

ISSUE #21 JUNE 2020

The Annual Show: A Photo Essay

Compiled by Bob Bauer

Following is a series of photographs pulled from the historical archives of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society featuring the club's Annual Show.

Annual Show Through the Years

Comments by Jack Wickle, Show Chair in the early 80's



The first show was in May of 1971 and has been held annually ever since. The photo above is from our 1976 Bonsai Show.

"The Annual Show is a way of communicating our pleasure/excitement to other people. Our exhibits are our society's public statement about who we are and the satisfaction/rewards we find in interacting closely with nature in this way. You can say our trees are our statement about the beauty of interaction between people and nature."



An AABS mini-show held locally Circa 1980, hosted by Betty Anne Duff (left, president from 1980-82) and Mary Stribley (right).

“Our exhibits are a way of reaching out to members and encouraging deeper involvement, and a way of reaching out to people who may be candidates for membership. In short, our exhibits are a way of communicating with each other as members and of communicating with the public.”



1984 Annual Show.

“Interestingly, many people report becoming more aware of trees and details of trees around them after seeing a bonsai exhibit. They find themselves seeing trees around them in a new way. This happens again and again.”



1985 Annual Show.

"After many years of involvement with our AABS Annual Exhibit and other bonsai exhibits, I still find it very satisfying to see visitors coming, looking intently at our trees and smiling. And, it is still especially gratifying to see someone really looking closely at one of my own bonsai."

1996 Ann Arbor Saline Flower Show and AABS Bonsai Exhibit

"Some people enjoying a bonsai exhibit are questioning, "How do they do that?" Some are thinking, "I could never do that." And seeing the wide variety of trees people are working with and enjoying, some people suddenly realize, "I could do that," or "I'd really like to try that."



**Ann Arbor Bonsai
Society
ANNUAL SHOW**

August 24th and 25th
10am till 5pm

Matthaei Botanical Gardens
1800 North Dixboro Rd.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Large Display of Bonsai Trees of all shapes and Styles

Demonstrations on going both days

Vendors:

- ☉ Bonsai House from Livonia Mi.
- ☉ CS Nursery from Muskegon Mi.
- ☉ Wild Things Bonsai Studio from Ohio
- ☉ Ken's World of Bonsai from Ohio
- ☉ Ed Meehan Supplier of Joshua Roth Tools, Ohio
- ☉ Ron Milostan, 'artist' soapstone and burl wood carvings

Admission is \$3.00 Adults: Includes Unlimited Access to Show;
Demonstration's and Vendors

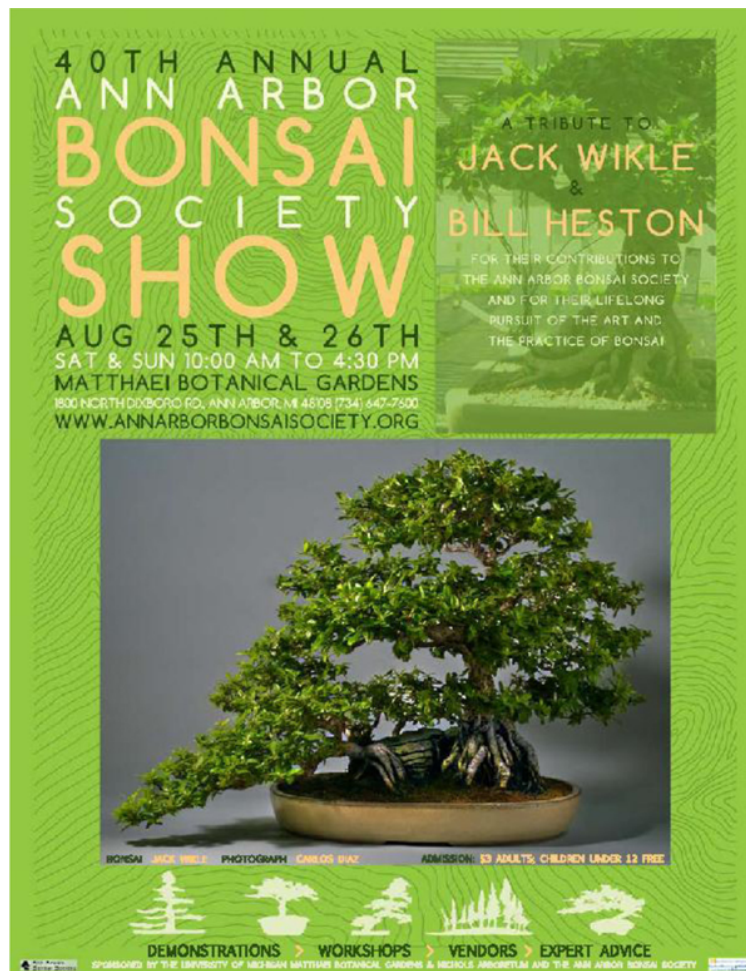
Children under 12.... Free

2002 Show Poster.



2009 Annual Show. Photo by Jay Sinclair.

"I remember being asked some years ago by a relatively new member why one particular tree, a small juniper, was included in our exhibit. When I explained that it was being exhibited by a very new, 10 year old member, her first bonsai, the questioner became, almost instantly, completely comfortable with it being there."



2012 Show Poster.



Demonstrations during 2013 Show featuring Aaron Binns on left; Carlos Diaz, center; and Dustin Mann, commentator. Photo by Jay Sinclair.



2014 Annual Show. Photo by Jay Sinclair.

"I've told members often, pick out one of your trees you like and do what you can to clean it up for exhibit. Eliminate or hide what you don't like and try to make it look as nice as possible. You will almost always be surprised at how well you like your show candidate tree after a little hands-on attention."



2018 Show. Cyril Grum, Cathy Strachan and Jack Wikle. Photo by Michael Field.

"It's notable --- I can't overstate this --- that there have been many individual members who have been major contributors of time and exhibit trees for years, but there have, also, been many who became deeply involved and have done far more than their share of the workload while they were active, who have moved away, grown away from bonsai, "aged out," or passed away, people who, unheralded, have made this show what it has been and helped it grow in quality to become the ongoing source of pride it is today."

Behind the Scenes

By Kurt Smith Show Chair since 1993, Photos by Jay Sinclair & Michael Field.

Friday afternoon setup with Tom McCue (back) and Paul Kulesa (facing)



Friday night staging area of submitted trees



Vicki Norcross helping with Friday night setup



Vendor area open during show hours



Saturday/Sunday morning tree watering with Jack Wikle and Paul Kulesa



Saturday night club dinner



To put on the show is to have a lot of people working together. I'm the show chair. But mostly I make sure everybody does their job right.

The biggest job falls on Paul Kulesa every Friday before the show, setting up the room, the tables, skirts, dividers and window shades. It looks really nice and that is a big job. And then Friday night, we check in all the trees, make sure all the names are correct and the forms are filled in. Jack Wikle is usually helping with this along with other volunteers. Then Vicki Norfleet and Michael Field are typing up and printing the labels.

For the last few years, Carmen Leskoviansky has been in charge of placement of the trees. And just like Paul needs 10-15 people to help, Carmen needs four or five people to move trees around and decide where they go, so the display flows and looks good. Then comes Saturday morning. Jack and Paul are watering all of the trees before the show opens. Saturday, we are in need of people to take money and welcome visitors and answer questions. Tam Milostan has the cash box and supplies for the ticket sales. Bill Struhar is selling raffle tickets. Ron Milostan, Aaron Binns and others run demos all day out in the bonsai garden.

Saturday night is the members' potluck dinner. Peggy Kubitz always cooks up a great main dish. She brings more dishes and along with everyone else's contributions we have a really nice dinner. It is a great social time with club members. Then there is a fairly quick critique and we start all over again on Sunday.

When people come pick up their trees at the end of the show we need help tearing it all down and packing it all away for the next year. So it's not any one person. It's a big job. We try to get as many club members involved as we can to get this this accomplished.

All of this is coordinated with Matthaei Botanical Gardens. They help with advertising and with volunteers directing people where to go. There's always someone there to answer questions and help us get everything we need. It's a good group effort with the Gardens staff and club members.

What do we look forward to in 2020?



There was a Board of Directors Meeting last night and several good suggestions were proposed about this year's Annual Show. Some will require a little more study, but it looks like we will continue the tradition of 50 years of Annual Shows. The plan at this point is to have a virtual show in late August. Time to start getting your trees ready for a photo op!

Previous issues of this publication are located in the [History section of the AABS website](#)

NEXT WEEK: *Hidden Lake Gardens and the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society: A Special Relationship*

HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH OUR 50TH CELEBRATION

1. To help us in this celebration effort, all Ann Arbor Bonsai Society members present and past, and all others wishing to contribute are invited to submit personal statements (60 words or less) to be published in our Yearbook. Each text contributor is also strongly encouraged to submit a favorite photo (with caption) of a bonsai tree or a bonsai activity to accompany his or her personal statement. (We can scan old prints or digitize color slides for anyone needing this help with old pictures.) [Upload Form is here.](#)
2. Let's all Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the AABS in style with shirts that have our commemorative logo printed on the front. Shirts will be available for purchase for \$20 each at our monthly meetings, at the Annual Club Show August 29-30, and at The Flower Market in Dundee, Michigan.



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