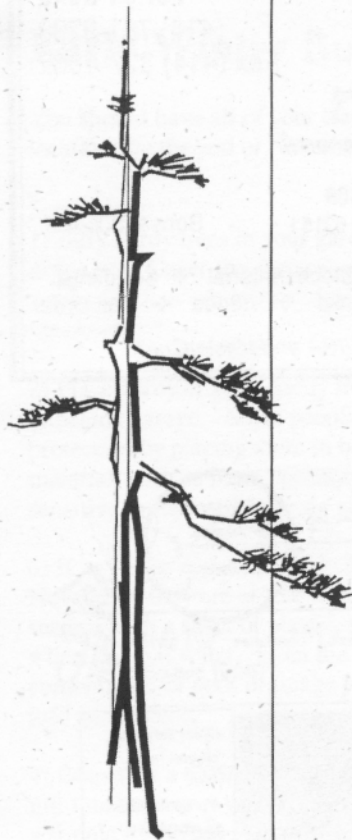


BONSAI NEWS



*Milwaukee
Bonsai Society*

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Information Line
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What's Inside?

New Officers.....	2
December Meeting.....	2
The Best Things In Life Are Free!.....	3
Early Winter Bonsai Calendar.....	4

President's Message

This edition of the newsletter will be coming to you just before our annual Holiday party. Those who have attended in the past know that it is always a good time. There will be no newsletter in January since that is our "no meeting" month. Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be Tuesday February 3, 2004.

A reminder that membership dues are now payable. Obviously we hope that all of you renew your membership and enjoy the programs that are planned for next year. According to our bylaws dues are payable in November. We will send out the December 2003 and the February 2004 newsletters to all of our current members. But if your dues are not paid by the end of January, you will not receive the March newsletter. Don't let your membership lapse and miss out on all the educational and fun meetings of 2004!!

If you are like me, your trees are put away for "their long winters nap" and your bonsai activities are starting to slow down a little. (I have always liked to have a few months to have a short vacation from my bonsai and just relax.) Those of you with tropicals will have them inside for the winter and will continue your bonsai activities all year round. More power to you!!!

I hope to see all of you at our Holiday Party on Tuesday December 2nd.

Your Executive Committee wishes each and every one of you a Happy Holiday season.

Holiday Folk Fair 2004

The 2004 Holiday Folk Fair was another huge success. We had 28 trees and a LOT of interest - interest from the school kids, but also from the general public. We may not pick up a large number of new members but we certainly have a lot of fun inaccurate information about bonsai. We had five tree sitters on Friday and, in all seriousness, we could have used a couple more.

Large numbers of people voted for the "Peoples Choice." And the trees spoke to all of them in one way or another. Jack Douthitt's Korean Hornbeam took "Peoples Choice" on Friday and his Kingsville Boxwood took it on Saturday while Scott Hurula's shohin Juniper won the honor on Sunday. But what was really great was that almost every tree got a few votes. Thanks to all of you who tree-sat and/or brought trees to exhibit.

No January Meeting

Please remember that we have no meeting (or newsletter) in January. There will be a club meeting on Tuesday, February 4, 7PM at Grace Lutheran..

New Newsletter Editor

As the old saying goes..... I have some bad news and some good news.

First the bad news.

After several years, Yvonne Szatkowski has retired as our Newsletter editor. She has done a marvelous job for a very long time. (Although I have to admit that I did not look forward to her telephone calls to tell me "Jack, the newsletter is supposed to go out tomorrow and I don't have the President's message yet! Do you have it for me? When will it be ready?") But she has been an excellent newsletter editor and we will all miss her.

Now for the good news.

Houston Sanders has accepted the position of Newsletter Editor for MBS. We all know that he has a flair for the written word and we appreciate his volunteering to become our new editor.

I am sure that Houston would appreciate receiving articles from any of our members to put into the newsletter. Maybe someone would like to write a continuing "column"? If you have information that you would like to pass on to all of our members, the newsletter is the best way to go. If you have any suggestions or comments, please talk to him at the next meeting.

(Editor's note: YES! Please give me articles and suggestions!)

Officers and Directors for 2004

At the October meeting, we elected the Officers and Directors for 2004. Elected by unanimous vote of the membership were:

President - Jack Douthitt (Second Term)
First Vice President - Kris Ziemann (Kris was previously the Treasurer)
Second Vice President - Jean Sher (Second Term)
Treasurer - Karen Kleineider (New to the Board)
Secretary - Darlene Shaginaw (New to the Board)
Director - Joe Herbert (New to the Board)

We have three Directors and each serve a three-year term, so only one Director is elected each year. The Directors that will continue their elected terms are:

Director - Dr. Erskine Tucker
Director - Sharon Schmidt

These Board Members and Officers comprise the Executive Committee as defined by the by-laws of MBS.

Executive Committee (EC) Meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of each month. Any member of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society is welcome at any EC Meeting. If you would like to see your Executive Committee in action, contact one of the Board members to confirm the meeting time and location.

Retiring Officers

Our thanks go to Russ Weiss (retiring as MBS Secretary), Houston Sanders (Retiring as First Vice President) and Pam Woythal (retiring as a Director) for all of their time and effort into helping the club meet it's obligations and demands. They have shown a dedication to their duties and a determination to make the Milwaukee Bonsai Society the best that it can be. We are appreciative of who they are and what they have done

December Meeting - Holiday Party

Our December meeting will be the annual Holiday party. It will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 2. The location will be the same as usual, Meyer's Restaurant. REMEMBER, THEY HAVE MOVED! (Forest Home and 74th St, between 74th, 76th and Cold Spring.)

There will be a drawing for prizes and gifts. Please bring a small, wrapped gift for the drawing - it does NOT have to be bonsai-related. Dinner will be at 7PM. There will also be a cash bar, starting whenever you get there (6:30?). The food is great and it is family style.

Come join us for an enjoyable social event with the other members of the club. Spouses, partners, and friends are always welcome at the party.



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MBS Meetings and Information Line:

The Milwaukee Bonsai Society meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 3030 W. Oklahoma Avenue. Call the MBS Voice Mail/Message System at (414) 299-9229 to learn about upcoming events and meeting times. To contact the club via email: mbs@asapnet.net Look for us on the web at: <http://www.asapnet.net/milwaukee-bonsai/index.html>

The Best Things in Life are Free!

(Reprinted from the Minnesota Bonsai Journal)

Of course, the writer of that saying had in mind such everyday things as a sunny June day, a cooling rain, the sound of ocean waves on the shore, and the chickadee's chirp. But did you know that the best bonsai material is to be had for the taking? Of course, it'll take some work on your part, and probably a good deal of perseverance, but the majority of classic bonsai trees (in Japan or wherever) began as collected material.

There's a special bonus for Minnesotans (or cheeseheads!, ed.) who use native material – our trees won't die from the cold! If your tree dies, it will be for some other reason: too much or too little water, transplanted at the wrong time, with too few roots, etc.

Some plants you might find will be seedlings from immigrants that have adapted well to our climate, for instance Colorado blue spruce. One of our attention-getters at our May auction was a tiny collected Colorado blue spruce with very small needles, a naturally-formed semi-cascade just 8 or 9 inches long – a perfect natural dwarf, and it commanded a price well over \$100.

So where and how do you begin, once you've decided to collect some free tree material for yourself? Well, no matter where you live, city or country, house or apartment, there is bonsai material nearby. For instance, the prolific sprouters like maple and elms can be found growing in cracks anywhere in the city, alongside the foundation of any building, beside a fence, in the crack of a sidewalk.

You'll find all sorts of surprises growing in ditches (willows and evergreen babies), beside railroad tracks (sumac and wild roses) and in any empty lot that isn't mowed too often. If the lot happens to be a woody patch, there might be various oaks, or some suitable shrubs. Many fine bonsai began as part of someone's hedge, or a landscape bush that

outgrew its space in the garden, so keep an eye out for such material being dug and discarded, or snoop around your friends' and relatives' yards when you visit. They may roll their eyes, but they'll understand – bonsai people are a little nuts!

Going further afield and out of the city, of course your choices are limited only by who controls the land on which the trees are growing. It's important to get permission to dig first!



The best time to collect, by far, is in spring when the roots are most actively growing – any other time of year will give a much lower success rate in keeping a plant alive. If you locate some great-looking material at another time of year, mark the location, make yourself a note, and come back for it in early spring.

Make a habit of carrying certain basics in your car trunk in summer, such as a spade, branch pruners, a number of plastic trash bags, and a sealed container of water, even a spray bottle to keep the foliage misted. Then, if a unique opportunity presents itself and a tree has to be collected immediately, you'll be ready.

Take as much of the root system as possible, especially any small fibrous roots. If there is a tap root, heading for China, just cut it off somewhere

below the level of any finer roots. Disturb the rootball as little as possible and always take along some of the original soil the tree was growing in, mixing it in with the potting medium when you get the tree home. Wrap roots and soil up in your plastic bag, adding water if it was dry, then take your find home and pot up as soon as possible.

Now prune back branches and remove anything you're sure won't be needed in the final design, reducing the tree as much as possible. Some hard decisions are made at this stage, but the more you can remove, the better the chances of survival. Seal all cuts on branches and large roots.

Place the tree in a sheltered area with good light, with air circulation but no wind, and keep it humid by spraying the top as often as you can, even if it's early and the tree hasn't leafed out yet, until you see signs of active new growth. Then gradually move into partial shade.

That's all there is to it. Now go out and have some collecting fun, and good luck!

Early Winter Bonsai Calendar:

You should have all of your trees in their winter storage locations by the end of November.

Some ideas:

- 1) Bury hardy trees in your garden. Bury in soil to the depth of the pot. Cover the surface with at least an inch of shredded cedar mulch or other insulation. And watch for mice and squirrels!
- 2) Place hardy or semi-hardy trees (like trident maples) in an unheated garage. Some people give tridents additional protection by placing them in boxes and filling with insulating material, such as foam "peanuts". Remember – the roots are sensitive to repeated freezing and thawing.
- 3) If any trees are still outside and unprotected in late November, they are at risk from freezing rain. I cover the soil surface with a sheet of plastic, so that the tree is watered only when I give it water. Even the hardiest tree can be killed if a combination of poor drainage plus freezing rain turns its soil into an ice cube.
- 4) Construct a coldframe using plastic sheets (No less than 4 mil thickness or it will rip in the winter wind). You can make a simple frame out of wood, or even use a bonsai bench as the frame, then cover it with plastic. Either staple the plastic to the frame, or just use rocks to hold it down. When plants are placed in the coldframe, it always helps to mulch the roots. Also be aware of the temperatures – on a sunny day, the "greenhouse effect" can heat up a small coldframe. It helps to provide an opening for air circulation on warmer days.
- 5) Semi-tropical trees, such as pomegranates, olives and Chinese elms, like to have a period of cold. It's not a bad idea to set up your coldframe early, use it for the semi-tropicals in October and November, then rotate the semi-tropicals inside and the hardier trees into the cold frame. This provides the desirable period of cold for the semi-tropicals and gives them a gradual transition to the low light of indoor growing.
- 6) Spray your trees with dormant oil or fungicide before placing them in winter storage. Dormant oil is a nice, environmentally friendly pest killer. It is just a suspension of oil in water that eliminates insects and their eggs by coating and suffocating them.

November is also a good time to do some minor wiring. But pick a warm day. After the leaves drop, the current season's growth on maples and other deciduous trees can be wired into shape. I try not to do much trimming when wiring hardy trees. Trees don't like to be cut as they enter the dormant season, since there is no growth to "heal" the cuts. If you do trim branches, seal the cuts! Branch removal should be delayed until the tree awakens in late winter or early spring. And it also provides a great benefit to delay making styling decisions until the locations of new buds are clearly visible.

If you are growing tropicals (I know that just about everybody has a ficus or two...), remember to spray them often while they are growing indoors. Not only does this keep them a bit more humid, it discourages spider mites – the tiny little critters that love to proliferate in dry indoor growing conditions.

Be well aware of the watering cycle for your indoor trees. You should know exactly how long it should take for the soil to dry out. If you leave home for a few days over the holidays, there are numerous tricks to keep your indoor trees from drying out. My favorite trick over Christmas is to place the fast-drying trees in clear garbage bags (with a few holes for air). This delays their drying out just long enough for me to take a 4-day holiday.

Whatever you do, whatever you grow, keep it alive and happy, and we will see you again at the next club meeting in February!

TEFKATViP

(The Editor, formerly known as the Vice-President)

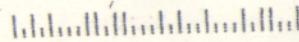


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Return Service Requested

Next Meeting of MBS
Holiday Party
Tuesday, December 2
Meyer's Restaurant
(Forest Home and 74th St.)



MBS Board, 2003

Jack Douthitt – President
Houston Sanders – 1st Vice President
Jean Sher – 2nd Vice President
Kris Ziemann – Treasurer
Russ Weiss – Secretary
Sharon Schmidt – Board Member
Dr. Erskine Tucker – Board Member
Pam Woythal – Board Member
Dr. Brian Palevac – Past President
Ron Fortmann – MABA Representative
Yvonne Szatkowski – Newsletter Editor

*Bonsai tables stand
Like horses hoof-deep in snow,
Waiting for spring thaw
- Milt Mandelin*

Members with questions or concerns
for the Executive Committee should
contact Russ Weiss, Club Secretary at
cowbell@wi.rr.com