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## Potomac Bonsai Association



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### What is the PBA?

The Potomac Bonsai Association (PBA) is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the awareness and practice of the art and horticulture of bonsai, and the collection and art of viewing stones. PBA is an umbrella organization consisting of local bonsai clubs in Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, and Maryland. Local club members are automatically members of PBA and may participate in the activities of any other member club.

PBA has a number of activities throughout the year in addition to the member club activities. PBA issues a newsletter on a quarterly basis. This newsletter contains bonsai and viewing stone related articles, bonsai merchant advertisements, member club activities, a list of member clubs and a membership form. Each year, PBA sponsors a Spring Bonsai Festival jointly with the National Arboretum and the National Bonsai Foundation. This Spring Bonsai Festival lasts for three days and consists of a bonsai show, a regional juried show, a new talent competition, beginner and intermediate/ advanced workshops, bonsai demonstrations and a bonsai vendor bazaar. The vendor bazaar provides bonsai artists and any visitors the opportunity to purchase bonsai, plant material, tools, and pots related to the art and horticulture of bonsai.

Periodically, PBA offers workshops by visiting bonsai artists. These workshops are open to any member of PBA and consist of workshops where plant material is provided or where the participants provide their own material. Any range of bonsai related knowledge and skill is welcome in these workshops.

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### PBA Member Clubs

PBA member clubs provide the best and quickest way for anyone to learn about bonsai horticulture and design. Members further their knowledge at monthly club meetings via lectures, workshops and mentoring programs. Each member club develops it's own educational program which is advertised in the PBA newsletter for other club members' benefit. These programs include lectures on bonsai horticulture, bonsai styling demonstrations and discussions, and workshops. These programs may be presented by club members or bonsai professionals brought in expressly for the club's membership. Workshops cover a range of topics from beginner to advanced levels. They also allow individuals to work on their own trees or on trees provided for the workshop. All PBA member clubs encourage club members to bring in their trees to meetings for discussion, suggestions and help.

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## PBA Member Clubs and Points of Contact

**Baltimore Bonsai Club**, 4th Sun., 1 pm, Towson Branch Baltimore Public Library; Barry Figard, (410)531-3937, (240)375-3361

**Bonsai Society of the Eastern Shore**, 1st Wed., 7 pm, Talbot Hospice, Easton, Susan Jones-Armari, (410)943-9886, susanja@bcctv.com

**Brookside Bonsai Society**, 3rd Thu., 7:30 pm, Bethesda, MD, Jim Hughes, (301)779-2891, jim6909@msn.com

**Chesapeake Bonsai Society**, Call for meeting time and location, Sharon Katz, (410)263-3307, sharonkatz@gmail.com

**Kiyomizu Bonsai Club**, 4th Sun., 2 pm, Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Rd, Clinton, MD, Essie Wilson, (301)839-2471, wilson@howrey.com

**Mid-Shore Bonsai Society**, Sat. meetings TBA, Adkins Arboretum, Ridgley, MD, Kris Doherty, (410)778-6662

**Northern Virginia Bonsai Society**,

2nd Sat., 9 am, Walter Reed Community Center, 2909 16th St South, Arlington, VA, Jack FitzSimons, jfitzsimons@verizon.net

**Potomac Viewing Stone Group**, Glenn Reusch, (540)672-5699, Ghreusch@aol.com,

**Rappahannock Bonsai Society**, Call for time and location, Todd Stewart, (804)448-4499

**Washington Bonsai Club**, 3rd Sat., 2 pm, (no Jul. or Aug. meetings), U.S. Nat. Arboretum, Washington, D.C., Ross Campbell, (301)587-6898

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## What are bonsai and viewing stones?

Bonsai are artistically grown and shaped trees that appear as though they grew naturally. Bonsai may be grown from seed, cuttings, air-layers, or may be collected from yards, fields or forests and nurseries. They are then adapted to pot culture and shaped using horticultural techniques (pruning, fertilizing, leaf reduction) and wiring techniques to appear as an aged tree in the wild. The real age of a tree is far less important than the apparent age of the tree. Bonsai may be created from any woody plant although some trees lend themselves more readily to bonsai and are easier to grow than others. Also, bonsai may vary in size from trees grown in a sewing thimble to trees that require several people or a fork lift to move. Most bonsai, though, can be easily carried or moved by a single person. In addition to the art and horticultural techniques used to grow bonsai, there is an art and a culture to the display of bonsai.

Viewing stones are collected rocks and stones that may resemble an object or may be an abstract representation of thought. Some objects that may be represented are mountains or mountain ranges, animals, people, huts or houses. There are also stones that have crystal representations of flowers embedded within them (Chrysanthemum or peony stones). Viewing stones are also called *suiseki* and may vary in size from small stones that are thumbnail sized on up to stones that require a crane to lift. There is a whole art discipline and culture in the orient around the care and display of viewing stones.