



# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

...to disseminate knowledge, encourage others and create interest in the art of bonsai



## October 2010 Newsletter



### NEXT EVENT

## Take to The Rafts!

### Kelley Adkins conducts a Demonstration and Workshop

Featuring Hinoki cypress in the Raft style. A modest \$20 materials fee gets you a tree, container and soil. Don't forget to BYOT (Bring Your Own Tools)!



Wednesday • October 20, 2010 • 7:00pm • Phipps Garden Center • Shadyside

### NEXT MEETING

November 17, 2010 Wednesday, 7pm

## ZEN & BONSAI with Bob Grealish



photo by Cindie Bonomi

Please check our website: <http://pittsburghbonsai.org>



# The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

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Published periodically (10 issues a year) by PBS for members and other bonsai enthusiasts. It's our sixth decade of advancing the art of bonsai in the Tri-State area.

**Deadlines:**  
Generally one month prior to issue date

**Submissions:**  
Please submit Photos or Artwork in JPG format and Copy in Microsoft Word.



## A Note From Bob:

Fall is fully upon us. It's about time. I'm tired of watering; the trees and I are ready for a break.

Now's the time to start thinking about getting the trees ready for winter and building your winter storage. If you only have a few trees, you can just put them on the ground where they are protected, but for a bunch of bonsai, you'll need some kind of structure.



*photo by Doreena Balestreire*

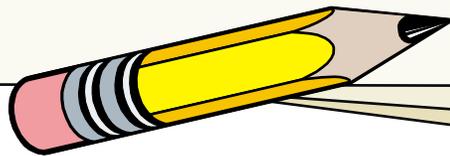
The main point of winter storage is to keep the trees from drying out when the pots are frozen, the roots can't transport water to the tree, so watering won't help. The trees need to be protected from sun and wind; and they should be in a humid environment.

Wind will evaporate water that is left in the branches, needles and buds. But sunlight is even more of an issue for some trees. Strong sunlight will cause the little pores called stomata on the surface of leaves and needles to open. This allows the tree to pump water out to the surface where it can evaporate during the process of transpiration. Some trees can lose fifty times as much water when the stomata are open compared to closed. So your evergreens, and other trees in the early spring when new leaves come out, should be kept out of direct sun as long as the pots are frozen.

Now is a good time to build your poly houses or some other unheated structure. It's no fun building them when it's freezing out. Make sure that the structure is built over moist ground, mulch or grass to keep the humidity up. If you try to store trees in a garage or on concrete, they might dry out. If your storage area is leaky and too wet, you might consider spraying a fungicide when you put the trees away. I put my trees in the structure around Thanksgiving.

I would also suggest you protect the trees from rabbits. Spraying them with Deer Off is pretty effective. After last year, I'm thinking of traps, poison, chicken wire, spraying... and possibly an armed guard!

**Bob Grealish**



For your Bonsai supplies support

the store that exists for the society



## Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771

Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

# 2010 Bonsai Symposium

By Karen Eckley

photography by Karen Eckley



Husband Dick, sister Debi and I journeyed this past weekend

to Rochester New York on a quest to learn more about our favorite pastime; Bonsai. We were not disappointed.

We, and other enthusiasts from 29 states and Canada, were ensconced comfortably in the Holiday Inn where the workshops, demos, banquets, lectures, and critiques took place. There we were happily bombarded for 2 ½ days with information, much of it hands-on. The specimens we worked on were collected, and the workshops were small enough to ensure plenty of attention from the teachers. ( I was one of only 3 doing the Cypress trees.)

These symposiums have been going on since 1981 under the tutelage of Wm Valavanis and the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York. Unfortunately Mr. Valavanis announced at its close that it will be the last one.

The first evening's activity was Ryan Neil working successfully on a Rocky Mt. Juniper over 200 years old. Debi, Dick, and I each tackled a White Cedar, Pitch Pine, and Bald Cypress respectively, and were happy with the results. My Bald Cypress looks a bit forlorn, having been reduced in size by almost half, but I was assured that it will bounce back and bud out.

We participants were treated to demos on Larch (David Easterbrook), Cypress and Buttonwood (Mary Madison), and White Cedar (Martin Schmalenberg). They were all excellent speakers, and quite funny; we onlookers chuckled a lot. Critiques were given on Suiseki and the lovely show trees. We listened and

learned, listened and learned...

We all three agreed that the real "star" of the symposium was one young Ryan Neil. He headed the day-long workshop on the Junipers, plus demos which resulted in trees that were auctioned for about \$800. (Of course these demo and workshop specimens were expensive to begin with).

Ryan's love of the art of Bonsai was so evident in his body movements, his voice, and what he said and did to the tree he sculpted, *as* he sculpted.

Mr. Neil has studied diligently under Mr. Kimura in Japan for 6 years, and is now stateside sharing what he's learned there with Bonsai enthusiasts here. Articulate and entertaining, he possesses the ability to create a thing of beauty and movement out of whichever tree at hand in a charismatic manner. Mr. Kimura can be proud of his young apprentice.

We plan to see him again in Kentucky at Bonsai in the Bluegrass Symposium June 16-19 and are saving our money! Anyone interested in going can email me: [katanee@yahoo.com](mailto:katanee@yahoo.com)

By the end of the weekend, we headed home to Kennerdell with our small Honda full of our sizeable workshop trees, materials galore, and three weary heads attempting to absorb all the information that had come our way.

The whole experience was unforgettable, and I highly recommend a Symposium like this for anyone who wants to learn about Bonsai in a concentrated way, with teachers and other folks like us who love those miniature trees in pots!



We have so much more to learn!

# Some Photos From The September **TOOLTOPIA** Meeting

*photos and article by Cindie Bonomi*



At our last meeting Bob Grealish did a little pruning presentation and then showed us how to sharpen our tools.

For as many years as I have been cutting trees back, big and small, I still learned things I did not know about how and were to cut to prune.

Not a lot of us showed up, but the ones who did had a good time. We got to sharpen the club's tools as well as our own.



# Seasons And Cycles

by Jay Miller

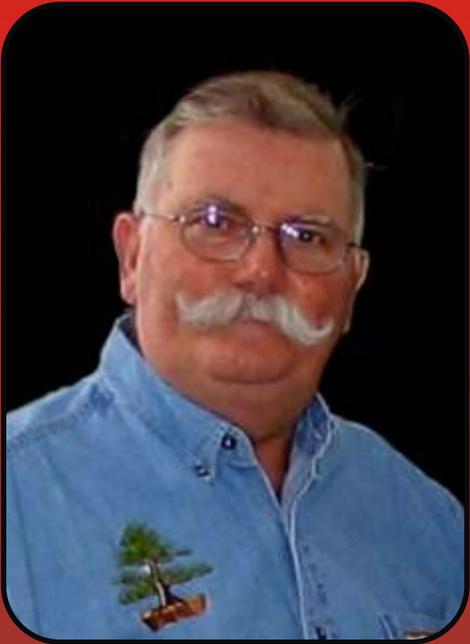
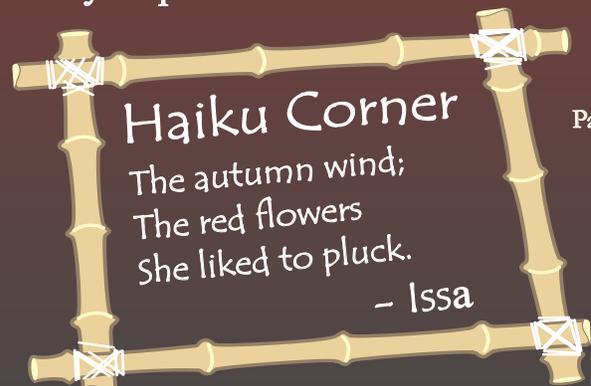


photo by Cindie Bonomi

Mid-Autumn in the Tri-State area brings home an enduring lesson: there is a certain rhythm and cadence to life that one experiences while interacting with nature. Your bonsai can help you appreciate the cycle of the seasons. Our technological progress has overshadowed the older relationship with nature. Grandparents used to teach planting by the phases of the spring moon or the first frost.

Fall is an end and a beginning. John Romano reminds us that life slows a bit, temperatures fall, the sun is lower in the sky. Maple leaves shine forth with incredible color before they fall. Larch needles in Dave Ruffaner's collection turn bright yellow, Korean hornbeam leaves show a more sublime color change. Now we celebrate the coming of cold months. Our bonsai displays show off colors along with the maturing fruit; crabapples, pyracantha and others.

It is all too easy to sit on a garden bench in the golden sunlight, perhaps dozing a bit, but the maintenance chores await. Reduced watering schedules still require checking your trees for dryness. Eventually the deciduous leaves will fall, and you have to keep the soil surface clear of debris. (I wish I could train chipmunks to use tiny rakes to do this instead of their annoying digging!) A good idea is to remove moss from the soil for the winter if it covers the whole surface; it may keep the soil too wet.





an article from  
**TRICKS THE BOOKS NEVER TOLD US**  
 By *Keith Scott*

## Ulmus carpinifolia

When Kelley Adkins told me he was collecting Elms near the Chagrin River, I imagined they were the usual weedy American elms that grow so profusely for a few years and then die of Dutch elm disease. Such was not the case with the Elms I have come to call *Ulmus carpinifolia*. Kelley

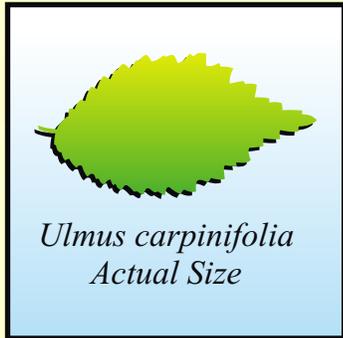
brought a two tree clump to me one particularly raw day in November of 1977. The trees had been topped by a limb lopper and jagged bark, ripped and torn adorned the stubs of the saplings. Again, I saw no value in the Elms but looked upon them as just another plant I would have to water and care for. The plants were in a plastic garbage bag and the soil had fallen off leaving only two or three surface roots. After Kelley had left, I threw the trees into a small swampy area beside the poly house and there I promptly forgot them until after Christmas.

which were by now numerous, the Elms began to look pretty good. I don't recall when I've worked on a collected tree that is so indifferent to growing conditions. It grows just as well with no care as with great care. It even grew well in the no drainage bucket.

After my first experience with this Elm, I collected twenty-five to be given to people attending work-shops at the nursery. So far all the Elms have thrived.

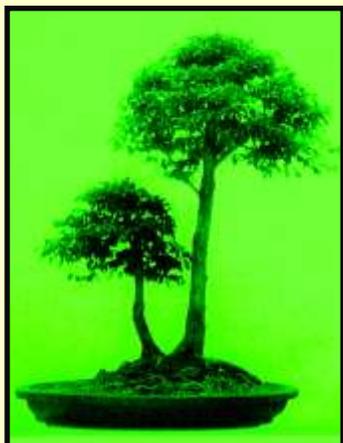
The parents of the saplings growing along the Chagrin River grow at the entrance to the Engel's Estate and estate records show that they came from China in 1905, but the proper name has been lost. The leaves are smallish, about the size of a Zelkova, but coarser. When pinched the leaves reduce to about 1/2 to 3/4 inch long. They are reddish-grey when opening and lemon yellow in the fall.

When time permits I plan to have the Elms identified, and if my strength and resolve hold up, I plan to collect great numbers of these Elms so others can grow them.



*Ulmus carpinifolia*  
 Actual Size

Smooth-leaved elm, *Ulmus carpinifolia*, twin trunk style, 26 inches tall. Trained for three years by Keith Scott.



Wm Valavanis

The poly houses were closed up and everything was secure for that was to be the worst winter in Northern Ohio's history. I noticed I'd not put the Elms away and in my haste, threw them into a bucket which had no drainage holes and precious little soil. The Elms leafed out in the spring, and I left them in an untraveled area in the nursery for a year or so before I looked at them with a more critical eye and saw they had some potential. With pinching, pruning, styling the top and selecting unnecessary surface roots



# The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society's HOLIDAY DINNER!



Photograph and Photo Manipulation  
by Cindie Bonomi



The Holiday Dinner will be held at the Phipps Garden Center on Wednesday December 15 at 6:30 pm. The event will be catered so everyone can enjoy the evening with no work.

We will also have the traditional White Elephant Exchange where you bring an item from your home that you no longer wish to see around the house. Wrap or disguise it so some lucky person will be surprised when they pick it.

We will have more information on cost and the dinners we will be serving in the November Newsletter.

**Cindie Bonomi**



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Urban Yamadori:

Although the Japanese word "yamadori" refers to collecting from the wild, it's possible to find bonsai candidates in urban and suburban locations. If you've had collecting adventures, let us know.

### Blogs:

The Meehans (vendors at all PBS Spring Shows) have an E-Newsletter that you can subscribe to at: [infor@meehansminiatures.com](mailto:infor@meehansminiatures.com)

They also have a blog at: [meehansminiatures.wordpress.com](http://meehansminiatures.wordpress.com) which contains bonsai care tips, news of their classes and appearances at bonsai/garden shows around the country.

### Newsletter Information:

It's easy to make an announcement or contribute to the PBS Newsletter. If it is text only, call or email Jay Miller at 412 481-4540 or:

[suisekifan@yahoo.com](mailto:suisekifan@yahoo.com)

If it is a sketch or photo, email:

Cindie Bonomi at

[cindiebonomi@yahoo.com](mailto:cindiebonomi@yahoo.com)

### Spotlight Trees:

Remember to bring your spotlight trees to the next regular meeting for "show & tell". It's a great way for new members to learn about various species; their TLC requirements and your tree's history.

### November Issue Deadline:

Submissions for the November 2010 Newsletter are due no later than October 22, 2010.

Compiled by Jay Miller

## Have You Moved?

If you have recently moved or are planning to move, please let PBS know! Contact our Membership Chair, Meg Vates-Amoudi, with your new address, email address and phone number. Email: [meg\\_bonsai@hotmail.com](mailto:meg_bonsai@hotmail.com) or call 412 477-7231.



Pittsburgh Bonsai Society  
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15216

# 2010/2011 Calendar of Events

Nov 17.....Wed 7pm..... Bob Grealish: Zen & Bonsai

Dec 15.....Wed 6:30pm ..... Annual Holiday Party

2011.....Remember..... No Jan. or Feb. Meetings

March .....TBA

April .....TBA



All events, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm.