



# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

## March 2008 Newsletter



### NEXT MEETING

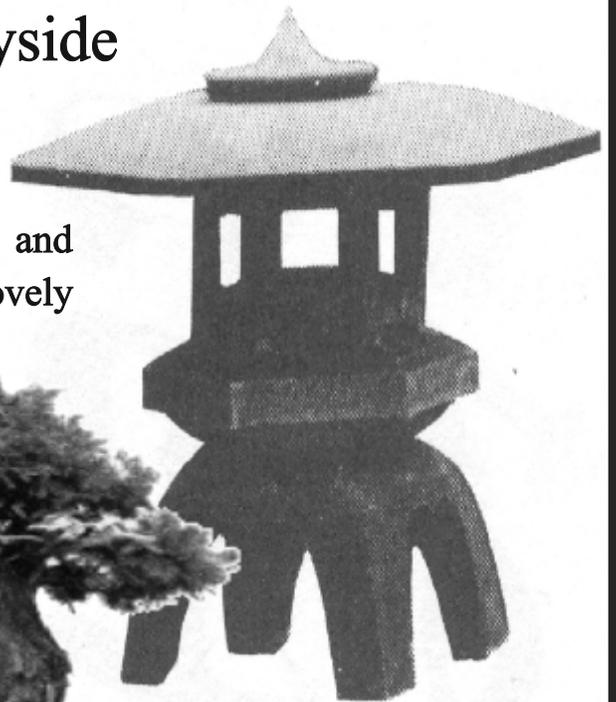
## “The History of Bonsai”

MONDAY March 17, 2008, 7:00 pm

Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside

Join us for a special presentation by David Steidl on “The History of Bonsai”, a fascinating look at the origins and evolution of a unique form of nature art; lovely recreations of the great world of nature combined with individual creativity.

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



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



**Bonsai In The Burgh**

**724-348-4771**

Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

**So What If There Are 7 Inches Of Snow!**

**Mike Stern's**  
Third Annual Early Spring Tree Sale

March 22, 2007 Saturday 10:00 am  
Weather permitting of course.

## Letter From The President

Another year has come and gone, It was very nice to see the membership grow in size and experience. I wish to give a very deserving thank you to the members for all of their help through out the year. There has been a lot of time and effort spent by individual members to get the society its programs, trips, news letters, spring show, programs etc. With out your help, support, ideas, and involvement there would be no Bonsai society.

### Highlights of 2007

1. Tropical presentation by Jose Cueto
2. Display at Home and Garden Show
3. Spring Show
4. Trip to Dawes
5. Fall picnic
6. Phoenix graft
7. Christmas Party



2008, brings us new officers, a show committee lead by Dave Metzgar, new programs and an enlarged and informative news letter.

## Monthly Question And Answer Box

Do you have a bonsai related question?  
Mail or E-Mail your question to:

Bob Dietz  
1525 Connor Rd.  
South Park, Pa.15219  
dietz4771@comcast.net



Your question and the answer will  
appear in the next news letter 

### Garden grown trees.

These trees have not been restricted and slowed in their growth by having their roots limited by the confines of a pot. The trees branches and roots grow unrestricted in open ground for a year and then are trimmed back with a future Bonsai in mind. Unlike trees collected in nature, these trees have excellent taper and multiple low branches. (They do not compete with grass and weeds.) Additionally, each tree has an excellent root system. They are root pruned every year. A number of trees have had their branches wired down.

In the spring they can be dug up, placed immediately in a Bonsai pot, and enjoyed.

Available Trees	Elm (American, Chinese, Siberian),
Flowering Crabapple	Sweet Gum (excellent fall color)
Scots Pine	Juniper
Blvd. Cypress	Honey Locust.

There are a few other trees. There are over 300 trees.

The prices are significantly less than you will find at Bonsai nurseries or on the Web.

Each tree will have been root pruned. Bring a training pot, plastic bag, burlap or whatever works to take your tree with you.

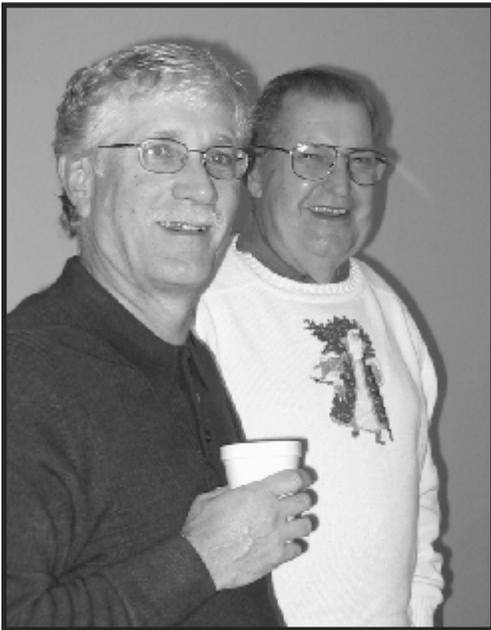
If you have questions e-mail me at [mstern55@comcast.net](mailto:mstern55@comcast.net). I can e-mail directions. I can e-mail some photos.

Easy to find. I am in New Castle, an hour north of Pittsburgh and less than 3 miles off of Route 60.

Mike Stern

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# Some Photos From This Year's Holiday Dinner





# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

## 2008 Contacts • Officers & Committee Chairs

President .....	Bob Dietz .....	724 348-4771
Vice-President .....	Bob Grealish	
Recording Secretary.....	Louise Means	
Corresponding Sec. ....	Jay Miller	
Treasurer .....	Tim Bamford	
Membership Chair.....	Unfilled	
Publicity Chair.....	Unfilled	
Past President .....	Norbert Pietrzak	
Web Content .....	Bob Grealish	
Newsletter.....	Cindie Bonomi	
Spring Show Chair.....	Dave Metzgar	



## 2008 Calendar of Events

Jan-Feb	No Meetings		
Mar 17	Mon 7pm	Dave Steidl "History of Bonsai	PGC
Apr 21	Mon 7pm	TBA	PGC
May 21	Wed 7pm	TBA	PGC
Jun 14-15	Sat/Sun	Site & details TBA	
Jun 18	Wed 7pm	TBA	PGC
Jul 16	Wed 7pm	TBA	PGC
Aug 9	Sat 10am	The Grealish Farm	
Sep TBA	TBA	TBA	PGC
Oct 15	Wed 7pm	TBA	PGC
Nov 19	Wed 7pm	TBA	PGC
Dec 9	Tue 6:30pm	Annual Holiday Party	PGC

# The Bonsai Glossary

The following is a selection of words that you may hear, or read, in relation to the care, development and maintenance of your Bonsai tree, and a description of what they mean. After all, you can't learn much about Bonsai, if you don't understand the words/terms used, right?

**Accent Plant**-a small plant that is put on view in conjunction with a bonsai; usually when a bonsai is being formally displayed at a show or exhibition; also called a companion plant.

**Air Layer**-a method for propagating trees through the removal of a large branch or section of trunk from an existing tree, or bonsai, to create a new tree.

**Akadama**-a traditional Japanese bonsai soil that is comprised of the red volcanic matter of Japan ; used for thousands of years by bonsai artists on most types of deciduous bonsai trees.

**Apex**-the very top or highest point of a bonsai tree.

**Back Budding**-a process of encouraging new growth on a branch where growth is currently non-existent.

**Broadleaved**-trees, mainly deciduous, with broad, flat leaves; non-conifer trees.

**Bunjin**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called literati. This is a tree that has a tall, slender trunk with foliage growing only near the top; illustrating maturity and the casting off of material things.

**Buttress**-the area of a tree trunk where the roots meet the soil surface; usually styled to convey strength.

**Callus**-the scar tissue that forms over a wound where a branch has been pruned off of a tree; it is part of the tree's healing process.

**Cambium**-the thin layer of green colored cell tissue growing between the bark and the wood of a living tree.

**Canopy**-all of the upper-most branches that form the top of a tree.

**Chokkan**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called a formal upright. This is a tree that has a very straight trunk with symmetrical branching; illustrating strength and order.

**Collected Tree**-finding and taking a tree from its natural habitat; a tree that has been shaped by the forces of nature alone.

**Conifer**-a tree that bears cones; mainly evergreen trees such as: pines, cedars, spruces and junipers.

**Cross**-a hybrid resulting from cross-fertilization between species or varieties.

**Crown**-the upper section of a bonsai where the branches spread out from the trunk.

**Cultivars**-cultivars are plants that have features desirable to the person "cultivating" them. These desirable characteristics have been deliberately selected and can be reliably reproduced in plants under controlled cultivation.

**Cut-Leaved**-a bonsai that has leaves which are shaped in very distinct segments.

**Deciduous**-a tree that has a seasonal growth cycle where new foliage is produced in the spring, then grows throughout the summer, turns colors in autumn, and drops in the winter, leaving buds on the branches for next spring's new foliage.

**Defoliation**-the practice of removing all leaves to encourage new shoots and potentially smaller leaves.

**Dieback**-the death of the tips of branches, or whole branches, due to extreme weather or possibly one of several diseases.

**Divided Leaf**-a leaf formed of separate sections that emerge from a common base.

**Division**-a method of propagating shrubs by carefully dividing the root ball and replanting the separated sections.

**Dormant**-the period of the year when little or no growth occurs; usually late autumn and throughout the winter months.

**Dwarf**-a variety or cultivar that is smaller than the species tree, but retains all of the characteristics of a full size species tree.

**Evergreen**-a tree or shrub that retains its leaves throughout the year.

**Fertilizer**-is "food" for trees, shrubs and plants; usually comprised of NPK: Nitrogen for the foliage, Phosphorous for the roots, and Potassium for the flowers.

**Foliage Pad**-a mass of foliage on a branch; sometimes referred to as a cloud.

**Fruit**-the part of a plant that carries the seeds; usually berries or fleshy or pod like.

**Fukinagashi**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called windswept. This is a tree that has its trunk and branches swept back in one direction; illustrating a tree exposed to very forceful winds.

**Genus**-a unit of classification for a group of closely related plants.

**Germination**-the moment a seed starts into growth, developing roots and shoots.

**Girth**-the circumference of the trunk of a tree, measured at just above the root base.

**Grafting**-is a commonly used method for propagating trees, when propagation by seeds or cuttings is impractical or impossible.

**Han-Kengai** - a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called semi-cascade. Where the branches and trunk of a tree are swept down to one side, but not below the top lip of the container; illustrating a tree subject to violent winds and weather.

**Hardy**-a term used to describe trees capable a withstanding winter frost.

**Hokidachi**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called broom. Where the trunk is straight with symmetrical branches and has its foliage arranged in a semi-circular dome or broom shape.

**Humidity**-the amount or degree of moisture in the air.

**Internodal Distance**-the length of stem between two nodes or leaf joints.

**Ikadabuki**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called raft. Where the tree is laid on its side and its branches are trained vertically and arranged in a group formation.

**Ishitsuki**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called root over rock. Where the tree has its roots arranged so they have grown over and in the crevices of a rock.



**Jin**-is a branch, which has been stripped of its bark and cambium to represent a dead branch; illustrating great age or harsh conditions.

**Juvenile Foliage**-the young leaves of a tree that produces two distinct shapes of leaves; the second type being mature foliage.

**Kabudachi**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called clump. Where the trees' trunks all grow from the same point on the root mass and are more crowded in appearance than a regular group planting.

**Kengai**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called cascade. Where the branches and trunk of the tree are swept to one side and hang below the container; illustrating a tree on the edge of a mountain cliff subjected to fierce winds.

**Leader**-the main shoot at the top of a tree, usually indicating the uppermost continuation of the trunk.

**Lime Sulphur**-a chemical used to whiten or bleach a section of stripped branch or trunk in order to preserve a jin or shari.

**Loam**-a soil mixture comprised of clay, sand and organic matter.

**Mame**-a term used in size classification of bonsai trees; this being a small bonsai.

**Moyogi**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called informal upright. Where the trunk curves through its taper up to the apex.

**Nebari**-the exposed surface roots of a bonsai.

**Needle**-a type of leaf that is narrow and usually of a stiff texture, like those found on a black pine tree.

**New Wood**-a stem or twig on a bonsai that originated during the current season's growth.

**Nitrogen**-an essential element of plant nutrition; identified by the chemical symbol N; aids in growth of stems and leaves.

**Node**-the point on a trunk or branch where the leaf buds emerge.

**Old Wood**-a stem or twig on a bonsai that originated during the previous season's growth or at an earlier time.

**Peat**-partly decomposed organic matter; when it is used as an ingredient of potting soil it assists in moisture retention.

**Perlite**-a form of volcanic rock that is heat treated to develop a lightweight, coarse granule that when used as a component of potting soil has advantageous ventilation and water retention properties.

**Phosphorous**-another essential element of plant nutrition; identified by the chemical symbol P; aids in development of roots, ripening of fruits and seeds.

**Pinching**-is a technique used in bonsai cultivation of controlling and shaping the growth of foliage by pulling off soft new shoots with the finger and thumb in a pinching motion.

**Potassium**-the third essential element of plant nutrition; identified by the chemical symbol K; it encourages strong new growth, development of flower buds and fruit formation.

**Pot-Bound**-the adverse state of a container grown plant where the root growth has filled the container to the extent of eliminating all vital air spaces.

**Prostrate**-the characteristic growth habit of a plant that naturally tends to grow along the ground instead of upright.

**Pruning**-the process of controlling the shape and growth rate of a tree by cutting back the shoots, stems and branches.

**Raceme**-a type of elongated flower that is composed of individual stalks all growing from a central stem; ex. Flower type found on wisteria trees.

**Ramification**-the dense branching structure of a bonsai that only develops after years of repeated pruning of the branches.

**Repotting**-the practice of replanting a bonsai tree at regular intervals to perform health maintaining tasks such as: root washing, inspecting, pruning, soil refreshing, and potting in a different or larger pot; all imperative to the health of a bonsai.

**Rootball**-the large mass of roots and soil visible when a tree is taken out of its pot or pulled from the ground.

**Root Pruning**-the practice of cutting back the roots of bonsai in order to make room in the container for fresh soil and to encourage new root growth.

**Rootstock**-is the root system and main stem to be used as the base of a new tree when propagating through grafting.

**Scion**-is a small section of a tree, which contains all of the desirable characteristics of the parent tree that will be propagated into a new tree through grafting on top of the rootstock.

**Shakan**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called slanting. Where the trees' trunk, appears similar to the formal upright style, but the trunk is slanting to one side.

**Shari-an** area where the bark and cambium have been removed from the trunk to suggest the struggle against fierce weather such as: wind, lightning, snow and ice.

**Species**-the unit of classification for a plant with identifiable characteristics.

**Suiseki**-stones that appear to look like large boulders or mountains and represent the spirit or essence of each; sometime used in a formal bonsai display.

**Taproot**-the large root of a tree that grows vertically downward, anchoring it into the ground; it is usually referred to in bonsai, because of its need to be pruned shorter or removed for container cultivation.

**Tokonoma**-a Japanese tradition of creating a specific area in the home where bonsai, accessory plants, Suiseki, and scrolls are displayed together in harmony.

**Wound Sealant**-a number of compounds formulated to seal cuts made on branches or the trunk of bonsai to prevent the loss of moisture and promote healing.

**Yamadori**-trees collected from the wild, which have been shaped by nature alone and have been collected to be developed into bonsai.

**Yose-ue**-a traditional Japanese bonsai style; also called a group or forest. Where the trees are arranged in a container to resemble a group or forest of trees.







# Mike's Corner

## Tips and Suggestions from Mike Stern

### “Winter And Early Spring Activities For Garden Grown Trees”

Like everyone else, I collect more trees than I can keep up with. I promise myself each spring that I will have fewer trees in training pots. Inevitably, I end up collecting numerous trees with great potential. It is a challenge to get them all watered. Gratefully Lisa, my wife, will dutifully assist with the watering. (Never have more trees than your spouse can take care of.) I am always grateful in the fall when I get a reprieve from watering my trees. I enjoy having few months during the winter to look over my books, magazines, and get reinvigorated about the upcoming spring.

Though spring is still on the horizon, there are a few things that you can do if you have trees growing in the ground. After the trees are dormant, they can be root pruned at any time. I tend to wait until after January 1 when there is a day that the ground is not frozen. This year has had fewer of those days. Many of my trees still have not been root pruned. When digging your trees use a sharp shovel. I purchased a tree shovel with an extra long face to root prune my garden grown trees. I also selected a shovel that has a welded steel handle. Occasionally, I will hit a root that is fairly thick and quite a challenge.

There is no reason that you could not dig up the tree and arrange its roots and re-plant it to ensure a well flared root system. Because I have so many trees in the ground, I never get around to doing that. I guess I should take a few of the trees and be more deliberate with them. I guess I'll do that when I am retired.

Root pruning merely involves digging around the tree as though you were going to transplant it into a pot. Because I root prune my trees yearly, I am comfortable creating a small root ball. When you dig the tree it is important that you do not attempt to lift it until you have completely cut all of the roots. Also rather than dig at a 90° angle with the ground I try to dig at a shallow angle so as to root prune trees that are attempting to form a tap root. Sometimes I will lift them up and take a hatchet and cut off the bottom cone of dirt and roots. This is not very delicate, but it is efficient.

In an earlier article, I recommended placing a barrier a few inches below the trunk so as to discourage any tap roots or roots growing straight down. If you have already done this you will be saving yourself less work when you finally take the tree up to place it in a pot.

After the tree is completely root pruned, I will turn the tree either 180° depending on the branch structure to expose the previously shaded side of the tree toward the southern hemisphere. If the tree is fairly tall and you are leaving sacrifice branches make sure that you stake the tree. If you don't anchor the freshly root pruned tree, spring winds will blow it over.

Most of the trees I grow continue to grow in the ground so as to thicken the trunks and create the appearance of age. When I am ready to pot one of my garden grown trees, I inevitably preselect a pot that is much too small. When a tree is growing in the ground, they look deceptively small. I have often had to place them in training pots as I did not have a bonsai pot large enough to hold it.

If you are thinking about transplanting one of your trees from the garden to a pot, take one of your pots out to the garden and place it beside the tree to get a true appreciation for its size.

When the root pruning in the spring, this is also an opportunity to look at the tree and selectively prune branches that the rabbits or deer did not perform for you.



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

# Calendar of Events

March 17..... Mon. 7pm .....“History of Bonsai”....Phipps Garden Center

Note: This is the  
THIRD Monday

April 21.....Mon. 7pm .....Program TBA ..... Phipps Garden Center

Note: This is the  
THIRD Monday

May 21.....Wed. 7pm..... Program TBA ..... Phipps Garden Center



All PBS meetings, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm.  
Emergency Phone: 412 441-4442.

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.