



The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens: 1800 N. Dixboro Rd. Ann Arbor. Please join us at 6:30 pm for socializing. The program starts at 7:00 pm. Dues are \$25.00 for the year 2011. <http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

September 2011

Volume 8 Issue 9

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING:

Wednesday, September 28, 2011

The Annual Auction

Roger Gaede will direct this annual event. Please consider helping with the auction administration. Setup of the auditorium and other preparations begins at 6 PM.

- Registration of bonsai and bonsai related items for the silent and live auctions start at 6 PM.
- The silent auction begins as soon as auction items are displayed and ends at 7:30 PM.
- A short business meeting starts at 7 PM.
- The live auction will begin at 7:30 PM.

FUTURE MONTHLY MEETING BEGIN AT 7PM

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

This past May the Executive Board moved the starting time of the monthly meeting to 7 PM, beginning with the September monthly meeting. This will allow adequate time for evening programs.

AABS SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS DESCRIBED

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

The Annual AABS Auction will take place at the next monthly meeting, Wednesday, September 28, 2011. The business portion of the meeting will start at 7:00 PM with remarks offered by Alfonso Tercero. The live auction will begin at 7:30 PM.

John Parks will act as auctioneer, continuing his years of service, and will charm us with his wit and insight. This year Roger Gaede and the Executive Board have agreed to use the silent auction alongside the traditional live auction. This bi-level auction process should offer adequate time for each item to be considered by purchasers, while dedicating time to those items likely to hold the interest of the membership. If you are unsure in which auction, silent or live, your bonsai related items would be best suited; Executive Board members will be able to assist you to maximize your sale opportunities.

The Silent Auction

- In simple terms, auction items that you would expect to sell for \$5 - \$25 may be sold in the silent auction.
- Examples of silent auction items include groups of seedling stock, bonsai pots, magazines, tools . . . plus pre-bonsai, bonsai wire, growing boxes, sieve of various screen sizes and bonsai soil mix.
- The opening bid on a silent auction item will be the first bid offered by a member.

The Live Auction

- Single items that you expect to draw a sale price in excess of \$20 may best be sold in the live auction.
- Items that are suitable for live auction include, but are not limited to, bonsai, rough grown pre-bonsai, pots, tools and related items that will hold the interest of the membership and draw the kind of bids you expect.
- The default opening bid for a live auction items is \$15 and will not be reduced.

The Fine Print

- Auction items not bid on will be returned to the owner.
- The AABS will earn 10% of the total sales from each seller.
- To simplify the work of our treasurer, I am asking your bid is in whole dollar increments and payment is made by check.

AABS ANNUAL SHOW PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNERS



#1. Fig Tree, *Ficus microcarpa*, *Retusa* (Dustin Mann)



#2. American Larch Forest, *Larix laricina* (William Heston)



#3. Japanese Maple, *Acer palmatum* (Carlos Diaz)

There Are Several Open Positions On the Executive Board That Can Be Filled By Members of the AABS. Please Consider Serving As A Member On The Executive Board. Elections Will Be Held At The October 2011 Monthly Meeting.

NOTES FROM THE SIDELINES

Almudena Veiga-Lopez – Recording Secretary

August 24, 2011 Meeting- Bonsai Soil with Jack Wikle, Al Fassezke, and Paul Kulesa

AABS members gathered at MBG auditorium to exchange bonsai stories, get acquainted with the new selection of bonsai books that our librarian Vicki Norfleet had taken out from our library, and get front seats for today's exciting program. Our president Alfonso Tercero welcomed AABS members at 7:35pm. Our Show Chair, Jay Sinclair mentioned that there are still few volunteers needed for Sunday night clean up and reminded members about the instructions for signing in trees. And if you want to post AABS Show signs around your area, ask Lary Howard for some signs. Roger Gaede, responsible for this year's auction announced that there will be a silent auction and that John Parks will lead the live auction. Volunteers are still needed to help move trees and items as well as record keeping.

The program started with a brief introduction from Jack Wikle, that recently authored an article on soil mixes (International Bonsai Journal, 2011; Vol 33:2, Issue 130; p 24-27). Jack said that if you are really interested in learning about soil mixes from the basics, you have to read this book: "*Growing media for ornamental plants and turf*" from K. Handreck and N. Black. Then, Jack introduced the first speaker of the night, Al Fassezke (a member of our club) that it is very well known in the gardening web forums for his expertise in soils.

Al started asking how many of us had less than 5 years of bonsai experience (I counted over 10 people, including myself...) and then who of those who had over 5 years were settled with the bonsai soil they were using (I counted 8 people). That means that over 80% of the audience had to be taking notes! He explained how after few years of growing bonsai and having many casualties, he stopped growing plants and started an in depth studying regimen about soils that took him over 5 years. He is now using all his expertise to help others and grow bonsai quite successfully.

Al said that you can adjust almost anything in a tree's environment; light, humidity, temperature, fertilizer, but not soil. It is of the utmost importance that the soil is adequate to the species we want to grow. The first step to understand how soil works is knowing how soil will behave in the presence of water. Several forces take place; 1) adhesion of water to soil particles, 2) adhesion of water to

itself, 3) gravity that pulls water out of the pot. Using a sponge, Al explained how water retention will be higher in a shallower pot (IMG#1). He said that water could be retained in the pores within soil particles (inner properties of the material used) but also in the pores between particles. And the latter is dictated by the combination of particle sizes in your soil mix. With a jar full of marbles (large particles), Al explained very graphically how the “between large particles” pores can be easily filled with small particles (sand) blocking all pores and therefore the aeration that roots need to grow. Al said that since roots are the energy source for a tree’s growth, you will have root stress much before you start seeing signs on the rest of your tree. Thus, at the end one has to play with the mix to achieve the best soil retention. However, one has to balance “*what we can do*” with “*what our plants can do*”. And at the end is the grower’s convenience that will dictate how plants grow.

Then, our second speaker of the night, our vicepresident Paul Kulesa, was introduced by Jack. Paul also covered some of the basics of “what makes a good bonsai soil” and what locally available aggregates could be used in the mix. Among the most important features of a bonsai soil is that it has to allow the water to flow through the soil mix, retain enough water and nutrients, and allow exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Paul shared with us his soil mix recipe: 2 parts of turface, 2 parts of granite, 1 part of lava, and 1 part of peat (>1/8” <1/4”); IMG#2). He also mentioned that the roots should not be standing in water. This has detrimental effects to the tree such as the blockage of root transpiration, toxins build up, and disruption of root cells which prevents water and nutrient uptake into the tree. To prove that soil makes a difference when it comes to water drainage, Paul performed a series of experiments that showed that the smaller the soil aggregates the more perched water you get in the pot (IMG#3).

Paul also showed then all the different classes of soil aggregates available; composted fine bark, canadian peat, sphagnum moss, fir bark, horticultural soil mix, pool filter sand, perlite, lava, heydite, turface, granite or chicken grit, and akadama, among many others. Paul said that as part of his routine in making a good bonsai soil mix is that the aggregates need to be screened and then washed to remove dust (IMG#4). Finally, they need to be let air dry before they get packed. Paul also tested the compaction and pore space in a five-month experiment. He tested different soil mixes and found that all mixes compacted over time and doubled the height of the perched water. The nursery mix had the highest perched water level and

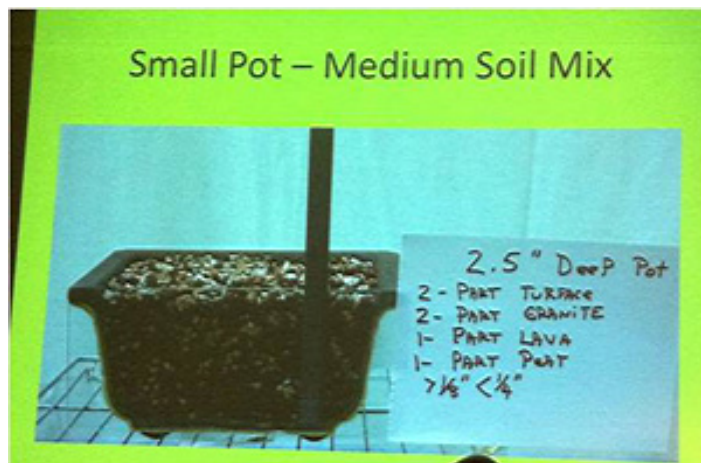
reduced pore space between aggregates in comparison to other soil mixes that included turface, peat and lava (IMG#5). And, if anyone was still concern about using a wick to remove the perched water in the pot, Paul also did an experiment to prove that the wick only helps with the standing water in the pot and does not remove any more water from the soil.

Finally, I would like to thank both speakers for a great informative meeting!

PICTURES FOOTNOTES



IMG1. Al Fassezke explaining basics of soils.



IMG2. Paul Kulesa’s bonsai soil mix recipe.

Perched Water Table

| Pot Size | Soil Mix | * Height of Perched Water Table (average) |
|----------|------------------|---|
| 2.5" | > 1/16" - < 1/8" | 0.89" |
| 4.0" | > 1/16" - < 1/8" | 0.91" |
| 2.5" | > 1/8" - < 1/4" | 0.45" |
| 4.0" | > 1/8" - < 1/4" | 0.43" |

IMG3. Paul Kulesa's results of the experiment about size of the aggregates influencing height of perched water.



IMG4. Paul Kulesa explaining the washing and draining of soil mix aggregates.

Compaction, Perched Water And Pore Space Trial

| Test Bottle | Soil Mix |
|-------------|---|
| A | 3 Part Turface, 1 Part Peat (Screened > 1/8" - < 1/4") |
| B | 1 Part Each, Turface, Granite, Lava, Peat (Screened > 1/16" - < 1/8") |
| C | 3 Part Lava, 1 Part Peat (Screened > 1/8" - < 1/4") |
| D | 1 Part Each, Turface, Granite, Lava, Peat (Screened > 1/8" - < 1/4") |
| F | Loam (Screened To Breakup Clumps) |
| H | Nursery Soil Mix Out Of The Bag |

IMG5. Paul Kulesa's results of the compaction and pore space experiment.

BONSAI DISPLAY GARDEN AT MATHAEI BONTANICAL GAREDENS

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

At the request of our anonymous donor... 'Construction will begin this fall' on the bonsai display garden, Gayle Steiner recently announced. "We may be able to construct the gallery before the snow flies, then raise the remaining \$188,000 over the next six to eight months, and construct the workshop/complete the entire garden in the spring and early summer. This would be tremendous because 2012 is the 50th anniversary of the opening of Matthaei Botanical Gardens, and opening the bonsai garden at that time would give the garden a huge boost of attention and interest. It would also be wonderful if we could be open in time for the American Conifer Society's national convention in Ann Arbor in mid-July 2012."

The U of M and MBG will build a bonsai garden with your help. The planned garden, west of the perennial garden and southwest of the Conservatory, will offer demonstrations and hands-on bonsai teaching for all levels. To help make it happen, contact Gayle Steiner, the Director of Development: gayles@umich.edu, 734.647.7847.



UPCOMING AABS MEETINGS

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

October 24, 2011, 7PM

"Our Bonsai, Then and Now - A Photographic Review". This is a members supported PowerPoint presentation depicting your bonsai from beginning until now. Members will present photos showing the development of their material into a bonsai. Please collect those photographs from years past until now. Almudena Vega-Lopez can assist with scanning those older photographs and including them in the PowerPoint presentation.

Almudena can be reached at
secretary@annarborbonsaisociety.org

November 7, 2011, 6PM

Annual Banquet and Critique of the MBG Collection. Banquet provided by the AABS club and members, including a bonsai mini-exhibit per table. Members are asked to bring a bonsai for the mini-exhibit and a dish to share. We will critique the MBG collection. This event will take place at Matthaei Botanical Gardens and starts at 6:00 PM.

2011 AABS EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Alfonso Tercero (734) 216-2708
Vice-President/Program Chairperson: Paul Kulesa
Corresponding Secretary: Ryan Liu
Recording Secretary: Almudena Veiga-Lopez
Publicity Chair: Lary Howard
Treasurer: Joan Wheeler
(734) 485-6306
Librarian: Vicki Norfleet
Past President: Bill Heston (734) 662-8699
Director 2010 & 2011: Dustin Mann
Director 2011 & 2012: Raquel Vega
Show Chairperson: Jay Sinclair

AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is exofficio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

Auction Chair: TBD
Membership Chair: TBD
Show Staging: Paul Kulesa
Demonstrations: TBD
Ways and Means Chair: Hugh Danville
Web Administration: Raquel Vega

FOR SALE OR WANTED

All members can offer for sale any bonsai and bonsai related materials in the newsletter or at the monthly meeting with no sales fee. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month. Please send your comments or documents to
newsletter@annarborbonsaisociety.org.

Wanted. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related that you don't need anymore and that is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Donations to the Society are always accepted. In

most cases many donated trees or other materials have been raffled among the attending members during our monthly meetings.

Help Spruce Up Our Web Page Appearance

Raquel Vega, AABS web master, is soliciting photographs of members' trees to appear on one of the many pages of our web site. You can hand deliver a photograph of your favorite bonsai to Raquel at the meeting or send a photo via email to her.

members-owner@annarborbonsaisociety.org

MEMBERSHIP

Society Membership is for the calendar year. Use the membership form on the Web and bring it to the next AABS meeting or mail it to:

Joan Wheeler
2295 North Harris
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
(734) 485-6306

Email: treasurer@annarborbonsaisociety.org. Please make your check payable to AABS for \$25.00.

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society (www.absbonsai.org) and the Mid American Bonsai Alliance (www.mababonsai.org).

Contact AABS at: newsletter@annarborbonsaisociety.org



AABS 2011 Bonsai Show information shared with the public at Detroit Public Library, 5201 Woodward Avenue, Detroit

*In Appreciation
Organizations that shared AABS 2011 Bonsai Show fliers
with their public*

Canton Public Library, Canton
 Detroit Public Library, Detroit
 Farmington Community Library, Farmington Hills
 Northville District Library, Northville
 Novi Public Library, Novi
 Plymouth District Library, Plymouth
 William P. Faust Public Library, Westland

Boys and Girls Club, Royal Oak
 Environmental Interpretive Center (EIC), Dearborn
 Family Aquatic Center, West Bloomfield
 Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton
 Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, Ann Arbor

Bensell's Greenhouse, Toledo
 Bonsai House, Westland
 English Gardens, Dearborn Heights
 English Gardens, Royal Oak
 English Gardens, West Bloomfield
 Flower Market, Monroe
 Lighthouse Coffee Shop, Tecumseh
 Penetta Nursery, Westland
 Steinkopf Nursery, Farmington Hills
 Telly's Greenhouse, Troy
 The Hair Studio, Troy

Four Seasons Bonsai Club, Troy
 Toledo Bonsai Club, Toledo



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1800 North Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9741

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance.

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