



# Kongetsu

## West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

Vol. 13 No. 5

June 2009

Mollie Hollar, Editor

### 2009 Schedule of Events

**Thurs, June 18:** Ciment fondu form making

**Sat, June 20:** Making ciment fondu planters\*

**Sat, July 18:** rain date for fondu, or BYOT

**Sat, Aug 22:** Annual silent auction & making muck\*

**Sat, Sept 19:** Bring your own tree (BYOT) & repot bonsai mums

**Thurs, Oct 15:** 2010 planning meeting

**Fri, Oct 16:** Set-up for Club show

**Sat & Sun, Oct 17 & 18:** Club show

**Sat, Nov 7:** Possible marking of trees for 2010 collecting

All events are held at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park unless otherwise noted.

Events marked with an asterisk \* will be held elsewhere.

### Mini-Mums Are In

I have finally received the bonsai chrysanthemums that some of you ordered earlier this year. These are free to active members. I did order several extra mums in various colors. I'll bring them to the Thursday and Saturday sessions this month, and probably to the July workshop. In case you've forgotten what you ordered, I still have the original sheet. They have been planted into small nursery pots so you won't need to bring anything to take them home in. I'll also have printed info on growing them.

### June's Exciting Events!

I am really looking forward to our events for this month. As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, it's been years since my first attempt at a ciment fondu planter, which failed miserably. While I'm not actually making one by myself this time, I'm sure Skip will let me help on his – probably especially the sewing part that we'll be doing next Thursday evening. For those of you who don't keep newsletters from one month to the next, here are details:

This will be a two-part workshop, Thursday evening, June 18, at 7:00 PM at Meijer Gardens, and Saturday, June 20, at 9:00 AM. Bob's notes for Thursday:

The material you start out with is 12" x 22" (approx.) and final size will depend on the shape you pick. It can be smaller, but will be 1/2" (min) thick once the ciment fondu is completed.

For the 18th meeting, you will be forming the slab with wire fencing, a metal dowel and chicken wire and then sewing on fiberglass cloth with fishing line. I will provide the above, but here's a list of items for you to bring with you:

- 1) Heavy Needle (2-3" long) and curved works best, but straight will also work.
- 2) Work gloves and if you have rubber glove type, it's even better.
- 3) **Needle nose pliers.**
- 4) **Sketch of what you want to create.**

And Bob's notes for the second part next Saturday:

For June 20th meeting you will finish the slab with ciment fondu and I will provide everything else, but here's a list of items for you to bring:

1. Plywood, 1/4-1/2 inch thick (min) and no smaller than 2'x2' (used to transport home and for curing until dry)
2. Old paint brushes, tooth brushes etc. for applying fondu.
3. Old bed sheet and plastic to cover wet slab when not working and transporting home.
4. Small mister to keep rock and sheet wet. **(If you don't have one, I have a couple)**
5. Work or rubber gloves.

(cont on page 2)

Mollie Hollar

616-754-2351

[hollar@chartermi.net](mailto:hollar@chartermi.net)

520 W South Street, Greenville MI 48838

## Show and Tell

I mentioned last month that I'd like to have you start bringing a tree to share with the group every month. We should have adequate time at the Saturday portion of our workshop for you to do that, so bring along something you need help on or you'd just like to show us.

## Bonsai Glossary

Some horticultural terms this month:

**Germination** - The point when the seed starts into growth, subsequently developing roots and shoots.

**Habit** - The characteristic growth pattern of a plant: for example a tree may have an upright, branching or prostrate habit.

**Hardy** - A term applied to plants capable of withstanding winter frost. Hardiness is relative to local climate and the degree of frost to which the plant may be exposed,

**Hermaphrodite** - The description of a plant that has both the male and female reproductive organs and is therefore self-fertilizing.

**Internodal distance** - The length of a portion of stem between two nodes, or leaf joints

**Juvenile foliage** - Young leaves of tree that that produces one type of foliage in new or young growth and mature leaves of a distinctly different shape.

**Leader** - Generally, the main shoot at the tip of a branch that extends the branch growth. In bonsai, this term usually indicates the uppermost continuation of the trunk.

6. With only 5 members attending the workshop you don't need to bring chair or table, I will have a work table and chairs for people to use. But still bring a hat if it's sunny, sun tan lotion if you want a tan.

7. Pint jar for liquid sealer (seal once it has cured in about 3 weeks).

8. Since there is a long period of drying time in between coats of fondu, plan on 4-6hrs for this workshop.

Here's a link to Mapquest for my house and since everyone attending lives in 4 different cities, use it to get directions. My home phone number is 616-791-9141.

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?city=Walker&state=MI&address=3693+Dublin+St+Nw&zipcode=49534>

Several people have said they want to come but not build a planter. That's fine with me, as long as you bring what you'll need for the day. I'd recommend a comfortable lawn chair and food for the potluck lunch. *If you decide to do this, please let me know ASAP (even if you've mentioned it earlier) so we know how many people to plan for at lunchtime.* Those of you not registered will need to call me to get an idea of what categories of food are open. The Club will provide soda and cups for the day. You will also need to bring a plate and eating utensils.

If you have any other questions about this two-part workshop, be sure to contact Bob at the number above, or me at contacts on page 1.

## Upcoming Event

### 29th Ohio Regional Bonsai Show

Saturday, June 13, Noon – 7pm

Sunday, June 14, 11am – 5pm

**The Dawes Arboretum cordially invites you to experience the art of bonsai at the 29th annual Ohio Regional Bonsai Show. Free demonstrations will go on throughout the weekend. There will be a workshop on Saturday focusing on beginning bonsai— perfect for those just starting out! Over one hundred bonsai specimens are displayed in the Firelight Room and Bonsai Courtyard for viewing. If you are so inclined to start your own bonsai or if you are an old pro looking for supplies, vendors will be on the Visitors Center Deck each day.**

For Information please call:

740-323-2355 - Keith Stevens, Treasurer ~

740-404-6511 – Jason Treadway, Vice President

740-403-0215 - Jeff Carr, President

Directions: [http://www.dawesarb.org/gen\\_info.php](http://www.dawesarb.org/gen_info.php)

## More Vocabulary

**New wood** - A twig, branch, or stem originating in the current seasons growth.

**Node** - The points on a twig or branch where leaf buds and leaves appear. A node may be the source of a new shoot.

**Old wood** - A twig, branch or stem that originated in the previous growing season or earlier.

**Pot-bound** - The condition of a pot-grown plant when the root growth has filled the pot to the extent of eliminating all air spaces.

**Prostrate** - The habit of a plant that tends to grow along the ground rather than upright.

**Raceme** - An elongated flower head composed of individual flower stalks growing from a central stem.

**Rootball** - The mass of roots and soil seen when a plant is taken out of its pot or lifted from from the ground.

**Root stock** - The root system and main stem used as the basis of a new plant in propagation by grafting.

**Scion** - A woody stem or small section of a tree or shrub used to propagate a new plant by grafting on a rootstock. The scion holds the characteristics of the new plant; - the root stock enables it to grow quickly.

**Standard** - A tree or shrub grown are trained with a single stem up to 6' below the branching head.

**Stoma** - A microscopically small opening in the epidermis of the green parts of a tree or other plant through which gasses pass out of and into the plant from the atmosphere.

Source: Brussel's Bonsai Nursery website

<http://www.brusselsbonsai.com/Definitions.html>

## More on Composting

There was no space for continuation of our composting information from April, so here's a bit more from my son in Tucson:

There are a few keys to a good, productive compost pile:

### 1. Keep it aerated

Good compost production requires a good oxygen level. If your compost gets too compacted, is not turned over frequently enough, and/or gets too much water, it'll go anaerobic. The easiest way to monitor this is with a thermometer and with your nose. Compost that maintains a temperature of around 100-130 degrees is aerobically active. If it spends more than a few hours at over 150 degrees, it'll go anaerobic quickly. If your pile gets too hot, take a pitchfork to it and turn it over. This will loosen up any compaction, put more oxygen in there, and get the hot stuff up on top where it can cool off.

### 2. Keep it warm

Site your pile in a sunny location -- but not too sunny. My bin is located in a corner of my garden where it gets about 4 hours of direct midday sun exposure. You can probably get away with more direct sunlight than that given your climate. You don't want to get too much sun as, at least on lower-humidity days, the pile can dry out quickly.

### 3. Maintain an adequate moisture level throughout the pile

Those beneficial microbes need water for themselves and as a medium to travel from place to place in your pile. Your compost should be moist but not wet. Even in this dry climate, I maintain enough moisture in my pile by washing my kitchen bin over the compost pile instead of in the sink, and by turn one of my garden irrigation sprinklers so it sprays the bin.

### 4. Maintain a balance of "brown" to "green"

You don't have to be a soil scientist to come up with a good brown/green balance. It'll be different depending on where you live and how you're going to use the compost. Our soil here is more alkali and tends toward being more heavily fungal; therefore I work on producing a more acidic, bacterial compost to augment the soil and balance it out for optimal growing of stuff that's not native to the desert.

So for "green" stuff, which is heavy in nitrogen, I tend to use a lot of coffee grounds (though their color is brown, they classify as being green), alfalfa meal, and a bit of steer and chicken manure (not straight manure, but rather manure that has been first-stage composted) along with my kitchen scraps and garden clippings. The "brown" stuff is a combination of sticks from pruning, mulch, dead leaves, dirt, coffee filters and tea bags, paper, sawdust, hay and straw, nut shells, corn cobs, etc. Most Starbucks now bag their coffee grounds and leave them in a bin in the store for gardeners to pick up for free.

My general rule of thumb is that I do 3 parts of green to 2 parts of brown. Your soil will definitely have a lower pH than ours, closer to neutral, probably, so you can start with more of a 1:1 ratio.

More later as space allows.

**2009 Membership Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one:)

Active membership (\$25.00)       Inactive membership (\$6.00)

(Check one:)

I prefer that my newsletter be e-mailed to me.

I prefer a snail-mail copy of my newsletter.

Please write check to:

**WMBC**

and mail to:

Ed Spaans

947 Orchard SE

East Grand Rapids MI 49506