



Kongetsu

West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

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March 2006

Mollie Hollar, Editor

2006 Schedule

Thurs, March 16: BYOT (bring your own tree) in preparation for the May show, also pests and diseases

Sat, April 1: Repotting workshop, and finally bonsai mums!

Sat, April 22: Collecting trip (location TBA)

Fri, May 5: Set-up for All-State

Sat & Sun, May 6 & 7: Michigan All-State Bonsai Show

Thurs, May 18: Show re-cap and photos

Sat, June 10: Open studio/BYOT

Sat, July 22: BYOT, styling, wiring, general care

Weekend of Aug 19 & 20: Trip to MidAmerica Bonsai Exhibit & Show in Chicago

Sat, Sept 16: Tanuki/phoenix graft workshop

Fri, Oct 13: Set-up for Club show

Sat & Sun, Oct 14 & 15: Club show

Thurs, Oct 19: Planning meeting for 2007

Sat, Nov 18: Potluck & auction (location TBA)

All events are at Meijer Gardens unless otherwise noted. Thursday meetings are 7:00-9:00 PM, and Saturday workshops are 9:00 AM to Noon. More details will come in future newsletters as events draw nearer.

Anita's Corner

The ROOT-OVER-ROCK workshop/meeting on Saturday, February 18, was pretty well attended (9 had committed to attending and I believe 12 actually participated in the workshop!).

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Spring is Coming!

Yes, it's true, spring is on the horizon. Warmer temperatures for the past several weeks have me thinking more about my outdoor trees and beginning to plan what's next for them.

One thing, however, that we must remember is that we all live in Michigan! That means there is bound to be more winter weather coming. The latest measurable snow (two or more inches) that I remember in this area was in May some years back. Of course, it didn't last long, but with it came some pretty cold temperatures.

Ok, so what does that mean for what we should be doing with our trees at this time? First, leave them in their winter storage until temperatures are above 40° at night for at least a week. Last year I didn't get some of mine out of winter storage until the middle of April and they were just fine. Since our trees will start their spring growth when temps are consistently above freezing, they will need good light then, but probably not for a few weeks yet.

Second, this is an excellent time for pruning, especially our deciduous trees. They are still resting, and it's much easier to see the branch structure without any leaves. Conifers can be trimmed as well. But **do not trim your spring flowering trees**. If you do you'll lose a lot of blossoms that you really don't need to lose. (Some trees that flower heavily are better off if you remove *some* of the buds since so much energy goes into producing them.)

Third, be sure to remember watering. If there is no measurable snow or rain you will need to water your trees. This is very important at this time. Again, they are still resting, so we might think they don't need water. Not so. They can still die if their roots dry out completely. Not a lot of watering yet, just enough to keep them satisfied.

And fourth, if you haven't been doing what I told you to all winter, start mixing your soil for repotting. It's amazing how much time you can save by having that done ahead of time. I keep at least two five-gallon buckets filled, one with soil for my deciduous and the other for my conifers. Then if you have an extra hour or two some Saturday in late March or early April, you'll be prepared to get a tree or two repotted.

Repotting is a bit of a sticky topic. Should you be doing it yet or wait? I'd recommend waiting with our unpredictable weather. If a tree has newly-trimmed roots and we get a prolonged cold snap, it's likely to incur some damage. Then again, if we don't get any more cold at all before the last week in March, you could begin the repotting process. But work only on your well-developed trees, probably the conifers before the deciduous.

Remember, you know your trees better than anyone else. If you question anything I've said here, do what you know is best for your trees.

Most of us participants did not bring a rock to "root-over", so, with the kind hammering-help from Jon Holwerda, we were working w/Feather-Rock for our base. Then we each had the choice of a variety of tropical/semi-tropical plants to complete our project. The overwhelming favorites were the Catlin Elms; while they looked a bit rough, their aerial root-structure was a natural for this workshop. Everyone who has ever attempted a root-over-rock planting has their own ideas about the "proper" way to accomplish this type of project, and this workshop was no different. This workshop, led by Mollie Hollar (our President & newsletter editor), used a mud-mixture comprised of paper-maché, sphagnum moss, & water to bind the roots to the rock & then a covering of plastic-cling wrap to secure the mud-root combination. Minimal root-pruning was encouraged (only to help stimulate new root growth & to reduce the tap-root if needed) and no wiring was done during the workshop. Some light pruning of the foliage was also encouraged (to help the plants recover from the shock of re-planting). Each participant put their own "slant" on their project, the workshop ran smoothly, & everyone finished in a timely manner!

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Dues are Due

Remember to get your dues in to our treasurer by the April workshop. Any people who have not paid by mid-April will unfortunately be removed from our mailing list. You don't want to miss even one edition of this great newsletter, do you? There's a membership form on page 4.

Looking Ahead

We'll have a special treat at our March meeting. I just got a phone call from Steve LaWarre, indoor horticulturist at Meijer Gardens, saying he will be glad to come in and talk to us about pests and diseases. He'll be first on the program, so be sure you're there promptly at 7:00.

Plans for the mums that Anita mentions have changed. We won't have those until the April 1 repotting workshop. Ordering and delivery times have held this off until then.

As Anita says, if you have any special requests as to color or blossom form contact me. I've given brief descriptions of each one we're ordering on the last page here, so you can get an idea of what will be available. We'll be ordering two of each, so if you think you'd like more of any one let me know. I already have special orders from some members. Don't expect full-grown plants. That would take all the fun out of it! These are cuttings that will grow very quickly through this season. Hopefully some will be blooming for our fall Club show.

This is a special gift from the Club to our members. The first mum will be free. If you would like more than that, the cost of each cutting will be \$2.00.

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This may seem early to be thinking about our September workshop, but I do have some suggestions. For this workshop you will be bringing your own deadwood piece, and possibly your own plant to graft onto the wood. This will be a true tanuki/phoenix graft. We will be carving a slot in the back of your piece of deadwood into which the live tree will be fastened.

So, you ask, where am I going to find a good piece of deadwood? If you have access to a rather secluded beach on Lake Michigan, take a walk on it, preferably after a good storm, and see what you can find. If you have already looked in a woods, look again. Just think of the wood that came down from our ice storm a few weeks ago. Look in parks and orchards for quirky, twisty pieces with or without smaller branches. Extra branches can always be broken (**not** cut) off, and bark can be removed.

We will be using Dremel-type tools for this project. If you don't know what one is, check them out on the Internet or in your favorite tool store. You don't need to have a big, fancy set. If you decide that you want to get more pieces later, you can always do that. Just the basic tool with a few kinds of carvers will be sufficient. Skip bought a great one for me on eBay. You could check them out too.

## *Joshua Roth 2006 New Talent Competition*

This would be an excellent experience for anyone in our Club who has been involved in bonsai for less than ten years. It is an "annual competition to recognize and promote new bonsai talent in North America. First prize

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## Bits & Pieces

I am having a bit of a problem finding a site for our collecting trip in late April. *If you know of anyone who has a woods with a good variety of types of trees, please let me know as soon as possible.* I'd like to do this trip since we haven't in a few years.

I must apologize to those of you who don't have Internet. I try to constantly remind myself to give non-electronic contact information (that's phone numbers) and not refer you to just websites.

I have subscribed to something called the Monday Garden at <http://www.themondaygarden.com/>. This is written by a middle-aged woman whose site says:

*"TheMondayGarden.com* is for beginning houseplant enthusiasts, serious weekend weeders, nature-loving urbanites, tree-hugger wannabes, and people who just like pretty nature pictures.

"On the site, there's information for the beginner, who would like just one houseplant or outdoor perennial to live (please!) or who would like to be able to tell a maple from an oak, at least some of the time.

*"TheMondayGarden.com* is also for the sub/urbanite who wonders what going on in the alley after we all go to work on Monday. On the site, you can get a sneak-peek at what nature's doing behind the parking lot when the *homo sapiens* aren't looking.

"For the socially conscience, please be advised that *TheMondayGarden.com* has a  
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pronounced bias in favor of squirrels, and against chemicals, both of the fertilizer and pesticide kinds, whether or not the label says "natural and organic". Please stop the chemical warfare; the results, time and again, are proving more harmfully than any of us could have imagined. Please also do what you can to feed and shelter the "homeless" critters who once lived where we now have condos and malls.

"This site explores how we, the gardeners of the ever-expanding sub/urban environment, who think we know what we're doing, collectively impact the world. This includes our impact on the wild critters forced to live much closer to us than they would choose.

"Much of *TheMondayGarden.com* is devoted to my own struggle to learn to how to pursue the pleasures of growing green things without possibly poisoning myself or the neighbors, be they humans or four-footed."

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Bob and Jeni Shives still have several books and all the tools that I had written about earlier, as well as a few of the pots. If you're still interested in something but have lost their phone number, it's 616-887-7006.

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I hope to be able to include in the April newsletter a list of the materials we have in our Club library, which has grown considerably in the past couple of months. Please take advantage of this great resource.

## Chrysanthemums for Bonsai

*"Low growing, mounding types with small leaves and blooms of anemone and daisy style. Bushy, free branching strong stems. Height from 8 to 15 inches. Most are bred for training to bonsai style and are also excellent for container and landscape planting."*

**Pumpkin:** small orange anemone

**Hatsune:** small, solid yellow anemone, develops many branches, good trunk, and strong surface roots.

**Crystal Falls:** naturally spreading type with long-lasting white anemone blooms; a natural for cascading bonsai.

**Senkyo Kubune:** short, bushy grower with small white blooms; more reliable for old wood bonsai than any other of this type.

**Yukari:** very small pink, single flowers with short florets; a dwarf grower.

**Kotoi No Kaori:** golden bronze anemone with red ray florets.

**Chidori:** very small white single flowers; dwarf grower that develops large trunks and many branches.

**Seigi:** small anemone bloom, free flowering with gold centers and red orange ray florets; the shortest grower.

*The following are best suited to cascades:*

**Biko:** a small deep purple anemone

**Rose Maiko:** a light rose colored sport, very floriferous

**Gum Drop:** high yellow disk and white ray florets

**Kurume:** a deep red sport, both ray and center florets of the same color