

## RIDERWOOD PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB - FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

### **The National Bonsai & Penjing Museum**

**Tuesday, September 1, 2026**

**Location:** Washington, DC – Center City

**Subject Matter:** Live Miniature Trees in an Asian Setting

**Date:** Tuesday, September 1, 2026

**Duration:** 3-4 hours, including travel time

**Time:** 9:00 – 12:00

**Description:** The National Bonsai & Penjing Museum at the U.S. National Arboretum is a hidden gem for photographers. Tucked into a quiet corner of the grounds, it houses living sculptures - centuries-old trees trained into breathtaking miniature forms, some over 300 years old. The interplay of gnarled bark, delicate foliage, and negative space makes every specimen a study in composition, texture, and light. Shoot in early morning or late afternoon, when soft, angled light rakes across the pavilions and casts intricate shadows through the branches. The Japanese, Chinese, and North American collections each offer distinct aesthetics - from wind-swept pines to flowering azaleas - giving you endless variety within a single visit. Macro shots reveal astonishing detail in bark and moss, while wider frames capture the trees against the surrounding gardens and sky. Quiet, uncrowded, and endlessly photogenic, it is a rare chance to practice patience and precision - the same qualities the bonsai masters themselves have spent lifetimes perfecting.

**Learn more at:** <https://www.usna.usda.gov/discover/gardens-collections/national-bonsai-penjing-museum>

**Transportation & Cost:** Carpooling. This site is free year-round. A contribution of \$5 for gas and parking would be appreciated by the drivers.

**Restaurants:** None

**Recommended Equipment:** **Macro lens (90-105mm)** This is the star player here. Bonsai reward close-up work: bark texture, moss, tiny leaves, the gnarled character of aged trunks. A true macro lens (1:1 magnification) lets you get genuinely close without distortion. If you bring only one lens, this is your best bet. A recent model phone camera could also work well.

**Short telephoto / portrait lens (85-135mm)** Great for isolating a single tree from its pot and background, with pleasing compression and soft bokeh.

**Wide-angle (16-35mm)** Useful for the surrounding gardens and architecture or a creative low-angle shot that exaggerates a tree's scale and presence.

**Sign up Info:** Contact trip leader David Lassiter **no later than Wednesday, August 26**, at [david.lassiter1@verizon.net](mailto:david.lassiter1@verizon.net) or text him at 301-257-2936. Meet at the entrance to Town Center at 8:45 AM. We will depart at 9:00 AM promptly.