



The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the U-M-Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Please join us at 6:30 PM to meet friends and members. Program starts at 7:00 PM.

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>
AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com

July 2016
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NEXT CLUB MEETING:

July 27, 2016

An Artist's View: Jane DeLancey

Jane DeLancey is a local visual artist with bonsai experience. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at The University of Michigan, with a second major in photography. Ms. DeLancey is the owner and creative director of DeLancey Design, an Ann Arbor-based firm specializing in graphic design and web development.

She will use her artistic expertise, and bonsai experience to discuss the application of artistic concepts to the art of bonsai. This presentation will be coupled with an application of these ideas to bonsai brought into the meeting by members and bonsai in the MBG Collection.

Join us at 6:30 PM in the MBG auditorium to catch-up with longtime friends, welcome visitors and talk bonsai.

The meeting starts at 7 PM with the evening program to follow

JULY'S SHOW & TELL:

Any member who brings this month's Show & Tell focus, Dawn Redwood, to the meeting on July 27th will receive one free Raffle ticket!

Show & Tell will begin between 6:30 and 7:00 and each owner will give a short history, or tips on how grow, or tell other tales about their special tree. Every general meeting will feature one special tree that members can bring for Show & Tell.

Each month's special tree will be specified here, in each month's newsletter.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

Ron Milostan

This spring Tam and I traveled to New Brunswick, Canada. Alma, the small village we stayed in, was a wonderful place to visit. We spent 3 days hiking the Fundy National Park and the rocky shoreline with its naturally sculpted rock formations. We also dined on lots of lobster since lobster season was in full swing.

The National park is located in the Eastern Temperate Forest region of Canada, the park is situated in two distinct ecoregions. The southern section of the park experiences cool, wet summers and mild, rainy winters. The northern section of the park experiences summers that are warm and rainy, and winters that are mild and snowy. The landscape was so rich, green, and diversified. Sounds were muffled by the layers of moss that covered every surface. It is a beautiful place. We hiked starting at the top, 350 meters to the lower valley at 100 meters. We followed the rivers and streams and skirted around waterfalls as we made our way to the lower valley.

Tam has always disliked the look of bonsai trees with exposed raised roots – saying that trees don't really grow this way in real life. Well, while hiking in the National Park we encountered many trees with exposed roots and over-

rock root systems. These were large mature trees. We took pictures and were quite impressed. These trees have weathered many heavy storms with lots of rain causing yearly washing off of the already thin soil deposits. Still they grew into very large trees, roots exposed and all. This environment is so different then out west in higher elevations where the weather extremes and dry conditions do not allow the trees to grow in size. Many of these trees were Hemlocks with exposed roots. These pictures show the trees and should convince all, including Tam, that exposed roots are really cool and in nature.



JUNE'S PROGRAM RE-CAP:

At our last meeting, Young Choe shared her deep expertise in kusamono, potted collections of plants. She introduced herself as an articulturist, an artist and a horticulturist. Kusamono are intended to be the center of attention, unlike a related art form shitakusa, viewed as an accompaniment to bonsai, not the center of attention. She explained that kusamono is 50% art, 50% horticulture. The kusamono should evoke a time and place in nature.

She recommended that you can buy the plants you wish to use for kusamono at nurseries, but that everything will tend to be too big. She advised that we break apart the plant, wire it, and cut back the big leaves. "It will take years, but it will then be nice."

Young pointed out that you can use driftwood in your kusamono. Attach it to the pot with wire, then plant an iris (the example she showed) or whatever plant you wish to use. Sometimes Young adds an accent to her kusamono, such as a cricket made of bamboo.

Young showed many beautiful examples of kusamono:

Schizachyrium scoparium (little bluestem)
Chrysanthemum
Selaginella rupestris (spike moss)
Mukdenia rossii
Anemone hupehensis (Japanese windflower)
Eleocharis montevidensis (sand spikerush)
Houttuynia cordata (chameleon plant)
Equisetum hyemale
Penstemon digitalis
Campanula rotundifolia (harebell)
Iris cristata (dwarf crested iris)

Besides using pots, Young showed the group how to make a moss ball using muck soil (sticky, muddy soil to hold things together). Young placed the soil on mesh with 2 thin wires in a cross shape, and added the plants or grasses into the soil. She pulled the wire around the mesh & soil into a ball shape, with the plants sticking out of the ball of soil. She then placed sheets of moss all around the ball and used black thread all around the ball of moss, multiple times, to help the moss attach to the sticky soil and to go around the plants.

Young shared the following tips for creating your Kusamono:

- Kusamono can reflect the seasons or habitat (woodlands, wetlands, mountain region etc.). A certain aspect of the tree can be brought out or contrasted with the kusamono
- Use a single species of plant or mix them. Depends on the bonsai and how the plants you pick for kusamono relate in nature
- When you have a flowering tree display, it's better to use a green accent plant.
- Every plant has a face. Kusamono should be facing you like the bonsai. Or they could be "talking" to each other.

- Paying attention to the proportions & how the bonsai and kusamono harmonize with one another is key
- Maintaining your kusamono is very important. Even though small, pay attention to watering schedule, lighting conditions, quality of the pot, soil combinations, and size (how it relates to the whole display)
- Moss can be used in building your kusamono, but remember to think about the size of the moss in relation to the plants you have chosen. How do these relate in nature?
- When you find a pretty plant in nature that you would like to use in your kusamono, pick up what's around....rocks, moss, grasses. All of this can be incorporated into building your kusamono. Young suggested the rule of 1,3, or 5... Usually, she puts three different things (i.e., tall plant, grass, rock) together.
- Pay attention to the type of soil you will need. Sometimes you can just use potting soil; other times you may need to add sand to your soil.
- Whether your kusamono is in a pot or in a moss ball, make sure your presentation is as carefully crafted, watered, and styled as your bonsai so that the viewer get the best presentation and understands the relationship between your kusamono and your bonsai tree.

Young also let us know that she has a website you can visit where she has a list of plants and grasses that can be used for creating your kusamono. She has wonderful pictures to get your creative juices flowing as you try this fascinating art.



Tom McCue (L), Young Choe, Kurt Smith, Jay Sinclair (R)



Young Choe during AABS presentation

During Young Choe's Kusamono Workshop:



Hanna Hughes (L), Young Choe, Vicki Norfleet (R)



Cyril Grum & Young Choe

Workshop participants display their Kusamono and Moss balls:



(L to R) Bob Bauer, Vicki Norfleet, Hanna Hughes, Bill Struhar, Young Choe, Cyril Grum, Cathy Strachan, Louise Neuman, Tom McCue and Jay Sinclair

UP FOR DEBATE: A Cry for Help!

Aaron J. Binns

Life can be difficult. When we are young, we need lots of help. How does one go about brushing one's teeth for example, or tying one's shoes? We generally rely on our parents to help us learn early on. As we age, the problems we need help with become more subtle. Instead of learning that discussions about the gigantic bugger one extracted from ones nasal cavity is not appropriate for dinner conversation we begin to need help understanding our place in society and during adolescence we need help becoming the man or woman we will eventually grow into. Sooner or later, the difficulties we need help with become so complex it is sometimes hard to put them into words. I used to think that if I got old enough I would have the answers, if not to life, the universe, and everything, at least to questions about daily living. Well, this year I will be 40 and I have yet to experience a heavenly epiphany ending me with all of the answers. In fact, the closer I get to 40 the more I realize I may even need help dealing with the fact that I'm actually that senior; I guess when your 20 you think of 40 as a theoretical number only; it is an interesting concept but you probably won't actually ever use it.

If life can be difficult, bonsai can be impossible. As humans, we have our very complex (sometimes too complex) society to help educate us on just about every topic and we have caretakers of every kind to help us when we can't help ourselves. (Example: the modern medical system, which is also a modern mess.) Most of us don't have a bonsai mom and dad to get quick answers from and unfortunately the number of members in our bonsai community is not great enough to sustain a bonsai pharmacy in every town located at the corner of Green and Vigorous. (If you have been to a Walgreens lately that was a very funny joke. Corny but funny.) As bonsai artists, we face a similar situation of seemingly endless questions. When we first start, we just need someone to answer the simple stuff. What tools do I really need, where can I get good bonsai, how do I wire a tree? As we become more proficient, we begin to have very specific questions about very specific trees. For instance, during a recent workshop I learned how to open the spring buds of a European Beech tree and prune leaves before they even open to minimize elongation.

I didn't even know to ask the question, I was just lucky enough to participate in the right class. There is an immense amount of horticultural information out there but how does one access it and how does one tell the difference between a good source of information and one that should best be passed over?

So, this week I would like to tap into some of your best sources of bonsai knowledge. I would offer the Ann Arbor bonsai society and its Facebook page as my favorite but I would really like to know what other sources have people found consistently helpful and accurate. Look to the Facebook page for further group discussion on this topic... and be sure to participate!

BEGINNER'S MIND

J. Brian Byrd & Carmen Leskoviansky

Our Facebook page recently featured the question:

Is there a consensus vision for a tree that would please all eyes once realized? Is there some predictably pleasing proportion or ratio that makes all observers like a tree? Is this perhaps partially true?

Here are some of the responses from our members:

Ron Milostan: Seems like the Japanese are trying to attain this with their design rules. I do not feel that one size fits all.

Mike Simmons: DeGroot speaks of proportions, ratios, balance, harmony, unity, contrast, etc....These are not "Japanese design rules". Much more universal. "They are what artists do as a rule because they are concepts or practices that have been found over time to be effective." (DeGroot, pg. 3) The first 45 pages of, Principles of Bonsai Design goes over these concepts in nice detail. If you haven't read it, you should.

Follow us on Face book and get involved in the conversation!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2016

July 27 - Monthly Meeting

Jane DeLancey will discuss the application of artistic concepts to the art of bonsai.

Aug 24 - Monthly Meeting

A Discussion of Seasonal Topics.

Saturday & Sunday, August 27 & 28

Our Annual Bonsai Show at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

September 28 - Monthly Meeting

Our Annual Auction of Bonsai.

October 26 - Monthly Meeting

Aaron Wiley will discuss the reasons, goals and objectives of fertilizing, timing fertilizer application and fertilizers.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS- 2016

You can reserve a position in these workshops by paying the workshop fee. Your check, covering the cost of the workshop, should be made out to *Ann Arbor Bonsai Society*. If you are interested, you can contact Jay Sinclair at aabonsaisociety@gmail.com (put **WORKSHOP** in the subject line) and I will provide you with mailing instructions OR you can reserve a spot in the workshop by paying the fee at the monthly meetings.

REGIONAL BONSAI EVENTS - 2016

August 6&7 Annual Show of the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan

Held at Bordine's of Rochester Hills, Michigan

Mid-August 39th Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit

Held in Glencole, Illinois

August 28 & 29 Ann Arbor Bonsai Society - Annual Show

Held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor, Michigan

September 10-11 5th US National Bonsai Exhibit

Held in Rochester, New York

Sunday, September 18, 2016 Art of Bonsai

Held at Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, Michigan

October (time and date to be announced) Mid-Michigan Bonsai Club - Annual Show

Held at VanAtta's Greenhouse, 9008 Old M-78, Haslett, Michigan

FOR SALE OR WANTED:

Ads in the Newsletter: 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.

Prizes for the Raffle: We are soliciting donations suitable for prizes to be raffled during each general meeting, and, for the Annual Bonsai Show Raffle. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related, that you do not use anymore and is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Please see Bill Struhar at any meeting, email Bill at wm.struhar@mail.com or call (586) 468-7169.

Club Logo Now Available: we will embroider the club logo on your garment for \$12 (plus modest additional charge for lined garments).

The logo comes in two forms; light green tree on dark green background, or dark green tree on light green background, with a border on both combinations and AABS lettering and Chinese characters with appropriate contrasting color depending upon the garment color.

Bring your garment in a clear plastic bag to a meeting, select your colors, pre-pay Bill Struhar, and your garment will be ready one or two meetings later. (The vendor requires a minimum of five garments per order)

2016 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

Fund Raising: William Struhar

Web Administration: Don Wenzel

Nomination Committee:

Show Committee: Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

Annual Auction: Paul Kulesa

Membership dues are \$25. Please pay by check, written to Ann Arbor Bonsai Society or bring your credit card to the meeting and pay! AABS now accepts credit cards for membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Tamara Milostan – Treasurer AABS
4228 Highcrest Dr.
Brighton, Michigan 48116

AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com



Tamara and our new Square

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society: <http://absbonsai.org> and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance: <http://mababonsai.org>



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

Visit us on the Web:

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

Support Local Bonsai Vendors

Hours: Wed., Thurs. & Fri.; 11:00 am to 6:00 pm Sat., 1:30pm to 5:00pm
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