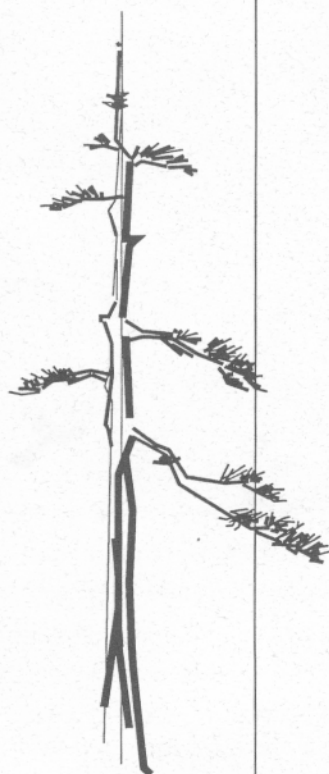


BONSAI NEWS



*Milwaukee
Bonsai Society*

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Ivan Watters at our June Meeting

Our June meeting (Tuesday, June 3) will feature Ivan Watters from Chicago, who will present a demonstration on "mamé" bonsai. Ivan has been involved with bonsai for a very long time. His trees have won several Best of Shows and many Awards of Merit at the Mid-American Bonsai Exhibit at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. He is also the owner of Yasakuni Bonsai Garden in Chicago. He is a very knowledgeable and able bonsai artist and teacher. A "mamé" bonsai is generally considered to be a bonsai that is less than six inches in height. These trees are sometimes called a "bonsai of a bonsai" because they are so very, very small. Ivan will also be doing a "mamé" workshop on Saturday, May 31. At the writing of this article there was one space left in this workshop. Cost is \$50 plus material. If you want to participate in this workshop, call Kris or Jean as soon as possible.

Club Exhibit

The June meeting will not only have Ivan Watters doing a demo on "mamé" bonsai, it will also be our annual Club Exhibit. Any member of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society is welcome to enter the Exhibit. Your trees must be in a bonsai container, and free of pests.

The Novice Class is for those who have less than three years in bonsai.

The Intermediate Class is for those who have more than three years in bonsai, and the Advanced class is for those who have won an "Award of Merit" or "Best of Show" at the Wisconsin State Fair. Each class will be judged separately and ribbons will be awarded in each class.

In our new meeting place, we have lots of space to show off our trees so we are looking for a good turn out of trees for this exhibit. This is an opportunity to show off your trees and have a look at what the other members of the club are doing with their trees. And who knows? You may even go home with a ribbon! So bring those trees!

Refinement Workshop

Saturday, June 7 will be the "refinement" workshop with Jack Douthitt. This was a very popular event last year. The attendees were able to work, not on creating new bonsai but on the techniques to improve the bonsai that they already have. The techniques that are used to refine your bonsai are not the same ones that you use to create the bonsai. This workshop is an opportunity to learn some of these refinement techniques that will provide continuing improvement in your bonsai. Cost is only \$30! Sign up sheets will be available at the May meeting. Don't miss this opportunity.

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Asian Moon Festival

The Asian Moon Festival is on Friday, June 13 through Sunday, June 15. We need trees for the exhibit, tree sitters and someone to do several presentations. This is something that the club did not participate in last year, but it is a very popular event at the Summerfest Grounds and we are being given extra special treatment this year. Free tickets will be given to the people who are "working" the event. Sign up sheets and additional details will be available at the June meeting.

Presidents Message

Wow! What a program Warren Hill put on for us at our May meeting! He is a very talented bonsai artist and assembled a marvelous Japanese Hornbeam forest as his demonstration. The forest was raffled off at the end of the meeting and I was fortunate enough to be the winner. All I have to do now is find a place to put it this winter. But somehow, Michelle and I will find a spot for it. The meeting was very well attended (almost 90 people). After the meeting, Warren told me that he was impressed with the large and knowledgeable crowd.

Those of us that were able to go on the collecting trip found some nice Larch, Hop Hornbeam, and even a couple of Beech. For an in depth account of our trip read the article by Houston elsewhere in the newsletter.

Coming for our May meeting is Ivan Watters from Chicago. Ivan will do a demonstration on "mamé" bonsai. Since they are so small they are sometimes called a "bonsai of a bonsai!" This is another aspect of bonsai that is of great interest to many of us. If we do not have a lot of room, we can grow mamé and still have our bonsai to look at and to work on. Since they are not nearly as heavy as those "big monsters" that some of us have in our collections, they are much, much easier to move around. Also as some of us grow older, we are not as anxious to move those great big trees around like we used too, so mamé becomes more enticing.

We need some volunteers that can come early to set up for our meetings and a couple of volunteers that can stay late after our meeting to help with the clean

up. If you can help with these "chores" please talk to Jean or Kris at the meeting.

Our June meeting is also our club show. This is an opportunity to show off some of your favorite bonsai, so get them ready to show and bring them to the meeting. You may just take home a ribbon!

Don't miss this exciting meeting!

Upcoming Events

Our July meeting (Tuesday, July 1) will feature Tim Thimios and "Kingsville Boxwood." Tim is a previous member and Past President of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society. He moved from Wisconsin to North Carolina several years ago, when his wife was transferred. He is bringing some field grown Kingsville at some very reasonable prices. Kingsville are dwarf boxwoods that grow about a 1/2 inch per year. They can get very dense but with some knowledgeable pruning can develop into marvelous bonsai. Tim will also be doing a workshop with Kingsvilles on Saturday, June 28. He has enough material for TWO workshops if there is enough interest. Sign up sheets will be available at the June meeting.

Novice Class News

Jean Sher

The 2003 Novice Class concluded with a nursery crawl at Minor's Nursery on Saturday, May 17.

This year's group topped the total for buying new Bonsai materials (\$503)! Next year we expect to see a number of novice entries for the club show produced from these fine new trees.



Thanks to Sharon Schmidt, Ron Fortmann, Scott Hurula, and Joe Nemeč for being our instructors for



the four class sessions. This year's class was the recipient of much expert advice and information.

The first two sessions presented historical background and theory on the various elements of Bonsai. The final two sessions gave the students an opportunity to put theory into practice on trees under the expert guidance of experienced bonsai club members. Their styled trees show much promise. Congratulations to each for successful completion of the 2003 Novice Class.

The Legendary MBS Larch Hunting Expedition

Houston Sanders

Ever dream of going into the growing field of some landscape nursery and digging up all the trees you could collect? Well that's "kinda" what several fearless club members did on the recent MBS Collecting Trip, April 30-31. Except we didn't have to worry about being arrested! (*at least not for collecting the trees*).



Somehow, our wily president, Jack Douthitt, got us permission to collect trees for free in a lovely, boggy forest in northern Michigan. For FREE! The forest land was owned by a charming woman who operated the Garden Place, a greenhouse and floral business in Norway, Michigan. Apparently she had

seen a bonsai show and mentioned that she had "little trees like that" growing on her land. Immediately, swarms of bonsai fanatics descended upon her like ravenous aphids on a weak ficus. Well, OK, seven bonsai fanatics and one fanatic's lovely wife and daughter who aren't bonsai fanatics. But we were enthusiastic!

Our adventurous group of tree-diggers arrived on a Saturday night, after a long hard journey over treacherous roads. In the absence of our accustomed luxurious accommodations, we spent the night shivering in a primitive Super 8 motel. But the pain was worthwhile, for in the morning we made a short journey to the collecting grounds, a swampy area where small larch trees grew amongst the grass.

We were thrilled to find collectable larch trees everywhere. There were plenty of small ones, and some not-so-small ones.

And the buds were just starting to swell, making this the ideal time for digging them up for transplanting. With larches, it is doubtful that the trees would survive collecting at any other time of year.



The American larch or Tamarack, *Larix laricina*, grows in swampy areas from N. WI thru most of Canada. It is not as fast-growing or fine-foliaged as the Japanese larch, but it makes a great bonsai. The specimens we found were not ancient, high-altitude dwarf trees like the collected ponderosa pine and mountain hemlock that you see in the bonsai magazines (or at the ABS convention workshops). They were nice 3-10 foot young trees with many low branches, moderately aged bark and, most importantly, shallow and compact root systems due to the soggy soil. Just a trunk chop and a few years growth from becoming great bonsai specimens!

After about 2 minutes of evaluating trees I located an excellent specimen, about 8 feet tall with a nice curve in the lowest portion of the 3-in thick trunk. A mere 5 minutes of digging and sawing roots, followed by removal of the top 2/3 of the tree, and

it was ready to transport. I wrapped the root ball in a plastic bag, leaving a lot of soil to wash off later, and carefully carried it to my car. Only 15 minutes, and I had all the large specimens that I needed. If only deer hunting were this easy, I might today be dressed proudly in blaze orange camouflage. Most of my companions had also gone for the big ones. Ron was busy digging out a massive (6-inch diameter?) swamp monster, which he had cut back to the lowest 3-inch thick branch. Tony had excavated a double-trunked giant. (Where do they put those things? And how can they afford a pot?) Kris, Jean, Jack and Cameron collected somewhat more manageable trees.

The next hour was spent collecting much smaller larches. My lovely wife and daughter had great fun finding cute little trees then waiting impatiently for



me to come dig them out. (But they aren't interested in bonsai)! By next year, all of those little trees will be ready to make into a bonsai forest.

After everyone had a few small larches, we drove to a second collecting area – this time a boggy forest. While the others hunted for more larch trees at the edge of the forest, I was attracted to the tiny spruce trees that grew in the forest. After collecting a miniature spruce, I noticed a strangely contorted little twig growing nearby. Closer examination revealed that it was a hop-hornbeam (or maybe hornbeam?) with excellent bonsai potential. The tree had a very shallow root system that remained in the top 2 -3 inches of soil on the forest floor. And, once we learned to look for them, we found squiggly little hornbeam trees all over that forest. None was over 12 inches tall and all had the kind of curves and natural contortions that bonsai growers love but can't

seem to duplicate. Just the right thing to collect, now that we had all the larches we could ever need. All along the soggy forest trail, we collected these little gems. It was easy to just pull them up with their the shallow roots, and place the bare-root trees in a bag. My wife located trees so quickly that I didn't have time to collect the ones my daughter was finding, leading to hurt feelings. (But they *aren't interested* in bonsai) By the time I stopped, I had collected 50 of the little "hornies." And every one survived. Timing is everything. It is hard to kill deciduous trees if you collect them when they are just starting to bud.

After we had filled our vehicles to capacity, we had to stop. Jack's van sagged under its immense arboreal burden.



And then we were gone, like Texas democrats, escaping with our hard-earned future bonsai masterpieces. After stopping for lunch we all went our separate ways, some returning immediately home, while others lingered to enjoy the beauty of the northwoods on a warm spring day. But our work wasn't done. After returning home, the next step was to re-plant all of our prized acquisitions. Some were potted, others planted into gardens, but they all had to be done quickly. Fortunately, my bare-root trees





could go into a bucket of water for the night, and the larches had been collected with ample soil. Others had to pot all of their trees immediately upon their return. Anybody know what to do with a hundred collected trees?

Perhaps there will be a second annual MBS collecting trip next year, and you too can join us!

Visiting Artist – Tim Thimios

More details on July Program

Houston Sanders

Bonsai professional and former MBS clubmember Tim Thimios will be our visiting artist for July.

Tim started bonsai in 1967, taking classes with John Naka. He has worked and studied with numerous luminaries of the bonsai universe, including John Naka, Roy Nagatoshi, Ben Oki, Johnny Ushida and Brussell Martin. He operated US Bonsai in Kenosha for many years, and many MBS club members own a few of Tim's trees. *(If you are looking for someone to blame, Tim is the one who dragged me to this club back in 1998.)*

Tim moved to North Carolina in 2001. Besides winning numerous awards, Tim has appeared on television and in newspapers promoting the art of bonsai. According to Tim, "most important...I still have fun! And want all the students to do the same."

Tim will be doing a demo on Kingsville Boxwood for our July club meeting on Tuesday, July 1. Tim is a very experienced professional who is also a great teacher. A presentation by Tim is guaranteed to be an entertaining and instructive experience! Tim will also have materials for sale at the meeting, so bring your checkbooks.

He also will be doing workshops with the same material. The trees are in 3-gallon pots (That's HUGE for Kingsville boxwood). The \$50 cost includes the tree, wire, and Tim's instruction. You will have to wait 'til spring to put it in a bonsai pot. Tim would like to limit his workshops to 8 participants, to allow for more individual attention. This workshop is highly recommended to all, especially the less experienced club members. We have scheduled TWO workshops with Tim on Saturday, June 30. There will be a morning workshop from 8 am-12 pm and an afternoon workshop from 1 pm-5 pm at Grace Lutheran. So anyone who signed up for Tim's workshop at the May club meeting, please see Jean at the next meeting to specify whether you will be at the morning or afternoon session.



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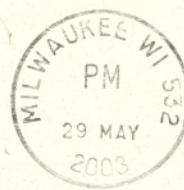
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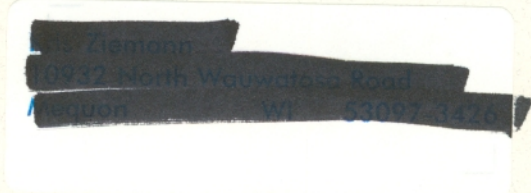
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MBS Meetings and Information Line:

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>



P.O. Box 198
Brookfield, WI 53008-0198
Return Service Requested



*Next Meeting of MBS
Tuesday, June 3
7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church*

MBS Board - 2003

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- Houston Sanders, *First Vice President*
- Jean Sher, *Second Vice President*
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- Ron Fortmann, *MABA Representative*
- Yvonne Szatkowski, *Newsletter Editor*



*Only the moon can
turn blossoming cherry tree
shimmering silver.*

~ Mary Turner

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