

NEXT CLUB MEETING:

July 27, 2017

Jack Sustic, AABS member and former curator of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum in Washington DC., will host our July meeting. The format will be a 'Bring your own tree' discussion and workshop. Individual trees will be discussed and there will be time for working on trees as well. This is a good opportunity to get ideas for trees that are under development.

Preparing For Our Annual Show

Paul Kulesa

This year our Annual Bonsai Show is Saturday and Sunday, August 26 and 27. To prepare for a successful show there are several tasks to accomplish.

- Several weeks prior to our show, we will repair, clean and paint the display stands used in the show.
- On Friday, August 25, we will transform the auditorium at Matthaei into the "stage" we will use to display our bonsai.
- We will take down the "display stage" on Sunday evening following the show.

Plan to help accomplish these tasks, mark your calendar and watch for the date to prepare the display stands. I will contact you by email as the task approaches.

(one more thing . . .) What's a bonsai show without your trees? Select several bonsai and start the grooming process now. By mid-August you'll have a better idea of which of your bonsai will look best in the show.

Questions? Contact me at kulesap@gmail.com.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

Ron Milostan

Well it's really been a dry summer so far this year. I have had to change my watering schedule. It is no longer a "schedule"... right now it is really based on watching my tomato plants. If they wilt, it's time to look at my trees!

Warm weather and high winds change everything. We have had short bursts of rain and cool mornings but just not enough. I have been watering every day and sometimes twice on certain pots. Two identical pots need to be watered differently based not only on sun, wind and rain, but on the plant in the pot. Trees with heavy foliage will have a higher rate of transpiration than a light foliaged tree.

I have tried covering the surface of my smaller pots with sphagnum and leaving larger pots without to try and force a watering schedule that is good for me. But in the long run this just created more problems. If we could have eight inch pots, three inches deep and all of our plants with same number and size of leaves we would have a near utopia for watering our bonsai collection. Boring of course but much easier to handle.

Ok, so even after 20 years of bonsai learning, watering is still a major issue. Instead of trying to find the perfect single watering system for all of my trees, I have learned to pay attention to each individual tree and its needs. As

you can see I have given up on a watering schedule that is good for me.

I wrote earlier that “watering is still a major issue”. I no longer think of it as a major issue. I look at it as a part of the technique needed to be able to grow bonsai trees right along with fertilizers and soil mixes.

June Meeting minutes and presentation notes.

Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meeting 06/28/2017 (48 people present)

Some communications:

- Michigan Invasive Species Education Program (OAK WILT): oak wilt is a lethal and invasive disease of oak trees. Go to the website www.misin.msu.edu in order to have all of the information and to report a case of oak wilt.

The exposed root style, by Jerry Meislik

Jerry Meislik, long time AABS member, is an internationally recognized expert on Ficus bonsai and author of the book "Ficus, the exotic bonsai".

The first time he saw a tree with exposed roots in Japan he didn't have a good impression but after some years he changed his ideas about them.

How do roots grow? In a wood, normally, all of the roots grow in the ground, but sometimes we can find some exceptions where the roots are exposed: one reason can be the erosion, or sometimes it is possible to see small trees in a dead trunk. Over time the dead trunk will disappear and the small tree will grow with exposed roots where before was the other trunk. It is possible to see an example in the following picture:



In the following picture it is still possible to see the dead trunk



For some trees, like Ficus, roots can grow in the air if the humidity level in the air is high. The following picture is an example:



Trees with adaptable roots are ficus, citrus, elms, pines, trident maples.

In order to have a bonsai with exposed roots you have to put it in a deep pot, its roots will grow deep in the pot. After that take a wire and put the roots together. For a few years they will be flexible and it will be possible to change their shape. Put the bonsai in a pot with the deep roots exposed and cover them with a foil of aluminum. At the beginning you should put water in the aluminum otherwise it will die. After some months put less water in the aluminum foil.

For the styling of the tree it is always necessary to find what is special in the tree and emphasize that particular thing. The same is for the roots.

During the design of the tree it is necessary to keep the design constant, for example if the design is based on the roots it has to stay that one.

Sometimes it is possible to use one branch as a root if there are not enough roots in the tree.

In the picture below there is a big Ficus bonsai, bought by Jerry in Taiwan in 1999



Jerry decided to donate this tree to the Matthaei Botanical garden.

An introduction to Jack Sustic: By Peggy Kubitz

Jack Sustic will be our guest facilitator at the July meeting. Jack grew up in Michigan. He became mesmerized by bonsai he glimpsed from a bus window while serving in Korea. He says he was “captivated”. I’m sure many of our members can relate to this. He believes that bonsai can cause you to feel suspended in time and place. It is an experience many of us have shared. I surely know I have lost track of time or felt transported to another time and place, while working on, or admiring bonsai. When Jack returned to the states, he joined a local bonsai club in Birmingham, Alabama where he was stationed.

Later, he earned a horticulture degree from Michigan State. He worked at Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens in Columbia, South Carolina and became president of the bonsai clubs of South Carolina. In 1996 he began a dream job at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the United States National Arboretum. He was named curator in 2002. He interacted and studied with the world’s most renowned bonsai experts, and became one himself. What an incredible responsibility and mission, taking care of trees hundreds of years old, including the 400 year old Yamaki white pine that survived Hiroshima. John Naka’s Goshin, a forest planting considered by many to be the world’s most famous bonsai, was also his to care for. I’m sure a job like this would make me lay awake nights, and

yet I would love to be a volunteer. I know Jack enjoyed working with the many dedicated volunteers over the years. He has recently retired. On National Bonsai Day, the museum is known for promoting Kato's idea that there would be peace in the world if everyone did bonsai. What a winsome thought!

UP FOR DEBATE:

By Aaron J. Binns

Everything is Debatable

We love to argue. It seems that the entire country has become one giant reality TV show with everyone defending their own position to the death. The thing is, the longer that I live the more I realize that there usually isn't one possible right answer. Life isn't a multiple choice test with four proposed answers where only one is right. It is more like a question with a thousand different possible answers where a couple hundred of them are perfectly acceptable and 20 or so are better than all the rest. The same rule can be applied to bonsai.

When I first started this column my hope was to bring up questions and have an open and friendly debate via Facebook, with the understanding that if your experience tells you something you are doing is right, it is. Even if someone else's right is diametrically opposed to yours. Although this hasn't panned out perfectly, my perpetual optimism and overall sunny disposition is making me want to try again. The real point here is to take stress off of the newcomer and experienced bonsai grower alike. If you have found techniques that work for you don't worry so much about finding the "right" way to do something. That will just thin your stomach lining. Sharing your experience will help others, even if you aren't the world's expert on the subject.

So, in order to spur debate, I'm calling you out Ron... that's right, I'm calling out the President of our club. (The reader should note that I told Ron I was going to do this and that I recognize he is way better at growing trees than I am... but hey, I need a way to spark interest.) Ron has been quoted as saying, "You shouldn't finger prune junipers... it turns them brown." I say, "Heck no Mr. President, I finger prune my junipers every spring with great results, so there."

Turns out this spring I found out that Ron was right... go figure. I also learned that he was wrong at the same time.

(See were I'm going with this? There is no one right answer.) The truth is that all of my junipers except one is a shimpaku. Pinching those back in the early spring keeps them compact. If you haven't tried this I highly recommend it. The tree I pinched back that turned violently brown was a common garden juniper. I have pinched it back before with only a little browning, but I won't do that again. To add to the muddy waters, I was behind in my bonsai maintenance so I pinched back later in the spring than I normally do. This may have contributed to the severe browning. My shimpakus were all just fine so I will continue to finger prune these but use extreme caution with other juniper bonsai.

This week's debatable question: Has anyone else had experience with junipers? Are there other variety we should be aware of that accept finger pruning? What is your experience? What is your right answer?

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)

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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.

Visit us on the Web:

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

Fund Raising: William Struhar

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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
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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>

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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