

MIDWEST
BONSAI
CONNECTION

盆栽コネクション

中西部



May



President's Message

Well, the bonsai season is off to a roaring start as I write this. All of my hardy trees are out of winter storage, and I've been working on repotting every time I have some time free. Its prime season for collecting, and I've added a couple of new trees to my collection (like I needed any more!).

So, as you're taking your trees out and getting them ready for the season, its time to do some planning. The May show is coming upon us, and we need your trees. Our May show is continuing with the very popular Education theme again this year, and this means we want to see your trees in training. Every stage of bonsai are welcome, the more different processes that we can display the better the show is. It's also the time to start thinking of write-ups for the trees; one of the things that makes this show work is the write-ups that are put out with the trees. Write-ups can be a couple paragraphs with a simple history of the tree, a description of some process (i.e. wiring) that's going on with the tree, or a few comments about what you're planning to do with the tree in the future. Anything and

everything is welcome, as well as early submission is welcome. Bring your write-ups to the next meeting, send them via email, or bring them when you bring your tree. Having these descriptions sitting next to the trees makes the show interactive with the attendees, which greatly increases their enjoyment of the exhibit.

We also need your help to staff the show and keep it running. Believe it or not, but the most novice among us knows more about bonsai than the general public – so please volunteer to help answer questions. Or help at the sales table, setting up, tearing down – there are jobs for all skill levels and experience. Our May show is one of our major public outreach events of the year, the more folks whom we can show supporting the Society, the more welcoming we are to new members. Rich Katz will have a sign-up sheet at the next meeting for folks to select time slots when they can come.

Speaking of public outreach, the next outing will be at the end of April at Chalet Nursery and Garden Shop in Wilmette. It's their 2011 Garden

Faire and we will have representatives in the green house on Sat., April 30 & Sun., May 1 to answer bonsai questions for their visitors. One of the stated goals of the Society is "the cultivation of a growing public awareness of bonsai as a living art." This benefits the Society in numerous ways; we gain members; we help institutions like the Chicago Botanic Garden support their bonsai collections; we gain attendees for our shows; and places like Chalet, who sell bonsai

supplies, gets incentives to keep supplies in stock. If you know of some group that would be interested in learning more about bonsai, or have some other idea about how to get the message about bonsai out to more folks, feel free to tell a board member or email the Society.

As always, I want to thank the membership for everything that they do for the Society. We can't do it without you.

Cat Nelson



Fothergilla gardenii [Dwarf Fothergilla]

One of my favorite Spring trees in the CBG Collection. Tightly clustered, honey-scented, yellow and white flower spikes that resemble bottlebrushes begin the show in April or May and persist for 2-3 weeks. Then, the full, green foliage appears and lasts until autumn, when vibrant yellows, oranges, purples, and reds conclude the season in a crescendo of scarlet.

Society News: **Cat Nelson / Candidate for ABS 2011-2014 Board of Directors**

Though she is most unassuming in person, our Society President is a devoted practitioner and dedicated supporter of all things Bonsai. At present, she is a member of a select group of candidates running for election to the Board of Directors to the American Bonsai Society, a most prestigious position. The following excerpt from the ABS website announces Cat's credentials and will

direct members how and where to vote.

KATHERINE "CAT" NELSON (South Bend, IN) - A lover of plants since early childhood, Cat has managed to study bonsai even when she was traveling a great deal and not able to keep them at home. She is very active in the Midwest Bonsai Society (currently president and MBS webmaster) and the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club, as well as an active volunteer with the Chicago Botanic Garden

bonsai collection. Cat has won several awards, including an Award of Merit at the 2010 Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit in Chicago.

Deadline for voting is 5 May 2011. Please join if not a member already and lets all vote for Cat to win election to the Board of Directors. See:

<http://absbonsai.org/>



Noteworthy Publications: **Andy Rutledge:**

While searching for information on *Trunk-chopping* I came across Andy Rutledge's "Web Book" as he appropriately calls it and in what surely would be a 100+ page volume were it published in a traditional format he delivers what I will describe as one of the most insightful commentaries on Bonsai

aesthetics I have uncovered thus far.

Those familiar with the various Bonsai Forums and in particular the "Art of Bonsai Project" will know Andy Rutledge.

I strongly recommend you print out and study in detail the contents of "Artistic Foundations". The illuminating text and descriptive illustrations will

Artistic Foundations of Bonsai Design

Elements of Meaningful Composition

by Andy Rutledge

do in one afternoon what reading the "aesthetic prefaces" of 40 Bonsai books will not do.....transcend the minutiae of Bonsai care and training. See: www.http://www.andyrutledge.com/book



Special Announcements

Many would consider 6 or 7 years membership in an organization like the Midwest Bonsai Society to be a laudable achievement. Can you believe 41 years? Recently, the Board received correspondence from one our members, which only incidentally noted this remarkable

fact. We are very interested to know who has been affiliated with the MBS for say 10 /20 / 30 + years, as we would like to recognize this accomplishment with a special mention in these pages. Please contact me or any other Board Member with your story. D/D



10,20,30,40...

How many years have you been a member?

Next Meeting Focus: **Warren Hill**

The Midwest Bonsai Society is especially pleased to have Warren Hill once again to present on the topic of Juniper Styling. Formerly, Supervisory Curator for the United States Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C., Mr. Hill is among the preeminent Bonsai Masters in the world today. I encourage you to visit his terrific website

which describes in detail the experience of studying at Tree-Haven, his unique School of Bonsai located in the foothills of the Smokey Mountains in Greenville, Tennessee.

Of particular interest to all should be the high quality bonsai stock material available for purchase on the Tree-Haven website. See: <http://www.warrenhillbonsai.com/>



Bonsai 101

Greetings fellow Bonsai enthusiasts.

The Bonsai 101 topic for May will be "Fertilizing your Bonsai"

When should I fertilize my Bonsai? With what should I fertilize my Bonsai? How often should

I fertilize my Bonsai? Should I fertilize my Bonsai at all?

These questions and more crop up countless times as you look ahead to long term care for your trees. At the May Bonsai 101 Session we will discuss how to make these important decisions.

Remember Bonsai 101 begins promptly at 7:00 pm prior to the general meeting at 7:30.

See you there.

Dick Besetzny



The real secret to Award Winning Bonsai.... "Fledermausdunger"

Bat Guano Fertilizer [See Walter Pall Blog]

Previous Meeting ReCap: **Repotting Workshop**

While I prefer to repot at the last possible moment placing my trees under the maximum amount of stress, more disciplined folks were in attendance on Monday night practicing Bonsai the right way. So much repotting....and so little "Oak Leaf Mold". Oak Leaf Bullion is more like it. When is Ivan Watters going to market this Rare Earth Element on-line?



Monthly Care Report: **What to do in May**

SPRING HAS FINALLY SPRUNG.....We hope everyone is enjoying the spring flush of growth everywhere, there is just something about that spring green color. Everything at the nurseries are popping out like crazy, already have seen some butterflies and according to the Hummingbird map, they are in are area mid April, that tells me it is time to get all the trees out of the garden and coldframe, In the middle of the month, watching the temps, maybe some tropicals can be started to be put out. It's always fun finding those little treasures you stashed away in the fall and seeing them again, all flushed out and ready to be styled.

FERTILIZE... You can start feeding most of your trees now. Also wait on any of your tropicals that you plan on defoliating. I apply a timed release fertilizer now. You can incorporate a little into the soil and then top dress the soil to hide it. When using a timed release fertilizer be careful not to use too much and watch for any salt build up. It is wise to learn about fertilizing your trees, there are so many variables when it comes to fertilizing a bonsai. If you want to thicken branches or the trunk, you can feed it more nitrogen. If you have an older tree with fine ramification, you don't want

to feed it anymore then you absolutely have to for optimum health. You do not want to overfeed your trees, it will promote too much growth that you will end up drastically having to prune off later in the season, increase your leaf size and lengthen the internodes.

PRUNING... If you have Maples you should be very busy pinching the growth tips back, this is a daily task this time of year, but it is the only way to keep your internodes short. Elms will need to be steadily pruned back to the first or second node. Your tropicals coming out of winter can be pruned back hard, prune farther back than your original style to improve taper and allow for rapid growth, or you will be doing it again soon. You can start defoliating some of your tropicals now to reduce the leaf size if needed, if not, keep your larger leaves pruned and keep pinching those growth tips off.

INSECTS... Along with the flush of new growth come those pesky little buggers wanting to eat it. Now is when you should pay careful attention so as to prevent infestations. As Barney Fife would say "nip it in the bud". If any of your Ficus have deformed leaves, open one up and you will probably see

Thrips, a systemic insecticide will take care of them. Aphids love new growth and come out with a vengeance now, spraying them with a little soapy water will get them.

By May most deciduous trees have come into leaf and new candles on pines have sprouted. Watering should now have started a routine. Cuttings of evergreens may still be taken. Air-layering of deciduous and evergreens can be continued.

Pinch back long shoots of deciduous trees as sudden frosts can damage the young leaves usually this will happen early in the month.

Your feeding, pinching, watering, and pruning schedules should be in full swing by now. May is not too late for repotting or field collecting, but this requires increasingly careful after-care as the season progresses. Trees repotted or collected in May should be protected from strong sun and wind until strong growth is observed, and leafy trees may suffer from transplant shock, so roots should be left intact as much as possible. Careful use of insecticides and fungicides becomes increasingly useful at this time of year. Always read and follow manufacturer's directions, but keep in mind that trees in containers may do better with slightly diluted formulations. Watch wired branches carefully to avoid

unsightly spiral scars from bark growing over the wires, deciduous trees in particular can expand very quickly in May and June.

Wrap up any repotting of pines by early in the month, Mugho pine do well being repotted in late summer(mid Sept). Remember to keep them in the shade for a couple weeks. Trees repotted in April can be given their first light doses of fertilizer.

Continue to patrol for insects and adjust your watering to match the warmer weather. Candles on pines can be pinched any time as needed. Start with the weak buds and do the strong buds a week or so later. Spruce, junipers and larch shoots are probably ready for their first pinching of the season. Watch the new growth on your deciduous trees and trim back to 1-2 pairs of leaves. It is critical to stay on top of maples now and pinch out that center bud just as it emerges from the middle of the first two leaves. Continue feeding your trees on a regular basis.

I continue to pinch and prune many of my tropical trees.

Don't forget to attend the Spring Show.

Ed Hake • Fort Wayne Bonsai Club • Reprinted by Permission. Compiled from several Web articles with adaptation to our area.

Chicago Bonsai Club News

The Chicago Bonsai Club, a chapter of the Midwest Bonsai Society, will hold its May Meeting on Wednesday, May 18, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Avenue. [At Lake St.] James Fairchild will discuss root grafting. As always,

you may bring your bonsai trees to work on or just come to watch. There is no fee for this program.

Chicago Bonsai Club
Contact:
suekazoo@hotmail.com or
call 773 235 9497

General Conservatory
Information: 312 746 5100



Bonsai Artist Spotlight: Harry Harrington

Possibly the first Website devoted to Bonsai I discovered was "Bonsai4me", while frantically searching for a Species Guide to answer Life+Death questions about Advanced Pruning Techniques for European Hornbeams. Too late for my Hornbeam, but not too late for me. Mr. Harrington's articles addressing care and styling techniques are now indispensable. Like many English Bonsai

professionals, he is knowledgeable, practical and considerate to a fault.

Even better news for Bonsai enthusiasts in America, he has collected and published his on-line writings in a new book entitled "Bonsai Inspirations. You should seriously consider adding this resource to your Bonsai library. See: www.bonsai4me.com/index.htm



For Sale or Trade

Discussions of Traditional/Classic Bonsai vs. Natural Bonsai aside, The Art of Natural Bonsai by Dave Joyce is a valuable tool for Bonsai practitioners by a talented English Bonsai Artist and fine author. There is something about the English....they create outstanding Bonsai and excell at writing about them as well. Tragically, Mr. Joyce passed away at a young

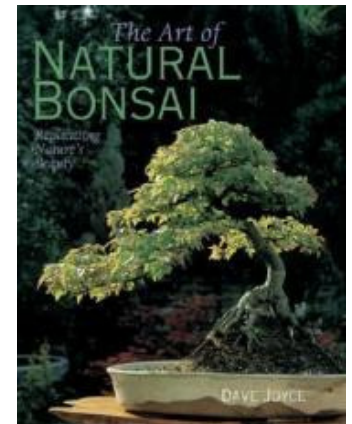
age in 2003, when this book was published. For months it has not been available anywhere, but when last I checked on a used book website it listed at 2 different bookshops in the US for over \$250. Essentially a compendium of detailed case histories of numerous trees and species. There is also a very amusing story about a *kebab*..... [actually that is just a line from a movie with Hugh Grant that I like.]

The Art of Natural Bonsai by Dave Joyce

Price available upon request.

All transactions are understood to be private between Members. The Midwest Bonsai Society makes no representations of any kind as to the specific items or terms of sale. **Send request to post a tree to the Editor.**

Contact dd@dolanarch.com



Places You Should Know: Hidden Gardens

One of our members, Gary Charneia, kindly provided this recommendation for Bonsai material.....Hidden Gardens in Willowbrook, IL.

Located just a few minutes from the intersection of 294 and 55, this nursery has a selection of Bonsai and

starter plants, with some pots, tools and other supplies. Jeff Schulz has broad experience and a variety of unusual conifers. They offer an array of other services, including boarding trees for the winter. Difficult as it is in the Chicago area

to locate suitable trees, Hidden Gardens is worth the drive and a very pleasant surprise. See: <http://www.hiddengarden.net/index.html>



World Bonsai News: **European Bonsai Convention 2011**

Imagine Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois, OK maybe Missouri, having a Bonsai Convention with 30 Vendors and 14 Demonstrators and Oh...yes, everyone involved is a world class Bonsai, Suiseki or Ceramic Artist. This is precisely what will happen in Ratingen Germany from 30

September to 2 October this year. I thought to post this now so that interested members could begin planning their trips immediately. Don't forget it's, "mit Bonsai Bundesausstellung!"I think this is German humor.

See: <http://european-bonsai-convention.eu/pages/en/welcome.php>



AHOY!

From the deck of the good ship Navy Pier, manned by Captain Cat and Crew Jim and Rich. We had a good time representing the Midwest Bonsai Society at the Annual Flower Show and promoting Bonsai to potential new members.

Local Bonsai News:

On the 7th of June, The Milwaukee Bonsai Society will be hosting local Bonsai expert, Jack Douthitt. The subject will be the styling and display of Englemann Spruce. Meeting place: Boerner Botanical Gardens 9400 Boerner Drive Hales Corners, Wisconsin For more information: <http://www.milwaukeebonsai.org>



Bonsai Haiku: **Susan Babyk**



CHERRY BLOSSOMS

*Nanking Cherry blossoms
Brighten the overcast day
Stir the sleeping muse*

Editor's Comment

Inspiration in Bonsai can come from almost anywhere: hiking in the White Mountains of eastern California to see the 4800 year old Great Basin Bristlecone Pine, Methuselah, reading the text of the 14th century Noh play "Hachi-no-ki" [The Potted Trees"] or for me personally, coveting the newly imported Japanese specimen Bonsai at Lee Verhorevoort Bonsai in Kent England..... 75 year old Maple trees for \$750.00.....Actually, this is less inspiring than simply down right depressing.

In moments like this when I realize that I do not live in Japan or England or anywhere else where I could, almost overnight, assemble a Bonsai collection of Pine, Beech, Apricot and Stewartia trees and enjoy the beauty of this art form....sooner than later, I often find inspiration in the form of a person.

At the Golden State Bonsai Federation website, which I brought to your attention last month, I noted at the bottom left a link to a short film by Ryoko Onishi, called: *California Bonsai Man*. This is a shorter version by this

filmmaker of the same subject treatment titled: *Heaven and Earth*.

Each film portrays a California Bonsai practitioner named Ted Oka.....it is likely that Ivan Watters knows Mr. Oka already. He seems to me to be one of a group of Japanese and Japanese-American Bonsai artists like Ben Oki, Mas Ishi and Katsumi Kinoshita, who continue to teach and create beautiful Bonsai well into their 80's. Mr. Oka is in fact 83 and was a founding member of Dai Ichi Bonsai, located in Los Angeles.

As I watched this film Mr. Oka narrates the story of his journey to Bonsai in his middle 50's, different, but in many ways similar to my own experience. To see him working in his mesmerizing garden, it almost.....just for a minute....allowed me to see the future of my garden.

Please take a moment to watch and listen to Ted Oka speak about Bonsai in, *California Bonsai Man* and *Heaven and Earth*.

See:
<http://myhero.com/go/films/view.asp?film=BonsaiMan&res=high>



Images of Ted Oka: *California Bonsai Man*

Midwest Bonsai Society: General Meeting • Feature Topics

January	No General Meeting	
February	Basics of Bonsai	Ivan Watters
March	Bonsai Photography	Steve Besetzny
April	Repotting Bonsai Workshop	MBS Members
May	Juniper Styling + Carving	Warren Hill
June	Suiseki: Viewing Stones	Tim Priest
July	Bonsai Garden Design	Dan Dolan
August	Shohin + Mame Discussion	Cat Nelson
September	Root over Rock Workshop	Eric Newton
October	White Elephant Sale	MBS Members
November	Bonsai Film Presentation [TBD]	MBS Members
December	No General Meeting	

Web Resource Discoveries: Tedy Boy Bonsai

About 1 year ago, Emmett Guzman, a member of our Board called me to say he had made an unusual web discovery. Specifically, an Indonesian Bonsai Artist by the name of Tedy Boy. It is not enough to say that I was astounded by this exotic artist whose trees and talent for drawing are presented in an encyclopedic scrolling weblog that you simply must see. Starting a mere 10 years ago, this Forrest

Gump like character, gives the impression that Bonsai is no mystery at all. As he says, "So, Nge-BONSAI yuuuu Asyik dech !!!" Translation: Lets play Bonsai Hobby for fun! My personal favorite is a photo sequence titled, "Quick Way to Make Bonsai with Bone Cracking Method." There's a new "Magician" in town, Mr. Kimura. See: <http://tedyboybonsai.blogspot.com/>



Inspirational + Curious Trees

I do not feel that Bonsai is an "elitist" art form. Though from time to time, when I hear other plant enthusiasts extolling the wonders of gladiolas or ground covers I do feel these are somewhat ordinary pursuits, which harbor few opportunities for art. Any creative visual endeavor which is not guided by an artistic intention is craft....or at best decoration.

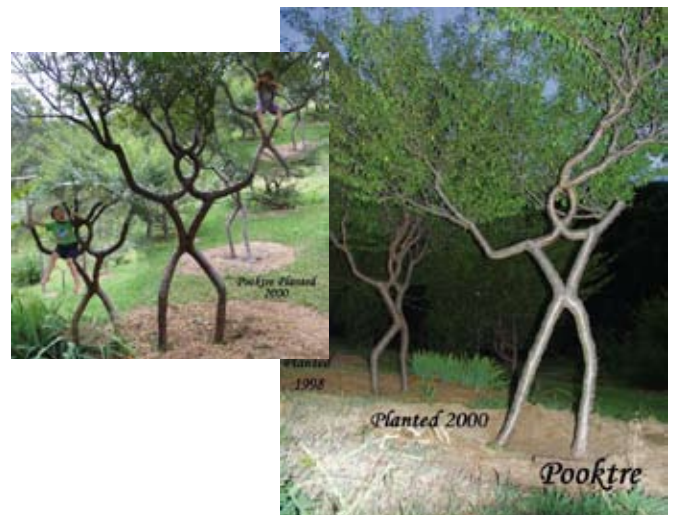
A friend, knowing my obsessive interest in trees sent images from

Australia which shocked and bewildered.

Peter Cook and Becky Northey met in 1995, became partners and began shaping plum tree suckers into living art they call "Pooktre."

Now say what you will about Broom Styles and Japanese Maple ramification....I would like to have seen Saburo Kato do this. See:

<http://pooktre.com/>



Ask Ivan: Juniper Root Grafting

Question for Ivan:

My juniper material is out of balance and would be much improved by a root graft. If the trunk has a 2" diameter, how thick should my root graft be? And how long will it take to make a 'convincing' root?

Ivan's reply:

The following method is a type of approach grafting. It will work with all genera and is almost failure proof if you work quickly and carefully. Other grafting methods will give poor to fair results. They require much skill that can only be gained from a lot of practice. Several grafts can be made at the same time if necessary. I have successfully grafted six roots at one time on a chamaecyparis. I suggest that you make a few practice grafts on junk material before you work on your bonsai. The best

time to do this type of grafting is mid-Summer. Use well rooted cuttings or seedlings (scions) of the same genus and the same or closely related species. Make sure the bark color of the graft(s) closely matches the bark color of the stock tree. Lower trunks must be flexible enough to bend. Diameters up to 1/2 inch work best.

Shave off a strip of bark through the cambium on each side of the trunk just above the roots slightly longer than the diameter of the scion using a very sharp stiff bladed knife. After shaving it, measure the diameter of the scion with a caliper. Cut off all the roots on one side of the scion below one of the uncut areas. Drill a very small pilot hole for a very small flat-head brad through the uncut parts of the trunk half way between the top and bottom of the cuts. Wrap

the cut areas and roots with wet cloth. Use a curved blade wood chisel the same size at the scion to gouge out a slot slightly longer than the cuts on the scion to a depth 2/3 to 3/4 the diameter of the scion at the level you want the new roots to be. Dig out enough soil below the slot to cover the remaining scion roots. If the stock has very hard wood, drill another pilot hole slightly smaller than the brad diameter in the center of the slot. It is critical that the scion fits tightly into the slot. Insert the scion into the slot with the roots facing outward and nail it in place. Use a nail set to avoid damaging the bark of the scion. Do not use a finishing nail. Cover the roots of the scion with soil and a thin layer of sphagnum moss. Depending on how well you did the work and the kind and age of the tree it will take from 1 to 3 years

for the graft to knit together. After you are sure it has knit remove the top part of the scion just above the graft line and seal the cut.

Ivan Watters

Curator of Bonsai, Chicago Botanic Garden



Ivan Watters, Curator of the Chicago Botanic Garden's Bonsai Collection and long-standing member of the Midwest Bonsai Society, has agreed to answer questions about Bonsai matters posed by our members and offer monthly bonsai care advice tied to our local environment. Please forward your questions to me via email <suekazoo@hotmail.com> so that I can interview Ivan every month for the newsletter.

Susan Babyk

Welcome to Newest Members

On behalf of all the members of the Midwest Bonsai Society we wish to extend a sincere and appreciative Welcome! to our newest members:

Michelle Blodgett
Matthew Corpolongo
Connie Heiman and
Jonathan McCloud

Remember the best way to become more involved in any organization, beyond attending our meetings and contributing your volunteer services is to provide your personal content to the ever evolving Newsletter. Like this interesting item at the right by my Aunt, Rosemary Lesh, who regularly sends unique Bonsai info from around the Web.



Current dessert offering at Atelier Crenn, a stylish bistro in, where else, San Francisco.

MBS Officers + Chairpersons

President	Cat Nelson
Executive Vice President	Richard Helminiak
Vice President • Programs	Richard Besetzny
Vice President • Special Events	Richard Katz
Treasurer	Elizabeth Carroll
Recording Secretary	Joe Waldman
Membership	Lorraine May
Public Relations	Susan Babyk
Library	Ron Eriksen
Editorial	Dan Dolan
CBG Representative	Ivan Watters
Past President	James Fairchild
Members at Large	Jose Escobedo
	Emeterio Guzman
	Phil Troy



General Meetings

Meetings of the Midwest Bonsai Society are held at the Chicago Botanic Garden’s Burnstein Hall, located in the Regenstein Center,

All meetings begin at 7:30 PM
 Bonsai 101 presentations commence at 7:00 PM



Not for Profit • Copyright • Disclaimer

The Midwest Bonsai Connection is an official publication of the Midwest Bonsai Society, Inc., an Illinois Not for Profit Corporation.

This Newsletter is published monthly and may not be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without the written permission of the Midwest Bonsai Society.

The views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the Midwest Bonsai Society membership or the Board of Directors.



Library Resources

MBS has a fine collection of Bonsai books and journals which are available for loan. Please contact the Librarian for information.



Midwest Bonsai Society
 P.O. Box 1373
 Highland Park Illinois 60035-7373
www.midwestbonsai.org

Midwest Bonsai Society
P.O. Box 1373
Highland Park Illinois 60035-7373
www.midwestbonsai.org

Midwest Bonsai Connection

May



Membership Request

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Telephone

Date

Email

Please Check if Renewal

Please make check payable to:
Midwest Bonsai Society

Send to:

Midwest Bonsai Society
P.O. Box 1373
Highland Park Illinois
60035-7373

Annual Membership • \$30
July 1st thru June 30th