



Kongetsu

West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

Vol. 17 No. 3

April 2013

Mollie Hollar, Editor

2013 Schedule of Events

Sat, April 20: repotting and show prep for May

Fri, May 10: show set-up

Sat & Sun, May 11 & 12:

Michigan show

Sat, May 18: field trip to West Olive Nursery

Fri & Sat, June 14 & 15:

Vance Wood (Mr. Mugo Bonsai) demonstration and workshop

Sat, July 20: silent auction & potluck

Sat & Sun, Aug 17 & 18:

group trip to Chicago Show

Sat, Sept 21: Club show prep

Fri, Aug 4: show set-up

Sat & Sun, Oct 5 & 6: Club Show

Sat, Nov 16: planning for 2014

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.

2013 Dues, Shirts

Technically it is past the cut-off date for paying 2013 membership dues. However, if you're receiving this newsletter and haven't paid dues, this will be your last newsletter – really.

In anyone knows of a good place to get embroidered shirts, please let me know. We need to look into getting Club shirts again.

Last Month . . .

The March meeting was well-attended, and I'm sure we all learned a lot about bonsai trees and their pots and how they relate to each other. Cat Nelson is truly an expert on this topic, and has had book 1 published by the American Bonsai Society. Those of you with Internet can find it here: <http://absbonsai.org/book-service/booklets>. Book 2 is in the making and will be out in the next year or so.

. . . And This Month

For many years we have done repotting (or potting) at our April meeting, and this year is no exception. This coming Saturday we will be putting our trees into bonsai pots. If yours is not quite ready to go into a bonsai pot but needs to be removed from its nursery pot, you can choose to put it into a plastic or wood training pot. Either way the process will be essentially the same.

The Club will provide soil, wire, and screening. You will need to bring any plants you want to repot, pots for each of them, and your tools.

On page 2 I have included "Tips for Repotting" by bonsai master Michael Hagadorn. There's some very interesting information in there! You can check his blog at <http://crataegus.com/> for more.

We will also be working on any trees with which you need help for displaying at the All-State show in May. If you have anything that needs top-trimming bring it along. *Please note* that it is not a good idea to do extensive work on both top and roots at the same time as it puts too much stress on our trees.

Our Hawaii Connection

I have included here the two latest newsletters of the Journal of Tropical & True Indoor Bonsai from my friend David Fukumoto. In these issues I have gotten a much better idea of what the newsletters will be like. There are introductions and links to a number of articles that cover a huge range of topics, from David's special "True Indoor Bonsai" to "sumo bonsai" to styling roots. Since there are so many articles, I will print one or two here, and then will include the newsletter Internet address so you can click on the links that are of interest to you. I could use a *lot* of paper on this! I apologize to those of you with no computer access – try your local library.

Incidentally, I've been asked about a field trip to meet David. I'd love to! Anyone up to financing such a venture?

Mollie Hollar



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Bonsai Elsewhere

May 3–5, Washington DC.

The annual Potomac Bonsai Festival at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

May 11, Tulsa Oklahoma.

The Green Country Bonsai Society Bonsai Show at the Tulsa Garden Center.

May 18–19, Chicago. The Midwest Bonsai Society 9th Annual Spring Bonsai Show at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

May 24–26, Olive Branch Mississippi. “Great bonsai, fabulous food and Southern hospitality” at Brussel’s Annual Rendezvous.

Aug 24 & 25, Ann Arbor Bonsai Society show

Sept 12-15, Saratoga Springs NY, ABS FOR THE LOVE OF BONSAI

Need Supplies?

If you need soil, pots, tools, or anything else to work on your bonsai this Saturday or after, check out my website at www.basicallybonsai.com. Send me an e-mail or phone call to let me know what you need, and I’ll bring it to you this weekend. That’ll save you postage and you’ll get it right away.

All-State Show

I have not received any official information about the show in May except for what is on the Meijer Gardens’ website. Check there if you have any questions.

Tips for Repotting

March 14, 2013 by [crataegus](#) (Michael Hagadorn)

Many of you are deep in the thicket of repotting, which I know can be one of those puzzling puzzles. This is just a short post on what I think are some of the big ones to not forget:

1. Don’t have your tree TOO dry before repotting. Although a bit easier for us, we would have a dehydrated tree just before cutting off many of its feeder roots—which ends up as a lose-lose bargain. Better to have it too wet than too dry.
2. As a general rule, don’t bare-root your trees. That’s for specialists doing special work; and try your best to ignore the Japanese magazines showing someone boldly bare-rooting a 100 year old pine, or some silly blog like Crataegus Bonsai showing hosing off a deciduous tree. Bare-rooting probably kills more things than all others combined, so without the attending techniques, I would say don’t do it unless you’ve been taught how to, and which ones it’s ok to bare-root and which ones you should never do that way. Bare rooting is extreme, for extreme circumstances.
3. Sing while you work. Or at least put on some calming music, as repotting tense does not help us or the trees. (Singing is the primary job of apprentices, by the way. Evenings are usually taken up by long singing lessons, as to not dishearten anyone overly with poor vocals.)
4. Don’t refer to your repotting log to determine when the tree was repotted last and when next it should be repotted; refer to the tree. If a sharp chopstick won’t enter the soil easily in several places, it probably needs repotting. A weak tree for whatever reason might take three times as long to fill a pot with roots as a healthy strong one. Time is irrelevant.
5. Don’t cut too much root off a young tree or you can stall its momentum. And when repotting young trees in general, don’t cut the top much the year you repot.
6. Bamboo is your best friend. Drive shafts into very firm root balls for anchoring wires, or for bracing trees with really bad root systems. Get timber bamboo with walls about 1/3” thick, and split it. You can see how bamboo is used in several places on this blog.
7. Have a REASON for repotting. If you’re just going through the motions because it’s what you always do at this time of year, well, rethink that one. Assess each tree and its needs. If you don’t know how to answer that, then find a teacher. No Star Trekking through your tree’s root systems, bolding going where no one has gone before...without a clue. Get clueified. Really. Repotting is like open heart surgery; we’re dealing with a tree’s life here.



**JOURNAL OF TROPICAL
& TRUE INDOOR BONSAI™**
MID-PACIFIC BONSAI FOUNDATION
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ISSUE #2. February 2013

www.fukubonsai.com/MPBFjournal2.February.2013.html

Aloha and welcome to the second issue! The first issue was sent out on January 20 and 21, 2013 and we've got some nice feedback from old and new customers and foundation members.

We had planned to issue about the 2nd week of each month but sending out the premier issue proved to be a challenge and it was delayed. We will move closer to our target release date as we develop a routine. Because the largest "cost" is putting it together, the modest annual dues are really an informal form of support and at this stage, it is a lot more important to get exposure and contact with all individuals and clubs who are interested in growing True Indoor Bonsai.

So we request your assistance to broadcast the Journal link to various individuals or groups who would enjoy it. The annual membership for a club is just \$12 per year provided there is a designated contact person.

February is the coldest month of the year and I've asked a few contributors to send me photos of a Fuku-Bonsai plant in the foreground in front of a picture window to see the winter scenery behind and received great photos from Jerry Meislik (Montana), Gerald Johnson (Minnesota), and Ken Kieck (Wisconsin). Each has made major contributions to this issue.

Jerry Meislik has agreed to be a "contributing editor" to add commentary and address growing issues in his section: "BONSAI INDOORS --- THE BASICS OF BONSAI GROWING! He invites readers to contact him with questions or topics to include in his monthly feature.

Gerald Johnson is proving that its possible to get superior growth in Minnesota and Ken Kieck is pioneering the difficult 1:10 Project in Wisconsin. Ryan Chang has his second and third "Fast Track Bonsai" report and will be trying to achieve superior growth by growing them outdoors in Hawaii. I hope more of our past customers will participate and that together, we can make True Indoor Bonsai the easiest, most successful, and most popular American bonsai for anyone who can grow houseplants!

Traditional outdoor bonsai is challenging and requires a high level of skills and discipline. There are relatively few trainers compared to the number who purchase bonsai. But we encourage everyone to try to train TRUE INDOOR BONSAI and the INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP PACKAGE (Beginner Workshop I) is a major breakthrough with a much higher success rate made possible by providing exceptional pre-trained plant and kit components paired with unmatched customer support!

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***Developing goals
for the Journal of
Tropical & True
Indoor Bonsai***

What type of articles are most needed and how can the Journal become a more valuable resource for both individuals and bonsai groups who teach?

We are committed to assisting hobbyists who are isolated and we hope these isolated individuals will go on to teach others and form bonsai clubs where none now exist. We hope that existing bonsai clubs who want to share and teach an easier more successful form of bonsai to their club members or to their general community will contact us for kits and assistance. We can supply exceptional plant materials that are affordable enough to be ideal for bonsai club programs with the funds recouped by raffling of the completed plant.

There were some nice comments on the explanation of the concept of Sumo. We also have an expanded introduction to "Roots" which is increasingly popular! By sharing with you details of the creative process, we hope you'll try or have additional insight into how your bonsai was created.

In surveying those who take the Beginner Workshop I, the most common recommendation is to increase information on how and when to do the first pruning and how to root the cuttings. This will be the major editorial focus of the next March 2013 issue.



We obtained our first Dwarf Schefflera cuttings in 1973 and 1974 from several different sources and they varied greatly. The Entry Tree and several others are from the early cuttings and since then, we've continually improved our selections and found ways to produce higher quality plants.

This is one of our oldest Dwarf Schefflera in ROOTS training since the early 1970's. The crown was developed with Sumo techniques but every few years when it was repotted, it was planted higher and higher with the roots rearranged each time. The tree is about 32" tall. At mid-height, the root-trunk is about 8 inches across and over 12" across at pot level.

Several of the oldest specimens in the Fuku-Bonsai Collection are the result of creating bonsai from "outriggers." Outriggers are a branch section off an old tree that has attached aerial roots.

"ARCHES" began as a heavy 5" long section that is the portion at the top of the bonsai. It had two long branches that were allowed to lengthen, trained downwards, and in time these dropping branches developed aerial roots. This photo was taken many years ago and it has since developed into an amazing bonsai!



**SPRING
2013
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ISSUE #3. March 2013

www.fukubonsai.com/MPBFjournal3.March.2013.html

Aloha and welcome to the third issue! As we move into spring and the start of the growing season, we focus on getting strong vigorous growth with an article by Jerry Meislik on preparing your indoor bonsai for outdoors. Whenever night temperatures are above 55°F, Dwarf Schefflera can be grown outdoors. For those who grow temperate climate outdoor bonsai or those in warm climates, consider Dwarf Schefflera to obtain much faster results compared to traditional slow-growing plants. Jerry's article touches on the do's and don'ts.

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A second less known bonsai concept is "Bonsai no Kokoro" (The Spirit and Philosophy of Bonsai) that greatly contributes to the enjoyment of bonsai. We are honored to reprint an article by Ted Tsukiyama, the senior bonsai leader who was instrumental in Hawaii's role in national and international bonsai.

There's questions on pruning and rooting cuttings and an article addresses this subject. There's an increasing focus on how to create exceptional bonsai by learning to train in shallow saucer-pots that we call the "1:10 Project." There's an overall update of the staff's progress, but also by Ron Davis of Montana who started with us almost two years ago. There's been remarkable progress and as this is being written, I am completing specifications for the new "1:10 Premium 7" Introductory Workshop Package" that is more difficult but will attempt to teach those with some bonsai experience a new concept to create high-quality bonsai in shallow saucer-pots. Please email if you are interested in being a part of this study group.

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PREPARING YOUR INDOOR BONSAI FOR SPRING

By Jerry Meislik (Whitefish, Montana)
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This is the time of year when days are lengthening and outdoor temperatures are rising. It's also the time of year when as indoor bonsai growers we have some decisions to make. Some growers grow their trees indoors full time while others move their trees outdoors for the warmer months and again move the trees back indoors for the cooler months.



Those keeping their trees indoors full time need little preparation for the upcoming longer days and warmer temperatures. With the seasonal change the trees should be showing new growth as the days are lengthening. New leaves will be growing out of all the growing tips. Watering may need to be increased to keep up with the extra foliage. Fertilization should be started or stepped up. Old leaves may be shed at this time in preparation for the new growth. Leaf yellowing and shed of 15-20% of the older leaves is to be expected at this time but more leaf drop or loss of new leaves is a sign of problems. Defoliation is the deliberate removal of leaves from a bonsai tree. This is done to create replacement with smaller leaves, new buds and refresh the foliage. We will plan to discuss defoliation on another date.

WHEN MOVING TREES OUTDOORS CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

LIGHT INTENSITY. Leaves and stems that are “indoor adapted” will develop brown and black spots on the leaves and trunk if put outdoors directly into full sunlight. Plants kept indoors have soft, weak leaves and stems, and thin cuticle layers. These weak areas will not tolerate direct sun and will burn. Trees grown indoors even under high intensity artificial lights cannot be placed into full sun. In full sun the leaves will burn and often be shed within a day or two of this move. This naturally weakens the tree and forces it to use precious reserves of energy to produce new leaves.

Instead plan on transitioning the trees to full sun over a 2-3 week period. Initially move the trees to nearly full shade and every 5 days move the plants to brighter and brighter light. Eventually, full sun conditions will be fine and result in no leaf damage or scorching of the branches. A reverse process will be needed as trees are moved back indoors in the fall months but we will leave details of this until fall.

TEMPERATURES. Spring has very variable temperatures that must be considered. Most tropicals will stop growing when temperatures are in the range of 55F for the lows. It is best to move your trees indoors for cooler nights and outside for the warm days. Better yet, temperatures above 60F are much more likely to keep the trees happy and growing.

WATERING. Watering needs will increase once the trees are outside and exposed to brighter light, warmer temperatures and increased air movement. Of course if temperatures remain cool water needs will in fact decrease and create water-logged soil that may promote root rot. Proper watering involves allowing the soil to get nearly dry and then watering the roots thoroughly until water drains out of the drain holes. Be sure your potting media allows water to penetrate the entire root ball and not just the top and sides. Be sure your pots all have ample drain holes. Without drain holes the water will accumulate and roots will rot.

FERTILIZATION. Fertilization programs can be stepped up at this time as growth accelerates.

INSECTS & PESTS. Insects can be a problem. Close observation helps to detect insect attacks and to allow the earliest treatment possible. Outdoors, insects are usually not a problem but real problems occur when trees are moved back indoors in the fall. But that is another story we will discuss at that time. Outdoors, animals, neighbors dogs and cats will also find your trees attractive places to chew, play etc. Squirrels, rabbits and other animals can chew on trees. Protect trees from these chewing friends. Dogs, cats, raccoons etc. will be interested in organic fertilizers and can dig up trees looking for treats. Fish derived materials seem the most problematic. In my area bears can be a danger both to trees and to humans as they are attracted to the smells of organic decaying materials.

WIND. Out of doors wind increases evaporation and watering needs. Secure the trees against winds that can dislodge the trees from their pots and stands. Wire newly repotted trees into their pots to prevent wind and animals from un-planting them.

ADVANTAGES OF OUTDOOR GROWTH. Growth of the bonsai outdoors will be much stronger than growing indoors even when compared with strong artificial light supplementation. Indoor light will never be as strong as outdoor sunlight. Photosynthesis is much stronger and plant leaves and stems will be thicker and more vigorous. Insect infestations outdoors are reduced and balanced by predators of the insects and by rain, wind and sun that inhibit insects from spreading. Chemical sprays are easier to accomplish and safer outdoors where the spray is away from humans.

ADVANTAGES OF FULL TIME INDOOR GROWTH: CONSISTENT CONDITIONS. Growing indoors is easy as temperatures, humidity and other environmental conditions are very stable. Watering needs vary only slightly throughout the year. There is also little or no chance of bugs finding your trees and damaging them unless introduced from new plants.

CONCLUSIONS

Growing indoors is the only way for many of us to care for our bonsai. Indoor growing is always slower than developing plants outdoors and indoor plants can never have the inherent vigor of outdoor growing. However, there are many benefits of indoor growing as discussed above. Growers who provide marginally indoor conditions will find that their trees will grow significantly only when outdoors each year. If indoor conditions are less than ideal little or no growth occurs during the winter. Moving trees outdoors for the summer allows these trees to grow, thicken and to get really healthy.

Only strong plants can be trained as bonsai. It is not true that bonsai must be kept weak and slow growing. Always grow your trees as fast and as strong as possible. It is only then that pruning, wiring and shaping can be done properly and safely. The simple planning discussed above should make the outdoor time more advantageous for your trees and less stressful to you, the owner.

Bonsai growers should aim for maximum bonsai growth as very few of our trees do not require further growth and development. Obtain the best materials suitable for your environment and/or alter the environment to suit your bonsai. True Indoor Bonsai have proven track records to allow them to thrive whether you grow them indoors or out. Outdoor growing where feasible produce stronger, healthier and more trainable bonsai. You will need to decide whether growing indoors or outdoors is best given your own situation and needs.

2013 Membership Form

Name: _____

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Phones: Home _____ Work: _____

E-mail: _____

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