

## Notes on “LANDSCAPES” by Chris Thomas at Salisbury Bonsai Club, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016

- When selecting yamadori, first find a good trunk line and taper. Next select good nebari. Finally look for branch structure: for pines start at the lowest branch; broadleaf start at apex.
- When styling a young tree, first wire all branches. Then identify front. Then bend the trunk, low down, backwards at about 80 – 90 degrees. Then bend to the left, about one third the way up, then back round to the front. Next bend the upper section of the trunk slightly back, up and finally forward.

As it's desirable to have branches on the outside of bends in the trunk, so also it is desirable to have twigs on the outside of bends on branches. These twigs should move out from the branch, immediately moving back in towards the branch, then out again.

Remember that old trees develop a canopy, not a stick at the top like young trees!

Remember the rule of triangles.

All of the above have the effect of compressing the tree.

If the image we're trying to create is a windswept one, remember that even windswept trees often have growth into the wind too.

After wiring and styling is complete, remove the dominant bud on every branch and twig, to encourage ramification.

Chris uses compost of 50/50 Moler clay granules and multipurpose compost, for Larch. In composing his landscape, on a concrete formed, coloured and contoured tray, he dressed the rootball with different mosses and Kyodama.

On a bogwood base, drill holes for drainage and can screw the wire in for ease of combining wires to secure the tree(s)

In a multi tree group, push the trunks as close together as possible, ensuring that all trees are wired before assembling the group. No two trees should be of the same height.

Larch wired now should be unwired end of April/ beginning of May.

Compose the group so that the eye is led in a particular direction by the whole composition.

Chris used Larch for all his demos and in answer to a question about Japanese vs European Larch, he related a brief history.

He explained that in the 1880s our European Larch in Britain began suffering devastating attacks of canker. In an effort to preserve the species, Japanese larch were imported and planted at

Dunkeld in Scotland, which hybridised with local European Larches, setting seed, producing today's variety, sometimes known as Dunkeld Larch.

He also explained how suitable Larch are for beginners, being tolerant of variations in temperature, moist and dryness, to a point!

During the evening, Chris produced three different Larch landscapes: one was a potted compressed Larch in a bonsai pot; another was a twin-trunked, tall windswept image on bogwood



and the third was the group of five Larch on the concrete slab.

All were very attractive and at the end of the evening, everyone agreed that the latter one should be purchased by the club, to be the tree raffle prize for this year!

During his presentation, Chris referred with some reverence, to other notable bonsai artists, including

Peter Adams, an accomplished creator of groups;

Pavel Slovak possibly the best bonsai artist there is.

Terry Foster, an amazing artist with wiring and styling trees;

and a book on the history of forestry, by Rackham.

I've guessed at the spelling of these names, so please ask Geoff Hobson or Helen Launchbury, who were there with me, if they might know more.

Amazed, Tony Moore