the very best of our North American bonsai artists, teachers and, needless to say, authors

Michael apprenticed with bonsai master Shinji Suzuki in Obuse, Japan from 2003-2006 and now resides and practices bonsai in Portland Oregon, where he founded his Crataegus Bonsai garden and the Portland Bonsai Village. Michael is also the Bonsai Consultant for the Portland Japanese Garden, teaches classes to students from around

the world at his garden, and blogs weekly at [www.crataegus.com](http://www.crataegus.com).

Michael's first book *Post-Dated: the Schooling of an Irreverent Bonsai Monk* has long been a favorite and in our opinion is the best bonsai read in the English language... at least until *Bonsai Heresy*



*Bonsai Heresy*: Paperback, 5" x 7" 360 pages, color illustrations by Sergio Cuan

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**Ads in the Newsletter:** All members can offer for sale any bonsai and bonsai related materials in the newsletter or at the monthly meeting with no sales fee. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month.

**Prizes for the Raffle:** We are soliciting donations suitable for prizes to be raffled during each general meeting, and, for the Annual Bonsai Show Raffle. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related, that you do not use anymore and is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Please see Bill Struhar at any

meeting, email Bill at [wm.struhar@mail.com](mailto:wm.struhar@mail.com) or call (586) 468-7169.

**Club Logo Now Available:** we will embroider the club logo on your garment for \$12 (plus modest additional charge for lined garments).

The logo comes in two forms; light green tree on dark green background, or dark green tree on light green background, with a border on both combinations and AABS lettering and Chinese characters with appropriate contrasting color depending upon the garment color.

Bring your garment in a clear plastic bag to a meeting, select your colors, pre-pay Bill Struhar, and your garment will be ready one or two meetings later. (The vendor may require a minimum of five garments per order)

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## AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

**Fund Raising:** William Struhar

**Web Administration:** Bob Bauer

**Nomination Committee:**

**Show Committee:** Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

**Annual Auction:** Paul Kulesa

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Membership dues are \$25. Please pay by check, written to Ann Arbor Bonsai Society or bring your credit card to the meeting and pay! AABS now accepts credit cards for

membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Tamara Milostan – Treasurer AABS  
4228 Highcrest Dr.  
Brighton, Michigan 48116

[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)

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The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society: <http://absbonsai.org> and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance: <http://mababonsai.org>



Ann Arbor Bonsai Society  
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<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

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