



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

September 2016
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NEXT CLUB MEETING: **September 28, 2016**

Ann Arbor Bonsai Society Auction

This is September, and that means the return of the annual auction for bonsai and bonsai related items. This is a great opportunity to lighten your stacks of bonsai containers, bonsai, pre-bonsai, and any sort of bonsai related material. The corollary is that there will be great bonsai and related material for you to purchase at auction.

All members are invited to offer for auction bonsai and bonsai related items at our auction. Offering items for auction is reserved for members of the club. Of course, you are welcome to bid on items at this auction. The auction is in two formats, a silent auction and the live auction.

The success of our auction depends on assistance provided by our members. If you can help with the administration of the auction, contact Paul Kulesa at AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com

In broad terms, the auction schedule is found below.

- 5:30 PM Setup of the auction floor space - setting up table and chairs.
- 6 - 7 PM Registration of Buyers, Sellers and auction items.
- 6:30 PM The Silent Auction begins.
- 7:00 PM The business meeting begins (10-15 minutes).
- 7:15 PM The Silent Auction resumes.
- 7:30 PM The Silent Auction wraps up and the Live Auction begins.

When the live auction wraps up, payment for auction purchases will begin. There are no provisions to accept payment for purchases prior to the conclusion of the auction. To eliminate the crush of members wishing to pay *right now*, buyer will be called by their Buyer ID Number, starting with #1.

Additional information and forms will be delivered by email.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: **Ron Milostan**

Wow! Another great Bonsai Show. Every year I am just so impressed with the AABS show. I am always surprised at the trees that show up. This year many exhibits were listed with the artist's name. I loved that there were many surprises as to whose tree it was and knowing the artist gave me an opportunity to talk directly with them.

I also enjoyed the displaying techniques. The closer you approached the tree the more you saw. Stands and pot were attractions in themselves. Everyone also enjoyed the vendors and the raffle drawings. It was very rewarding to see the vendors selling so many trees and during this event we always pick up a few new members.

Saturday evening's potluck was intriguing to say the least. After a very well organized and delicious meal, Kurt Smith led the members in a round robin of questions and discussions that involved all of us in choosing favorite displays based on different criteria; trunk, pot, balance and overall look were some of the choices.

In the Matthaei Garden's Bonsai display area we held demonstrations and fielded all sorts of questions. One gentleman kept insisting he wanted a maintenance free tree. He said he really enjoyed the beauty of a bonsai tree but he was working all day and had no time for all the feeding and watering, not to mention the wiring and trimming. But he still wanted to know what trees were easy to care for. I wondered just how he had managed to raise his children. Bonsai enthusiasts know that there are many similarities between the two and I know of no maintenance free children.

Ok, this month is AUCTION TIME. Bring your trees, pots and anything bonsai related to sell. Remember what Cyril said, " Ron buys most anything".

AUGUST'S PROGRAM RE-CAP:

By Paul Kulesa

This year the August meeting took place a couple of days prior to our annual show. Jay Sinclair, Program Chairperson, arranged to have Cyril Grum share his thought on preparing bonsai for display in our show. Following this presentation the membership would offer advice to members who brought bonsai seeking specific advice for their bonsai.

Cyril Grum opened his presentation with an emphatic encouragement for all members to bring their bonsai to the show. Showing your bonsai is a great way to garner suggestions from a variety of members to consider before improving your bonsai. This will be a learning experience for you and other members who see your bonsai. Because personal taste varies among all viewers, 70% of bonsai in the show receive a positive endorsement for *best of show*.

Bonsai are not welcome at the show if they are infested with harmful insects or diseased. However, treating the bonsai with pesticides or chemicals immediately prior to the show may leave the bonsai with an unappealing odor at the show. Healthy trees have a visceral appeal to the

viewers. This should be a season-long goal for any bonsai you plan to show during the year.

Cyril continued with a list of tasks to spruce up and prepare your bonsai for the show.

- Remove dead leaves and branches from the tree and weeds from the container.
- Clean the bonsai container, removing dirt, stains and mineral buildup on the surface.
- Oil the unglazed surface of the container to improve its appearance.
- Wired branches are acceptable, if kept to a minimum and out of sight where possible.
- Trim the foliage mass to maintain the profile you want to present.
- Refresh the soil surface removing debris and adding moss and an appropriate soil mix.
- To ensure your bonsai display finds its way back to you, label with your name the bonsai container, the stand / slab, accent(s) and associated scroll / drawing.
- Water your bonsai prior to delivering to Matthaei.
- Remember to bring your show registration forms.

To improve the visual appeal of your bonsai there are procedures that should be started two weeks prior to the show to *green-up* your bonsai. Cyril has openly discussed his procedures and may share them if . . . and this is critical . . . if you corner him with a minimum of two other persons and pointedly press for those procedures.

UP FOR DEBATE:

An American Contribution

Aaron J. Binns

Our annual show has once again come and gone. I think for most of us it represents the high point of the bonsai season.

We train and nurture our selected tree with special fervor in hopes that for the two days it will be on public display that it will look its best and cause someone to hesitate in front of it as they walk through the show.

The rest of the season almost seems anticlimactic in comparison. Every year the show teaches me something or causes me to question some aspect of our art. This year was no different.

In last month's article I alluded to the perception that bonsai is considered by many to be a Japanese art form. My position was (and still may be... I guess I'm on the fence, that unless we can somehow communicate that bonsai is an American art too it will never become truly mainstream here in the U.S. I spent considerable time during and after the show mulling over this very issue and have come to split conclusions as to what bonsai is and what it could become.

Art (which is what I think bonsai really is) evolves. Take paintings as the ultimate example. The first paintings used a cave wall as a medium and depicted images that were basically stick men. Fast forward in time and the Greeks showed us what classical art could really be and these concepts were taken to new levels on canvas during the renaissance where painting flourished. New artists brought new ideas and Claude Monet revolutionized what painting was by introducing impressionism. Take another leap forward to today's modern art and there seems to be no boundary as to what the subjects or techniques of painting really are. The different styles allow paintings to be classified to time and area of origin. You hear art historians talk of the Italian or French masters and their styles are such that someone with a bit of background study can date and place a painting without knowing the specific artist.

Slow evolution in bonsai is happening. After all, the peijing that was (and still is) practiced in China is somewhat different from the bonsai developed in Japan. Pot size and shape seem also to evolve somewhat over time. What then is the American contribution? What styles or techniques have we developed to leave our fingerprints on the history of bonsai?

I may be that the bonsai "rules" may be hampering the evolution of bonsai and may be preventing us from adding our own twists. The people's choice tree in this year's show was a larch forest by Bill Struhar. If you look closely at the back of his bonsai, he placed several small bear statues. I think in doing so he communicated a seen that was "American" or at least more familiar to the typical American than a literati bonsai. Obviously, the bonsai itself was of high quality but maybe, just maybe this very small appeal to the familiar helped to produce an emotion

in the viewer that a perfectly classical presentation never would. I for one liked it.

There has been at least one time that I considered placing a scaled tire swing on a tree and chickened out because I knew I would illicit many comments of "That is not bonsai." I have never been to a national show but I wonder if they would allow a tire swing? If not why? Art is supposed to illicit an emotion and if done well why not?

Then I began to change my thinking again and decided that if I could paint like a renaissance master I wouldn't care if I contributed anything new to the art form. Applying that same logic to bonsai, maybe I shouldn't care that our art is so closely associated with the Japanese works that first introduced the craft to the U.S. I am after all not suggesting that a classical Japanese bonsai is bad; on the contrary, it is exactly this presentation that appealed to those of us who are now attempting to produce our own trees.

So here are this month's questions: Is there an American style of bonsai and if so what is it? Should we strive toward something that can truly be recognized as American bonsai or leave well enough alone?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2016

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

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 may require 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

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
 CLOSED: Sunday, Monday & Tuesday
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