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## West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

Vol. 15 No. 6

July 2011

Mollie Hollar, Editor

### 2011 Schedule of Events

**\*Fri, July 22:** Blended mame demonstration by Pauline Muth

**\*Sat, July 23:** Blended mame workshop with Pauline Muth

**Sat, Aug 20:** Potluck & silent auction

**Thur, Sept 15:** Prep for fall Club show

**Fri, Oct 14:** Set-up for fall Club show

**Sat & Sun, Oct 15 & 16:** Fall Club show

**November meeting:** Planning meeting for 2012. **Date TBD**

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

Thursday meetings are from 7:00 to 9:00 PM, and Saturday meetings/workshops are from 9:00 AM to Noon unless otherwise noted.

### Jun 2012

I have been contacted by the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society to help them "bring bonsai artists to Michigan." I assume that means we would go to Ann Arbor for those programs. First, in April, is Erik Wigert

([www.wigertsbonsai.com](http://www.wigertsbonsai.com)), then in October is Marty Schmalenberg

([www.bonsaiinthebluegrass.com/page/Instructors.aspx#schmalenberg](http://www.bonsaiinthebluegrass.com/page/Instructors.aspx#schmalenberg)). More info at our planning meeting and as it becomes available from Ann Arbor.

### July Work

I'm sure most of you know by now what's most important for your bonsai at this time of year, but just in case you don't I'll enlighten you: **watering!** We've been having some really hot weather with lots of humidity, but don't let the humidity fool you; there's not enough moisture in the air to do our trees any good unless it's raining. And even then, if we get just a quarter inch or so it won't do enough for our trees. If you have a rain gauge use it to keep track of how much rain your trees get. Here are a few guidelines:

1. Perhaps most important to over- or under-watering your bonsai is the soil mix you use. Your bonsai **must** be in soil that is appropriate for each individual type of tree for several reasons:

A. A soil mix with too much humus or organic matter (we use aged pine bark) will only clump around the roots and allow no room for the roots to grow;

B. Using a soil mix with too much inorganic matter (clay aggregate in our case) will cause the water to drain through and not stay in the soil long enough to soak into the roots;

C. If your soil holds too much water you'll end up with root rot even if you water only every two or three days.

So it is important to have the correct soil mix for each individual tree.

2. Obviously, if your trees are in full sun (sun directly on them for more than six or so hours a day) they will dry out more quickly than if they have only a few hours of direct sun. I know of very few types of trees that will grow well in only a couple of hours of sunlight. This means that, with the kinds of days we've been having, you should be watering almost everything *at least* once a day.

3. Temperatures play an important part in your watering schedule. When it gets above 85 or so degrees, if your trees are in full sun, there's a good chance that you'll need to water twice a day. However:

A. Don't water trees in full sun in the heat of the afternoon. You're likely to burn foliage. This is especially true of Japanese maples.

B. Don't water too late in the day or your trees will retain moisture on foliage that could cause growth of molds.

C. I'd recommend a second watering, when it is needed, at between 6:00 and 7:00 PM.

So here's the bottom line: if you're not sure whether or not your trees got enough water from a rainfall, check the soil in them. If it's dry on the top few inches, or wet on the top and dry an inch or two down, you'll need to water your trees.

Mollie Hollar



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## Best repotting of the year

From Bonsai Tonight  
by Jonas Dupuich  
Bay Area Bonsai, Northern CA,  
June 2011

The technique comes from a crafty gentleman named Ebihara. It involves nails, chopsticks, plywood and a drill. Below are photos of the first steps in a slow process that can yield a truly impressive root base.



Zelkova roots



Nice, thin root system - so far, so good



To get a bit of perspective on the size of this tree – pretty small  
(continued page 3 column 1)

## July's Events

I am so excited about our events this month. First on Friday, July 22 at 7:00 PM Pauline Muth from New York state ([www.pfmbonsai.com/](http://www.pfmbonsai.com/)) will be demonstrating a bonsai technique called blended mame. I was sure that I had included a description of it in an earlier newsletter but apparently I didn't, so here's a quick overview:

### A Bonsai Close-Up on Blended Trees

From seedlings or cuttings to mature bonsai in a "wink of time"  
by Pauline F Muth Copyright 2009

#### What is blended bonsai?

Bonsai that are created by binding five or more very young trees together to create one bonsai. This method can create a mame or shohin bonsai in a fraction of the time it usually takes. It is excellent also for root over rock styles.

#### What are the advantages?

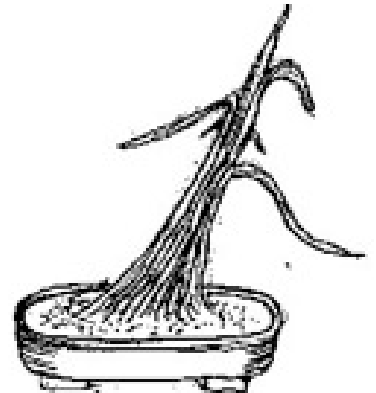
- It creates a thick trunk quickly.
- It allows for the exact placement of branches.
- It uses inexpensive material....often material that you have grown from cuttings or seeds.
- It allows you to be more creative.
- It allows for perfect nebari.

#### What are the traits of good material for blended trees?

- The seedlings or cuttings are long and very thin.
- The species is fast growing.
- The trunk is a single straight line.
- If branching occurs near the projected apex you may wish to use it.
- It is well rooted.

#### Suggested species to use

- most maples especially trident and koto hime
- Chinese elms
- Mugho and black pines
- Azalea
- try others and experiment (remember the traits listed above)



The second event that weekend will be a blended mame workshop conducted by Pauline Saturday morning, July 23, from 8:30 to Noon. We will be limiting the workshop to 10 to 12 people, so I need you to register for this. I've included **a registration form on page 5**.

Also, due to expenses for flight and hotel, we will need to charge for this workshop, but only \$25.00 per person. This is the first workshop we've charged for in several years, but it'll be well worth the expense. This topic and guest artist were agreed on at the planning meeting last November because some people who had wanted to take this workshop at the Mid-America Bonsai Alliance (MABA) convention last June were not able to. So get signed up quickly. It promises to be an outstanding program! Registration deadline is **Saturday, July 16.**

## Some Tidbits from Wayne Schoech Stone Lantern ([www.stonelantern.com/](http://www.stonelantern.com/))

I am not only a wholesale customer of Stone Lantern, but also a faithful reader of Bonsai Bark, a regular newsletter of sorts that always has fascinating information about bonsai. I've included here a few tidbits.

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### Nick Lenz' fertile imagination



Roots on plywood



Adding nails and chopsticks to place and support roots



Wires are applied to each side of the plywood over the roots to help flatten them. And finally, plywood, nails, chopsticks, and roots placed in a pot, ready to be covered with bonsai soil. Notice shallowness of pot. This will allow for even more controlled growth of the roots.

#### *Needed: a House or Yard*

While our potluck and silent auction are scheduled for Saturday, August 20, we don't really have a good place for it. Would anyone like to volunteer a space? Garages are fine too. Let me know.

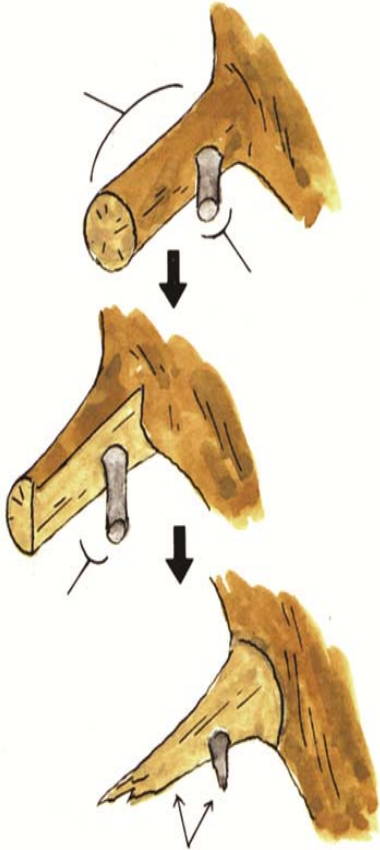


Nick Lenz ([www.artofbonsai.org/galleries/lenz.php](http://www.artofbonsai.org/galleries/lenz.php)) has been pushing bonsai boundaries for a long time. The planting above is just one example of his fertile imagination. However, a friend of mine says that what Nick is up to is just vain eccentricity and has no real meaning as far as bonsai goes. As for me, well, root-over-tank (below) always makes me smile, and maybe that's good enough (BTW: in addition to his 'vain eccentricities' Nick collects and styles plenty of simple and remarkable uneccentric bonsai.)



### Deadwood

An abbreviated series of drawings to show how to carve a primary and secondary branch that were cut off square. This is why I much prefer tearing off ends of branches if at all possible.



### Volunteers Needed

Our classes at the GR Veterans' Home are going very well. We're meeting every other week on Friday mornings, and we get several new people every time. They start on shimpakus (junipers) and go on from there.

Because I have people at so many different levels in learning, I am rather desperately in need of more volunteers to help. (*My undying gratitude to Tim Roest, Bob Goddard and Bob Coykendall.*) If you would be able to help out, please contact me ASAP. Next session: July 22.

### More Tidbits (still Wayne)

#### Dan Robinson's raw and rugged trees

I won't say too much about Dan's trees except that some are so raw that they seem to be begging for work, while others are simply perfect in their natural ruggedness.



*Bonsai? Or simply a dug up old tree in a bonsai pot? Many of Dan Robinson's trees are so raw that some might say they are more potential than fully realized bonsai. I have no idea where the border is between potential bonsai and bonsai. Or, even if it matters. Bald cypress by Dan Robinson from the gallery chapter in [Gnarly Branches, Ancient Trees](#) by Will Hiltz.*

### And Still More Tidbits – Wayne still talking

I would love to encourage some views on “crazy,” “wild,” “eccentric,” bonsai. Do you consider these photos to be bonsai?

Also, something about which I'd love to hear others' opinions: Is there such a thing as “instant bonsai?” Can I work for three hours on a juniper procumbens nana and develop something that looks much like something that has been developed for 20 years? Do bonsai *have* to take 20 years to be bonsai?

**Mollie here:** I say yes, there can be “instant bonsai” but it's different from traditional bonsai. Any opinions? Let me know and I'll print them here.

*Extraordinary Yew  
More from Wayne:*



*Deadwood Before . . .*

Yew wood is very hard. Harder than almost any other type of wood. In this light, take a look at the photo below and then at the photo above. Now imagine all that carving with only hand tools.... Okay, I'm kidding. Kevin used power tools. But still, it's a labor of love (and considerable skill).



*. . . and after*

*Every time I open Bonsai Today issue 106 and lay my eyes on this wickedly powerful, dynamic old English yew, my mind does a little double take. It may not look exactly like anything you'll see in nature, but it certainly jumps off the page. It's by Kevin Willson, bonsai artist and deadwood carver extraordinaire.*

For more about this deadwood article go to: [bonsaibark.com/2011/05/26/how-about-yew-carving-deadwood/](http://bonsaibark.com/2011/05/26/how-about-yew-carving-deadwood/)

*Registration for Workshop  
Saturday, July 23, 8:30 AM*

**Yes, I want to take part in the Blended Mame workshop on Saturday, July 23. My check for \$25.00 is enclosed.**

*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Phone Number*

\_\_\_\_\_

*E-mail Address*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this form and your check to:**

**Mollie Hollar  
520 W South Street  
Greenville MI 48838**

**Deadline for registration is Saturday, July 16.**

*2011 Membership Form*

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

(Check one:)

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

(Check one:)

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Ada MI 49301

Or bring to any meeting or workshop.