



# Kongetsu

## West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

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August 2012

Mollie Hollar, Editor

### 2012 Schedule of Events

**Sat, Aug 11:** \*Bonsai mums

**Sat, Sept 15:** Prep for Fall Show

**Fri, Oct 12:** Show set-up

**Sat & Sun, Oct 13 & 14:** Fall Club Show

**Sat, Nov 17:** 2013 Planning & Officer Elections

#### \*Please note date

All events are held at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park unless otherwise noted. Saturday meetings/workshops are from 9:00 AM to Noon unless otherwise noted.

### Bonsai Video

My apologies to those of you who don't have Internet access, but this is a must-see for anyone who does:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjhuNvVqgCY&feature=youtu.be>

### Chicago Show

I have finally received information about the Mid-America Bonsai Show & Exhibit which takes place August 17-19 at the Chicago Botanic Garden. For those of you with Internet go here: <http://www.midwestbonsai.org/augustshow.html>.

Otherwise, I will bring the flyer to the mum workshop.

### Apologies – and August Event

I always hate to have to start something by apologizing but here it's a necessity . . . and unfortunately not the first time this bonsai season. Please note on the schedule to the left that the date for our August workshop has changed from what you have seen previously. Our guest artist needed us to change it, and I was happy to do so in order to enable him to come. Also, my humble apologies to you all for the delay in getting this newsletter out to you.

Our topic for August is chrysanthemum bonsai. Bill Cadman from MSU will be coming on Saturday, **August 11** (note date change) at 9:00 AM at Meijer Gardens. He will be doing a talk about this unusual topic and then we will work on two- to three-year bonsai mums that he will bring. **Please note that I need you to call to let me know if you want to sign up for this workshop.** I don't need pre-payment, but I do need to have a head-count for Bill to bring enough plants.

At various times over the years WMBC has given free mum cuttings for growing bonsai mums, with varying levels of success. Some members – Lorena Chambers comes instantly to mind – have had great success, even managing to winter over her mums, which always seems to be my downfall. The mum cuttings have come from King's Mums ([https://www.kingsmums.com/phpapps/km\\_showCultivars.php?subgrp=GNM&subgrpdesc=Gnomes](https://www.kingsmums.com/phpapps/km_showCultivars.php?subgrp=GNM&subgrpdesc=Gnomes)) and are particularly suited to bonsai. As you will see from the website, King's also has many other types of mums, so shop away!

Since this is a rather unusual topic for most of our new members especially, I will provide several printed handouts at the workshop for your information. Meanwhile, below is some information from the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum in Washington, D.C.

“Chrysanthemum bonsai are very popular in Japan, and like azalea bonsai, they often have their own exhibits. Although we may think of them as Japanese chrysanthemum, the plant, a woody perennial, is originally a native of China.

“According to the National Chrysanthemum Society, ‘*The Chrysanthemum was first cultivated in China as a flowering herb and is described in writings as early as the 15th Century B.C. In fact, their pottery depicted the chrysanthemum much as we know it today. As an herb, it was believed to have the power of life. Legend has it that the boiled roots were used as a headache remedy; young sprouts and petals were eaten in salads; and leaves were brewed for a festive drink . . .*’  
(cont page 2 col 2)

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## *More on Japanese Apricot from Wayne:*

### **What's in a name?**

Ume have several names: *Prunus mume* (or just mume), Japanese apricot (or sometimes Japanese flowering apricot) and Chinese plum to name the most common. In the bonsai world, Ume seems to be the name of choice.

### **Fantastic bonsai**

Ume is an Asian native and even though they make fantastic bonsai, for some reason not many nurseries grow them here in North America (Muranaka Nursery on the California central coast is one exception). As far as I know, they aren't that difficult to grow as bonsai and they have numerous positive traits: they show the appearance of great age while still fairly young, they combine graceful elegance and tough looking ruggedness, and offer a striking display of buds and flowers late each winter. Altogether a noble candidate for your bonsai collection.

### **Omiya Bonsai Art Museum**

The trees shown here reside at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum in Saitama City, Japan. The photos are from Yoshitomo Ishizuka's facebook page.

“Chrysanthemum bonsai are not as popular in western culture, as they are in Japan. One reason may be that they are, in general, short lived plants. Although most seem to live as few as 3-4 years as bonsai, there have been a few known to be 20-25 years old.

“Another reason for their lack of popularity may be [that] mums are photoperiod plants. They bloom during months with short nights. In order to show the flowers, exhibits are held in the Fall, when most other bonsai are not blooming ... a good reason for Chrysanthemum only shows.

“Mums lend themselves to being trained into many different forms, including topiary. It's a little tricky to wire them, however you can. The root systems are especially good for creating wonderful rock plantings.”

Cost of the workshop, including all materials needed, is \$20. You are also welcome to come just to watch and learn. This will be a great workshop for you to take and an excellent opportunity to learn about something unusual in bonsai.

[My thanks (again) to Wayne Schoech from Stone Lantern for the material for the remainder of this newsletter.]

### **Rugged, Graceful & Not All That Common**

**Sabamiki and uro.** Aside from its overall power and beauty, there are several things that might catch your eye: the flowers and buds, the aged bark (Ume bark develops an aged look fairly fast) and the hollowed out trunk (sabamiki). If you look closely you can also see several uro (small hollows that are left on deciduous trees where branches have rotted and fallen off, though bonsai uro may well be man made).





**Shari.** Though it's a little difficult to see, this ume features some deadwood (shari) on the trunk. You usually see deadwood on conifers, as it tends to rot fairly quickly on deciduous trees. However, on ume deadwood rots quite slowly, so the shari on this tree appears natural.



**Fluid motion.** Ume trunks and branches tend to display graceful, fluid motion. Just one more feature that makes Ume such a great subject for bonsai.