



Roots & Branches

The Origins and Directions of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society

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The First Public Show

By Jack Wikle (from the 30 Year History)

Following the first election and other business that evening, plans were discussed for a "bonsai show." It was to be staged at Matthaei with the cooperation of the earlier established, and larger, Lansing area bonsai group, the Bonsai Society of Michigan. (Begun in October 1963, the first bonsai society in Michigan, this Lansing group eventually disbanded sometime after its last full year of regular meetings in 1990.)

Bonsai Show A Huge Success 5/71



Bonsai Lovers Meet

The Bonsai Show, sponsored by the Washenaw Bonsai Society and the Michigan Bonsai Society, attracted large crowds to the U-M Botanical Gardens. On the left is Leonard A. Kersch, president of the Washenaw Bonsai Society, and next to him is Mrs. Mary Westman, secretary. Kersch is a resident of Ann Arbor and Mrs. Westman lives in Dexter. With them are Winnie Jones and Keith Bakeman of the Lansing Bonsai Society. The miniature tree in the center is an imported Satsuki Azalea which is more than 90 years old but still blooming. More than 300 persons attended the show. "The attendance," said Kersch, "was overwhelming." The local society was formed only last year. The other miniature trees shown on this page are a sampling of the kind of Bonsai exhibited at the show. The local society meets regularly and welcomes visitors.



Blaauw Juniper



Japanese White Pine

That first show was held May 16, 1971 in Matthaei's west lobby with some of the bonsai overflowing into the adjacent classroom (Rm. 125). A bold headline proclaiming, "Bonsai Show a Huge Success," accompanied four photos in the Ann Arbor News report of the event. Highlight of the exhibit was Dr. Seevers' "90 year old," imported, satsuki azalea in full bloom.

Note: The author of this history, a member of the Bonsai Society of Michigan at the time, was an exhibitor at that first show. After the show closed, many members from both clubs went on to Dr. Seevers' home to enjoy his hospitality and be amazed at the size of his extensive bonsai collection.

Bonsai Lovers Meet

From the Ann Arbor News

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NEXT WEEK: *Dr. Maurice Seevers and Matthaei's Bonsai Collection*

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. Show your support for the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society with a T-Shirt Purchase. Celebrate the 50th Anniversary in style with shirts that have our commemorative logo printed on the front. Available in multiple colors and sizes. [Order Here](#)



Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
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