



# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

## August 2012 Newsletter

**THIS MONTH**

### The Annual PBS Picnic and Flea Market at The Grealish Farm



*-Photo from last year's picnic*

Saturday, August 11, 2012 Starting at 11am

Bob & Rose Grealish are hosting our annual Society picnic at their idyllic country farm, where you can admire superior bonsai, horse-trade with your fellow PBS members and pick up tips and trees. Bring your family and help us celebrate summer, pack a swimming suit and enjoy the pool.

Bring chairs, a table if you want to sell stuff, plus the customary \$10.00 PBS table fee and something delicious to share with old and new bonsai friends. (a tithe for President Dave in the form of a Chocolate Chip Cookie is always appreciated!) There is ample parking. PBS provides snacks and soft drinks.

The directions are enclosed on Page 5. See you on August 11th!

**NEXT MONTH**

## TBA (To Be Announced!)

Wednesday, September 19, 2012, 7pm at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside

Please check our newly revamped 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 two months prior to issue date.

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



## A Note From Dave:



The success of the Spring Shows the past few years has put us in a good position financially. About five or so years ago we were on a lean budget with no room for extras. Money raised at the show with consignments sales, vendor fees, raffles, etc., along with new memberships, has given us the opportunity to offer discounts on trees for workshops and partially pay for other events like the slab workshop and the up-coming August picnic.

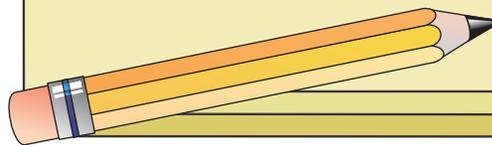


*Photo By Cindie Bonomi*

In the future we would like to bring guest speakers to do workshops and demonstrations like we have done in the past. People like Erik Weigert, from Florida, who brought up Brazilian Rain trees, Jose Cuerto and his Schefflera workshop, and Kelly Adkins who brought elms to work on. The more exposure to different bonsai artists will increase our knowledge and appreciation of the different varieties on bonsai that are available to us.

Speaking of exposure to bonsai, all members, with an extra prodding to new members, are invited out to Bob Grealish's house for the summer picnic. You can view a fantastic collection of trees of many varieties and styles. If you are in the mood for a day trip, head down to Washington D.C. and see the great National Arboretum collection that houses trees that are hundreds of years old. Longwood Gardens in Kennet Square, Pa has a nice collection, and you can find several collections in Ohio as well.

So get out there and see some bonsai, and if you learn something new, come tell us about it.



**Dave Metzgar**

### Plant Care Tips for August (from the Great Swamp Bonsai Society)

Since August can be a very hot and dry month, it is imperative that trees be watered every day, maybe twice daily. Not much else can be done except to feed regularly. From August on, trees will need less nitrogen and more potassium and phosphorus to harden the wood and induce budding. Continue to pot up air layering's that put out roots. Branches start to thicken during August, and wire which begins to bite into the branches should be loosened.

August is pretty much about keeping your trees sufficiently watered against the heat, and beginning to harden them up for the coming fall. This is about the time that most people start backing off their feeding, pinching, and pruning schedules. Don't fertilize too aggressively, or else you risk the trees pushing too much new growth that will not harden-off sufficiently before the cold weather comes in.

# Slab Workshop: Creative Messy Fun For Future Forest Plantings!

-by Jay Miller

For the 20+ registrants who gathered at Bob Dietz's backyard wonderland, it took only a little orientation and instructions from Prez. Dave Metzgar to "get into it". Everyone grabbed a plywood board, some wire mesh and thought a lot about slab shapes. Those who toured Bob's pre-bonsai area already had some ideas about the trees, hills, valleys they might incorporate into their own creation, and soon wet sand was outlining their designs. Elbow length rubber gloves were the fashion of the day at the cement-molding areas; it looked like bread-kneading at a construction site!

Drain holes and wiring holes were punched into the slabs during the drying process, then everyone broke for lunch, with Bob Dietz and his able crew at the grill. Working with cement gives you an appetite! Members helped each other tote the slabs on their plywood base back to the cars.

The slabs will dry over late summer and fall. We may see some of them as the base for Forests, Clumps or Groves in the 2013 Spring Show!



We all gathered at Bob Dietz' around 10am ready to roll.



Dave brought a privet forest planted on a slab for inspiration and everyone got right down to work.



Plywood pieces were cut for each of us to do our slab on.



Spreading our sand out on the plywood spraying it occasionally to keep it moist we tried to come up with an interesting shape for our slab.



Once we had our shape, we each mixed and colored our cement.



The first layer of cement!

Spread out over our sand mold.



We then needed to cut steel screening to reinforce the slab. This was placed over the first layer then the second layer was applied.



As our slabs set, Bob made us some goodies on the grill for lunch.



# Mike's Corner

Tips and Suggestions from Mike Stern



Over the years I have been encouraged by some of the officers to do a workshop for the Bonsai society. Since I have never done one, some individuals thought it might be something different for the members. I have and continue to resist doing a workshop because I don't think that I could take raw

## Bonsai Takes Time, and Can't Really be Demonstrated in a Workshop!

material such as a nursery shrub and create something that would look good.

A typical workshop brings someone in to work on material provided by the club. Sometimes the material provided to the artist is something that the members have looked at and see no possibilities. Individuals who are masters or who have been practicing their art for years often create something stunning.

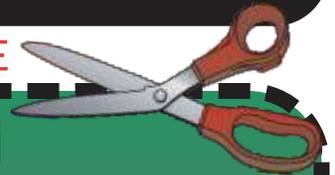
I rarely obtain nursery shrubs or such material and attempt to create a bonsai. When I started bonsai in 1981, I did exactly that and the results were rather unimpressive.

My oldest son was recently given a production bonsai (procumbens Juniper) as a gift. I encouraged him to trim and wire it to look more artistic. He sent me a photograph of his effort and reported he had a much greater appreciation for the art of creating bonsai. His creation looked like my early creations. He could not figure out which branches to trim and which to keep it. He was not sure how to wire it to create something that was artistic.

My creations have been ones that have taken years rather than hours. By taking the long term approach I have been able to establish trees with wide bases and ones that taper quickly. I am always looking for a

*Continued on Page 6*

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Come and Celebrate Summer at our Bonsai Flea Market & Picnic Saturday, August 11, 2011 11am

# The Grealish Farm

Bob & Rose Grealish's House:  
39 Henry Road, Tarentum, Pa.  
Phone: 724 265-4535

This is a great opportunity to buy, sell or trade bonsai trees, training stock, tools, pots, soil, wire and countless other bonsai-related items.

Bring chairs, a bathing suit and a table & the \$10.00 fee if you want to sell stuff.

Ample parking, snacks and beverages will be available. However, please feel free to bring something to share with your friends, old and new.

### From Pittsburgh:

Route 28 North to the Cheswick Exit. At end of ramp, turn right and go to the first stop sign. Turn right on Russelton Road (at Bocheck's Auto Repair). Go 7.4 miles, through Rural Ridge and Russelton and past the Red Belt sign There will be a sharp left bend and go across a small bridge to the stop sign. Turn right on Saxonburg Blvd. (There's a Culmerville gas station across the street.) Go 1 mile to Henry Road (small green sign on left, easy to miss!). Turn left and go 1 mile to the brick farmhouse on the right. 39 Henry Road sign on house, mailbox across from driveway, driveway past house.

### From Route 8:

Go east on Bakerstown Road (Red Belt) to Saxonburg Blvd (Culmerville gas station on right). Turn left on Saxonburg Blvd and go 1 mile to Henry Road (small green sign on left, easy to miss!) Turn left and go 1 mile to the brick farmhouse on the right. 39 Henry Road sign on house; mailbox across from driveway, driveway past house.

bud or branch that is very low on the trunk and intend to use that as the top of the tree.

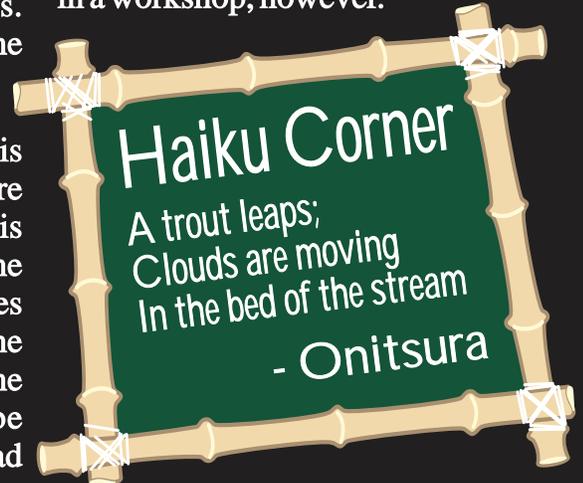
So often shrubs and trees we find have decent bases but tend to be long and do not taper quickly. They also rarely have usable side branches that are low on the trunk. I have some Scots pines that are 25 years old growing in my garden. They will often pop buds on the trunk when trimmed. You can imagine the bases of trees that are 25 years old. I have a tree where one of the buds popped two years ago that is only 8 inches from the base. That will be my new top. As the tree grows I can direct the

growth of the branches with early and minimal wiring. For instance, I allow the side branches to grow with greater vigor and the leader will often be pinched back. That ensures distance between side branches as they ascend is limited to an inch or two rather than greater distances. I also have great control over directing the branches and ensuring alternating directions. This process can take years but the results are wonderful.

One of the problems with this method is that large scars are created when the rest of the tree is cut off to allow the bud to be the new top. Obviously needled trees and shrubs handle this better as the wood is less resistant to rot. In the alternative old wood can be retained and carved. I have had

deciduous tree completely become hollow as of the wood rotted. It is incredibly attractive right now with the hollow trunk. However, I am worried that it could ultimately collapse. I'll enjoy it while it lasts.

Consider using this method if you plan to be at it for years. It is not something that can be demonstrated in a workshop, however.



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# Map To The Grealish Farm





After everyone was done munching...



Our slabs were set, we poked drainage holes, cleaned up and left!

*-photos by Cindie Bonomi & Louise Means*

For your Bonsai supplies support  
the store that exists for the society



## Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771  
Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants



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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Bonsai Barn:

Whether you want to buy, sell or trade any bonsai-related material, take advantage of the "Bonsai Barn" on our website: [pittsburghbonsai.org](http://pittsburghbonsai.org) You can also list regional/national bonsai events that your fellow PBS members might find interesting.

### Spotlight Trees:

Remember to bring your spotlight trees to a meeting for "show & tell". It's a great way for new members to learn about new (to them) species; their TLC requirements and the story of your tree.

### Coming Events:

17-19 August-35th Annual Mid-American Bonsai Show. Featuring Peter Warren. Presented by the Midwest Bonsai Society at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Details can be found at: [www.midwestbonsai.org](http://www.midwestbonsai.org)

04-07 October 2012 Grantville, PA "International Stone Appreciation Symposium" Holiday Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey. The largest show devoted to suiseki and stone appreciation in the West; More information and registration forms at: [www.StoneShow2012.com](http://www.StoneShow2012.com)

### Future Events:

If you have a topic or subject that you would like to see in coming months, please contact Dave Metzgar or Bob Dietz for your idea's consideration. This means NEW members too. PBS wants to help you grow in your knowledge and techniques as your bonsai grow.

### 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 [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)

### September 2012 Issue Deadline:

Submissions for the September 2012 Newsletter are due no later than August 13, 2012.

Compiled by Jay Miller  
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Pittsburgh Bonsai Society  
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)  
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## Pittsburgh Bonsai Society 2012 & 2013 Calendar of Events

Aug 11 ..... Sat 11am.....Picnic: Grealish Farm  
Sep 19..... Wed 7pm.....TBA  
Oct 17..... Wed 7pm ..... TBA  
Nov 14 ..... Wed 7pm .....TBA plus  
Dec 6 ..... THURS 6:30pm.....Annual Holiday Party

No Meetings January & February 2013

Mar 20 ..... Wed 7pm .....TBA

Apr 17 ..... Wed 7pm ..... TBA

Spring Show 2013 June 7, 8 & 9



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

Phipps Garden Center is located at the edge of Mellon Park in the Shadyside section of Pittsburgh. At the Phipps Garden Center sign on Shady Avenue, just south of the intersection of Fifth and Shady Avenues, turn into the cobblestone driveway. Park in the metered lot. Walk 50 yards farther down the cobblestone lane. The Garden Center is the red brick building on your left.

**Severe Weather & Emergency Information:**

PBS Meetings and Special Events at Phipps Garden Center will take place as scheduled except in the event of severe weather or emergency. Unsure? Call their Emergency Phone Number: 412 441-4442 for updates.