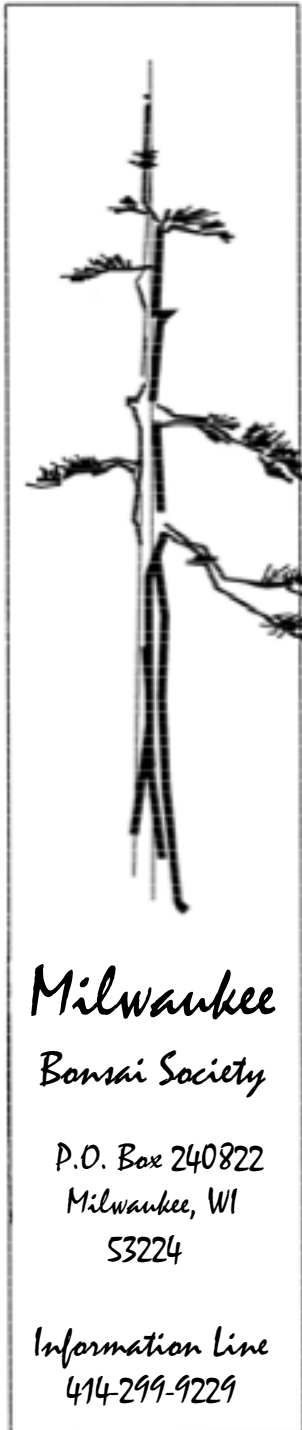


March 2011

Bonsai News



*Milwaukee
Bonsai Society*

P.O. Box 240822
Milwaukee, WI
53224

*Information line
414-299-9229*

April Club Meeting

It's a Ginkgo bonanza!

Everyone who went on the ginkgo dig last year, bring in one of your trees (even if still in a nursery pot) for our guest artist, Ted Matson, to critique and give suggestions what the next step might be.

(If you wish, you may follow his suggestions and prune your ginkgo at the meeting.)

Ted Matson has been coming to our club for many years now. He has a wealth of information to pass on about almost any kind of tree.

2011 Events

April

April 2-3 Ted Matson classes

April 5 - CLUB MEETING

Ted Matson, guest artist
Ginkgos

Apr 9

- 1) Novice Class #2 9-12
- 2) Repotting workshop 12-4

Apr 30 - Novice Class #3 9-12

MAY

May 3 Warren Hill workshop

May 3 - CLUB MEETING
Guest Artist - Warren Hill

May 7 - Public Workshop

May 14

Novice class #4 and Novice class
2010 show at Hoffer's Pets

May 21-22 - Chicago Show

To see the **year's events** go to:

www.milwaukeebonsai.org

click on **What's New**

NEXT MEETING

April 5 - 7 pm

Boerner Botanical Gardens

President's Message

"Deliberate Practice"

You hear a lot about talent being overrated in the self improvement realm lately. Think of the people who are the best performers in any field (Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong, Yo-yo Ma, Bill Gates, Suthin Sukosolvisit, Walter Pall, Kathy Shaner) and ask why are they world class? You will probably answer they are talented or worked unbelievably hard. A number of researchers now argue that talent means nothing like what we think it means. It isn't just hard work, either. So if specific, inborn talent doesn't explain high achievement, what does? Researchers have converged on an answer. It's something they call "deliberate practice," but watch out - it isn't what most of us think of as practice, nor does it boil down to a simplistic practice-makes-perfect explanation. Deliberate practice is a specific and unique kind of activity, neither work nor play. It's characterized by several elements that together form a powerful whole. The following points are from a Forbes magazine article by the Geoff Colvin author of *Talent is Overrated*:

1. **Deliberate practice is designed specifically to improve performance.** The key word is "designed." The essence of deliberate practice is continually stretching an individual just beyond his or her current abilities.
2. **Deliberate practice can be repeated a lot.** High repetition is the most important difference between deliberate practice of a task and performing the task
3. **Feedback on results is continuously available.** Obvious, yet not nearly as simple as it might seem, especially when results require interpretation.
4. **It's highly demanding mentally.** Deliberate practice is above all an effort of focus and concentration. That is what makes it

"deliberate," as distinct from the mindless playing of scales or hitting of tennis balls that most people engage in.

World Class Bonsai performers do not wait for inspiration to fall from heaven. They work, experiment, succeed, fail and try again. When a finished bonsai dazzles you, try to see the failures and long periods of work that preceded it. Deliberate practice lets you come to know bonsai so deeply that you can work through each part of the process.

Now let's thank some of our great performers in MBS who make teaching and feedback on our trees possible. Houston just completed a beautiful well attended workshop where 13 root over rock trees were created. To repeat their practice, most participants created more than one tree (28 in all). And many, when completing one step, helped someone else with that step before moving to the next step. Kris Z. has spearheaded the Novice class again this year with Steve Ca. taking on some of the responsibility as part of his stretch goal. Steve Co. recently stepped up to chair our first Silhouette show in the Boerner Atrium. He is not afraid of challenge. And neither is Rocio S. who stepped up to improve our MBS Brochure. Steve Co., Steve Ca., John M. and Greg P. all helped put the exhibit together. They say it is getting easier with practice. Great performers pay a lot of attention to details and constantly repeat small skills, even the ones they use only occasionally. Thanks to all our great performers.

-Pam

"Killing trees is the tuition you pay for learning bonsai."

– John Naka

Ginkgo, maidenhair tree - Ginkgo biloba



The Ginkgo is the last member of a family of trees common in prehistoric times, and was, in fact, thought to

be extinct in the wild until rediscovered in the 17th century in eastern China. It is deciduous, once thought to be a conifer, but now classed by itself. It is immediately recognizable by its columnar shape and graceful fan-shaped leaves which turn a lovely yellow in autumn. Ginkgo tolerates most soil, including compacted, and alkaline, and grows slowly to 75 feet or more tall. The tree is easily transplanted and has a vivid yellow fall color which is second to none in brilliance, even in the south. However, leaves fall quickly and the fall color show is short. Male specimens are recommended as the seeds from females emit a rancid odor. However, this is much less of a factor in bonsai than landscaping as bonsai Ginkgo rarely fruit.

Family: Ginkgoaceae

Lighting: Full sun to part shade. Maximum light is necessary for good autumn color. Very young trees may need some shelter in midsummer.

Temperature: Hardy in Zones 3 through 8A. However, its roots have a high moisture content, and are easily



destroyed by frost when exposed to the elements in a shallow bonsai container. Winter protection of the

roots is thus a necessity.

Watering: Needs a fair amount of water during growth, but soil should be kept fairly dry in winter to avoid frost-damage to roots.

Feeding: Twice monthly, spring-midsummer and in early September- October.

Pruning and wiring: Young trees have an open branch structure, but older trees form dense columns. It is best to style Ginkgo according to its natural shape. Ginkgo has large leaves which do not easily reduce, so use it for medium to large size bonsai. Pruning scars will not heal, so avoid cutting large branches. Shoots grow in clusters of



leaves - reduce the cluster to 2-3 leaves with topmost leaf on the outside. New branches should be pruned back to 2-3 buds while young. Ginkgo is usually shaped by pruning, but may be lightly wired spring-autumn. Great care must be taken to protect the bark as it is delicate and scars will not heal. Leaf pruning does not produce

appreciable results. Leaves will reduce somewhat from exposure to high light levels and controlled watering.

Propagation: Seed, cuttings or grafting of male specimens. Seed can be sown in spring after cold-treatment. May be air-layered in spring, or hardwood cuttings may be taken in autumn.

Repotting: Young specimens require annual repotting, older specimens every 2-3 years. Repot in spring, preferably early spring, in basic soil mix.

Pests and diseases: The Ginkgo is virtually pest-free and tolerates pollution well.



Rock collecting on the Eel River, Northern, CA

by Steve Carini

reprinted from Golden Statements Jan/Feb 2011 with permission:

I could never imagine I would ever buy a rock!

For years as I traveled, I would carry home collected stones in my suitcase, which would always create anxiety as I'd set my bag on the airline's scale. Once home, I'd arrange them with other found treasures on the shelf behind my desk. I'd stand back and admire them all. As I've developed my interest in bonsai and attended more conventions, I have always been attracted to the Suiseki displayed, but never thought I would ever consider buying one.

This all changed in Santa Nella, February, 2010.

I was particularly drawn to a small dark stone set in a walnut daiza, displayed on the top shelf of a vendor's booth. At least four times that weekend, I studied it and set it back down. Knowing that I could trust the opinion of a fellow Badger (Wisconsinite), I asked Nina Ragle if she might comment on its value. She watched me look at the stone and asked me why I liked it. Not really understanding much about the finer qualities of a suiseki stone, I responded, "I don't know... I just like it." We turned the stone over to see that it had been collected in Death Valley by Lee Roberts. Nina shared that this area is no longer open to collecting. Again watching me admire the stone, Nina thought it might be the perfect stone to start my collection. So I bought it.

This one event has begun an interest in Suiseki that is similar to buying my first bonsai. That's why, when I opened the July Golden Statements and saw the Eel River collecting trip offered as part of the convention in Santa Clara, my decision was made - I was going collecting.

I arrived in Willits Tuesday evening, too late to attend the short briefing held at the Super 8 motel. I looked over the pre-trip guidelines that Janet Roth had sent out to all

the collectors, and made sure I had all the items that were suggested; clothing to cover the entire range of weather conditions, good hiking boots, hat, gloves, backpack and a crowbar were all packed in the car. We were to depart at nine sharp and I was ready. The group

was large, maybe 45 people. As I introduced myself, I shared that this was my first time collecting suiseki stones. By the time I left, I was holding a small paper napkin with three words Bob Carlson had written, "shiny, dark, smooth." I didn't realize how important those words were to become.

In all the times I had searched for stones, I never saw anything like the stones displayed at convention booths or at exhibits. I wondered how I could find stones like these? I hoped I could train my eye to "see" better. Sam Edge, an experienced collector, invited me to ride with him and shared, "...you get a good eye with practice... it takes time."

Our caravan traveled in procession up highways 101 and 162 along the

Eel River

Eel river for nearly an hour when we arrived at the first of three collecting sites. I could see a wide bed of rock, near a bend in the river. Sam commented, "As the river's course takes a turn, it deposits many stones along the bank." Watching me stuff my small

crowbar in my back pocket, Sam suggested I take one that he had brought along. It weighed about 10 pounds and was at least 36" long. Not really understanding why, I agreed to haul his bar down to the river.

Once there, it was like forty kids in a toy store - all vanished instantly in different directions. Not sure of what I was I actually looking for, I just walked along, looking down. I am always drawn to heart shaped rocks. I picked up a few that had obviously been tossed and cracked, leaving a heart shape broken into

the rock. Most likely noticing my hand full of small pebbles, Mas Nakajima, one of the trip organizers, walked up to me, looked down, and picked up a stone. He showed me it's smooth surface; "The



Mas Nakajima

texture shows that this stone is very hard," he said. He asked me to rub my hand over it and notice its smooth surface. "There are no sharp edges" he said. The stone was dark grey with maroon and green highlights, and was heavy for its size. He suggested I keep my eye out for this type of stone. Janet Roth, handed me a larger stone and explained that this was a nice one and I should keep it, as a gift. She said I might not know why as of yet, but guaranteed by the end of the trip, I would understand its desirability. The stone was rose red, heavy and had a flat area, right next to a small peak. I set it next to the one Mas had shown me, starting a small pile. Janet also shared that when Mas decides he will not keep a stone he had picked up, he never just tosses it aside, he carefully sets it back down, right where he found it.

Bob motioned for me to come over and showed me a dark, charcoal grey stone with a perfect depression in its center. It looked like another rock might have been embedded in it at one time. Felix Rivera, another experienced leader, was standing in the distance and holding his crowbar, horizontally, in front of a stone he had raised up in his other hand. I must have looked puzzled when Bob told me that Felix was evaluating whether the stone had potential as a mountain scene. My look of confusion must have remained, so Bob explained that even though an ideal suiseki is uncut, it is common for some collected stones to be cut to expose the image. I found this to be valuable because, to this point, I had only been looking for stones with a flat bottom. Bob asked me to pick up one of the stones I had collected. The stone was quite large, it had many bumps and lumps, and it sort of flattened near all the edges. He picked it up, tipped it on its side, and held his crowbar up to the rock and showed me what to look for. It finally



Mountain top

clicked. I could see the mountain. My eye was beginning to develop.

After lunch we drove further up 162 to a second site. Once there, I walked down the path with Mark, another collector. He pointed out a rock in the river. We walked over to it and both could immediately see a mountain top. He shared that he sometimes submerges rocks that he has collected in a large pan of water, creating a visual of just what he sees in the river. We collected for another hour when it began to rain and the day came to a wet end. We had collected so many stones that I offered Mark help with getting his pack on his back, and I

wondered how I was ever going to get my weighty stones home to Wisconsin.

But for me, it was the next day that really made the whole trip worth it.

We woke to a very grey, cold and wet day - too wet to go out collecting. The leaders chose to gather in the breakfast room at the motel and critique all the stones collected the previous day. Mas set up a wooden box he



Marking the cut

had made for the San Francisco club. It provided a means to present a stone at different angles for viewing. Two socks filled with car litter were

used to support the standing stone.

He also had many different sized small boards which he could then set in front of the displayed stone to help decide where and if the stone could be cut to create a better image for viewing. Everyone brought stones to critique. John Nishizawa, a long term member of SF Suiseki Kai, a quiet, very thoughtful looking man, lead the discussion.

When John took a stone from a collector, I was most impressed with how he handled it before he'd ever set it on the stand. He would hold it for a long moment, feel



its weight, run his hands over the stones surface, repeatedly turning it over and over, almost as if he was asking the stone how it wanted to be viewed. He'd stroke the top of the stone, feeling it's natural beauty and finally set it in the stand and arrange the stuffed socks to support it. It all looked so very respectful. He'd bend down, look again,

John Nishizawa rearrange the socks, grab a few pieces of wood and stack them, one by one, in front of the stone until all the people were cooing approval; it was a joy to watch. John spoke about why he chose the position, picked it up again and tried another viewing direction. When John had completed his comments, he would hand the stone back to its collector, who invariably would have a big smile on their face.

Karen, a collector from Oregon, found a beautiful rose colored stone with a perfect picture of a bird in it. I had found one that needed no cutting at all and had five colors. John called this one goshiki-ishi, or five colored stone. Another I collected was a large green serpentine stone, a typical Eel River find. When John thoughtfully placed this stone on the stand and boards were placed to identify the cut line, I was happy I had endured its weighty haul up from the river. John said, "This stone made the whole trip worthwhile for you."



Bird



Through the clouds

All of those present agreed that the morning critique was more valuable than another day of collecting. We were all able to witness the process of finding that very special suiseki hidden in our collected stones. Many thanks to all the members of both SF Suiseki Kai and California Suiseki Society for being so encouraging while helping the many newcomers develop the skills needed to find that perfect stone. As for me, I feel I have begun to develop an eye for collecting, something I know I will be doing again and again.

Sand used in a suiban is sometimes used to represent a line of clouds, revealing just the tip of a mountain top.

Intermediate Class 2011 forming – *Space Still Available!*

The MBS Intermediate Class 2011 will meet at various venues for 4 eight hour sessions during 2011. These classes are open to all MBS members who have taken the novice class, intermediate class or have some Bonsai experience.

Ron F, Houston S, Steve C and Jean S. will teach one class. The intermediate class offers excellent hands on opportunity to improve your Bonsai skills meet other members of our club and accelerate your Bonsai experience, all for \$100.

If you are interested in taking these classes please call Jorge R 414-357-8793, e-mail AL345900@hotmail.com or signup during our monthly meetings.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity!

LAST CHANCE TO RENEW FOR 2011!

Don't miss the opportunity to learn from guest artists in workshops and classes.

Please fill in the form below and send it with your check to Milwaukee Bonsai Society!

Milwaukee Bonsai Society Membership Form 2011

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # (home) _____ (work) _____

Email _____ Check # _____

(This e-mail address will not be shared with other parties and is for MBS Board use only.)

for (circle) **Single** 1 year \$25 2 years \$48 3 years \$70

Family 1 year \$35 2 years \$68 3 years \$100

Do you have any hidden talents / interests that you would be willing to share with our members?
If so, please describe:

Please send to: Milwaukee Bonsai Society, P.O. Box 240822, Milwaukee, WI 53224



P.O. Box 240822
Milwaukee, WI 53224
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next Meeting of MBS
7PM, Tuesday, April 5
Boerner Botanical Gardens
9400 Boerner Dr
Hales Corners, WI 53130

2011 MBS OFFICERS

President	Pam W
First VP	John M
Second VP	Greg P
Secretary	Jorge R
Treasurer	Kris Z
Director	Steve Car.
Director	Steve Con.
Director	Pat B
Past Pres.	Joe H

Other Club Functions:

Newsletter - Kris Z
Webmaster - Pam W
Librarian - Tom A
Telephone response - Jorge R
PAB Board - Ron F, Don G & Houston S



*Riotous colors
On a craggy mountain alp
Joyous springtime spawn
- Joe Nemec*