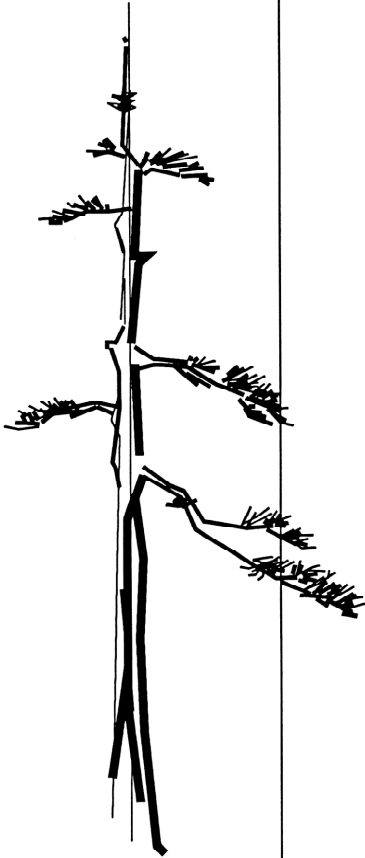


# Bonsai News



*Milwaukee  
Bonsai Society*

P.O. Box 198  
Brookfield, Wisconsin  
53208-0198

Information Line  
414-299-9229

**FEBRUARY MEETING:  
Care and Maintenance of  
Your Tools** is the subject of the February meeting. Winter is a good time to repair, sharpen and get your bonsai tools prepared for the summers work ahead of them. Since bonsai tools are very specialized there are always questions. How do you sharpen curved concave nippers? How do you remove rust? What should you do to keep from transferring any plant diseases from one tree to another?

Jack Douthitt, who is a certifiable tool junkie, will bring his overflowing tool box and discuss the various tools that we use and how to sharpen, clean and maintain them. Come to this meeting and learn how to have your tools in good condition to shape your bonsai this summer!

## MARCH MEETING

There will be a presentation by Allen Koszarek about Bonsai Gardens and Areas. Come and get some ideas for your Bonsai area!

## NEWSLETTER ACCESS

After some hard work by our webmaster, Pam Woythal, our Milwaukeebonsai.org website now has the newsletters. *There is a password required.* We will send the password of the month for you to access the newsletter. If you have not received instructions for access, please contact Jean Sher (jshe@wi.rr.com) or Houston

Sanders (bonsaidiot@tds.net) for assistance. Check out the website - there are already some of the 2006 newsletters available online. Other clubs have been doing this with great success. So, here we go...

## Pots! Pots! Pots!

We will have a brief show,  
On the history of pottery, to know:  
How to choose a pot,  
How to recognize quality,  
How to identify ceramic,  
Stoneware, porcelain and mica,  
Handbuilt, poured and thrown;  
Names that you should know.

*Feb 6, 2007  
MBS meeting*

## INTERMEDIATE CLASS LAUNCHED

 By Michelle Zimmer

### *Space Still Available!*

Thirteen novice bonsai artists have signed up to start a new phase of their bonsai careers. All will meet at the home of Senior Bonsai Artist, Jack Douthitt on Sunday January 28, 2007 to discuss venues, teachers, dates and other details – a wonderful winter bonsai activity.

The MBS intermediate class 2007 will meet at various venues for 4 eight hour sessions during 2007. The goal is to move to the next level of information and skills in creating bonsai. Teachers are members of the current Ted Matson Masterclass.

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There is still space for 3 club members, so if you missed the announcement or are a late decider, please bring your \$50 deposit to the February 6th club meeting and see Jack Douthitt to complete a questionnaire. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity!

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

By Jean Sher

Happy Bonsai New Year to everyone!

I am excited about the year ahead for MBS members and guests. I am honored to have been selected to serve as President. The MBS officers and Board are a diverse and dynamic group who share a passion and joy of bonsai. All of these dedicated people will do their best to bring you all the interesting programs planned for 2007.

The board has developed an interesting and eventful calendar for 2007, with presentations, demonstrations, guest speakers and workshops. Marty Schmalenberg and Jim Doyle will be visiting and offering workshops for MBS members. Novice and Intermediate classes are being formed and the Masters class with Ted Matson is entering its third year. It will be a busy and eventful year.

Added this year will be a display table for trees of a select style at each monthly meeting. Joe Herbert will be searching for volunteers to bring trees for this display and will notify us each month about the featured style. The newsletter will be arriving on line but will also be mailed to those who do not have electronic access. We will also have a new feature in the newsletter, "Mr Information"? will be answering your bonsai questions. There will be a question box at each meeting and questions can also be submitted via email to our editor.

I hope you will attend meetings, join workshops, and volunteer at MBS events. I look forward to seeing you at our meetings, classes and club events during 2007.

The Milwaukee Bonsai Society is ready for the New Year.

See you at our February meeting,

*Jean*

**Please REMEMBER TO  
RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007**  
(See page 5 for renewal form)

**AND DON'T FORGET TO  
RETURN LIBRARY  
MATERIALS!!**



Here is our schedule for 2007. More activities may be added during the course of the year.

## **MBS 2007 Schedule**

**January - no meeting**

**February 6 - Club meeting TOOLS and POTS, Everything You Need To Know**

**March 6 - Club meeting BONSAI AREAS AND GARDENS**

March 17 - Novice Class #1 9AM-Noon

March 31 - Novice Class #2 9AM-Noon

**April 3 - Club meeting - GROUP SLASH**

April 5-13 Ted Matson here (April 7, 9 Master's classes)

April 21 Novice class #3 9AM-Noon

**May 1 - Club meeting - BRING YOUR OWN TREE**

May 1-7 Ted Matson here (May 5-6 Master's classes)

May 12 - Novice class nursery crawl am /class #4 pm

May 19 - Bonsai Workshop at Boerner 9-12

**June 5 - Club meeting - MBS CLUB SHOW**

June 21 - 24 - Ted Matson here (June 23-24 Master's classes)

**July 3 - Club meeting-TBA**

August 2-12 Wisconsin State Fair Bonsai Shows

**August 7 - Club meeting**

**MARTY SCHMALENBERG, GUEST BONSAI MASTER**

**September 4 - Club meeting-TBA**

September 15 - Public workshop 9AM-Noon

September 27-30 Ted Matson here (September 29-30 Master's classes)

**October 2 - Club meeting –**

**TED MATSON – MASTER'S CLASSES FINALE**

**November 6 -Club Meeting –**

**WHITE ELEPHANT AUCTION**

**December 4 – HOLIDAY PARTY**



Photos are from the  
November Holiday Folk Fair  
Display (Taken by Delores  
Day)



## HOW OLD ARE TROPICAL TREES?

by Houston Sanders

This article has little to do with growing bonsai. But it started with a question inspired by my bonsai, and gives a bit of information about trees that we should all know.

Recently I sawed a 1" branch off the lower trunk of a ficus bonsai. There were about 35 rings! This got me interested... I think that it is very unlikely that the tree is over 35 years old. So why does it have so many rings? And, if the rings don't show the age, how *do* you tell the age of a tropical tree anyway?

The age of our trees is one of the fascinations of bonsai. As bonsai growers, we all know that the size of a tree is a very poor indicator of age. A tree's age is usually most evident in the appearance of the bark. Other little details such as the ramification of branches, development of tapered trunks and branches, and ability to flower also give us an indication of age. Professional researchers determine the ages of trees by drilling out a small cylinder of wood from the trunk and counting the rings. But that only works with trees that have a well-defined seasonal growth cycle - the ones that form one ring each year. In the tropics, the age is a little harder to determine. A sample from the core of the tree must be tested by radiocarbon analysis to get the age.

One would think that tropical trees aren't very old. Everyone knows that tropics grow quickly - 10 feet a year is typical for many species. But researchers were surprised to find that tropical trees are often quite old. Scientists found that more than 50% of trees growing in undisturbed areas of the Amazon are greater than 300 years old. Amazon trees as old as 1400 years have been found<sup>1</sup>. How can this be when the tropics grow so fast? It seems that tropical trees are capable of growing quickly when water, nutrients and sunlight are all in sufficient supply. But typically, they grow slowly in the shade of larger trees in the nutrient-poor jungle soil. So it may take centuries for a tree to reach a height and root spread that assures it sufficient sunlight and nutrients.

How long can tropical trees live? The oldest known tropical tree, and also the oldest cultivated tree is a *Ficus religiosa* in Sri Lanka that has been grown in a temple garden since 288 BC. Some of the oldest documented tropical tree species include the Brazil Nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and Monkey Nut (*Cariniana micrantha*), Cumaru (*Dipteryx odorata*), Angelim de Mata (*Hymenolobium* sp.) which have all been documented at over 1200 yrs of age. Interestingly, the Amazon trees that turned out to be the oldest were not remarkable specimens. All reached the highest level of the rainforest canopy at over 50m (165 ft) tall, but had relatively slender trunks (less than 4m diameter), much the same as many other surrounding trees<sup>2</sup>. Due to the expense and difficulty of testing the age of tropics, few have been dated, so it is likely that much older individuals of each species exist. I have seen no similar data from trees of the African rainforest.

OK, what do all that mean for my tree, the one with 35 rings on a branch? Unfortunately, not too much. My tree is a willow leaf ficus (*Ficus nerifolia*). It does not require a dormant period. Like many tropics, it puts out a spurt of growth whenever heat, water, nutrients and sunlight are all in sufficient supply. And each spurt may create a ring. So the rings tell me nothing about the age, especially since I know very little about the history of the tree before I acquired it. Based on the size and other appearances of age, I would guess that it is 15-20 years old. And carbon dating doesn't work well below 100 years... so I'll just guess and exaggerate like everyone else.

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<sup>1</sup> Vieira, Simon et al., *Slow growth rates of Amazonian trees: Consequences for carbon cycling*, Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2005 December 20; 102(51): 18502-18507.

<sup>2</sup> Lewington, A. and Parker, E., *Ancient Trees*, (Collins and Brown, 1999).

# ***THE GREATEST BONSAI SHOW IN THE WEST!***

**September 15-16 2007**



In 2005, in an effort to show my students and friends what can be achieved by ordinary folks like them, I organized a trip to visit the **Ginkgo Exhibition and Awards** in Belgium. Everyone who joined us, from relative newcomers to experienced artists like Bill Valavanis and Julian Adams, was deeply affected by what they saw. Everyone returned to the United States with a greater insight, a new vision, and a new goal.

Following the overwhelming success of the 2005 trip, I have decided to repeat the trip for the 2007 event.

***If you only attend one bonsai event in 2007, this should be the one!***

Learn more about the [Ginkgo Exhibition and Awards](#)

The location: [Ghent, Belgium](#) one of Europe's most beautiful and historic towns

Affordable price for a great trip: [Itinerary and cost](#)

I have always maintained that the best way to learn how to create fine bonsai is to get up close and personal with as many bonsai masterpieces as possible. Europe is blessed with some of the greatest artists and teachers outside Japan - plus a "competitive camaraderie" between nations and a thousand year-old artistic heritage. Now is YOUR chance to see for yourself the finest bonsai in Europe, from professionals and amateurs alike, as well as to meet and mingle with some of Europe's top bonsai artists. While you're there, sample the history, food, beer and artistic culture of one of the most beautiful old cities in Europe.

**Please join us on this important trip. I promise you will never regret it!**

*Colin Lewis*



**Photos From Folk Fair Show**  
(by Dolores Day)







P.O. Box 198  
Brookfield, WI 53008-0198  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next Meeting of MBS  
7PM, Tuesday, Feb. 4  
Grace Lutheran Church  
3030 W. Oklahoma

## MEET THE 2007 OFFICERS

The new Officers for 2007 are:

President	Jean Sher
First VP	Scott Hurula
Second VP	Gregg Wein
Secretary	Susan Coleman
Treasurer	Mary Turner
Director	Allen Koszarek
Director	John Moore
Director	Michelle Zimmer
Past Pres.	Kris Ziemann



### Other Club Functions:

Houston Sanders – Newsletter Editor  
Pam Woythal – Webmaster  
Josh Rageth – Librarian  
Jean Sher - Distribution / Telephone  
response  
Mary Turner - Membership Chairperson

*Children stumbling  
Laughing in the falling snow  
Childhood remembered*

- Joe Nemec