

April 2007

Bonsai News

APRIL MEETING – Group Slash

The MBS April meeting is our most anticipated and most feared (depending on whether you are a person or a tree). Yes, it is the *Group Slash!* We will form teams and each group will attempt to style nursery material into bonsai. At the end of the night, as the world holds its breath, a winner is chosen. And then you get the opportunity to bid in an auction for the newly styled masterpieces. (You know that you all need more trees to replace the ones that died in this month's cold weather!)

Please bring along tools if you have them.

NEW IDEA ---A Monthly Display

By Jack Douthitt

Starting in April, we will feature a small display of bonsai related items at our monthly meetings. The purpose of this display is to heighten the awareness of the other aspects of bonsai besides the trees, although less common tree styles may be used. This is not a judged show, but a "peoples' choice" award may be given out. Space will be very limited, but we will try to accommodate all objects. Usually the display will coordinate with the topic of the evening.

Here is the Display Calendar for 2007:

2007 Display Schedule

April - Alumni from previous "group slash" meetings, dead or alive

May - Accent plants

June - Raft style bonsai

July - Bunjin (literati) style bonsai

August - Ficus bonsai, any species

September - no display, club show

October - no display- masterclass "finale" display

November - Suiseki

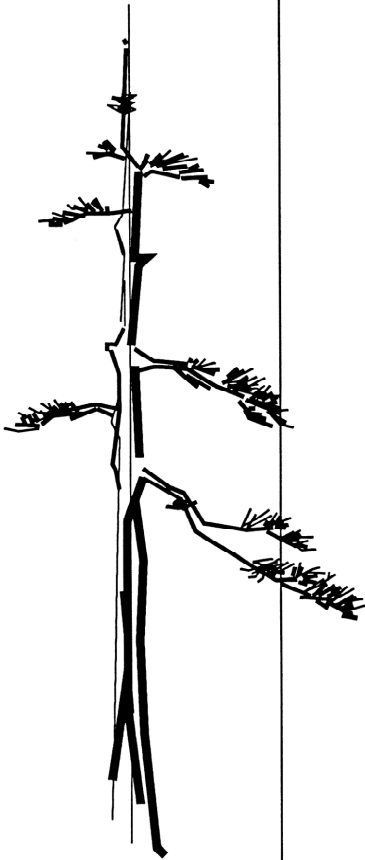
December - no display, Christmas

Joe Herbert is responsible for this great idea and will be coordinating and setting up the display. Please contact him with your offerings for the display, or if the time is short, bring what you wish to the meeting. You can reach Joe at cell: 414.520.0753 or by e-mail at club_jose@yahoo.com.

FREE! FREE! FREE!

(Do we have your attention?)

Every member who wears his or her MBS name badge to the April meeting will receive a prize - a genuine mud-man figure! So dig through your desk, your glove compartment, your toolbox or your safe deposit box and wear that badge proudly! When you arrive for the April meeting, see Mary, the MBS Treasurer, who will also check (Continued on next page)



Milwaukee
Bonsai Society

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

Information Line
414-299-9229

NEXT MEETING

April 3, 7 PM
Grace Lutheran
Church

to see if your membership is current. First come, first pick! (And keep that badge handy for all meetings - you really need it for things like borrowing materials from our library, participating in club White Elephant sales, etc.)

President's Message

By Jean Sher

Happy Spring to everyone!!!

It is such a relief to know that Spring Bonsai Season is here. This is such an interesting time for our bonsai trees. New leaf buds indicate that trees have survived the cold and snow, and the roots are active again. Now we can begin to prune and repot those trees that we have studied and thought about so much during the winter. Somewhere among these trees is this year's Wisconsin State Fair's winner!

April MBS meeting's Slash is my personal starting point for bonsai season. "Bonsai by Committee" produces some very interesting results and definitely creates positive energy, lots of fun and personal connections for our members. Remember to bring your tools. It is also a necessary precaution to mark your tools in some easily identifiable way, as we frequently share tools, and find a few lost tools during clean up. This year's Slash will be great fun, with a prize for the judge's favorite tree. This year we invite anyone who has a tree from a previous "Slash" to bring it to show at a special display table. Please try remember the year when you "slashed" it.

This is also the time to begin picking out the tree you intend to work with at the May meeting. May will be a BYOT (Bring Your Own Tree) you will also need to bring your own tools and wire. Taking "Before and After" photos are a good idea for your bonsai tree records.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the April meeting.

Jean

Crepe Myrtle cascade.
August 2006, Chicago.
Photo by Maria Sanders

MAHONE MIDDLE SCHOOL BONSAI CLUB NEWS

THANK YOU to the Milwaukee Bonsai Society for becoming our Official Sponsor. Many MBS members have donated trees, pots, and workshop help. Without your support for our club we would not be able to exist.

Now we are asking again for your support. We have been invited to travel to the Ginkgo Exhibition 2007 in Ghent, Belgium in September. We have received Kenosha School Board approval and are beginning our fundraising efforts. We estimate that it will cost each of the students \$1500 to participate. We are looking for corporate funding to help us reach our goal. We will be doing fundraising at school and in the community as well. If you have connections to businesses or corporations that have funding programs please help us connect with them to seek funding.

Ms Sher is our MBS contact person, so please let her know if you think of something that will help us get to the Ginkgo Exhibition in September.

Sincerely,

The Mahone Bonsai Club Members



Electronic Newsletter

As your omnipotent newsletter editor, I would like to say a few words about the new electronic newsletter. It is not an easy process to wean the club away from the familiar and comfortable printed and mailed documents. I ask your patience as a new routine is established.

There have been a few complaints from members, and I have tried to respond to them below:

1. *I didn't get the e-mail!*

Unfortunately, internet e-mail is unreliable (to say the least). If you didn't get the newsletter by e-mail, just log on to the MBS website (www.milwaukeebonsai.org). Each new month's newsletter is supposed to be put onto the website by the 25th of the month. If you are a member in good standing, you should have the password.

2. *I like to read the newsletter as a printed copy!*

Well, that's why you have a printer on your computer... And there is also the option to receive a mailed printed copy, although you will have to pay an additional newsletter fee to offset the cost of mailing and printing.

3. *But I like to use my newsletter as toilet paper when I'm done reading it!*

Hmm... you will have to take that one up with Jean.

2007 Club Events Calendar

March

March 31- Novice Class #2 9AM-Noon

April

April 3 - Club meeting - Group SLASH

April 7, 9 - Master's classes

April 21 Novice Class #3 9AM-Noon

May

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

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

June 5 - Club meeting - CREATING A RAFT PLANTING

June 23-24 Master's classes

June 30- JIM DOYLE WORKSHOP

July

July 3 - Club meeting-

JIM DOYLE, GUEST BONSAI ARTIST

August

August 2 - 12 - WI State Fair Bonsai Shows

August 4- MARTY SCHMALENBERG WORKSHOP

August 7 - Club meeting-MARTY SCHMALENBERG, GUEST BONSAI ARTIST

MBS Meetings and Information Line:

The Milwaukee Bonsai Society meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 3030 W. Oklahoma Avenue. Call the MBS Voice Mail/Message System at (414) 299-9229 to learn about upcoming events and meeting times. To contact the club via email: mbs@asapnet.net Look for us on the web at: <http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org>

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Guest Artist Series....

Who Is Jim Doyle?

By Michelle Zimmer

Artist, teacher, horticulturist, dancer, poet, tree-collector---Jim wears many hats, but mostly he is interested in a life filled with plants and art in all of its forms. He continues learning by teaching and observing bonsai all over the world. We will be privileged to see him demonstrate his styling skill at our July 3, 2007 club meeting.

Jim Doyle has been acquainted with bonsai since 1973 and actively involved with all aspects of bonsai on a daily basis since 1984. He is the founder and owner of Nature's Way Nursery, Harrisburg, PA, which offers classes, tools, material and books. He travels extensively to lecture and demonstrate on bonsai and Japanese garden design. He is committed to seeing bonsai elevated from hobby status to the art form that it is.

Jim is a founder of the Susquehanna bonsai club and has studied with and been influenced by great bonsai artists including Chase Rosade, Yugi Yoshimura, Bill Valvanis, Walter Pall and others. He believes that the best trees come from naturally- aged, collected material and will be demonstrating on a pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) about 50 years old which he personally collected in Pennsylvania. The style will be literati or "bunjin" (Please see article elsewhere in this issue)—a most elegant and artistic style that often "dances." The tree will be auctioned at the end of the evening.

A reasonably priced workshop including material, limited to 8 people will be offered to club members **only** on Saturday, June 30 from 9a.m. to 1 p.m., so please mark your calendars. Private workshops with individuals or groups can be arranged for Sunday, July 1, Monday, July 2, or Tuesday July 3. The cost is \$300 for the first 3 hours, and \$250 for the second workshop on the same day. Jim is a gentle and patient teacher and time with him is a wonderful experience, so consider getting a group together to make this affordable. Please contact Scott Hurula as soon as possible to reserve your time with Jim.

Just Goofing Around – Root Trimming for Field-Grown Trees

By Houston Sanders

In attempt to provide new material for your reading pleasure, I decided to take a camera with me this year as I play with my bonsai. (You "artists" can take yourselves as seriously as you like, but I will insist that we are all just playing). I don't pretend that I do things right, but maybe the photos will help someone, or at least inspire some thought.

The photo below shows a Japanese hornbeam after I dug it from the garden. This is what your tree's roots



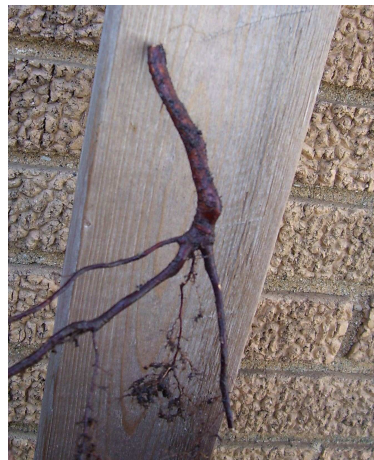
aren't supposed to look like. I don't know how they got so tangled, but that's why you dig 'em up and prune 'em every 2 years when they are growing in the ground. After untangling, the roots and cutting, the next photo shows what was left. There's no danger in cutting off a lot of roots in early spring! Also, the tree was placed back in the ground, but this time a board was placed beneath the roots, and they were spread evenly over it to correct some of the c-shaped curves. Sorry, I didn't get a photo of that. NOTE: Electronic files are cool. Try viewing the pictures at 500%... You can see a lot of detail!

Now here is something fun that I am sure many have never tried. Did you ever notice that when you cut off a long root, it often looks just like a little tree? Well, why not plant it as such? The photo below shows the roots cut off from the same Japanese hornbeam.



Now I've never tried this with a hornbeam before, but I expect it to work just fine. I can guarantee that it works for elm, ficus, apple and many other species. Ever seen photos of the fat little 6-inch stumps of hornbeams that are collected for bonsai? Just stumps with no branches... If something like that can sprout buds and grow into a new tree, then these cuttings should do so as well.

Next photos show an example of a cutting before and after it is trimmed to remove fine roots from the top four inches, then potted. I leave as much of the root above the soil surface as possible, on the theory that this provides more space for new buds to come out.



Yes, there will be a slight reverse taper. But if you plan to let the tree grow in the ground a few years until it becomes the size of the parent tree, I expect that the reverse taper problem goes away.

I will let you know if the root cuttings work. If they don't, who cares? It was fun to try.



MBS Program Advisory Board What Is It? What Does It Do?

By Michelle Zimmer

This committee of 3 MBS members was established in 2002 following that financially successful convention to manage the convention profits for the benefit of the membership. Monies from this fund can be used for programs which are beyond the financial constraints of the club's treasury.

For example, when a group of 16 intermediate and advanced level members wanted to improve their skills, the "masterclass" was formed in 2004, which elected Ted Matson as sensei for a 3 year commitment to regular work and study. The financial commitment for this undertaking was considerable and prohibitive for some members. The Program Advisory Board (PAB) approved this program and the fund is underwriting a portion of the cost of this program. Each individual student is benefiting, but must "pay back" the club by passing on his new- found knowledge to the rest of the members.

In 2007, a group of 15 novice level members will undertake a one year intermediate class consisting of 4 one day sessions with teachers elected from the 2004 masterclass. Funds will underwrite some of the teaching materials which will make the class an affordable value for those wishing to participate.

Any club member can make a recommendation to the PAB for a program that would benefit the entire club, but is beyond the financial constraints of the club treasury. Programs should be open to all club members, and include the idea, the logistics of setting up the program, an estimate of the costs, the likely benefits, and identity of the program director.

Ideas can be submitted in writing to any of the 3 current PAB members who are Jeff Moths, Ron Fortmann and Michelle Zimmer.

TREESTUMP's BONSAI ADVICE

By Joe Herbert

Do you need some advice on Bonsai?

Please be as specific as possible with your questions to increase the chances of getting a correct answer. All answers are researched either in text, from experienced artists and masters, or just plain guessed at. Names won't be printed unless asked to protect your privacy. Send your question to Tree.Stump@yahoo.com.

Q: After I repotted my Korean Hornbeam, I put it in the laundry tub to water it. Unfortunately, I forgot it was there and did a load of laundry. So, my hornbeam has been through a wash and fabric softener cycle. I took it outside and really watered it. Any thoughts? C.

A: The soap shouldn't hurt your tree, rather it should help with fertilizing because of the phosphates and also soap helps kill bugs. Now as for the fabric softener its 24% alcohol and also has ethanol in it, that could be very deadly to the beneficial bacteria and the tree. Chances are that because your tree is still quite dormant it really didn't swallow to much of the wash water. Your quick flushing afterward's probably saved your tree but I would recommend removing every trace of soil with a hose and re potting once again to give your Hornbeam the best chance of survival.

Q: I'm confused... I read that I should start fertilizing my trees as soon as they leaf out, but I also read that if I do this, the leaves will be large and the internodes long which is what I've been fighting against. So, when should I begin fertilizing my deciduous trees? What about conifers? M.

A: On established trees you can begin a slow release fertilizing program such as cottonseed meal (75%) and bone meal (25%). Nitrogen is what causes the larger leaflets and internodes and should be kept to a minimum at this time. On repotted trees you should wait for a few months before fertilizing to avoid root burn. Conifers enjoy a light feeding during the winter since they don't go completely dormant.

Literati Bonsai

By Jack Douthitt

The painters of the Southern School of Chinese Landscape Painting turned their backs on the "refined" world of their times and became wanderers and hermits. They immersed themselves in Buddhism, contemplation, painting, poetry and calligraphy. They were called "literati."

The trees in their paintings had tall, elongated trunks with only a few branches on them. The line of the trunks, and the branches, was strong, angular, and often contained abrupt shifts in direction. Generally the trunks were very abstract, reminiscent of calligraphy, and reflected the literati's constant search for freedom. But they also suggest, with haunting beauty, trees found growing in very rugged and spectacular settings. Literati bonsai are named after the style of trees shown in the paintings of these artists.

Although a literati bonsai is a simple style, it has no specific form. It may be an informal upright, slant, semi-cascade or full cascade style bonsai. Generally, but not always, it is a tree with a single trunk.

The trunk does not have to be massive but should move in three dimensions to give movement and depth to the composition. The trunk may be gnarled and sharply angular or flowing and sinuous. Taper is a plus, but not absolutely necessary. Driftwood is always an option. Since the trunk is the most important design element of the bonsai, it must always exhibit grace and beauty. The branches are few in number and are very short in comparison to the height of the tree. Generally they originate close to the top of the tree and have sparse foliage to continue the image of stark beauty. Literati bonsai are potted in shallow, understated, pots to emphasize the line of the trunk.

Using primarily line and asymmetrical balance the literati bonsai captures the essence of a tree of great age, living under extreme weather conditions. Every tree has a story to tell and a tree in the literati style, like good poetry, tells us a great deal with just a few lines.



A literati bonsai from the 2006 MABA show
Photo by Maria Sanders



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

Next Meeting of MBS
7PM, Tuesday, April 3
Grace Lutheran Church
3030 W. Oklahoma

MEET THE 2007 OFFICERS

The MBS 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 Rabeth – Librarian
Jean Sher - Distribution / Telephone
response
Mary Turner - Membership Chairperson



*Gusty winds blow cold
Snow weeping in the warm sun
Winter's sting is gone
- Joe Nemec*