



Ann Arbor Bonsai Society

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the U-M-Mattheae 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 2021
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September 22th Meeting – Rodney Clemons to Present “Stone Plantings”



Our September Meeting will take place on Wednesday evening, August 22nd beginning at 6:30 on Zoom with a half-hour informal chat. The formal meeting will begin at 7:00 with Rodney Clemons presenting “Stone Plantings”. This will be a live demonstration via Zoom followed by a Q&A.

Rodney Clemons was captivated by bonsai in 1973 when he saw a Trident maple forest that struck chords in his heart and artistic nature. Bonsai has been his passion since that time. Rodney is a bonsai artist and instructor. He was a professional landscaper, specializing in Japanese gardens and natural water features. His work has developed his sensitive eye and skill with rock and plant placement which adds realism to his bonsai creations. He studied with E. Felton Jones and enjoyed workshops with many visiting artists like John Naka and Yugi Yoshimura. His style has been formed by studying nature, drawing heavily on childhood memories of coastal Florida. Rodney excels in capturing the tension in nature and translating it to bonsai. He is best known for his unique “rock plantings” and his love of “Kingsville” boxwood. At present he is applying his talents at his nursery, [Allgood Bonsai](#), designing trees and teaching

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August Meeting Notes: Mark Hanner

The scheduled speaker, Rodney Clemons, was ill and his presentation was rescheduled for September 22.

Cyril Grum indicated he couldn't attend the show, and would have an open house at his home for members to drop by, see his trees, chew the fat about bonsai and such, on Sunday, September 19. The time and address are being provided to members.

Our annual auction will be held at Hidden Lakes Garden on Saturday, September 25; as an alternative to the usual silent auction, prior to the actual auction we will have a sale in the parking lot, for items members would like to sell. There might be tables available for this. Will probably start about 11:00, go for a couple hours, with the live auction beginning at 1:00. Forms for Sellers and Buyers will be emailed out to members in advance.

October will be our final meeting for the year, with Jim Doyle, from Nature's Way Nursery, as our speaker via Zoom.

We concluded with a quick review of things to do with our trees and pots, and forms, to prepare for the show at HLG's.

September Auction News and Notes

Paul Kulesa

The AABS Auction

Saturday, September 25, 2021

Held in the Service Building at Hidden Lake Gardens

This is September and that means the return of our annual auction for bonsai and bonsai related items. This is a great opportunity to lighten your stock of bonsai containers, bonsai, pre-bonsai and all sorts of bonsai related materials. The corollary is that there will be plenty of bonsai and related material for you to add to your collection at this auction.

All members are invited to offer bonsai and bonsai related items for auction. Offering items for auction is reserved for members of the Society. Of course, you are welcome to bid on items at this auction. The auction will be conducted in a single format, the Live Auction. The Silent Auction has been curtailed to simplify the administrative process during these unsure times. Replacing the silent auction we are offering the opportunity for members to sell bonsai and bonsai relate items from the "TRUNK OF YOUR VEHICLE".

Entrance to the Gardens involves a \$5 fee or presenting a reciprocal membership with another Garden.



Tom McCue and Bill Struhar As Auctioneers 2019

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 kulesap@gmail.com

In broad terms, the auction schedule is found below.

- 9 AM HLG Opens
- 10 AM Setup of the auction floor - setting up table and chairs.
- 11 AM Private Sales of bonsai and related items in the parking lot.
- 11 AM Registration of Buyers, Sellers and auction items.
- 12 Noon Lunch
- 1 PM Live Auction begins.
- 3-3:30 PM The program should wrap up for the day

When the live auction wraps up, payment for auction purchases will begin. The treasurer will accept your credit card for payment, along with a check, PayPal and US currency. There are no provisions to accept payment for purchases prior to the conclusion of the auction. To eliminate the crush of purchasers wishing to pay right now, buyers will be called in succession by their Buyer ID Number, starting with #1.

Additional information and forms will be delivered prior to the meeting by email

Revisiting Wikle Bonsai Writing

By Jack Wikle

Prospecting for Bonsai Material

Yes, the usual bonsai society annual auction can be an excellent source of bargain practice material for bonsai but it's not your only opportunity.

Late summer and early fall are great times of the year to explore woods, fence rows and pastured fields before the hunters start shooting. Permission to dig can be surprisingly easy to obtain when the property owners learn that your targets are things many of them see as weeds.

It is also a great time to revisit the nurseries and garden centers. Typically prices on potted stock drop dramatically as winter approaches. It is better business, it seems, to have a little money in the bank than a lot of plants on hand that need protection to survive the winter. For the bonsai enthusiast, this potted stock has the great advantage of already having most of its root system relatively close to the trunk. With a little pruning of top and roots it can go into a bonsai pot almost immediately. This is in contrast to collected or field-grown stock that

may have to go into a bed or a large container while roots develop nearer to the base of the tree.

Be alert also for little "Ma and Pa" businesses or semi-abandoned nurseries. These places are often hideaways for surprising numbers of ungainly specimens held for years despite their imperfections. You will usually find the proprietors open to almost any offer short of paying you to haul "disfigured" things away. This is especially true if you show an interest in buying more than one plant.

And, don't forget your own yard or the landscapes of your friends and acquaintances. What has been planted there that is now overgrown? What has volunteered from seeds distributed by squirrels, birds and the wind, and is now growing where it is not wanted? The reality is that there are a lot of plants out there "up-for-adoption" because their owners are reluctant to destroy them but delighted if they find new homes.

Remember too that some choice species and varieties are essentially unavailable except from vendors who specialize in bonsai material and supplies. Keeping up with what they have to offer can be very helpful in enhancing your collection.

What to Look for:

Theoretically, any tree, shrub or vine is a candidate. But, as it turns out, some kinds are much easier to grow and develop as bonsai than others. If the plant naturally has small leaves or short needles and thin twigs, its proportions will be more pleasing as bonsai. If you want small flowers and small fruit, you will need to start with a plant that normally has small flowers and small fruit.

Also, some kinds of plants seem to be happier, easier to grow, in a pot than others. Which are the most tolerant ones? They are the ones that show up repeatedly in bonsai books, magazines and your friends' bonsai collections. If it works for them, it will probably work for you too.

In the Orient, the great majority of their bonsai are developed using those relatively few tree species they have found to be rewarding over hundreds of years of experimentation. For instance, of the two or three dozen maple species native there, just two species are commonly grown as bonsai. Of the variety of pine species, only three are much used as bonsai, etc. The message

here is don't ignore those plants known to make very nice bonsai quickly.

Keep in mind also that a lot of the nicest bonsai, especially in the Orient, are grown using selected clones (named varieties that are genetically identical being all pieces of the same plant) chosen for outstanding vigor and appearance. As one very knowledgeable bonsai grower of Chinese ancestry emphasized strongly to me some years ago, "You don't use just any trident maple as bonsai. People have grown hundreds of thousands of trident maples from seeds. They picked out the best ones and planted them in the ground. Those are the mother trees." Passing up the high quality clonal stock available from some bonsai vendors can mean passing up very rewarding material.

Oh yes, don't forget the vigor factor. Other things being equal, choosing the strongest growing, healthiest looking plants when more than one are available can expedite your bonsai success greatly. Remember that the strong tend to get stronger and stronger and the weak tend to get weaker and weaker.

Here is a quick list, in no particular order, of kinds of plants that come to mind as bonsai material to be especially alert for in our climate: Junipers (*Juniperus*), almost any; American larch or tamarack (*Larix laricina*); Yews, (*Taxus*); Elms (*Ulmus*), especially the smaller leaved kinds; Apples and crab apples (*Malus*); Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*); Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*); Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); Mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*); Hornbeams (*Carpinus*), especially Japanese and Korean natives; Beeches (*Fagus*); Azaleas (*Rhododendron*), especially the relatively hardy variety Hino Crimson; False cypresses (*Chamaecyparis*), especially *Chamaecyparis obtusa* varieties; our native white-cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*); Zelkova (*Zelkova*); Dwarf varieties of Norway spruce (*Picea abies* vars.), especially *Picea abies* 'Little Gem'; Cotoneasters, (*Cotoneaster*); Firethorns (*Pyracantha*); Flowering quince (*Chaenomeles*); Barberry (*Berberis*); Boxwood (*Buxus*) and Privet (*Ligustrum*).

What? No mention of something you are trying to grow? Don't let that slow you down. Experimenting is part of the fun and the more experimenting you do the more fun you will have and the more bonsai you will have too. But, don't miss your chance to also grow those kinds that are almost guaranteed.

A Check List of Things to Look for in Your Material

Search:

- Pick the healthy plant when you have a choice. Vigorous material with lots of stored carbohydrate reserves will tolerate more stress and recover faster from whatever you do with it.
- If you want a thick trunk, start with a thick trunk. Trunks thicken very slowly in a bonsai pot.
- A nice, flaring trunk base with well-distributed surface roots should also be high priority. Even though it is the oldest part of the tree, an impressive base can be very slow in developing. Finding one gives you a great head start.
- Perhaps next in importance is an attractively tapered trunk or, at a minimum, an opportunity to create trunk taper by cutting the main trunk back to a low branch.
- Now look for a trunk line with a pleasing flow, not stiff but something conveying a feeling of motion - movement interesting to you.
- Naturally small leaves and thin twigs are useful too because proportions will be more pleasing.
- Finally, if your great discovery is a needle evergreen, confirm that it has usable foliage not too far away from the tree's trunk. This is much more rewarding to work with than foliage tufts isolated at the branch tips.

February 2009 update of material from September 2003 and 2004 AABS Newsletter column

A few trees from our 2021 show





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)

2021 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: Bob Bauer

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 and paypal for membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Katie Norder – Treasurer AABS
Attn: AABS Membership
13143 Hadley Road
Gregory, MI, 48137

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

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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