

OCTOBER 2006

# Bonsai News

## OCTOBER MEETING – *Ted Matson Critique*

You have a great opportunity to work on your tree with our guest artist, Ted Matson. If you do not know, Ted, from California, has been coming in for about 2 years to work with 16 of our club members. It is called the Master's class. We have one year left with Ted and the time has flown by. I don't think there is a tree that he has not been able to help us with.

So.... bring a tree that you would like Ted to work on. Here are trees that he has suggested: (conifer cleanup...) junipers, pines, evergreen type trees. Early flowering trees like wisteria, Japanese quince, persimmon. It's probably too early to go after deciduous trees too aggressively. This is not open to the Master's class participants. Ted will look around at the trees that have been assembled and pick ones that he wants to work with. BUT, he will not be doing the work... you will.

Ted would like 3 or 4 people at a table and will go around helping all. When he discusses your tree with you and the other club members, you'll get direction on what to do. He'll move on to another person as you are working. That way, there'll be lots to see and hear. We foresee that there will be more trees brought than we'll have time to work on. MAYBE, if there's a little time, you might be able to ask Ted

for a little direction before you leave. This will be a wonderful experience and you'll get to see how our Master's classes are run.

## NOVEMBER MEETING – *Jin and Shari Demo*

Here is an opportunity to see demonstrated what you have read about. Jin and shari de-mystified!! We will have a number of club members working on jin and shari using weird and wonderful tools. We will also have someone explaining the process and tools. Also, there will be a display of phoenix graft trees.

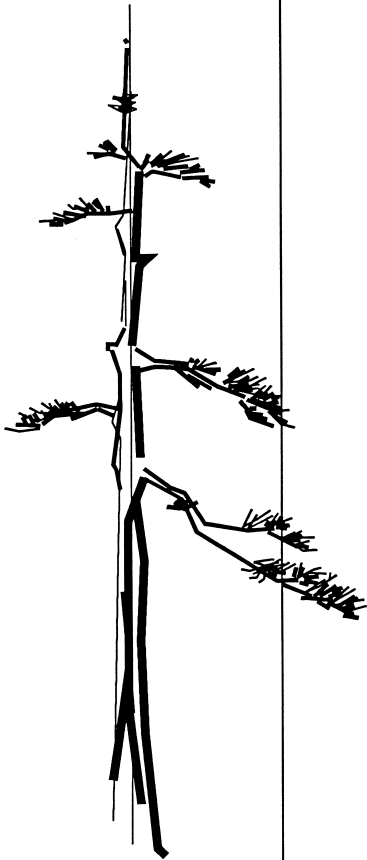
## YOUR NEWSLETTER...

At the October meeting, we will be sending around a sheet for your email addresses. We wish to have more people receiving the email version of the newsletter (pictures in color, more pages, etc). You'll continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter and an email version.

In 2007 you will have the option to only receive the email version. We're hoping to save money and trees!

## Folk Fair 2006

It's coming up again November 17-19. Please check your calendars to see if you might be able to tree sit.



*Milwaukee  
Bonsai Society*

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

Information Line  
414-299-9229

## KRIS' KORNER

I'd like to welcome our new members who just participated in the Public Workshop September 16. I believe those who participated went away with lots of information and some very nice looking trees! Now what do you do?

Coming to the club meetings is a good way to continue your education. We have talented bonsai artists from our club and other parts of the country ready and willing to share their experiences with you. If you are having a challenge with your trees, bring them in for us to look at. Many times it's easier to diagnose a problem if we can actually see the tree. Winter is not a good time to bring in trees as they are hibernating or if they are tropical, they wouldn't like the weather outside (even if only for a short time). You could also email pictures to us (although not quite as effective).

Get involved with club activities! We are in the process of setting up workshops for 2007. Plan to attend at least one. If you are interested in growing in your knowledge and craftsmanship in the bonsai world, hands-on experiences are the best!! You can get a lot from books (in fact, that is my number one activity during the winter), but seeing things demonstrated is by far a better method.

As you get your feet wet, volunteer to do some tree sitting at State Fair, Folk Fair, or any other function the club might have. It's fun to pass along your enthusiasm, as many of you know from talking with us at State Fair.

Milwaukee Bonsai Society is a strong, vibrant club and has for years set a standard after which clubs around the country are patterning themselves. We have fantastic, dedicated folks in this club. We are extremely fortunate!!

So, get involved on one level or another, but most of all, have fun!

See you in October.

*Kris*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS by Jack Douthitt

The Executive Committee is the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society. They are the people who guide the club throughout the year. It is through their efforts that the club continues to grow and prosper. The Nominating Committee has nominated the following individuals for election to the Executive Committee for the year 2007.

President – Jean Sher  
First Vice President – Scott Hurula  
Second Vice President – Greg Wein  
Treasurer – Mary Turner  
Secretary – Susan Coleman  
Board Member - Michelle Zimmer

Allen Koszarek and John Moore will continue their terms as Board Members, and Kris Ziemann will become our "Past President" to complete the MBS Executive Committee. The election of club officers and directors will take place at the October meeting.

### 2006 Club Events Calendar

#### September

Saturday 30 - Master Class #1

#### October

Sunday 1 - Master Class #1

Tuesday 3 - Ted Matson / Discussion and Critique / Master Class Exhibit with commentary

#### November

Tuesday 7 - Jin, Shari, Carving Demonstrations and Phoenix graft Display

Friday 17-19 - Folk Fair Exhibit

#### December

Tuesday 5 - Holiday Party

## **BUDDY BUCKS** by Kris Ziemann

Thanks to the following folks who volunteered their time at the Public Workshop:

### 1 Buddy Buck

Allen Koszarek, Tony Plicka, Delores Day, John Moore, Camrin LaFond, Houston Sanders, Yvonne Szatkowski, Craig Berg and Kris Ziemann.

### A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!!

Here are the buddy bucks for the 2005 Folk Fair, novice classes, MABA, State Fair, Bradley Gardens and the public workshop.

Anyone who has earned more than 5 Buddy Bucks will receive 1 raffle ticket for each BB over the 5 needed for the Holiday Dinner. These raffle tickets can be used anytime during 2007. So, here is our listing:

1 Buddy Buck (\$3 off dinner) - Ralph Stockhausen, Melba Stockhausen, Joe Nemecek, Carolyn Sanders, Karen Kleiner, Bill Goetzke, Pat Basich, Don Gumieny, Karen Gumieny, Chris Rute, Michele Rute and Yvonne Szatkowski.

2 Buddy Bucks (\$6 off dinner) - Dorothy Schenzel, Gen Molling, Ken Krueger, Susan Coleman, Houston Sanders and Mike Nold.

3 Buddy Bucks (\$9 off dinner) - Craig Berg, Jerry Niemiec and Dick Butula

4 Buddy Bucks (\$12 off dinner) - Pauline Judy, Ken Judy and Jerry Blaski.

### 5 Buddy Bucks

Complimentary dinners go to:

(REMEMBER - YOU MUST STILL TURN IN A RESERVATION FORM)

Marilyn McKnight, Dolores Day, Erskine Tucker, Rita Luedke and Susan Lindell

Complimentary dinners and raffle tickets go to:  
(REMEMBER - YOU MUST STILL TURN IN A RESERVATION FORM)

6 Buddy Bucks - Gregg Wein and Pam Woythal

7 Buddy Bucks - Steve Carini, Mary Turner and Jeff Moths

8 Buddy Bucks - Michelle Zimmer

9 Buddy Bucks - Carol Butula and Ron Fortmann

10 Buddy Bucks - Camrin LaFond

11 Buddy Bucks - Darlene Shaginaw

13 Buddy Bucks - Jim Toepfer and Sharon Schmidt

14 Buddy Bucks - Scott Hurula and Joe Herbert

15 Buddy Bucks - Allen Koszarek

18 Buddy Bucks - Jack Douthitt

20 Buddy Bucks - John Moore

24 Buddy Bucks - Tony Plicka

25 Buddy Bucks - Jean Sher

26 Buddy Bucks - Kris Ziemann

### THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!

If you think your name was not included, please email Kris: [hagr8d@mac.com](mailto:hagr8d@mac.com)

## **CLUB LIBRARIAN NEEDED**

It doesn't take much time at all. Be present at the club meetings to check out books, magazines, etc. Check to make sure that the folks are members of the club. Check in the books that are brought back. If you are interested, please email Kris: [hagr8d@mac.com](mailto:hagr8d@mac.com)

### **THE CITY GARDENER**



-Specializing in-  
Bonsai and Bonsai Accessories

Go to - [www.citygardener.biz](http://www.citygardener.biz) for more info

Alene Krieger  
Owner

P.O. Box 341575  
Milwaukee, WI 53234-1575

### **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](mailto:mbs@asapnet.net) Look for us on the web at: <http://www.milwa>

# **Mistakes I have Made Along The Way**

By George Buehler, Greater Louisville Bonsai Society

Over the years, I have learned a lot about bonsai from the mistakes I made. We all have made mistakes whether it was in the form of cutting off the wrong branch, using the wrong pot or some other mistake. Since one of the purposes of this journal is to be a learning tool, I thought I would list some of those that I have made – not necessarily in order of importance!

## **To much of a hurry**

Quite often I found that in order to get a bonsai project done – whether repotting or trimming – I would hurry. Quite often this hurrying led to problems that had to be corrected when I wasn't in such a hurry.

**MORAL:** Before you start that repotting project or restyling, make sure you have time to complete it. Also, if you are tired, don't start – see below.

## **Starting a bonsai project when you are tired**

When I was working full time, I would come home after a hard day knowing that I needed to do something to my trees. As with most people, when I am tired, I don't think with the same 'brain power' that I do when I am fresh. This of course, can cause mistakes to happen that you don't realize you made until later when you reexamine your work. Sometimes the mistakes are so obvious that you wonder how you could have done it. The answer is quite simple when you examine the circumstances – you were tired. Of course, there are many things that have to be done – whether tired or not – but try to plan ahead and do the menial things, like watering or rotating plants, when you are tired.

**MORAL:** If you have had a hard day, whether at work or just because you had to work outside all day, postpone that restyling project for an early Saturday morning project and just examine those trees – with your note pad – and plan ahead.

## **Not reading about a tree type**

I have often picked up a tree at a bonsai nursery or at a garden store because it looked good, or could look good, or I simply thought I needed it in my collection. When I got home and pulled my reference books, I learned that it would only marginally grow in our climate, that it was a difficult tree to grow, or that it required special treatment or growing conditions.

**MORAL:** Before you buy, make sure you research the tree to determine its growing requirements or to decide if you are willing to put in the amount of work needed to keep it growing and looking like a real bonsai.

## **Buying on a whim**

This mistake goes hand in hand with not knowing about the tree. I have gone to several bonsai suppliers and seen some unusual trees and picked up something. When I got home and examined the tree carefully, I found that the tree had more problems than I originally thought. Often these problems can be corrected over time, but just as often they are not correctable (i.e. that poorly pruned scar or branch in the wrong place). Ask yourself, do I really need that tree, will it make a good bonsai or is it something that you just 'want'.

**MORAL:** When you purchase a tree, examine it carefully and make sure you are getting something that will make a good tree and doesn't have more problems than you can correct in a reasonable time.

## **Buying stuff**

Bonsai is a long term hobby. We know that it will take years to grow a good tree – maybe more than we have left in our lifetime. However, buying a one year old start will probably just be “stuff” for the rest of your life. I know that I have done that a number of times. If you understand, prior to buying it, that it will just be a tree and not a real bonsai, then go ahead. You can learn a lot by experimenting with “stuff”, but be realistic. Also be realistic about the potential of a tree. More often than not, this “stuff” will always be “stuff” and not true bonsai. When your collection gets larger, you should be ready to dispose of this ‘stuff’ without a lot of pain, and hopefully you have learned something.

**MORAL:** Bonsai is supposed to be both fun and a learning experience. Experiment with the “stuff”, but keep it to a minimum so that you can spend more of your limited time on the trees that have more immediate potential.

## **Not teasing out roots properly**

During transplanting I either didn’t remove all the dirt or didn’t straighten the roots properly. This is not a major problem but with proper placement of the roots a better looking tree can be obtained.

**MORAL:** Take your time to make sure you tease out the roots and examine them carefully before you remove the longer, larger roots. Watch for the placement of the surface roots. This will pay off in the long run.

## **Dirt removal**

This could be a major problem. On a boxwood I picked up several years ago from a home supply center (something I have recommended not doing – but that is another story), I didn’t remove all the soil around the trunk on the first or second transplanting. Later, when I learned better, the soil was rock hard, and I have been trying to get it out over the last several transplantings and still have some of it left to get rid of. When you examine the roots, also examine the soil around and below the trunk.

**MORAL:** When you get a new tree and do the first transplanting, take your time, look at the roots carefully, and make sure you get all the old soil out. If you purchase the tree from a bonsai nursery, this may not be a problem. However, if purchased from another type of store, do a thorough job in getting the potting soil out.

## **Pot placement of tree**

I don’t know how many times I have read about the proper placement of a tree in a pot. You know the routine – slightly back from the horizontal center line and slightly off the vertical center line. Even after careful planning, and hopefully careful working, I have stepped back and it hits me at the first look. It is not in the proper position, or the slant of the tree is wrong. Maybe you say it’s not that big of a thing – and if you are new to bonsai maybe it won’t be. However as you look at the tree day in and day out during watering for instance, you will see it, and you know you did it wrong.

**MORAL:** After you set the tree in the pot, step back and make sure it is in the correct spot, then go ahead and tie the tree into the pot. Step back again and make sure it still is in the correct place and the angle is still correct – if not, correct it then. Then put the soil in and work it around the roots and step back again. Is it still correct? If not, read the next section.

## **Setting a tree and knowing it was not correct and then being sorry for not correcting it then and there**

As with the previous section, what do you do when after working in all the new soil, you determine that the tree is not in the proper position? Do you start over or just ignore it and say you will correct it during the next

replanting? I know I have said just that and regretted it all year. It is better to take the tree out of the pot and redo it to get the proper placement or correct angle.

**MORAL:** If you determine that the tree is not correct, repot it then. You won't regret it if you do, but you probably will if you don't.

### **Putting tree in wrong pot – too small or too large**

I have spent a lot of time trying to determine if a particular pot complimented a particular tree. Even after doing this, when the tree was put into that pot, it just didn't look right. I haven't figured out how to eliminate this mistake. Perhaps I just don't have the eye for the aesthetics. Use several different styles and colors if you have them before deciding on the one to use.

**MORAL:** Spend a lot of time trying to envision how a tree will look in a particular pot. Place the pot in front of the tree to get a better idea of how it will look in that pot. Try several different pots before you decide on one.

### **Not keeping up with trimming to get ramification**

A tree always looks better when it has a full flush of leaves. To get this flush of leaves, you need to develop ramification. If you don't keep up with the trimming, you will simply get elongated branches. You may need to have longer branches; but to get the needed leaves, you will need to trim – maybe as much as once a week or more often, depending on the growing conditions of your tree. I have overlooked this simple task several times and found that it took quite a while to get the tree back in control.

**MORAL:** Always spend a few minutes a day examining your tree and pinch or trim out that new growth when several leaf pairs have formed. As you do, you will gradually develop a much improved tree.

### **Using stainless screws in stands**

I built my own stands. In the first one I built, I used regular screws. Due to the constant exposure of water, the screws started corroding the first year and quickly gave way. I had to replace the stand and started using either coated deck screws or stainless screws. The stainless screws are about twice as expensive, but they last longer than the pressure treated wood.

**MORAL:** If you want to keep your stands looking good for a long time, use stainless screws. You'll be happy you did. Also make sure you treat your benches regularly with a good water repellent. You could always use a special wood like cypress, but I would rather use the common pressure treated wood which is much cheaper and spend the savings on better bonsai.

## October Bonsai Tips

By Houston Sanders

Although our September weather has helped me to remain in denial, the one thing that we can count on here in Wisconsin is the arrival of cold weather. And soon. Eventually, we are going to have to start some fall activities, such as taking in tropical trees and getting the hardy ones ready for winter.

You may notice that the soil of your trees stays damp longer, even during the hot days. Since growth has slowed and days are shorter, your trees will need less water during the fall, even while their leaves are still green. But it is still important to walk thru your growing area and check everything each day – because every tree is unique and they don't all cut down their water use at the same rate. I have seen it suggested that better fall color results from giving a tree good sunlight with less water during the fall. The color occurs when chlorophyll breaks down in the leaves, removing the green color and making the secondary colors visible. Seems like a nice theory, but my experience doesn't support it much. For me, some trees have good color while some don't, and the species of tree is the main factor determining this. But I keep experimenting! Anyone who has found the secret of good fall color is very welcome to write an article to tell the rest of us!

For well-developed hardy bonsai, it will probably be necessary to perform some fall maintenance after the leaves fall. My maples need to have their fine branches wired and slightly trimmed. This keeps the small branches looking interesting, with short curving shapes. If you leave this task until spring, I have found that it is too late to do any wiring. I break off many, many of the new buds when wiring in spring, and the wire cuts into the branches within a few days of putting it on. So do it in FALL! This also applies to many other species.

Pines need to have yellow needles removed, and it is also appropriate to remove all needles pointing down from the bottom of the branches on developing trees (as long as you are sure which side is going to be the bottom!). For ponderosa pines, there was a recommendation in the ABS Journal a few years back for inducing budding. In fall, remove the bud at the tip of the branch and all needles more than one year old. This can only be done on well established trees, and only once every

few years. It seemed to work well on my ponderosa pine last year.

There are a few trees that respond well to fall repotting, but unless you are pretty sure about what you are doing, wait until spring. (See the article on fall repotting).

After the leaves fall, it is helpful to use a dormant oil spray. Dormant oil is a very inexpensive and non-toxic weapon against insects that lay eggs in the bark of trees. The oil covers the insect larvae or eggs, doesn't let in air, and the evil insects are defeated. I spray it on everything in the fall.

So when do you bring the indoor trees inside? The easy answer is "Now". My tropicals are usually protected in a greenhouse by mid-September, but this year's warmth allowed me to delay. Tropicals do not like temperatures below 50°F, so when the nighttime low starts getting below that temperature regularly they need protection. At first, all the tropicals and sub-tropicals go inside the greenhouse, while the hardy trees stay out. A small electric heater is available for emergency duty in the greenhouse in case of unseasonable cold. This allows the trees a transition period in which the sunlight *gradually* decreases before the sunlight is reduced even further as the trees go into the house. Even in the brightest window, there is less than 1/3 of the sunlight of an outdoor location. The tropicals go inside the house after 2-3 weeks in the greenhouse, while the subtropicals stay out until November to get their "winter". It is good to spray the trees with insecticide in the greenhouse a day or two before bringing them in.



P.O. Box 198  
Brookfield, WI 53008-0198  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

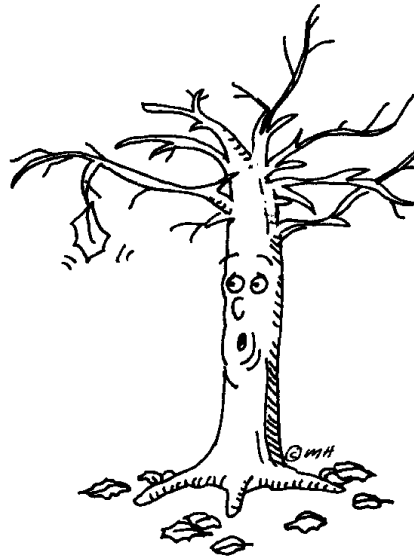
Next Meeting of MBS  
7PM, Tuesday, Oct. 3  
Grace Lutheran Church  
3030 W. Oklahoma

### **MBS Board, 2006**

Kris Ziemann – President  
Scott Hurula – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Darlene Shaginaw – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Mary Turner – Treasurer  
Sharon Schmidt – Secretary  
John Moore – 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  
Pam Woythal – Webmaster  
Josh Rageth – Librarian  
Jean Sher - Distribution / Telephone  
response  
Mary Turner - Membership Chairperson



Maple leaves dangle.  
Morning sun through the window.  
My eyes are heavy.  
- Christopher Jones