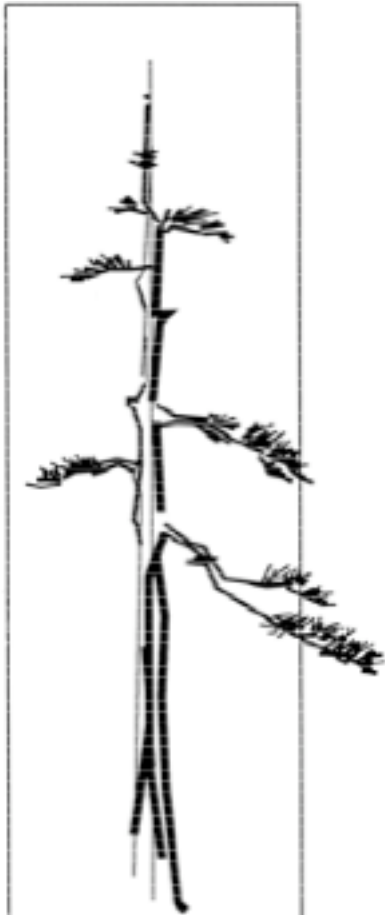


May 2009

# Bonsai News



*Milwaukee  
Bonsai Society*

P.O. Box 198  
Brookfield, WI  
53008-0198

*Information Line  
414-299-9229*

The **May Club Meeting** will feature **Warren Hill** who was first introduced to Bonsai in 1960 while living in the Los Angeles area of California.

After this initial exposure Warren went on to study the rich Japanese culture that spawned this unique art form. In addition to his Asian studies, Warren majored in engineering and horticulture while attending college. Warren's formal Bonsai studies and training has been with a wide variety of Japanese sensei, (teachers) which include such notables as John Yoshio Naka and Saburo Kato.

In 1974 Warren began teaching. Since 1974 Warren has conducted lectures, demonstrations and workshops for numerous State, National and International Bonsai Organizations.

In 1996, the Federal Government, U.S.D.A., Agricultural Research Service selected Warren, to be the Supervisory Curator for the United States Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

On September 30, 2001, Warren retired after serving as head of the Museum's staffing and operations for five years.

(Continued on page 2)

## MAY

May 5 - CLUB MEETING  
Guest Artist: Warren Hill  
Exhibit flowering trees  
May 23 - Nursery Trip

## JUNE

June 2 - CLUB MEETING  
Root Over Rock Phase 1  
placing a tree on a rock  
Root Over Rock Phase 2  
uncover roots & transplant  
Cutting Swap

## JULY

July 7 - CLUB MEETING  
Kusamono/Accent plants  
Dressing/cleaning  
wounds & cuts / Pot swap  
Exhibit preparation  
Sunday July 26th  
Workshop - Cookout

## AUGUST

August 4 - CLUB MEETING  
Guest Artist:  
Suthin Sukosolvisit  
Exhibit Shohin trees -  
Workshops - TBD  
Suthin Sukosolvisit  
material provided  
August 6-16 - STATE FAIR

## NEXT MEETING

May 5 - 7 pm  
Grace Lutheran Church

## President's Message

Blooming Crocus, Daffodil, and Striped squill are a welcome sight... hopefully marking the end of winter weather. All the books tell you to transplant at the end of March. My trees haven't read those books and are still in bed. So right now I'm just concentrating on wiring and shaping. I call it shaping because what I try to do is when placing a branch I study the way the branch fits into the negative space. Adjusting the bends so you create a pleasing shape not only in the branch but more importantly in the space around the branch. The negative areas are the open places where there are no trunks, branches or leaves. These spaces are little windows or pictures with the trees structure acting as their frames. Keep the shape of the frames interesting, and also if you can see something through a window make sure it is something worth seeing.

Last month we had a fun meeting with Pat Coen's viewing stone talk. He really makes something that's all around us, ( like rocks) exciting. I've had the pleasure of collecting with Pat a few times, he really knows his stuff. Pat has also donated some stones to MBS to be raffled off. Thanks Pat!

This month we have another real entertainer, Warren Hill. Warren is as gifted in banter as bonsai knowledge. He really puts on a great show, (come early for parking on this one). Those who took Warren Hill's last workshop on forests plantings are invited to bring them along to show.

There will also be a display of flowering trees. Anyone with a tree in bloom is welcome to display it. Blooming permitted.

- Joe H.

## Warren Hill (continued from page 1)

After leaving Federal service, Warren and his wife Sharon relocated to Sharon's home state of Tennessee. He maintains a busy teaching schedule at Tree-Haven, Warren Hill's School of Bonsai located in Greeneville, Tennessee and throughout the Nation.

We are honored to have him and his demonstration should not be missed.

### *Warren Hill Workshop*

An all day bring- your-own workshop with Warren Hill is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5 from 9-5. The cost is \$100. There are still 3 openings available. If you are interested, please contact Jack D. at 414.228.9628. The location will depend on the total number of participants, weather, etc.

Warren Hill is an internationally known artist and teacher, a former curator of the Bonsai Collection at the National Arboretum, an excellent designer and thoughtful horticulturist. With his wife, Sharon, he is the owner of Tree-Haven School of Bonsai in Greeneville, Tennessee. His website, ***warrenhillbonsai.com*** is wonderful and is worth reviewing if you are thinking about participating in the workshop or are curious about what you will see at his club demo in the evening.

### **Flowering Tree Display**

In conjunction with the Warren Hill demonstration at the May meeting, we will be hoping to show a selection of flowering trees. If you have a tree or trees that you can coerce into flower around May 5<sup>th</sup>, please bring them to the meeting. If you have any trees that you would like to display at the May show, please let me know by May 1 so that I have a feel for the display space needed. Jeff 414.962.5088

## **A Handy Dandy Guide to Shopping in a Garden Center - 2009**

excerpts from the COLUMBUS BONSAI SOCIETY  
by Zack Clayton

It is possible to reduce any tree and keep it in a pot as bonsai. Some are easier than others, a few will look better than the rest. How do we ferret out those few gems? How can we elicit a response such as, "Now that is a nice tree"?

**How are your horticultural skills?** If you have a green thumb that can keep anything alive, you can go for more material than the rest of us. There is advice in a lot of books that the discard pile is a good place to get interesting trees. Most likely, those trees are not going to be healthy, misshaped and interesting trees. The healthy trees sell to the people who do not care about shape or are put into special "Pre-bonsai" (expensive) areas. The discards are usually sick or dying. There may be some interesting things there, but can you keep it alive?

**How much time do you want to spend for something that looks good?** If you want, a nice looking instant bonsai look for a tree that is already "bonsai -ish". They are out there; you just have to look at more plants to find them. Do not be afraid to look at plants that are not traditional bonsai material. Some bushes adapt very well to a bonsai style.

**Okay, so what should you look for?**

Look for a nice trunk. Try to find a trunk with some taper built in. If there is no taper but the rest of the tree has good potential, are there branches low down that could thicken the trunk and then be sacrificed? Does the trunk have movement or is it a straight stick? A straight stick might be okay for a formal upright. If it bends and

turns, is there a pleasant movement or rhythm in the motion? If you think you can bend the trunk with wire, is it big enough to form a nice tree in your time line? Above all remember, an ugly trunk will thicken, heal scars, sprout, or do other things, but if the shape is ugly, it will just get bigger ugly.

**Branches are a good thing to have on nursery stock.** You can always cut them off. But if they are not there does the species back bud? Can you graft a new branch on and hide the graft scar? Also, do the branches look normal (the big branches at the bottom and thinner, smaller ones at the top)? A big thick branch at the top is hard to keep and have it look good. Cutting it off is an option, but how will that affect the rest of the top? Beware of cultivars. Some are for street planting, and that usually means the branches will try to grow straight up. You can still develop a nice bonsai with these, but be prepared to wire it down every spring.

This touches on another aspect of the branching; **does the growth habit support the tree you see in the plant?** Do you see many J. Procumbens nana or green carpet junipers as formal uprights? Are there many cascade maples? They probably exist, but they do not show up in coffee table books.

**Check the roots.** You can probably reject 95% of what you do not want with above the soil checks. Once you start messing around with finding the root base you are getting close to buying the plant. Some places really do not like customers pulling the plant halfway out of the pot or digging down into it to check the nebari. Also, if you are looking for bigger stock, this can get tiring and messy after the 3rd or 4th tree. Do the roots match the trunk? Read up on or ask advice about nebari.

**Think about the size of the tree you want.** Something moderately too big can be cut back with okay results in a short time frame. Small trees will only grow so fast and if it is really too small then maybe that is the size you should plan for the specimen. Small trees that are super-fertilized may bolt and create internodes that are much too long to look good on anything.

**Buy local stock.** You may not have the exotic bristlecone pine, but what you do get locally will probably stay healthy longer. Check that your trees are hardy in zones 4 or 5 (if you are near Lake Michigan) - Milwaukee area.

**Really examine the tree.** If you do not see your bonsai in there someplace, put it down, step away from the plant and look at the next one. Do not buy something "really neat" if you do not see the bonsai in it; leave it for the next person. They may see the potential tree.

If you go to the nursery looking for "something", you will probably find it. The question will be "What is it?" If you go looking for bonsai, one of the plants there will speak to you. Don't be afraid to leave the nursery without a tree. Check again in a few weeks.

Check out:

[www.evergreengardenworks.com](http://www.evergreengardenworks.com)

Bonsai Articles

Nursery Grown Plant Material (for more info on browsing through nurseries) as well as many other articles on bonsai.

## **MBS LIBRARY**

In order to prevent further losses of hard cover books from our library, all members will be required to show a current membership badge to the librarian.

## ***WOODSTOCK, IL NURSERY TRIP PLANNED Saturday May 23***

After reading the above article, you can make use of the information by joining us on a nursery trip on May 23. We'll meet at the Park N' Ride at Moorland and I43 (east side of Moorland / north side of I43) at 9:00 Saturday morning. The nursery (Rich's Fox Willow Pines) is about one hour from the Park N' Ride. Rain or Shine. Rich's will give MBS members a 10% discount.

Call Don G 262-548-0480 or 262-513-8395 to confirm or for more information.

Maps will be available at the May meeting.

## **Flowering Bonsai Trees**

*By Pam W*

Flowering bonsai trees are the most elegant bonsai. Some of the most commonly used varieties for flowering bonsai trees, are bougainvillea, quince, white Serissa, flowering gardenia, cherry, jasmine, pomegranate, hibiscus, olive, lavender, camellia, well the list could go on and on. Here are some links to articles on flowering bonsai:

<http://www.absbonsai.org/articles/azalea.html>

<http://psba.us/articles/Lust/Azaleas.html>

## **INTERMEDIATE CLASS**

There are still a few openings for the Intermediate class. In addition to Michelle Z and Pam W we will also be working with Ron F, Steve C, Houston S, and Scott H. If you are interested, please call or e-mail Susan L 414-744-2808 or [ashwini1890@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ashwini1890@sbcglobal.net) as soon as possible.



**Thank you to our  
2008 outgoing board  
members!**

by Steve C.

Bonsai has been my hobby since the early 90's. One year, while eating fried cheese curds for extra energy and searching out the Dairy building for that over filled cream puff my mind's eye is directing me to, I see a most stunning exhibit in the Horticulture building. It was a show by this very society, and it is all history since then. I've attended many meetings over the years, sat for many shows, and even helped Jean, Allen and Kris set up a show one warm Sunday morning at The Bradley Sculpture Garden. Basically I've been on the receiving end of what has seemed like an effortless array of events that has supported me, in a hobby that I love.

This January, I began a three year commitment to this club as of a member of the Board of directors. I agreed to help Michelle by joining her Silhouette Show Committee and volunteered to head the Newsletter Committee along with Kris and Pam. I rush out of work and drive 45 miles to get to the monthly club and board meetings, on time for a change, and let me tell you all, EFFORTLESS is in no means a description of how things happen in this club.

So what I'm saying here, if you haven't already figured it out is Thank you! Jean S. and Kris Z have ended many long years of service to this club, recently as president and just about every other position possible, and Allen K. has ended a three year term as director. So I, along with the all the members of the current board of directors, and I'm sure all the membership, would like to wish them a heart felt thank you.

**Wiring / Styling Workshop**

There will be another club workshop in June reviewing wiring and styling of bonsai. The dates are tentatively set for either June 13 or 20. Final details will be announced at the May meeting.

***Special Event—***

***Secret Gardens of Wauwatosa***

MBS has traditionally manned a tent at this one day event which will be Saturday, July 11, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine. The starting point for this event is the Kneeland Walker house, 7406 Hillcrest Drive in Wauwatosa. If anyone is interested in managing MBS' participation in this event, please contact Michelle Z. at 414.228.9628.

**Novice Class**

As this newsletter goes to press, we have only 2 members interested in taking a novice class. There will likely not be a formal novice class in 2009. Take advantage of the workshops and more advanced members help during this year. Members are willing to help before or after meetings, and times may be setup at other times with more experienced members.

***2009 Club Inventory***

This year we are due for a club inventory, the first since 2003. Many members have graciously stored Club materials at their homes due to our lack of storage space at the Church. As you are doing your spring cleaning, please make a note of any club materials that you have and report them to our club treasurer, Laura L. And thanks to all who are helping us out.



# Call for Raffle Items

By Pam W

The MBS Board committee has been expanded to "Ways & Means", which means "creative ways to raise money". One of our good, consistent fund raisers has been the raffles that take place at meetings. We have sometimes sold close to 100 raffle tickets, when there was a selection of trees, pots and tools, some very nice ones, donated for the raffle. In recent meetings, however, the raffle seems to have fallen on hard times. Item donations have been sparse, and trees have been even scarcer. As a consequence, ticket sales have been down, and many of those who bought tickets have done so simply to help out the club, rather than any real interest in winning an item. At recent board meetings we have tossed around some suggestions. For now, we will just try putting out a CALL FOR RAFFLE ITEMS.

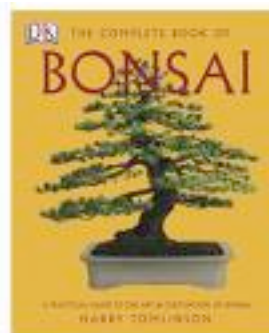
Donations to the raffle may be tax-deductible. If you want a receipt, turn in a note with your name, donated items, and the estimated value (be reasonable!), to the Raffle Manager (see below) or the Treasurer.

We are working to collect items to use in our next Warren Hill event and we need your help! Do you or someone you know have items of value that could be donated? Bring them to the meeting! "Big hits" in the past have included:

- Artwork such as scrolls or jewelry
- Tool roll with tools
- Sara Rayner or large pots
- Bonsai themed Baskets or Wine
- Memorabilia or Collectibles like autographed books or aprons
- Gift Certificates
- And of course Bonsai

Finally, we need a RAFFLE MANAGER. That person's main responsibility would be to collect donated items and cull out diseased or undesirable items, see that raffle tickets get sold, and run the actual drawing. This could be a job for more than one person, rotating the meetings among two or three people would ease the work load. Any volunteers? Please call me at 352-7799, or see me at the meeting. And remember, support the club raffle - donate plants, and buy raffle tickets.

Thank you for your support!



## July Meeting Preview- Kusumono Hands-On Workshop

*By Michelle Z.*

Kusumono is the art of herbaceous tray planting. Combinations of grasses, flowering species and mosses or lichens are created and planted in low tray-like containers. These may serve as a complement to a bonsai, scroll or suiseki, or stand alone as a living work of art.

At the July meeting, I will demonstrate this art form and then any members of the club who wish may join in making their own kusumono. In order to plan for and order plants and pots, I need an idea of how many members will likely want to participate.

Robert Seele has agreed to make some lovely kusumono pots for us for the very reasonable cost of about \$20 each. (Those of you who participated in the Northwestern Mutual workshop will remember the excellent quality and creative design). I am estimating that the soil, wire and plant material will run another \$10 each. You will also have the option to bring your own container for planting, if you wish.

I am asking club members to sign up and prepay me for materials at the May meeting, so if you know, FOR SURE that you want to make a tray planting at the July meeting, please bring cash or check for me to the May meeting.



### IDEA BOX

Do you have suggestions for MBS programs? Workshops? Presenters?



Is there anything you would like the board to know about and feel the membership would benefit from?

If so, please contact Steve C at:

[stefanoo@att.net](mailto:stefanoo@att.net)  
ph 414-837-5953  
c 414-617-9162



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

Next Meeting of MBS  
7PM, Tuesday, May 5  
Grace Lutheran Church  
3030 W Oklahoma

## 2009 MBS OFFICERS

President	Joe H
First VP	Jeff M
Second VP	John M
Secretary	Pam W
Treasurer	Laura L
Director	Jerry N
Director	Steve C
Director	Michelle Z
Past Pres.	Jean S

### Other Club Functions:

Kris Z - Newsletter Editor/Distribution  
Pam W - Webmaster  
Joe N - Librarian  
Pam W - Telephone response



## TRY A LILAC!