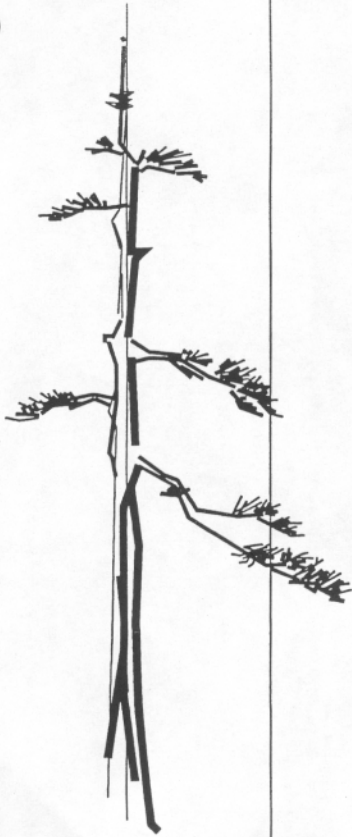


December 2005

Bonsai News



Milwaukee Bonsai Society

P.O. Box 198
Brookfield, Wisconsin
53208-0198

Information Line
414-299-9229

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.milwaukeebonsai.org>

KRIS' KORNER

Happy Holidays to all!

I hope all your trees are safely stowed for the winter. Now's the time to get out your books and read, read, read throughout the "cold spell"! Ask questions. If you have any questions you'd like answered, email me or Houston (quindao@tds.net). We'll get them in the next newsletter (end of January).

We've had a busy and exciting 2005. The workshops, demonstrations and events were great successes thanks to the participation of our club members. We're looking forward to a super 2006 with the highlight being the MABA convention in June. Be sure to get information on this exciting event. Right at your backdoor will be vendors from 10 different states, workshops in which to participate or observe, critiques and much, much more. It's something you'll want to attend (either for a day or the full event).

Hope to see you at the Holiday Party!

Kris

No January Meeting

Just a reminder that there will be no January club meeting or newsletter. The next meeting will be on Tues. Feb. 7.

HOLIDAY PARTY 2005

Our annual Holiday party will again be at Meyer's restaurant at 74th and Forest Home. It's a festive occasion and folks always have a great time (family style dinner). In the spirit of the holidays, please bring a wrapped gift for our door prizes.

Date: Tues. December 6

Time: 6:00-7:00 cash bar

7:00 Family Style
Dinner

Place: Meyer's Restaurant
74th and Forest Home

Some Bonsai Websites

For your education and entertainment during the bonsai "off-season", check out:

www.bonsaichannel.com
(presented by Dallas Bonsai Garden). They have online videos of wire and wiring, pots, fertilizers, repotting, etc.

www.mini-bonsai.com/indexe.html
a wonderful Japanese miniature bonsai site by Kyosuke Gun and Sachiro Iwasaki. Great photos!

www.bonsaivillage.net/
A free online resource for enthusiasts, featuring articles, galleries, interviews and bonsai news. By Andy Rutledge.

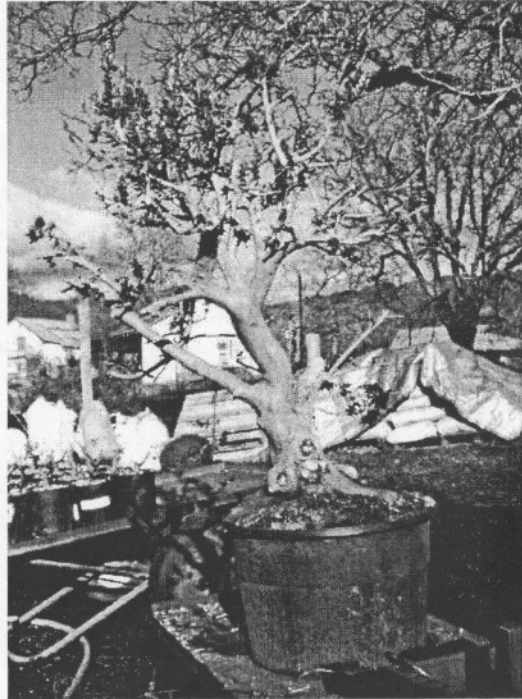
Recommended Indoor Bonsai Species:

Luma (*Myrtus luma*) Also known as *Luma apiculata*, Arrayan or Peruvian myrtle.

By Houston Sanders



Trunk of very old luma in Ireland
(UK forest service photo)



A very large luma pre-bonsai
(Robert Potts photo - <http://bonsai-apprentice.blogspot.com/>)

Recently, I donated a few starter trees to Jean Sher's bonsai club at Mahone Middle School in Kenosha (See photo). This article originated as an attempt to provide some growing information for the group. Unfortunately, the BCI website is about the only source of information out there, and doesn't provide much detail. However, you lucky readers will get a *lot* more detail from me.



Some members of
the Mahone Bonsai
Club with their Luma
trees

Let's start with the name. Why would anyone use "Luma" when a beautiful name like "Arraya'n" is an option? So that's what I'm calling my bonsai trees. But to avoid confusion (and save having to use the a with that funky accent thing) I will call it "Luma" for this article. The Luma is relatively new to bonsai, and apparently has not been grown in Japan, although it would be perfect for their climate. So there are few, if any, masterpiece bonsai of this species. Unfortunately, I couldn't find any good finished bonsai photos, so all you get is pre-bonsai trees.

There are many features that make the Luma a desirable bonsai species. First, it has small, dime-sized leaves that have a pleasant smell when handled. The bark is its most attractive feature; smooth and cinnamon-brown, peeling away in mature trees to reveal light-colored flakes. This species also has small fragrant white flowers and black berries in late summer to fall, although I have never seen any on my bonsai. But what is really special about the Luma is its rapid growth¹ and ability to take hard pruning of branches and roots. You can fearlessly cut back to bare branch stubs and count on a profusion of new buds. Likewise, you can reduce the roots ruthlessly. I doubt that it is even possible to kill it in repotting. So it is a great beginner tree.

Bonsai Care:

The Luma is from the Valdivian Temperate Rain Forests of Chile. That's about as far south of the equator as Milwaukee is north. This is **not** a tropical tree! In its natural form, it is a small tree of 10-20m height. It is hardy to Zone 8 and likes cooler temperatures and high humidity, so it grows fastest for me in the early fall. The Luma has no problem surviving our summer heat, but seems to slow its growth in the hot weather. I leave Lumas outside until mid-November in our Wisconsin climate, bringing them into a protected area in case of a freeze. Although they will survive if kept in a

cold, frost-free area all winter, the growth stops and extended cold can cause some leaves to turn black and drop off, and branch tips to die back. So I bring them inside once the real winter comes. Although the Luma prefers bright light, it will survive indoors with indirect light or under fluorescent lights.

As a temperate rain forest dweller, the Luma obviously likes a lot of moisture and will happily suck up a lot of water in summer. Surprisingly, though, it also has above average resistance to drought. It will be one of the last trees to go limp when I forget to water. The ideal conditions include tons of water – you probably can't overwater them, but I've never tried letting them sit in a dish of water like a wisteria. Since the Luma grows quickly, I fertilize pretty heavily – about every two weeks from April through October.

Pruning and wiring: All growth is long and straight. To create taper and movement, cut a long straight branch or trunk back to a small side shoot, or even to bare wood if there is no convenient shoot. Then let the shoot grow out at least 6 inches and repeat. This process creates tapered branches with natural curves. If you remove a branch entirely, the tree will quickly form a scar. This can lead to prominent, bulging scars, similar to those of elms or maples. So carve more deeply into the trunk when removing branches. Like all of the myrtle family, the leaves are opposite, so you need to repeatedly remove branches and buds to avoid opposite branching. Wiring is a problem. The bark is a highlight of this tree and it is thin and easily marked by wire. Although the branches bend fairly well when young, the fast growth rate is likely to cause ingrown wires. You should strive to style the Luma by the clip and grow method, as described above, which minimizes the need for wiring. If you do wire, try to wire loosely and wrap the wire with a protective coating of paper or rubber. It is ugly, but it is only temporarily ugly. Wire marks stay ugly a lot longer!

Another nice feature of this species is its easy propagation. Every shoot that you cut off can become a new tree. Just stick them in rooting hormone and put them into the soil and roots

¹ Apparently, the growth is only rapid for small trees. The tree is listed as "slow growing" in many sources. This may be true for 10-ft landscape trees, but the Luma will be the fastest growing bonsai you have.

will form very quickly. You can repot almost any time because it roots so easily. Late spring/early summer works well. A second opportunity for repotting comes in early fall (mid-Sept. for us in WI)

The following photos are from a blog by Robert Potts, who is working as an apprentice with Brent Walston of Evergreen Gardenworks (www.evergreengardenworks.com) The photos do a great job of illustrating the severe treatment that this species can handle.



Above: A 1-gallon Luma before any work



A batch of Lumas after initial pruning

A pruned Luma ready root work. Pot-bound!



After using an ax to remove the outside layer of roots, soil was removed with a hose and root hook. They were then re-potted.

Here are some photos of my Luma trees.



← The nice root development is easy to achieve with this species. But I'll have to wait awhile for the trunk to look like the photo at the beginning of this article!

My original Luma, about 7 years old, and has a 1 1/2 inch trunk. It is still being allowed to grow and thicken the trunk, so the branch tips have not been trained, low branch intended to enhance taper. The roots of this tree are pictured at left



4th year cutting from tree at right, 3/4-inch trunk



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RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

Next Meeting of MBS
7PM, Tuesday, Feb. 7
Grace Lutheran Church
3030 W. Oklahoma



Individual
Kris Ziemann
10932 North Wauwatosa Road
Mequon WI 53097-3426
Paid 2008

MBS Board, 2005

Kris Ziemann – President
Scott Hurula – 1st Vice President
Darlene Shaginaw – 2nd Vice President
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Sharon Schmidt – Secretary
Dr. Erskine Tucker – Board Member
Joe Herbert – Board Member
Allen Koszarek – Board Member
Ron Fortmann – MABA Representative
Jack Douthitt – Past President

Other Club Functions:

Houston Sanders – Newsletter Editor
Yvonne Szatkowski - Distribution
Pam Woythal – Webmaster
Joe Nemecek - Librarian



*I saw in a store at the mall
A bonsai, with man on a wall
But shellac on the rocks
Made a real paradox –
'Cause the tree got no water at all.
- Tom Pillichody*

Reprinted from Columbus Bonsai News, November 2005