


Bonsai News



*Milwaukee
Bonsai Society*

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Ted Matson Program at October Club Meeting

By Pam W

Ted Matson began studying bonsai in 1979 in San Francisco, where he learned the basics under John Boyce. He moved to Los Angeles in 1980, where he became involved in a number of clubs and began a serious pursuit of the art, taking classes from leading masters in Southern California, including Ben Suzuki, Shig and Roy Nagatoshi, Melba Tucker, Warren Hill & John Naka.

Although Ted is a lover of shohin bonsai, his collection includes trees of all sizes, styles and a range of species. They are known for their proportion, refinement and detail.

Ted says one of his strengths is having a good eye for selecting material. A primary goal in his lectures and demonstrations is to help others improve their own abilities to recognize potential bonsai stock. And, he works to help people understand how to realize that potential through creative design and proper styling techniques.

Ted has been our club's sensei (Japanese title used to refer to or address our master instructor) for the past 5 years. This year we will present Ted with a Crape Myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica*. (See picture on next page) The crape myrtle is a

OCTOBER
Oct 6 - CLUB MEETING
Guest Artist: Ted Matson
Exhibit fall coloring trees

NOVEMBER
Nov 3 - CLUB MEETING
grafting techniques by
Mike Yanny of Johnson's
Nursery
Nov 20-22 - FOLK FAIR

DECEMBER
Dec 1 - CLUB MEETING
MBS Club Holiday Pot Luck

small tree with deciduous leaves and known for its short-lived but showy display of flowers which can range in color from deep lilac, through pinks to almost white. For the bonsai collector, crepe myrtle has more to offer than just its flowers. It sheds outer layers of bark from time to time and, depending on the season, the color of the underlying bark can vary from pale gray through rusty brown to almost pink. The result is an extremely attractive mottled appearance of subtle color that is particularly spectacular in fall and winter when there are no leaves to obscure the bark.

Ted will begin his staged development of this crepe myrtle as...
(continued on page 2)

NEXT MEETING
October 6 - 7 pm
Grace Lutheran Church

President's Message

Earlier this month I was invited by the Bay Area Bonsai Society, Green Bay Wisconsin, to do a styling workshop for them. It was really fun to meet everyone as almost the entire club showed up with their trees. I was amazed by the distance some of the members drove to attend the meeting. Each person was full of enthusiasm and brought very good material, much that was collected. Unfortunately time was very limited and only a few minutes could be spent with each person. Hopefully they will join us at the State Fair some time in the near future. If you are invited to present at smaller clubs like this one please don't hesitate to go. People out there are starving for our knowledge. While we in the Milwaukee Bonsai Society are blessed with countless opportunities to get a bonsai education, it is not as easy for other smaller clubs to afford the kind of artists, classes, and workshops that we offer. They need, and would really appreciate, any kind of help or advice that you can offer them. That same enthusiasm was present at our public workshop where almost thirty new members were welcomed into our club. Each went home with their own beautified bonsai and a great big smile. There is also a follow up workshop planned for the new members to review their trees, hopefully all the instructors that came will be available to assist their same students in the progress of the soon to be bonsai masterpieces. The Milwaukee Bonsai Society welcomes the class of 2009 and looks forward to meeting and working with each one of you!

- Joe H

Please be prepared to vote for the 2010 MBS Executive Board at the October meeting.



Ted Matson Program (continued from page 1)

it will be owned by the club and in the foster tree program (contact Pam if you are interested in fostering this tree). He will discuss/analyze this tree with an eye toward future refinement. The preliminary shaping and critique of the tree's potential will be the elements or processes that help to create the highest levels of bonsai expression. In future programs we can look forward to Ted repotting, refining, and explaining the tree's development.

Thank you to Susan L, Scott H and Mary T who served on the nominating committee. Following is a list of candidates for the 2010 Executive Board. If you wish to add your name to the following slate, please contact Susan at 414-744-2808 or ashwini1890@sbcglobal.net or you may nominate someone from the floor at a Club meeting.

President	Pam W
1st Vice President	John M
2nd Vice President	Greg P
Secretary	Jorge R
Treasurer	Kris Z
Director - 3 year position	Judy H

Those with terms to finish:
Director - 2 year position Steve C
Director - 1 year position Jerry N

Join a Ted Matson Study Group!

By Steve Carini

Six years ago, I considered myself a true novice to bonsai. When I received a letter from Jack Douthitt describing a program of study that would advance my knowledge, experience and enjoyment of the art of bonsai, I was fast to fill out my application. Along with 15 other club members, I began a journey of study with Ted Matson, which has proved to be all that Jack had described it would be.

You see up until then, I had taken a workshop or two with a couple of artists that our club had brought in, subscribed to the BCI Magazine and had even asked Jack if he would mentor me by spending a few days per year working on trees. Except for the time I spent with Jack, most of the other workshops taught me to initially design that chosen tree, and then left me on my own. As many of you have probably experienced, I'd leave the workshop wondering if this ugly stump that was seatbelted into the passenger seat next to me, would ever turn into anything. I'd go home, set it on my bench along with a lot of other trees that were overgrown and screaming for help, and wonder how I would ever really understand what to do next.

Well here I am six years later, and even though this study group was initially named the "Master's Class", I am now clear as a bell that the "master" referred to in its title is certainly not me! And what I also realize is that I have grown a great deal in my knowledge, experience and enjoyment of bonsai... just like Jack intuitively knew would happen. I no longer have a bench full of out of control trees displaying a mind of their own but rather, I have trees in many different stages of development. Some are very young and are in an active growth phase, others are beginning to resemble a tree in nature and a few are waiting for that final branch to ramify.

Ted approaches teaching with only one goal in mind, and that is to help each student learn just what it will take to develop a tree. He will not pick up your tree, snip a few branches, tell you what to do next and move on. He may suggest the best front by helping you to see the nebari and other qualities that are hidden. He will help you recognize if a pest is present or if there is another health issue and what steps you

might take to correct it. He'll help you understand the species-specific skills for branch development and, after working with you for a few sessions, he will be the first to acknowledge when you are really getting it. The key here is that he will see your trees and work with you on a repeating basis.

I encourage any of you who are interested in developing your skill in bonsai, especially if you consider yourself to be a novice, to commit to participating in a Ted Matson study group next year. The group of club members who are currently studying with Ted has grown to 24 and I bet that any of them will tell you that it has been more than they have expected. I'm confident that you will enjoy being a part of the Matson study group in 2010. I know I will.

More thoughts...

At the meeting following my registration for the 2009 Ted Matson workshop, a few members asked me if I was now in the "Advanced" ability level of Bonsai, since I was taking the Ted Matson workshop. "Absolutely not!", was my reply. Apparently, Ted Matson workshops had the reputation as being for the Advanced students. Since I had participated in a one-day workshop with Ted the previous spring, I assumed that his 2009 workshop series was open to members as well. I had been impressed with Ted's teaching style and vast knowledge of Bonsai techniques and the dates fit into my personal calendar. So I signed-up for Ted Matson's 2009 series.

Far from an "Advanced" student. I consider myself to be an "Advanced Beginner." There is so much to learn about the art of Bonsai and I tend to benefit from reviewing or even relearning techniques. Like wiring. Ted demonstrated how to make a "staple-shaped" wire to secure screens to the drainage holes; and that a sharp tug on the wire will secure the tree into place. Simple ideas, but two that I had not retained. With regards to his teaching style, Ted rarely touched the trees

himself. He is very thoughtful. After consideration, he will make suggestions to the student. If the student agrees, Ted, with his eyeglasses perched on his forehead, will guide the student through the process.

Although most of the students in my Ted Matson group are "Advanced Students" I never felt that I did not belong there. In fact, I felt that studying with Ted has been a wonderful opportunity for me. None of the students seemed hindered by my modest skill level. We each have our designated time limit with Ted. Ted works with each person as an individual, not as members of a particular ability level. Ted Matson's teaching style is one of a "guide." To me, this is the sign of a good teacher, one who encourages and guides his/her students with the goal of improving the individual's Bonsai artistry. MBS members who do not know Ted, will have the opportunity to meet him and see him in action at the October Club meeting.

- Pat B

Club Vendors

Jeff M

There are two classes of vendors for MBS. Regular Vendors, which may be present at all club functions during the year, and Term Vendors, which are limited to 2 club functions per year.

The requirements for Regular Vendors are:

1. Filing with the MBS Treasurer a current Wisconsin Department of Revenue Sellers Permit, AND:
2. Donation of \$35.00 to the Treasurer for the current club year.

The requirement for Term Vendors is:

1. Donation, to the Treasurer, of \$5.00 at close of each club activity (maximum of 2).

2010 TED MATSON STUDY GROUPS FORMING...

Novice, Intermediate, Advanced students are all welcomed. A sign up sheet will be available at the next Club Meeting (Oct. 6) where Ted will be our featured artist! Ted will be coming to Milwaukee March 8-14 and Oct 23-24 (and a few days after that weekend).

*Day and evening classes will be offered.

*Private and semi-private lessons will be offered to those who are in one of Ted's 2010 classes).

The costs will be discussed with interested parties at a future meeting when we have an idea how many MBS members will be participating.

For more information contact:

Steve C (414-837-5953 / stefanoo@att.net
or Kris Z (262-512-1228 / hagr8d@mac.com).

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Club show:

Novice:

- 1st Ficus Benjimina - Devon C
- 2nd Ficus Benjimina - Devon C
- 3rd Green Island Ficus - Barb S

Intermediate:

- 1st Trident Maple - Jerry N
- 2nd Amur Maple - Don G
- 3rd Juniper - Mike N

Advanced:

- 1st Juniper - Joe H
- 2nd Ponderosa Pine - Steve C
- 3rd Liquidamber - Pam W

Open:

- 1st Juniper rock planting - Houston S
- 2nd Ficus - Houston S
- 3rd Bougainvillea - Susan L

BEST OF SHOW and PEOPLE'S CHOICE:
Juniper rock planting - Houston S

Suthin workshops in 2010!

MBS members, we have a great opportunity to learn to do better BONSAI!! The talented artist Suthin Sukosolvisit has agreed to return to our club in 2010. Full day workshops are planned for the weekends of July 31, August 1 and again September 25, 26, 2010. ALL members at ALL levels are welcome to participate. The details of the costs and location are being worked out now, but costs will likely be \$80-\$100 per day. There will be a planning meeting for all interested students soon.

We know that many members are interested in material being provided, and we have asked Suthin if he will have material for us from his nursery.

Get on board early with your preferred dates by calling Judy H. @ 262.245.6465 or Michelle Z. @ 414.228.99628.

**VOLUNTEERS AND TREES NEEDED for
FOLK FAIR**
Friday November 20 - Sunday November 22
Sign up at the Club meeting.

Grafting Presentation at the November Club Meeting!

By Steve Carini

So often I've had a tree that needs a branch where there isn't one. I've tried many techniques to stimulate a bud to develop. I've turned that side of the tree to the sun, tried to inflict a wound to the spot, in hopes it might stimulate a bud to form... and I've prayed! Well if any of you have had a similar problem, help is on the way.

Mike Yanny, of Johnson's Nursery, will be giving a lecture on grafting at the November meeting. Mike is the chief plant propagator for Johnsons Nursery and an interesting, knowledgeable and entertaining speaker. I first met Mike when he gave a talk to the Hort. Club while I was studying Horticulture at MATC. More recently, Mike was a speaker for a "Wild Ones" meeting at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center. On both occasions I learned a lot and had fun. I know that you all will enjoy hearing Mike talk, and why not bring a tree that you feel would benefit from an extra branch... I bet Mike will suggest the perfect graft.



A Highlight from the 2009 Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit

Black Pine Demo | Saturday, 8.15.09 at 2 p.m.
- By Devon C

Q: How do you make a five-trunk clump from a 40 year old informal upright?

A: Very carefully!

The Artist: Hiroyoshi Yamaji,
Guest Master and Judge 2009
Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit
by Devon C

The Material: 30-40 year old black pine

What Happened: Mr. Yamaji took an already old and well established black pine and restyled it from an informal upright to a five-trunk clump

What I Learned: Never underestimate the merits of early training

This tree, as I'm sure you'll agree from the "before picture" was a good looking, healthy tree. Just waiting for a new home in a bonsai pot and a little TLC. However, according to Hiroyoshi Yamaji, long straight sections "never would've happened in Japan, this tree would've been trained to be a bonsai from the time it was a sapling." As he was describing the poor merits of the tree, I started to understand what he was saying. There is a huge negative space between the 1st and 2nd branches and the 4th and 5th branches have more girth than the 1st and 2nd. Still, at this point in my novice bonsai career, I would have just lived with what I had and never attempted what happened next. And

what happened next was nothing short of spectacular. Words almost can't describe what I saw on Saturday the 15th of August at the demo, so I will use bullet points and photos. **Please note:** You CAN try this at home, but this tree was very healthy and this technique should



only be attempted on healthy, vigorous trees.

The Steps:

- Identify the "trunks"
- Take the largest branch cutter you can find and begin separating the branches and "trunks" from the main trunk, making sure there is enough cambium to sustain the life of the tree
- Use wooden v-shaped wedges and a hammer to completely separate the trunks
- Cover every bit of the separated trunk's wounds with wound sealant
- Brace the weak spots
- Wrap each trunk with "horse leg-wrap" or raffia
- Wire to shape and finish pre-styling
- Put in a mist house for the next six months and pray your new creation survives the drastic restyling
- Come spring, get the tree into the ground for the next 2 years



While watching the demo, I kept imagining that if Mountain Dew made commercials using bonsai artists instead of skateboarders, this is what it might look like. **BONSAI TO THE EXTREME, DUDE!**

I had no idea something like this was even possible and it just goes to show that trees want to live. Otherwise why would Mr. Yamaji, a master bonsai artist, attempt something so drastic? This demo really was awesome. I can't wait for next year.



October Bonsai Tips

By Houston S

Although our September weather has helped me to remain in denial, the one thing that we can count on here in Wisconsin is the arrival of cold weather. And soon. Eventually, we are going to have to start some fall activities, such as taking in tropical trees and getting the hardy ones ready for winter.

You may notice that the soil of your trees stays damp longer, even during the hot days. Since growth has slowed and days are shorter, your trees will need less water during the fall, even while their leaves are still green. But it is still important to walk thru your growing area and check everything each day - because every tree is unique and they don't all cut down their water use at the same rate.

I have seen it suggested that better fall color results from giving a tree good sunlight with less water during the fall. The color occurs when chlorophyll breaks down in the leaves, removing the green color and making the secondary colors visible. Seems like a nice theory, but my experience doesn't support it much. For me, some trees have good color while some don't, and the species of tree is the main factor determining this. But I keep experimenting! Anyone who has found the secret of good fall color is very welcome to write an article to tell the rest of us!

For well-developed hardy bonsai, it will probably be necessary to perform some fall maintenance after the leaves fall. My maples need to have their fine branches wired and slightly trimmed. This keeps the small branches looking interesting, with short curving shapes. If you leave this task until spring, I have found that it is too late to do any wiring. I break off many, many of the new buds when wiring in spring, and the wire cuts into the branches within a few days of putting it on. So do it in FALL! This also applies to many other species.

Pines need to have yellow needles removed, and it is also appropriate to remove all needles pointing

down from the bottom of the branches on developing trees (as long as you are sure which side is going to be the bottom!). For ponderosa pines, there was a recommendation in the ABS Journal a few years back for inducing budding. In fall, remove the bud at the tip of the branch and all needles more than one year old. This can only be done on well established trees, and only once every few years. It seemed to work well on my ponderosa pine last year.

There are a few trees that respond well to fall repotting, but unless you are pretty sure about what you are doing, wait until spring.

After the leaves fall, it is helpful to use a dormant oil spray. Dormant oil is a very inexpensive and non-toxic weapon against insects that lay eggs in the bark of trees. The oil covers the insect larvae or eggs, doesn't let in air, and the evil insects are defeated. I spray it on everything in the fall.

So when do you bring the indoor trees inside? The easy answer is "Now". My tropicals are usually protected in a greenhouse by mid-September, but this year's warmth allowed me to delay. Tropicals do not like temperatures below 50°F, so when the nighttime low starts getting below that temperature regularly they need protection. At first, all the tropicals and subtropicals go inside the greenhouse, while the hardy trees stay out. A small electric heater is available for emergency duty in the greenhouse in case of unseasonable cold. This allows the trees a transition period in which the sunlight gradually decreases before the sunlight is reduced even further as the trees go into the house. Even in the brightest window, there is less than 1/3 of the sunlight of an outdoor location. The tropicals go inside the house after 2-3 weeks in the greenhouse, while the subtropicals stay out until November to get their "winter". It is good to spray the trees with insecticide in the greenhouse a day or two before bringing them in.



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

Next Meeting of MBS
7PM, Tuesday, OCTOBER 6
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
Pam W - Webmaster
Tom A - Librarian
John M - Telephone response
Don G, Leo S, & Houston S - PAB Board

