



BONSAI NEWS

July 2017

GREATER LOUISVILLE BONSAI SOCIETY

Ross Clark, editor

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OFFICERS' CORNER

Our **Annual Garden Tour on Saturday, July 15** will include two bonsai gardens we have never visited as a group before. Both should be spectacular. Our first stop at 2:30pm will be at Bob and Sonya Williams's. From there, we will move to Tom and Helen McCurry's bonsai collection. At 5pm we will move to Gustavos Restaurant in Prospect.

Both Bob and Tommy have a lot of fine trees we have never seen before, so the tour should be interesting and very informative. They have been working long hours, spending a lot of time getting their gardens and collections ready for our visit. These guys are great! — Let's enjoy helping them celebrate their trees!

Our **Mid-America Bonsai Alliance (MABA)** is holding its Annual Convention on July 7 and 8 at the Clarion Waterfront Hotel in Indianapolis. Featured artists include Matt Reel, Bill Valavanis, Mary Madison, Jim Doyle, Mark Fields, Andy Smith and others. There will be a variety of vendors offering practically everything related to bonsai. Whatever your interest or skill level, you'll want to see and enjoy this show. (**See next page.**) On Saturday, July 8, a group of our club members will travel to Indy to visit the show. We will meet to carpool at the Costco parking lot, next to the Norton Medical Center, close to Springhurst Shopping Center. We will leave at 9am and cross over the new East End Bridge. Now is a good time to begin getting groups together so we can travel in a fewer number of vehicles. This will be the closest full-spectrum show to us this year. Let's go!!

I would like to get the **Board of Directors** together on Wednesday, August 2 at 7 pm at Bob Williams's home. The agenda for this **very important meeting** includes discussion of the proposed changes in our constitution and by-laws. Also, we will discuss and plan our 2018 schedule of events and meetings. Even though there is a lot to discuss, I'm sure we can accomplish it all. I'm looking forward to seeing all Board members in attendance. (Please!)

A BIG THANKS TO TIM WECKMAN

On June 10, our club's outing to Tim Weckman's Berea Bonsai Nursery and Studio turned out to be a valuable trip. Everyone had a wonderful experience, and an opportunity to see a great variety of bonsai and pre-bonsai. Many thanks to Tim for his warm hospitality and graciousness. Tim, you have a wonderful garden!

Best regards,

Earl Ekman

President

Goshin, in the U.S. National Collection



MID-AMERICA BONSAI ALLIANCE C O N V E N T I O N

July 7-8 2017

Featuring Matt Reel

Bill Valavanis

Mary Madison

Jim Doyle

Mark Fields

Andy Smith

Brian Ciskowski

Michael Bell

Paul Weishaar

Carl Wooldridge

Scott Yelich

Ken Huth

Alan Magruder

Exhibit

Demos

Workshops

Vendors

Seminars

Clarion Hotel

Waterfront Plaza and Conference Center

2930 Waterfront Parkway W Drive

Indianapolis, Indiana

www.MABAbonsai.org

Host : Indianapolis Bonsai Club

2017 OFFICERS of the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society

President Earl Ekman earl.ekman@gmail.com 502-376-1584
Vice President Lee Squires bonsaiman@tvc.com 502-551-5985
Treasurer Mike Pfeffer mike.pfeffer@ge.com 502-500-9866 12503 Kirkham Rd., Louisville KY 40299

Other board members (elected at the business meeting during the 2016 holiday party):

Dick Blayne, Chris Bowman, George Buehler, Steve Hammel, Tom McCurry, Marian Taylor, Bob Williams

The Editor thanks everyone who helps this newsletter succeed and welcomes ideas, suggestions and articles. Please address newsletter items to ross.clark@eku.edu. The deadline for the April 2017 issue of this newsletter is Monday, July 24.

2017 MEETINGS OF THE GREATER LOUISVILLE BONSAI SOCIETY

(all meetings in Louisville, Eastern time, unless otherwise indicated)

JULY 15, Saturday, see schedule on page 1. Garden tours hosted by members Tommy McCurry and Bob Williams.

AUGUST — no meeting scheduled.

SEPTEMBER 16, Saturday, details tba

Workshop on “twisted mame junipers”. Instructor: GLBS member Cliff Tye.

OCTOBER 19, Thursday, at Bon Air Library. Building of bonsai show stands. Sharpen your tools!

NOVEMBER 8, Wednesday, at Bon Air Library, time tba. Important business meeting. We will vote on our revised constitution and by-laws and plan 2018 meetings and events.

DECEMBER 2, Saturday, time and place tba. Annual holiday party.

Additional details will be published in this newsletter as they become available.

SOME 2017 SIGNIFICANT BONSAI EVENTS, EASTERN NORTH AMERICA (listed by date)

Additional events and details will be posted in this newsletter as details become available

Mid-America Bonsai Alliance Convention, July 7-8, Clarion Waterfront Hotel, Indianapolis

PLEASE SEE FULL DETAILS, pp 1 & 2 of this newsletter.

This should be considered a “must do” event for people who are relatively new to bonsai.

Prairie State Bonsai Society (The Art of Bonsai) Show, Aug 5-6 (Sat. + Sun., 10 to 4), The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL. Owen Reich is headliner; workshops include dwarf hinoki, dwarf English yew, shohin Chinese elm, kusamono, junipers.

Midwest Bonsai Society Show and Sale, Aug. 18-20 (Fri. noon to 5, Sat. + Sun. 9 to 5), Chicago Botanic Garden, Glen-coe, IL. Features: display of numerous trees; judged by Colin Lewis; more than a dozen vendors; demos, lectures, workshops

Mid-Appalachian Bonsai Kai Show, Sept. 9-10, Gray Fossil Site (near Johnson City, TN)

Carolina Bonsai Expo, Oct. 13-15, North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville

An Evening of Bonsai with Rodney Clemons, Thursday, Nov. 2, 6-8pm, Waterfront Botanical Gardens, Sawyer Hayes Community Center, 2201 Lakeland Road, Louisville. This is actually an annual membership meeting of the WBG, but they are inviting folks interested in bonsai to join them. Admission: WBG members, free; general public \$20; students with ID, \$5. Information on how to obtain tickets and other details of this event will follow in a future issue of this newsletter.

Carolina Bonsai Expo, Oct. 13-15, North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville

2018 American Bonsai Society Convention, April 19-22, Collinsville, IL (suburban St. Louis)

The History of the GLBS

A Multi-Part Series- Part 4, July 2017

Lee Squires

BCI '76—Dedication of the National Collection

The GLBS was almost 5 years old in July 1976 and as I said in my last article, 1976 was an interesting year for the GLBS. I refer to 1976 as 1976 B.E. & T. ; Before Earl (Ekman) & Tommy (McCurry) were members. These iconic, "volunteeraholic" gentlemen have been stalwart members of the club for many years and without the actions of this dynamic duo many jobs would go undone. All praise to Earl & Tommy!

In 1976, at age 29, I was President of the Louisville Area Bonsai Club, now the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society. The Club voted to send me, as our representative, to the **Bonsai Clubs International** meeting in Washington, D.C., aka, BCI '76 in July 1976. This was to be my first BCI convention and I was to be the club's representative at the convention. The American Bonsai Society did not hold its convention at the same time as BCI. However, many ABS members were present at BCI '76. The highlight of the meeting was to be the dedication of the National Bonsai Collection at the National Arboretum. The people of Japan presented the United States with a gift of 53 bonsai to honor the U.S. Bicentennial, our 200 years as a nation, July 4th, our Independence Day. The trees first came into the U.S. in January 1975 under a 16-month quarantine. Eventually, they made their way to the U.S. National Arboretum to be placed on permanent display. The bonsai were named the National Bonsai Collection. Here is a reasonable facsimile of my printed invitation to the dedication ceremony from 41 years ago this month.

The Secretary of Agriculture
Earl L. Butz
requests the pleasure of your company
in dedicating
the National Bonsai Collection
presented by the Japanese people
to commemorate
our Nation's 200th Anniversary
on Friday evening, the ninth of July
nineteen hundred and seventy-six
from seven until ten o'clock
at the U. S. National Arboretum
Dedication Ceremony
R.s.v.p. 7:30 p.m.

The 1986 book, *Timeless Trees*, shows that there were 44 trees remaining in the collection at that time. Nine trees died over a 10-year period, I would guess from the stress of the trip and the change in climate and cultural practices. I remember, there was a dogwood, *Cornus florida*. (Dogwoods hate to have their roots “messed with” even as landscape plants.) Incarceration in a bonsai pot apparently did not agree with the dogwood, and it was not alive in 1986. Many others met the same fate. I’m sure many of our club members have seen this collection sometime over the past 41 years. There is a new book available that shows the entire collection available through the museum.

Today the collections are housed in the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. It is supported by the National Bonsai Foundation created in 1982. There are four collections at the museum : The Japanese Collection (63 trees now), The Chinese Collection, The North American Collection and The Viewing Stone Collection. GLBS member Linda Kossman donated a stone that is in the viewing stone collection.

I had created my first bonsai in 1972 and was ready to see what other plants were out there that could be grown as bonsai in Louisville, so I readily accepted the club's invitation to attend the convention and made my way to Washington, D.C. *

* [I stayed with my cousin, John Meisburg, who lived in Georgetown, a suburb of Washington. He was a law clerk on Capitol Hill. Jackie Onassis had an apartment in Georgetown and cousin John lived next door to Dr. Henry Kissinger. Henry was the Secretary of State appointed by President Richard Nixon. There were two body guards at his door at all times. They spoke rarely but by the time I left we were on a first name basis. They were really fairly friendly after they realized I was with a Georgetown resident attorney.]

A viewing stone (*suiseki*) and its pedestal (*daiza*) belonging to Lee Squires.



I think the meeting started a few days before the dedication. I was amazed at everything that was on display from trees to pots to supplies to suiseki. I drove by the famous Watergate office complex everyday on the way to the meeting hotel. Roy Nagatoshi was there with a display of some great trees. They were not in pots but the root ball was wrapped in aluminum foil. He could sell them cheaper that way. All of the other great bonsai growers were there but, me being a new kid on the block, I wasn't familiar with many of them. There was one vendor that got everyone's attention. A young southern cool cat with long hair had a whole display of Chinese Elm clones. He had everyone mesmerized with his trees. They were all mostly identical – 8-10" tall, 1" trunk diameters with 6" globes of foliage. They were \$30.00 and everyone had to have one. Even the Japanese couldn't believe what they were seeing. The cat's name was Brussel Martin ! I, also, met Tony Thomas, an exhibitor from California. He had an amazing collection of suiseki stones. He collected all of them from the Mojave Desert. He would drive through the desert & find a rock sticking up out of the sand. The exposed part would be sandblasted by the wind and sand, etching away the sandstone and leaving the hard chert in bizarre horizontal patterns. He would use a portable electric saw to cut off the sandblasted piece and bury half of what was left in the sand. In two or three years he came back to that spot and cut another valuable stone. He hand made all of his dais (wooden stands for you non-suiseki types) to fit the stones and wood burnt his initials, AJT, on the bottom of the dai. I bought a suiseki from Tony that he collected in the Mojave Desert and it is still in my collection. I paid \$35.00 for it. He had others that were more expensive and I should have bought more but you know how that goes. A picture of my stone is in this issue. Melba Tucker, the grand dame of 70's bonsai in California, wrote the book, *Suiseki & Viewing Stones – An American Perspective*, in 1996. She mentions hunting for stones (very similar to mine) in the Mojave Desert with Tony and some of his collecting buddies. Tony and I became friends and he invited me to a cocktail party held by the prestigious California Bonsai Society on Thursday night. All of the big names were there, no doubt. This is where I met John & Alice Naka. They had some suishi on the buffet and I had never eaten it before. John told me what it was and laughed as I ate the eel & seaweed piece. John said to me, "Lee you have to be a little eccentric to grow bonsai and a little crazy to eat raw sushi". I'll never forget that. Tony and John have both passed away. 1976 was the year that Coors Beer started to ship east of the Mississippi River. It was a big deal for sure. We all had heard of Coors but never had one. Tony and I went to the Capitol Liquor Store behind the White House and bought a 12 pack to take to the party. It was double the price of other beers and not all that much different from other beers available.

The dedication night was here before we knew it. A lavish buffet and cocktail party was planned and all attendees could eat, drink and tour the bonsai collection. It was an amazing time for all as we saw the trees for the first time. I saw the famous 'Miyajima' Japanese White Pine in cultivation since 1625 that survived the atomic bomb blast in Hiroshima and the Emperor's Black Pine, donated by the Japanese Emperor from his private collection. These trees were too impressive for words and hard to believe that they were on American soil now. Agriculture Secretary, Earl Butz, was first on the podium and he gave all a good welcome and sufficiently thanked the Japanese dignitaries for their gift. Good 'ol Earl got into some hot water with racial slurs later during his tenure and resigned before President Gerald Ford could fire him. You all may remember that. I remember exactly what he said and I'll tell you sometime if you're interested. It depends on who's around at the time. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was there with his wife, Nancy, and he gave a great speech with his deep German accent voice. I went up to him after the speech and told him that I was staying with my cousin who lived next door to him in Georgetown. He looked at me with a quizzical expression on his face. The trees were officially dedicated after all of the speeches were over.

There were many workshops and several trees were exhibited from members throughout the U.S. I did not take a workshop since carrying a tree on the airplane would have been a bit of a hassle.

I was certainly glad I went to BCI '76 and fortunate to have had the opportunity.

I had a half carousel of excellent slides that I took at the convention. I have showed them several times at club meetings in the past. Where are they now? Good question! I can't find them. Somewhere along the way they have been misplaced or thrown away? When and if I find them I will put some pictures in the newsletter.

To be continued.....

SEASONAL SUGGESTIONS

A Modest Proposal for Keeping Bonsai Cooler in Hot Weather

by Ed Stanton

Our editor Ross Clark published a helpful note titled “Coping with Heat” among his “Seasonal Suggestions” in the August 2016 “Bonsai News” (pp. 6-7). There he reminded us that “on average, the third week of July is the warmest week of the year” in our area. As we approach that seasonal point (as the Japanese might call it), and in fact during the entire summer, we should take measures to protect our trees from excessive heat.

All bonsai, no matter how healthy, suffer from the stress of being confined to a pot. If extreme temperatures are added to this unavoidable condition, the trees will be under even greater duress. This is how Ross Clark summarized the situation:

We know that soil temperatures over 90°F significantly stress and begin to kill roots. Species that are adapted to cool, wet soil (such as native larches and all spruces) or cool, mostly shaded forest-floor temperatures (such as maples, beeches and azaleas) and high-altitudes where large rock masses keep root zone temperatures cool (such as ponderosa and limber pines) are not well adapted to growing in hot soil. Any roots lost to high temperatures must be rebuilt before winter, or our trees will be under added stress in winter. And any roots replaced will require resources which could otherwise have been allocated into stem diameters and other desirable outcomes. (p. 7)

Some writers are slightly more conservative regarding the upper range of hazardous soil temperatures. Larry Morton, for example, in his recent book *Modern Bonsai Practice* (2016):

The usual recommendation is to minimize the exposure of tree roots to constant temperatures higher than 100°F. That is also the temperature at which the process of photosynthesis will start to break down. At 95°F root growth slows by as much as 90 percent. Higher than 107.6°, which is 42°C, the roots can't take up water and essential elements and can die. (p. 83)

Morton goes on to offer some of the usual tips for keeping bonsai cooler, from simple steps like watering trees more often and more deeply and misting their foliage, to mulching and burying pots in the ground. Clark also suggests placing bonsai trees in areas with more shade. Finally he adds a novel method of shading the pots themselves with aluminum foil, plastic pots and saucers, admitting that this solution “might look messy...” (p. 7, text and photos). I would like to offer here a similar method that might be easier on the eyes.

On August 12, 2016 I initiated an informal experiment, wrapping the pots of several sun-loving bonsai with white cotton cloth (see photo). When the air temperature reached 90°F at 4 p.m., I measured the soil temperature of each tree with a probe designed for that purpose:

Japanese Black Pine 1: 91°F (large rectangular pot)
Japanese Black Pine 2: 87°F (smaller rectangular pot)
Japanese Red Pine: 89°F (large round pot)
Shimpaku Juniper: 89°F (smaller round pot)
Dwarf Juniper: 88°F (small cascade pot)

Next I waited for another day with similar conditions in order to measure soil temperatures of the same trees without the cotton wrapping, but vagaries of the weather and my schedule forced me to wait until August 26th for the second stage of the experiment. When the air temperature hit 90°F that day around 3 p.m., I measured the soil temperatures of the same trees in the identical locations:

Japanese Black Pine 1: 98°F (+7 degrees)
Japanese Black Pine 2: 90°F (+3)
Japanese Red Pine: 91°F (+2)
Shimpaku Juniper: 96°F (+7))
Dwarf Juniper: 96°F (+8)



A pot shielded by cotton cloth, as described in the text.

I do not know why some trees showed as little as two degrees differential while other showed as much as eight. What I do know is that the presence of the cotton cloth lowered the soil temperature of all trees, and that if I moistened the protected pots with a hose, *they stayed cooler to the touch for a noticeably longer period of time those that were unprotected*. My next amateur trial may compare temperatures of covered, wet containers to others that are covered and dry.

I stress that my experiment was informal, without rigorous controls. The humidity was higher on the second day of the experiment, for example, and it was almost two weeks deeper into the season. Also, there are other variables such as a pot's color: we all know that lighter-colored containers, glazed or unglazed, remain markedly cooler. All of the pots in this study were in various shades of brown, some darker than others. The shape of a pot—rectangular, oval, cascade, etc.—may also be a factor.

In spite of the experiment's limitations, the numbers and my own sense of touch persuade me that my trees are "happier" when they are covered during hot weather, and I feel happier too; besides, they don't look too bad in their summer whites. Of course I would never rely on this procedure alone, but always combine it with others like more frequent and deeper watering, misting foliage and moving pots into shadier places during the dog days of summer.

If I were fortunate enough to have a tree worthy of being shown at Kokufu-ten or the U.S. National Exhibition, clearly I would not show it in swaddling clothes. But I will continue the practice in my own backyard, because to me it makes both esthetic and horticultural sense.

Editor's note: Many thanks to Ed for this article, which to my knowledge suggests a technique which I have not seen noted elsewhere. Obviously, a white surface will reflect more incoming energy, and when wet will be cooled further by evaporation. Approaches to keeping our trees healthy will have to evolve as changes in weather and climate continue to accelerate. So, constructive and innovative suggestions such as this one are both welcome and necessary. I must add that proposals more immodest than swaddling clothes will be considered.



The author (extreme left) with the other members of the Berea Bonsai Study Group. A more recent picture would include Bob Williams, who joined the group after the picture was taken. Photo by Jim Robertson (second from left).

CONFUSED ABOUT JAPANESE SPRUCES?

So was I, because I've heard various opinions expressed in various bonsai forums and by different sources. Is it ezo, yezo, "the real Ezo", Sakhalin, or what? So, I went to Conifers.org, which I consider the best overall (most up-to-date and accurate) source on the characteristics and distributions of all conifers in the world. A lot of the information which follows is from conifers.org.

What I found is that, aside from a few very rare species, the common spruces in Japan belong to two species. Both of the two species have populations which vary somewhat from place to place. That's to be expected in species that are widespread, especially when they are found on different islands.

One of the main species is *Picea jezoensis*, also called Yezo or Jezo spruce, a.k.a. *Ezo-matsu* in Japanese. This spruce species, which is the classical **Ezo Spruce**, is common on Hokkaido island, and is also native in the south Kurile Islands (northeast of Hokkaido), northeastern China, North Korea and eastern Russia.

The second main species is *Picea glehnii*, also called *Aka-matsu* or **Sakhalin Spruce**. It is very common on Hokkaido and has a very small protected population on northern Honshu Island. It formerly was very common on Sakhalin Island (large island under Russian control, northwest of Hokkaido) and the southern Kurile Islands.

Both of these spruces are adapted to long, cold winters and grow naturally in harsh environments. The reason why they grow only in the southern Kurile Islands is because the northern Kuriles are covered in arctic tundra.

And here's the clincher: you can very easily distinguish the species from each other. **The twigs of Sakhalin spruce (*P. glehnii*) are covered with very fine, short hairs (puberulent, in botany-speak). By contrast, the twigs of Ezo spruce (*P. jezoensis*) are not hairy at all (glabrous in botany-speak).** You heard it here. Which leads me to believe that all of the bonsai Japanese spruces I have seen in the U.S. (a limited sample, I'll grant you) are *Picea jezoensis*.

You don't see many Japanese spruces in this country, because importing them has been forbidden for many years, and they are difficult to propagate from cuttings. —ed.



One of the nicest *Picea jezoensis* bonsai in our country is this roughly 4.5-foot-tall group belonging to Michael Hagedorn. Photo from Wayne Schoech's *BonsaiBark* blog of 25 June 2014. According to him, this group was growing on a board. Wayne is the owner of Stone Lantern and publisher of *Bonsai Today*. You may want to note the creative illusions in the styling.



A small, grafted specimen of *Picea jezoensis*. Delusions of grandeur? Possibly; just need a few more decades . . .

WHAT DEFOLIATION DOES: SOME ILLUSTRATIONS (by the editor)



Witch hazels (above) aren't often used as bonsai. The last one I recall was a picture, years ago, of one in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's collection. However, they have interesting foliage and uniquely attractive flowers which appear between Thanksgiving and New Year's (*Hamamelis virginiana*). These two collected specimens are the same age. The one on the right (top view and side view) was defoliated on May 13; photo was taken on June 14. Notice the smaller leaves and increased branching of the defoliated tree. Also, note the increased stem diameter of the undefoliated plant—it did not use resources to rebuild its foliage; instead, stem diameter and length increased greatly.



These **chalkbark maples** are in their 7th year. The tree on the left was defoliated on May 8; photo was taken on June 14. The new leaves of the defoliated tree are now fully expanded. Even though the new leaves are not drastically reduced, they are significantly smaller. Even more noticeable is that the foliage of the defoliated tree is much more compact than the foliage of the tree which was not defoliated. Compact foliage, especially in a relatively large-leaved species such as this, is very desirable in bonsai.

Why grow a relatively large-leaved species as bonsai? Well, this sugar maple species is more drought tolerant and has the smallest leaves of any sugar maple species, and truly spectacular typical sugar maple fall foliage color. In the fall, it is eye candy.



This 14-year-old collected **Eastern hop-hornbeam** was defoliated on May 14; the photo was taken on June 14. Even though leaf expansion is not complete, it is obvious that many new branches are developing from the (axillary) buds which were at the bases of the original leaves. (It's more obvious if you enlarge the photo.)

*Over there, quietly,
A tree almost forgotten
Is now beautiful*

rc

ADVERTISING (free to members)

Please consider patronizing our advertisers. It helps make bonsai in our region stronger.

BONSAI FOR SALE

Sometimes it's worth it to take the time, expense and risk of traveling hundreds of miles and/or incurring big shipping expenses to buy a bonsai that has no special connection with GLBS. However, if a nice tree is available and the price is right, please also consider buying from fellow GLBS members. You might get a lot more for your money that way.

Trident maple grove (*Acer buergerianum*), five years in training, approximately 22" spread, 28" tall. Lovely Tokoname pot is approximately 18 x 12 x 2.5" oval, glazed, Oribe with copper accents. Contact Ed Stanton at (859) 552-8215 or <Stanton@eky.edu>



Kiyohime Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Kiyo Hime'), 30" spread, 23" tall, trunk diameter 2.5". Pot is glazed olive green, 16" x 12". Grafted tree, 13 years in training. \$400.00. Contact Lee Squires at 502-551-5985 or bonsaiman@twc.com.



To encourage advertisers to review and update their ads, we require advertisers to contact the newsletter editor at least once per year to request that an ad be continued or modified. All ads for specific trees should be accompanied by photos no more than six months old.

BONSAI FOR SALE

Korean hornbeam (*Carpinus turczaninowii* var. *coreana*) with weeping habit, 29" spread, 22" tall, 2.5" trunk diameter. Pot is 14" x 11" oval, glazed, reddish brown with feet. Raised from a 1996 cutting. \$250.00. Contact Lee Squires at 502-551-5985 or bonsaiman@twc.com.



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