

The Midwest Bonsai Connection

A Newsletter Published by The Midwest Bonsai Society

April 2001

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take a moment to give you my views about the Society's mission and the purpose of its activities. It seems to me that our paramount goal is the promotion of bonsai in general, and specifically the cultivation of a growing public awareness of bonsai as a living art. To that end, and with the deeply appreciated cooperation and assistance of the Chicago Botanic Garden, we have presented one of the country's premier exhibitions of bonsai for nearly a quarter of a century. That tradition continues, and the exhibit reaches a new standard of excellence with each passing year. Two years ago the Society began a new tradition with its sponsorship, financially and artistically, of an exhibit at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show. That exhibit arose through the efforts of Yasukunai Bonsai Garden and its proprietor, Ivan Watters, who conceived the idea of such an exhibit and created it at the request of the show's management. The financial burden of such an undertaking is considerable, and accordingly the Society has helped to underwrite it as part of our ongoing efforts to develop increased public interest in bonsai as an art form. With that as the benchmark, the Society's participation has been a well-recognized success, and tentative planning for next year's show is already under way. In these public displays, the Society should and does receive a measure of recognition for its participation and involvement. Self-promotion is not, however, a high priority; if we

are successful in our efforts to foster an interest in bonsai, we will attract new members as a matter of course.

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STEVE SNOKE

From the Editor

As editor, it is my intent to continue on without any major changes in this newsletter. I do plan to include articles on things that come up in meetings such as Leonard's article on mycorrhiza.

You can expect some articles on the history of the Midwest Bonsai Society and bonsai in the Chicago Metro Area.

I also intend to run from time to time a little story on some of the people at the Garden who are very helpful to us but maybe are not so visible. There is one in this issue on Nancy Caccioppo.

I may even throw in a little story on one of our members from time to time.

Finally, there will be Midwest Bonsai Society sponsored beginners workshops this summer on June 3, July 15, and September 29.

Please feel free to call me at 312-226-2442 or e-mail me at splashpix@earthlink.net with your comments or your ideas.

Larry Larimer, Editor.

May Meeting Info - Monday, May 7 - 7:30 p.m.

For May's meeting, we have a special guest. Herb Gustafson, nationally recognized Bonsai Artist and Author, will provide us with a demonstration. He is well known for his group plantings and Saikei (use of rocks). Exactly what he will be working on is not yet determined, but there are several options in his collection and Herb will make a selection when he arrives.

Herb has written a number of books which have established his reputation for clear explanation and keen guidance in training and refining bonsai. We have several of his books in our library, and my copy of *Keep Your Bonsai Perfectly Shaped* has provided me with helpful insights. I look forward to a marvelous demonstration. We have Nick Steenhout to thank for the initial contact. Thank You Nick!

In addition to the demonstration Monday evening, Herb is offering a workshop Sunday Morning, May 6. This is a bring-your-own-material

workshop. This is one of the best ways to learn new skills and refine your techniques. Please try to bring two trees!

The workshop will be limited to 12 people, so in the three hours there will be intensive individual attention by the instructor to the students. Each bonsai artist offers there own unique insights into the art and it is something special to say, "I worked on this tree with Herb Gustafson in May 2001".

Everyone should take advantage of this terrific opportunity. Anyone interested should call me at 773-262-2072. The cost of the workshop is only \$50.00 which is a great learning opportunity at a reasonable price.

See you in May!
James Fairchild, Program Chairman.

FRIENDS OF MBS:

We of the Midwest Bonsai Society are going to truly miss a lovely lady who is leaving the Chicago Botanic Garden. NANCY CACCIOPPO was at the Garden for two years as Public Events Coordinator. In this position she was responsible for making sure that we had a room for the meeting and the classroom for all of the workshops during the year. Nancy worked with us on all arrangements for our show in August. We will miss her.

Calendar of Events

May 6, 2001
**Herb Gustafson
Workshop**

9:00 a.m.
Call 773-262-2072

May 7, 2001
MBS Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Herb Gustafson
demo at Chicago
Botanic Garden

May 25-27, 2001

**Brussel's
Bonsai
Rendezvous**

Memphis, TN

June 3, 2001
**Beginner's
Workshop**
Chicago Botanic
Garden

WHAT IS MYCORRHIZAE???

Submitted by Leonard J. Wegryn

Terminology:

Mycorrhizae- Is a collective term for several distinct kinds of beneficial fungi.

Fungus is & Fungi are- A growth that forms during decomposition of organic matter.

Pathogens- Are disease producing organisms.

Symbiotic- Is a relationship of the structure built from the mutually beneficial interaction of the small absorbing root and a particular type of fungus, working as a team.

What is mycorrhizae?

In virtually every plant there is a hidden, almost invisible silent partner working to maintain the health and vitality of that tree. That silent partner is mycorrhizae.

In the simplest terms, mycorrhizae is one of the two systems by which a tree or plant takes in water and minerals from the soil. Root hairs are one system, and mycorrhizae the other, but it's much more than that. All forest and landscape trees and more than 92% of plants world wide have mycorrhizae in the soil composition, naturally. Without mycorrhizae they would lose their vitality, disease resistance, and longevity.

In nature, as new roots grow, they first develop root hairs for uptake of water and dissolved minerals from the soil solution. Then, gradually, over a period of several weeks, a large proportion of the absorbing roots are beneficially-- invaded and become colonized by the mycorrhizae fungi.

The functions of mycorrhizae in the soil are:

1. It increases root absorption surfaces.

2. It has the ability to render substances in the soil (phosphorus, zinc, manganese and copper) available to the host plant.

3. It detoxifies the environment for the host plant, thus, protecting against pathogenic invasion. Protection is accomplished by utilizing root carbohydrates and other chemicals which would be attractive and would be utilized by the pathogens.

4. It provides a physical barrier to pathogens in the form of a fungus mantle.

5. It secretes antibiotics which inhibit or kill pathogens.

6. It supports a protective rhizosphere population of other microorganisms.

7. It stimulates root cells of the host plant during symbiotic periods to utilize chemical inhibitors. Inhibitors function to maintain symbiosis but may also inhibit infection by pathogens.

A bonsai soil-less growing medium is, or should be, composed of all sterile ingredients, and so, may be barren of mycorrhizae. The addition of mycorrhizae compost to a mix completes it as an ideal basic bonsai soil, assuring successful growing throughout the life of the tree.

In view of the importance of the presence of mycorrhizae in the root area of all plants, it follows that, when repotting a healthy plant, bare rooting it drastically depletes this beneficial ingredient.

Mycorrhizae compost:

Is one which is produced to specifically encourage the growth of mycorrhizae. This compost is part of the **GLENORA BONSAI SOILLESS FORMULA.**

THE BEGINNING OF MBS

by Ruth Ladany

It was a delightful summer evening in August of '67. A group of us who had trees shown in the Hill's Nursery Show and had been invited to the pre-showing and supper, were sitting around discussing the likelihood of forming a bonsai club; where we could document information on the creation and care of bonsai.

Lee Firth was the motivator of the idea and offered to write letters to all persons who had filled out cards at Hill's stating that they were interested in bonsai culture. The response Lee received was far greater than any of us had anticipated.

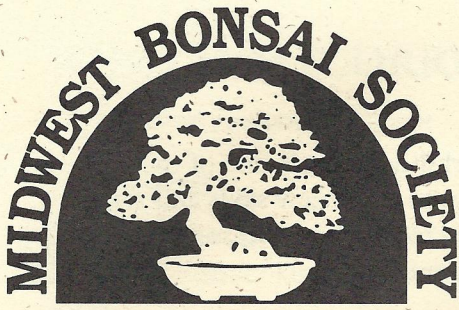
A few days later Lee sent out lettersto all of us, informing us of a meeting in the Hill's Potting Shed on the following Monday evening. There we discussed the formation of a Bonsai Society and formulated ideas of our aims and goals.

At the first meeting in September those present (please forgive any omissions) were: Alex Alexander, John and Viola Clay, Norman Downing, Lee Firth, La Vita and Kenny Hill, Ruth and Jules Ladany, Gay Laubsch, Betty and Paul La Vigne, Harold Lenz, Alex Leighton, Jeanelle Kochin, Ruth Rice, Joe and Lollie Price, Pat Rockford, Irene Schmidt, Ed Scully, Marg Swenneson and perhaps a few more.

A varied and informative discussion ensued. A name for the society was chosen and officers were selected. They were:

President - Lee Firth
V.P. & Program Chairman - Alex Alexander
Treasurer - Ruth Ladany
Corr. Sec. - Jeanelle Kochin
Rec. Sec. - Marge Swenneson

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