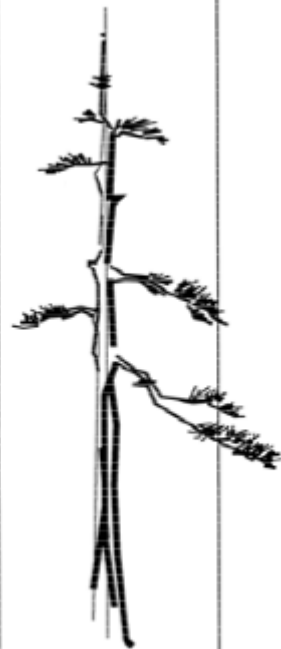


# BONSAI NEWS

June 2018



Milwaukee  
Bonsai Society  
PO Box 240822  
Milwaukee Wi  
53224

Information Line  
414-299-9229

## June Meeting

Our guest artist for June is Todd Schlafer. Todd has been a lifelong bonsai enthusiast. He started under Harold Sasaki in Denver Colorado and honed his skills with Ryan Neil. Todd is an avid collector of Colorado Yamadori.

Here are some of the quotes praising Todd.

"Todd is a wealth of information" "Todd is a very hard worker and a great teacher" "Todd is very articulate"



With all that being said you shouldn't miss the meeting or either of the two workshops that we are having with Todd. The first one will begin shortly after 8AM and the second one will begin at 1PM. Here is a link to the Eventbrite ticket site to see if any of the spots are still available for the morning workshop. If that one is sold out also you can still come to watch and learn as a silent observer for a \$5.00 fee. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mbs-bring-your-own-conifer-or-deciduous-workshop-tickets-46030810393>

## June

June 5 —**MBS meeting**  
Todd Schlafer  
June 16-Intermediate class\*  
June 23-Raft workshop\*

## July

July 3—**No MBS meeting**  
July 14-Picnic  
July 22-Repotting Workshop

## August

Aug 2-12—State Fair  
Aug 7—**MBS meeting**  
Tropicals  
Aug 11-Intermediate class\*  
Aug 25-Bonsai Basics #1\*

## September

Sept 4—**MBS meeting**  
State Fair winners  
Sept 8 — Beginner workshop  
Sept 22-Bonsai Basics #2\*  
Sept 29-Intermediate class\*

## October

Oct 2—**MBS meeting**  
Elms revisited  
Oct 6-7 — Annual Exhibit  
Oct 20-Bonsai Basics #3\*  
Oct 27-Bonsai Basics #4\*  
Oct 27-Intermediate class\*

\*Open to MBS members only

**Next Meeting**  
**June 5, 2018**  
**6:45pm**  
**Boerner Botanical**  
**Gardens**



Connect with MBS  
@Milwaukeebonsai.org

## President's Message June 2018

Happy June fellow Bonsai enthusiasts!

My trees are loving the warmer weather we are having and are growing like crazy. I, for one, am very happy winter is finally over; I have been ready to work on my trees for a couple of months now and my bonsai room has been set up for weeks!



(the James bonsai workroom)

I hope your trees are doing well and that no one lost any over the winter.

We are once again having a picnic for members in July. This is a great opportunity to mingle with fellow members. There will also be members selling various bonsai items at the picnic. You may find the 'perfect' pot for a tree by attending the picnic or you may be able to make some extra money by selling some of the bonsai supplies that you no longer need. If you would like to have a table in order to see items, the cost is \$5 and sign up will be on Eventbrite. Also, please sign up on Eventbrite so we will know how many people to expect for the picnic.

Although August seems to be a long time away, it will be here before you know it; which means State Fair is right around the corner. Now is the time to start making plans for the trees you would like to display in one of the exhibits over the 11 day run of the fair. This is also the time to consider volunteering to tree sit.

Tree sitting can sound scary if you are new to bonsai, but remember that you actually know more than the people stopping by the booth, so you really seem to be an expert to the spectators. Although I am usually a reserved person who doesn't always talk to people I don't know I have helped out at the fair for a number of years and I find that I enjoy talking to the people who stop by the booth to ask about the trees. The fair volunteer and tree coordinators may be contacting you in the upcoming months asking for help; please do consider helping to share your love of bonsai with the public. Another perk is that you receive a ticket to the fair to use on the day you volunteer. Before or after your shift at the booth you can wander the fair grounds for free. Sign up for exhibiting a tree is available on Eventbrite.

As you can tell, MBS is utilizing Eventbrite for a number of different functions. Please check the Eventbrite website often to find out what activities the club is offering. The service is very helpful to us for workshop registration as well as events that are free such as the picnic registration and State Fair tree exhibiting.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the June Tuesday meeting when Todd Schaefer will be our guest artist. Todd will be sharing some of his knowledge and experience throughout his demonstration that evening. Also, don't forget to bring in the scraps of wire that you remove from your trees to the meeting. MBS will be recycling the wire in order to fund purchasing wire for the club.

Have a great month!

Melissa



**WISCO BONSAI**  
www.WiscoBonsai.blogspot.com  
www.WiscoBonsai@gmail.com

## **WISCO BONSAI**

**DELIVERY TO MBS MEETINGS AVAILABLE.**  
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**PROVIDING SUPERIOR BONSAI  
PRODUCTS SUCH AS U.S. SOURCED  
SUBSTRATES, U.S. MADE CUT-PASTE  
AND CUSTOM BLENDED FERTILIZERS.**

**SEE ALL THE PRODUCTS: [www.WiscoBonsai.blogspot.com](http://www.WiscoBonsai.blogspot.com)**  
**ALSO TAKING ORDERS FOR LARGER QUANTITIES OF PRESIFTED & SIZED  
SUBSTRATE ORDERS FOR SPRING 2018•DON'T BE CAUGHT UNPREPARED !!!**

**contact: [WiscoBonsai@gmail.com](mailto:WiscoBonsai@gmail.com)**

# World Bonsai Day at Lynden Sculpture Gardens

Special Guest: Jennifer Price  
May 12, 2018



# Satsuki Azaleas by Dave Kreutz

May 1, 2018

By Michelle Z.

## AZALEAS GROW LIKE WEEDS!

That's the main message from Dave Kreutz, one of the largest importers of Japanese Satsuki Azaleas in the country. Dave resides in the St. Louis area, so had many suggestions for how to keep these beautiful, somewhat finicky, but essentially forgiving shrubs growing vigorously in the Midwest climate.

Dave is quick to mention that he is not an expert, but only tells people what he does to have success. Currently he is caring for 2500 azaleas, so understandably his methods and techniques have been adapted to his large scale nursery.

Here are his practices:

1. Pay attention to the amount of stress a tree has been under. The most stressful event is its arrival, bare-root from Japan. Dave immediately pots his new stock in 100% kanuma, using a combination of 4 different sizes, making sure to fill the hollow area under the trunk to avoid an empty area which cannot grow roots. Kanuma is a lightweight clay from Japan. Its pH is slightly acid. The roots grow around, rather than through the particles, therefore it does not breakdown as quickly as akadama.

However, it is somewhat fragile, so sift first to remove fines and water thoroughly until the water runs clear from the drainage holes.

2. Best pots are larger and deeper with large drainage holes and large holed screening. Excellent drainage is essential, since the roots are quite fine. Use chopsticks to secure tie-in wires so wires do not pass directly over the roots, thus scaring surface roots permanently. These trees are surface feeders so a thin application of Yamagoke (an acid moss from Japan which does not compact, like sphagnum) moss allows the roots to grow into the moss, stay near the surface and hold the soil in place keeping the roots cool and humid.

3. The typical satsuki cycle of growth is: grow-bloom-dormant-grow. When transplanting you can remove a lot of roots just before the early "grow" period. Many people transplant after the bloom period. Your tree must be very healthy if you choose this method, since blooming followed by transplanting gives the tree two sequential stresses.

4. These trees love humidity, moist, but not wet soil and plenty of misting. The misting also helps to cool the environment and is essential in the very hot summer.

5. Water to keep the soil moist and cool, at any time of the day, depending on the tree's needs. This will vary from yard to yard so observe your own environment and plan accordingly.

6. Fertilizing: These trees are heavy feeders.

Dave gives his first fertilizer when the trees have entered the first grow phase usually an inorganic "wake-up" that does not contain urea as its nitrogen source such as DynaGro.

2 weeks later he applies fish emulsion + chelated iron such as (Spring 3-3-0) for green up.

2-4 weeks later pelletized fertilizer is spread thinly over the entire surface of the soil. Because he is working to preserve all of the surface roots, tea bags or other "focal" release packaging doesn't work as well. If you use low dose organic type slow release fertilizers, you may not need to remove it during the blooming season. Experiment with this and see for yourself.

7. Flowering: This is stressful and an energy drain on the tree. This is also WHY you bought the tree(!), so decide for yourself how often you will enjoy flowering. The flower buds for the next year are set in the fall of the previous year. In spring, when the flower buds are enlarging, thin the buds to one per shoot selecting the bud for its direction and to allow space for adjacent flowers. When 80% of the buds have flowered, remove the remaining flower buds and allow the tree to enter dormancy.

8. Pruning: Serious pruning, called motobedome is carried out in the fall season. This is when the branch structure is set for the next year. Light pruning in spring to open the branch structure and allow space for the flowers is carried out at the time the flower buds are enlarging. Tips may be wired for fine positioning in spring.

Dave spent 3 years studying under a Japanese azalea master and was one of the few to be certified as an instructor so clearly there is much more to be learned about this beautiful blooming species. The starter program above doesn't sound so impossible, so here's hoping that more bonsai enthusiasts will try azaleas. Also, this shrubby tree is on your side because

AZALEAS GROW LIKE WEEDS!

## Compost Tea by Pam W

Compost teas are traditionally used as liquid organic fertilizers, but recently have been touted as powerful antimicrobial agents capable of combating pathogens associated with foliar diseases. One of the biggest problems with compost, and by extension teas, is the high variability among composts from different sources as well as different batches. With this variability that exists among batches of compost tea, it is difficult to interpret results by anything but anecdotal evidence.

### What is compost tea?

The historical manufacture and use of compost extracts is a straightforward, centuries-old practice. Plant and animal wastes were placed into a permeable bag and held in a bucket of water until the water turned black. This method produces non-aerated compost tea (NCT) whose principal components are thought to be anaerobic microbes and nutrients. In contrast, compost tea brewers require an energy input in the form of an aerator. This constantly oxygenated mixture forms aerated compost tea (ACT), which contains aerobic microbes and nutrients.

Essentially, compost tea production is a brewing process that extracts microorganisms from compost followed by microbial growth and multiplication. This includes beneficial bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and nematodes.

### Why use compost tea?

The purpose of compost tea is to reintroduce these beneficial microorganisms and nutrients into our soil that ideally would be there in the first place. As with mycorrhizal fungi, these microorganisms are largely responsible for the health of our plants. They help increase water and nutrient retention in the soil and increase plant nutrient uptake, so your trees get more of both. They also help breakdown toxins in the soil and is also a broad spectrum organic fertilizer of soluble nutrients that can be immediately used by both microorganisms and tree.

### How to brew compost tea?

Air is bubbled through a bucket of water that contains a bit of quality compost and other ingredients. The bubbles pull the microorganisms off the compost and give air for the microorganisms to breathe. Air is important because we want to create a compost tea of mostly air-breathing (aerobic) microorganisms, as they tend to be the beneficial ones for our trees. The other ingredients are foods like liquid kelp and liquid fish and molasses that feed the microorganisms and cause them to multiply. When it's done, we have a solution with trillions of beneficial mostly aerobic microorganisms that we can feed and spray into our trees.

### What are the ingredients for compost tea?

The most important ingredient in determining which type of tea you produce is your compost. Your compost will ALWAYS be the biggest factor in determining whether you brew a balanced tea, or a tea dominated by bacteria or fungi.

Each of the different types of compost are determined by their initial ingredients. Bacterial-dominated compost begins with materials that have a lower carbon to nitrogen ratio (C: N); whereas, fungal-dominated compost begins with materials that have a higher C: N. Said another way, the more fungi you want in your compost, the more wood materials you are going to have to include. And our trees need fungal-dominated compost.

### How to ensure we've got fungi in our compost tea?

If your compost doesn't have any fungi in it, and you don't add any, then there is no way your finished compost tea will have fungi in it. The first method is to add spores of mycorrhizal fungi. Mycorrhizal fungi act as a wonderful inoculum to any fungal compost tea recipe. These fungi naturally form beneficial relationships with approximately 95% of all plant species. They aid in nutrient transfer to plants and help to create better soil conditions.

An interesting book, *Teaming with Microbes*, by authors, Jeff Lowenfels and Wayne Lewis suggest you "give fungi a head start." Since it can be difficult to get fungi to multiply (they do grow in size, just rarely in number) during the compost tea brewing process, the authors recommend growing them prior to the brewing process.

To do this, you moisten a couple cups of compost then put it in a light-resistant container. Then grind up some simple proteins (fungal foods), such as oatmeal, and mix them in with the moist compost. Cover partially with a lid, and then place in a warm, dark area. After about 3 days, you'll remove the lid, and find a bunch of fungal mycelia throughout the compost. You can now use this compost to brew your fungal tea.

### My method for compost tea.

I start with 5 gallons of tap water, I then add an air pump (Active Aqua Commercial Air Pump, 6 Outlets, 20W, 45 L/min) with two huge air-stones (2"x4") placed in the bucket and let bubble for 24 hours so it becomes dechlorinated water. In a mesh bag of at least 400 micrometers (I use a painter's bag) I add my compost and dry ingredients (recipe below). Once the water has been dechlorinated, I hang the painter's bag in the bucket making sure not to let it touch the bottom and add liquid ingredients. Let all these ingredients brew with continuous air for 24 and not longer than 36 hours. It creates a foam which means it is working. To use, I dilute to 50/50 with water and apply to trees.

### My recipe for compost tea

- 1/2 cup vermicompost (worm castings)
- 1/2 cup fungal-dominated compost
- 2 Tablespoons soluble kelp (I use Neptune Kelp Meal)
- 1 Teaspoon Mycorrhizae (I use Myconox, look for Ecto Mycorrhizae)
- 1 Tablespoons rock dust (I use Azomite)
- 2 Tablespoon humic acids (I use Bioag Ful-Power)
- 1 Tablespoons fish hydrolysate (I use Neptune Fish Fertilizer)

Tuesday, May 1st meeting

Special guest: David Kreutz





**STATE FAIR 2018** - Are you interested in entering a tree at State Fair? If you have never exhibited before, please consider doing so this year. Classes are: Youth, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Open. **Please sign up at Club meetings, email or call John hernejb@msoe.edu (414-514-0594) or search on Eventbrite for MBS State Fair to participate**

## STATE FAIR EXHIBIT SCHEDULE 2018

Exhibit #1 August 2 - August 4  
Exhibit #2 August 5 - August 8  
Exhibit #3 August 9 - August 12

### Exhibit #1

Deliver trees to \*\*  
Wednesday, August 1 from **6pm - 6:30pm**  
Pick up trees from \*\*  
Sunday, Aug 5 from **9am - 9:30am**

### Exhibit #2

Deliver trees to \*\*  
Saturday, Aug 4 from **6pm - 6:30pm**  
Pick up trees from \*\*  
Thursday, Aug 9 from **9am - 9:30am**

### Exhibit #3

Deliver trees to \*\*  
Wednesday, Aug 8 **6pm - 6:30pm**  
Pick up trees from \*\*  
Monday Aug, 13 from **9am - 9:30am**

**\*\* Strip mall parking lot approx. 102nd and National, just west of Baker's Square. Turn in by the Piggly Wiggly sign. Meet in the area nearest the street (National Ave)**

**Note:** If the drop off/pick up schedule is not good for you, please make personal arrangements for your trees with someone who will care for them. **YOU** must alert the crew about these arrangements so trees will not be misdirected, lost or stolen.

## When checking in please bring:

- + your list of scientific names and common names
- + the approximate age of the tree
- + stand, accent, sketch of display, and the proposed style of tree.

**HAVING A PICTURE OF YOUR SET-UP IS RECOMMENDED!!**

It is also wise to mark all components of your display with your name.

(an address sticker is usually adequate)

**Call or email for exhibiting trees (414-514-0594) or [hernejb@msoe.edu](mailto:hernejb@msoe.edu) or search on Eventbrite for MBS State Fair**

Good luck and thanks for supporting the MBS 2018 State Fair committee.

\*\*\* If you wish to help out at State Fair by **greeting people** who pass by our exhibit, please contact Rob P by phone or email: 414-453-7317 [rstylingcourt@yahoo.com](mailto:rstylingcourt@yahoo.com)

For specific information as to whether your tree will qualify to be entered at State Fair, please go to: [http://www.wistatefair.com/pdfs/competitions/entry\\_info/general\\_info/hort/society\\_shows.pdf](http://www.wistatefair.com/pdfs/competitions/entry_info/general_info/hort/society_shows.pdf)

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## So that's why I killed so many azaleas... by Kris Z

I love flowering trees and attempted many times to keep azaleas alive... to no avail. I am so happy I sat in on the azalea workshop and our Tuesday evening meeting with Dave Kreutz. Many "Ah Ha" moments. Here's hoping my notes will help some to avoid the tragedies I experienced.

#1 and most important to me - azaleas are high mountain plants. I guess I didn't do much research on azaleas before trying to work with them. This one fact put things in perspective. As I look back, I must have been treating them like sub-tropicals. Lesson learned.

### General

Moist / humid but not wet

Filtered sun

They wake up in the spring and start growing. Depending on the variety they stop growing, flower, then go into a short 2 to 3 week dormancy and then restart growing...

Azaleas are surface root feeders.

Azaleas put on new growth between 1:00am - 5:00am

### Repot

Need to be drier when you want to repot

If using Kanuma, when repotting, don't stab at it. That breaks down the Kanuma.

Kanuma white when dry, orange when wet. It doesn't break down like Akadama.

You can repot early before flowering - and can reduce the root ball more than if you have to repot after blooming..

If you repot early, leave the buds on until you see that they are swelling or showing color.. the bud's need for moisture forces the roots to start growing

Repot end of March beginning of April if you have a greenhouse or can control the temperature.

To stimulate growth, use large sized Kanuma.

Important to lay out roots to form good nebari

### Watering

Water until it runs clear

If tree is light - water. If tree is heavy - just mist. If tree is medium - water and mist.

They LOVE misting. Mist often.

### Propagating

From cuttings, put in Kanuma. Wire so it doesn't move. Tent it (I used zip-lock bags for ficus cuttings, I think it will work with the azalea cuttings). Mist 2-3 times per day. High humidity will get upper growth and root growth.

The only time you have to wire the cutting in is if your trying to root a bigger size cutting.. but the normal cutting is the new growth when it is 1/2 to 2 inches long.

### Pruning / Trimming

Prune in fall if you don't want new growth

Prune in spring for new growth

Pull flowers after 10 days

Cut off anything growing down but think about the ones growing straight up (don't mindlessly follow the cut everything growing up and down rule)

NEVER make a concave cut into either the trunk or a main branch - azaleas are thin skinned and do not callous over rough cuts

Prune flush in spring, leave a stump in the fall

After a mild frost when leaves start changing color, then trim. Fall is the most important trimming.

### Wiring

Is done for shaping and to control the growth of the limb (it slows growth)

Azaleas are thin skinned

### Fertilizing

Don't use anything with urea.

First use Dynagrow when temperature is about 40°

2 weeks - a month later use fish emulsion/liquid seaweed/chelated iron/chicken doo (pick one)

0-10-10 August/September

### Over wintering

Azaleas need 40 days under 40°

Dave has had temps at -10 degrees. The bottom line is not as important as protection from the wind when the trees are frozen in the pot. He has also had trees frozen in the pots for 3 months. If kept in a garage or dark area, then the tree needs light to keep the buds healthy



PO Box 240822  
Milwaukee, WI 53224  
Www.milwaukeebonsai.org  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next MBS meeting will be  
June 5, 2018 at 6:45pm  
Boerner Botanical Gardens  
9400 Boerner Dr  
Hales Corners, WI 53130

### 2018 MBS OFFICERS

President [Melissa J](#)  
First VP [Bryan L](#)  
Second VP [John H](#)  
Secretary [Leo S](#)  
Treasurer [Wally V](#)  
Director [Rob P](#)  
Director [Bonnie P](#)  
Director [Phil R](#)  
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### Other Club Functions

Newsletter [Melissa J](#)  
Webmaster [Pam W](#)

Director of Children's Education—Jean S  
PAB Board—Ron F, Houston S & Jean S



Pruning my bonsai  
Which to keep, which to lop....  
(sigh) can't decide  
~Dave Burke