

# March 2010 Newsletter

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*Beginning of  
Life,  
Be it March,  
Yayoi, or  
spring.  
A fresh cycle  
begins.*

—Rich Uhrick

“A Pinch of this....”

... Yayoi, yayoi, yayoi....

## Term of the month: Chip Budding

**Chip Budding:** A budding technique which may be used whenever mature buds are available. The chip budding season is longer than "T" budding because the bark doesn't have to slip and certain species whose bark doesn't slip easily without breaking are propagated more easily using this method..

Well, after a record snowfall in February, it is now time to begin the season of the flood. As all of that snow melts and we get the spring rain, be sure that your trees are where they will drain well.

But with this is the time of renewal, as deciduous and evergreen alike begin to come out of dormancy. To this end it is time to begin early spring work on trees. To that end we welcome Ken Huth to our meeting this month. Hopefully, you have studied your tree species and are ready to work. You may also want to take a look at Mike Thornhill's article on dealing with lack of taper through creative carving on page 8 of this month's newsletter.

Membership cards for those current in dues will be available at the meeting

Bonsai=Perseverance



Rich Uhrick

**Join us at Franklin Park  
Conservatory on March 21, 2010.**



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**Columbus Bonsai Society PO Box 1981 Columbus OH 43216-1981**

[ColumbusBonsai@hotmail.com](mailto:ColumbusBonsai@hotmail.com) [www.ColumbusBonsai.org](http://www.ColumbusBonsai.org)



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Columbus Bonsai is a proud member of the American Bonsai Society and Bonsai Clubs International.

## This Month's Program—Larch in March aka Larch "Madness"

This is a full styling and re-potting workshop. Bring your tools and a pot suitable to a plant that has about a one gallon root ball. I suspect a blue glaze will be popular, except for those who actually selected to work on Larch which would need a non-glazed pot. We will have a selection of wire and soil. Ken Huth said he plans to bring some pots to pick from and maybe a couple of extra trees from which to choose.

If you are signed up, you will have received a notice showing whether you are to come at 11am or at 2pm. There are currently 10 people in the 11am group, 9 people in the 2pm group, and 4 undetermined as of March 8th.

# 弥 生

### Columbus Bonsai Society to participate in the Dawes Arboretum Bonsai show in June.

Would you like to participate? Maybe use it as a "shakedown" for your trees to show in September?

If so, please plan on taking your tree(s) out on Friday June 11th, for the official drop off time. (More information to come at a later time.)

We may attempt a group return trip, we will have to see. Watch the newsletter and the meetings for more



The Columbus Bonsai Society receives meeting space and other support and assistance from Franklin Park Conservatory and Oakland Nurseries

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Rich Uhrick, Editor  
ruhrick@otterbein.edu

#### UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

**APRIL:** "Maples in April"

**MAY:** Extreme Makeovers, including Extreme Bending with Jeff Carr.

**JUNE:** Initial Styling

**JULY:** Root over Rock with tropicals

**AUGUST:** Bonsai Styles

**SEPTEMBER:** New Annual Show date.

## AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT....

**I**t may be that we have survived another winter! It is still early yet, but at least the worst is over, and anyone who made it through February here in Central Ohio has certainly made it through a tough winter. The snow fall in the area set records, and though we are not about to compete with, say Buffalo, NY as far as snow fall, we had more than enough to go around. It might be hard to see well in snow-I am more than ever ready to move south-the deep covering of snow outside provides a safe, temperature regulated cocoon that a bonsai tree finds very comfortable. Protected from drying wind and other perils of extreme weather, a tree can sleep very happily through the winter when it has the sort of protection that a blanket of snow provides. It seems lately there is not enough snow for those kinds of horticultural purposes in our area, and now that better weather has come, we still have a month or two to make it through were the trees are in hibernation but the approach of spring means the buffering snow is gone, so the trees are more exposed, literally.



Meanwhile back in the house and under the shop lights the indoor trees are toughing it out through a different sort of winter trial. I have over the years gone from a totally indoor collection to having only a few tropical or “non-hardy” plants. Until I can manage to get a greenhouse added on to my home, I just do not want to bother with them. It is always a worst right about this time, when the tree’s natural energy reserves are at their lowest, the light has been at its lowest as well, and the interior dryness is taking its toll.

One key to success indoors, is in my opinion immersion watering. Using a watering can simply does not deliver enough usable moisture that stays with the plant. Dunking the plant, pot and all into water and letting it stay there for a while makes sure every space in the pot itself is flooded, all the soil mass can absorb water, and once it is hauled out and set back on the bench that pot will have a large mass of water in it, which will actual drain out more efficiently than a smaller amount of water just dribbled on.

Every bonsai grower seems to like to fiddle about with a new fertilizer source, and I have gotten what look to be great results with something rather novel-guppy manure. I gather rain water in a barrel over the summer, and to keep the rain barrel bug free I usually keep a few minnows in it. Last summer rather than going to a bait shop I bought a few fish at a pet shop that are called “rosy reds”, they are good looking feeders meant to

*(Continued on page 5)*

### **Notes from the Columbus Bonsai Society Care Guide Zone 5/6**

March - Early Spring - 50/31

- ◆ Repot deciduous trees if their buds are starting to swell. If you wait until the leaves have emerged, you will need to take more care to keep the tree out of direct sunlight and wind.
- ◆ Be sure to check wire from last year. The spring's growth will cause tight wire to cut into the tree. Remove any that is tight. This should be done year round as well. If the branch did not hold its shape, reapply wire.
- ◆ You can wire branches on all trees, but be careful of buds and swelling branches caused by growth.
- ◆ Grafting is possible on most trees now through spring.
- ◆ You may bring hardy trees out of winter protection now, as most can handle temperature above 20°F.
- ◆ This is an ideal time to take hardwood cuttings from deciduous trees.

**Go to the website at [www.columbusbonsai.org](http://www.columbusbonsai.org) for more information**

## Tree of the Month: Japanese Flowering Apricot, *Prunus mume*

Since we have twelve people signed up for the flowering apricot for Ken Huth, I thought I would put together a tree of the month for our new trees. This tree is uncommon in the United States other than as a bonsai subject. The tree is native to China and Korea, where it has been cultivated for 1500 years, and originally came to Japan as an ornamental and fruit tree. In Japan, there are about 300 named cultivars.

*Prunus mume* grows to about 20 feet in the ground and scales nicely for mame to shohin bonsai. Dark green foliage, dark green stems and craggy bark characterize the plant. It flowers in 'dormancy' as early as January, depending on the variety and storage conditions. In a cold frame, it will flower in late winter or early spring and in a greenhouse, it may bud out as early as late December.

*Prunus mume* produces staggered buds of fragrant flowers over many weeks on old wood. Flowers color can be white to red through pink, single or double, and many varieties have a heady rich fragrance. It is not a long-lived tree although specimens in the ground may live for more than twenty years. Fruit is about a 1 inch yellow globe. It is bitter but often eaten dried, pickled or salted in oriental culture.

*Prunus mume* is resistant to most insect pests and diseases and hardy to USDA zone 6, so in Ohio it will need to be over wintered in a cold frame or green house. It will not tolerate a heavy or wet soil, a loamy, free draining mix is best. Water normally but do not allow water to accumulate in the pot. It is also an acid lover preferring a pH of 5.6 to 6. Although most sources list it as needing full sun, a report from New Mexico cautions against sunscald on the bark if planted near paved areas. In zones 8 and 9 it is listed as happy as an under story planting, so some afternoon shade may be appropriate in bonsai culture. As a note, the plant is attractive to butterflies and bees, though evidently not for pollination in our climate.

*Prunus mume* blooms on last year's wood. Buds are set during the growing season the year before so wait until after flowering for pruning.

Propagation of *Prunus mume* species is possible from seed if you do not care about variety purity. Stratify in a refrigerator for three months or allow exposure to frost in a cold frame over winter. Sow outdoors in spring or in the greenhouse any time of year. Seeds can take from 120 - 365 days to germinate and light is required for germination, but Gibberellic Acid-3 may aid in speed and reduce the amount of light needed. You can also start softwood cuttings taken in early summer and grown under mist. T or chip budding [See term of the Month] with buds from soft or semi-hard wood onto the more available purple leaf plum, *Prunus cerasifera*, is the preferred grafting method. This means you can add branching where desired.

*Prunus mume* will flower in three years from seed and in two from grafts.

Sources:

[T. Meghan Ray](#), Japanese Flowering Apricot (*Prunus mume*)—A Mid-winter Extravaganza, *Plants & Gardens News*, Vol. 10, No 4, Winter 1995. Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. [http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/plants/1995wi\\_midwinter.html](http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/plants/1995wi_midwinter.html)

Plant files: Detailed information on Japanese Flowering Apricot  
<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/56638/>



Zack Clayton

### THE PINE TREES KNOW ....

"The Pine trees start their new growth in the weeks before Easter -- if you look at the tops of the Pine trees two weeks before, you will see the yellow shoots. As the days get closer to Easter Sunday, the tallest shoot will branch off and form a cross. By the time Easter Sunday comes around, you will see that most of the Pine trees will have small yellow crosses on all of the tallest shoots."...

~author unknown



### *Presidential Thoughts...(Continued from page 3)*

be lunch for piranhas and other large and hungry aquarium residents. As I was about to up end the plastic bag and put these rosy reds into their new home, I noticed that I had been given a bonus with my purchase, two tiny baby guppies, each about the size of a grain of rice. Thinking that these little guys had no chance in a big cold rain barrel, these two infants were given a home in another part of the backyard, in a half barrel that sits in the sun and if filled up with the circular leaves of a water lily.

The lily pads do not cover the entire surface of the half barrel, which mean that abundant sunshine turns the water into a thick pea soup of bright green algae. Though I wondered if the two tiny fish would be all right in their new home, I should have been more confident. It proved to be the ideal place to raise guppies. In late September when the weather began to chill, I got a net and went looking for the two guppies, and they were easy to find. Both alive and very well, they had obviously enjoyed their steady diet of algae, mosquito larvae and other bugs. They had grown to large size considering they were guppies and were obviously a pair, the male sporting bold bright orange hues and the female massively pregnant.

Guppies are sometimes called 'million fish' and once brought inside and placed in a proper aquarium tank that nickname proved most apt. My kids have been thrilled to become the surrogate parent to what are a few dozen guppies and what could easily turn into hundreds. So how do we tie this all into bonsai? Small though they are these fish still have the basic needs of any animal-they eat, and that food is processed in the usual manner. To keep aquarium water bright and clear it is necessary to do frequent water changes, pulling out old water-along with waste- and adding new.

One biological process that every fish tank goes through is the ammonia cycle. Fish excrete ammonia, which is poisonous. If it were to build up in the small volume of an aquarium, it would kill the fish rather quickly. But nature is always ready-there are certain bacteria which eat ammonia and turn it into nitrite, which is still poisonous, but less so. Another type of bacteria feed on nitrites and turns them into nitrates, which are much less poisonous than nitrites and ammonia and are readily usable by plants as a source of nitrogen. Ammonia is an agricultural fertilizer for the same reason, though the process of delivering the nitrogen is very different. Guppy manure may never replace Miracle-Gro, but it is a very effective organic fertilizer.

### Mark Passerello



### Looking for a helping hand?

Beginners and novices, prior to the regular April meeting (12 -2:00) we are offering a mentored workshop. Gallon size Shimpaku (*Juniperus chinensis*) will be the material in use. The Junipers are ordered for the 12 people who signed up.

More experienced club members will assist small groups in the initial styling of the trees.

## Book of the Month: **Bonsai, Saikei and Bonkei Japanese Dwarf Trees and Tray Landscapes**

Last fall while visiting my Mom, Linda and I stopped at the Half Price Books near her house. They had several older bonsai books that I had not seen before. This book has a 1969 copyright date. Being 40 years old it contains more than 200 black and white photos and 12 color plates. Jose' mentioned that this book was the first bonsai book he purchased. It is a paperback, 252 pages 8 1/2 " x 12". According to the cover, the author lives in the Sierra Nevada's 150 miles north of San Francisco and was a professional writer and photographer since 1948. I could not resist this historic book for \$6.48. Mr. Sato and Mr. Ioka who Behme lists as his teachers were members of the East Bay Bonsai Club, the Kusamura Bonsai Club and BCI.

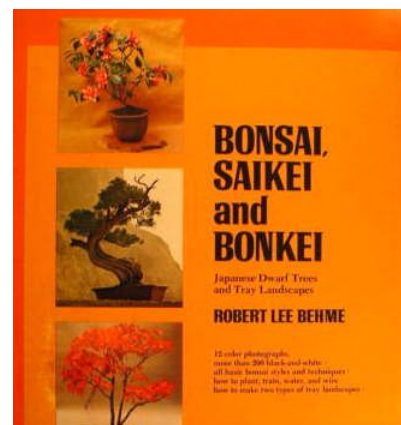
Despite the title, the chapter on Saikei and Bonkei begins on page 204 and ends on page 235. The first 13 chapters are on bonsai. On page 45, he talks about when he likes to start his flats of tree seeds. He then talks about cuttings and air layering followed by grafting twigs onto a trunk. The photos in this section are clear and I thought very informative. I liked the photo of cuttings and grafted plants under mason jars planted in the ground. I can remember my grandfather starting roses this way. And because he likes to collect from the wild, he explains the steps he follows to collect trees from the mountains near where he lived.

In chapter 4 on wiring, I got great amusement from the photo of someone cutting the insulation from a piece of heavy gauge electrical wire. I guess ordering bonsai wire was not possible. He says he fertilizes a month before wiring as feeding promotes sap flow and reduces shock when the limbs are bent. He also decreases water to make the branch more pliable. Apparently in 1969 using real soil was the norm, because in Chapter 5 Behme talks about using heat to purify the soil of nematodes and fungi. He warns that ground covers and dirty tools can harbor disease. He mixes sharp sieved sand, screened granite, and screened potting soil. He says that he uses seven graduated screens, noting that the sharp sand does not need screening. His screens ranged from 1/32" to 1/4".

Chapter 6, the Art of Potting and Repotting, focuses on good drainage. Behme states that 70% of tree deaths are from over watering. At that time, Terra-Green and Turface are new products in experimental usage. He refers to the wires that tie the tree into the pot as "hold-downs". He notes that repotting can be an annual occurrence or twice a decade. He says each tree needs checking twice a year, spring and fall, for 3 things: 1) Pests, worms, ants or other insects, 2) Soil that has become hard-packed or waterlogged, and 3) Roots damaged by over fertilization or too much or too little water. These conditions call for repotting. He warns against potting deeper. He plants in the ground as a hospital or to thicken young trees.

Chapter 7, "To Control Growth", takes you through when to pinch to check growth. He breaks trees into groups, Pines, junipers, and deciduous; which he divides into 2 groups. He warns if pruning is done too early on cherry, apricot and quince, they will not flower the next year, But if you wait too long they will produce suckers – which do not bloom. Chapter 8 is "How to Water Bonsai. He notes that the Japanese believe it takes 3 years to learn to water. Chapter 9 is "To Protect from Weather, Pest and Disease". He recommends that you build a cold frame if you do not have one. It needs to be 15-30 inches below grade. I am still thinking where could I do that and not end up with a pond! Chapter 10 is "Containers – How to Select Them". This started out with the normal shapes and glaze discussion and then he got into making your own out of wood. Skipping to Chapter 14 Saikei and Bonkei Tray Landscapes – I was interested in his use of custom wooden containers. Especially of interest are two saikei trays made from waterproof plywood with a jigsaw. The book shows its age when he talks about molding mountains using asbestos.

Ken Schultz



**This book is in our club library**

**In addition to our club library, you can find many books on Bonsai at your public library under the Dewey decimal system # 635.9772.**

## Fun and adventures at the February Meeting....



Jerry Freeland's Hypertufa method



Mike Thornhill's Fertilizer Cakes

## CBS Beginnings....

**I**n February 1972 a few people somehow got together to discuss bonsai. Nancy Green, Leo Bistak, and Gwen and Dewt Jones were the initial group. At a meeting in August of 1974, Nancy became the president and Leo the treasurer. They adopted a constitution and organized a membership drive. Columbus Bonsai Society joined Bonsai Clubs International.

Keith Scott conducted a hornbeam grove planting demo in March of 1974. This is the first reference to a program. At this time, meetings were at Slemmons Nursery where the first show took place, June 1974.

Gleaned from notes by Larry Learn (CBS president 1986-1987)

I am looking for information on Alice Keaton, a local bonsai specialist and teacher in the Columbus area in the early 1970s. She was Gwen Jones' teacher and did several programs for CBS.



C. Tom Holcomb

## Trunk Carving to Create Taper and Movement

**A**t the upcoming workshop, some of us may very well get trees grown out for trunk size and chopped back only once. This growing method produces a straight trunk with very little taper. This lack of taper and movement results in an entirely unnatural appearance. The question we are left with then is how do we handle this lack of taper and movement? Lucky for us there are several options for handling this dilemma. The best option is to plant the tree out in our garden for a few years and chop it back every other year and grow some taper into it. Since this option takes years to produce results it is not suited for working on trees in the “workshop” format. Another option would be to grow a nice thick canopy of leaves around our trunk to hide the defects and pretend that it looks better than it does. A final option would be to try and carve some movement and taper into the trunk and reduce the overall “telephone pole” look that has been created by the original growing method.

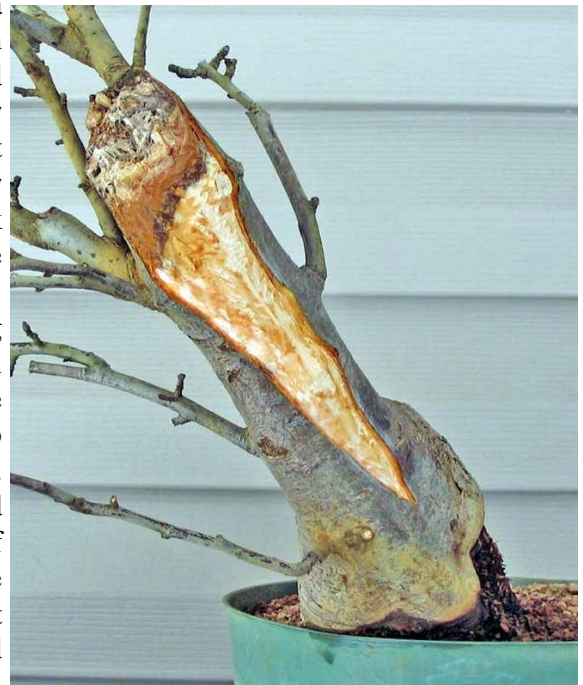


Let us look at a crab apple tree that suffers from symptoms of this single chop growing method. This tree (picture 1) comes from Ken Huth’s nursery and is approximately 15 inches tall and has a trunk diameter of three inches. As you can see in the photo the tree has very little taper and the trunk has almost no movement, other than being planted at a 45 degree angle. The trunk also ends in an abrupt flat chop that has begun to rot.

There used to be an old apple tree on my parent’s farm that was a least three feet in diameter. This tree had been broken off at about six feet tall many years ago and was almost completely hollow. I would like to create a similar feeling with this tree. My plan is to use carving to soften the abrupt chop at the top of the trunk and create a more natural looking transition into the main trunk. I am also going to hollow out the trunk for most of its length. My goal is to try and reduce the visual impact of the lack of movement and taper by adding curves into the hollowed out area of the trunk.

I started by selecting the front of my tree and marking a rough outline of the hollow I intended to create on the trunk in chalk. After I established a rough outline of what I wanted, I used a razor knife to cut an outline in the bark of the intended hollow and removed the bark over the area to be carved. It is important to establish this boundary in the bark, lest your intended hollow wander into unintended areas. In picture 2, you can see the bark removal over the intended hollow and the rotted wood from the ugly chop’s reduction.

I used power tools to create the carved hollow, starting with the largest carving bit I had. During the early roughing in stages of the carving, I am not concerned with the texture I leave on the wood while I carve. My goal at this early stage is to remove as much of the wood as possible as quickly as possible. This is the time when the overall shape and depth of the carved area that was defined earlier is created. With the rough shape of the hollow defined, it is time to switch over to a smaller bit in the carving tool to reduce the marks left behind by its operation. At this point in the carving I defined, the margins created earlier and put the finishing touches on the shape of the curves I created in



*(Continued on page 9)*



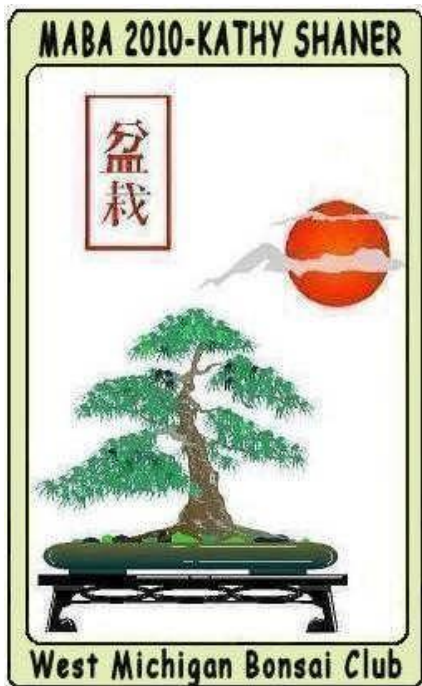
(Continued from page 8)

the hollowed area of the trunk (picture 3). For the finishing touches on the carving I switched to the smallest bit I had and smoothed away my earlier tool marks. It is important to follow the grain of the wood at this point to create a believable texture on the surface of the carved wood. When I was satisfied with the finished product, I coated the freshly carved areas with lime sulfur. The dead wood on an apple tree is not the usual color white/silver color created by lime sulfur. To create a more natural color I mixed some India back ink in with the lime sulfur to create a darker result.

I hope this brief article provides some ideas on how to deal with trees that have straight trunks devoid of taper. I am bringing this tree to work on during the 11am session of the workshop at the next club meeting. If anyone has any questions/ advice or just wants to see the end product in person feel free to stop by.



Mike Thornhill



MABA's next convention will be hosted by the West Michigan Bonsai Club and takes place June 25-27, 2010 at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The West Michigan Bonsai Club is pleased to announce that **Kathy Shaner** will be the convention's headlining bonsai master.

**Presenters also include:**

**Jose Cueto**

Additional information will be posted here as it becomes available, but you can also check the West Michigan Bonsai Club [www.wmbonsai.org](http://www.wmbonsai.org), for updates as well. To be put on the convention mailing list, contact Mollie Hollar, [info@basicallybonsai.com](mailto:info@basicallybonsai.com).

Or go to the MABA website: [www.mababonsai.org](http://www.mababonsai.org).



“Spring” Bonsai BBQ  
July 24th & 25th , 2010

Bonsai Master Suthin Sukosolvisit from MA.

### From the Circulation Desk of the C.B.S. Library

In an effort to make the C.B.S. library more available to all of our members (since the library cabinet is being stored at Oakland Nursery and since we aren't meeting there every month), I will do my best to fill any requests that you may have to borrow any of the items that we currently have in our collection. I have a complete list of all of the books, magazines and videos that we have in our library; so, no later than the Friday before our monthly meeting, either send me an e-mail at [jyoungjfy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jyoungjfy@sbcglobal.net) or give me a call at 614-267-4168 and let me know what items you would like to borrow from our library.

I will let you know if we have that particular item in our library or, if it has already been checked out by another one of our members, when it should be available for you to borrow. However, if you are interested in a particular article or topic in one of our bonsai magazines, I will need to know the specific issue you

would like to borrow, since I don't have a master index for all of the magazines that we have. And to be as fair as possible to all of our members, you may check out only two books, magazines, CD's or videos at one time for a two month period.

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions about these new procedures. After all, it is your library, too!

**John Young, Librarian**  
 (614) 267-4168  
[jyoungjfy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jyoungjfy@sbcglobal.net)



### Columbus Bonsai Society Membership Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ -- \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Membership: Individual \$25.00 \_\_\_\_ Family \$35.00 \_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

P. O. Box 1981

Columbus, Ohio

May your phone number be included in our members list? Y N

4 3 2 1 6 - 1 9 8 1

Would you like to get your newsletter by email? Y N

(email saves the club about \$3.00 - \$4.00 an issue in printing and mailing.)

IF family membership, please list other members: \_\_\_\_\_

*Renewal Memberships may be paid for more than one year at a time.*

### **Bonsai Here and Beyond the Outerbelt**

Unless otherwise noted, The Columbus Bonsai Society meets the third Sunday of every month at 1:45 pm at the Franklin Park Conservatory. Board Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The board meetings are open to members.

<b>21 MAR 2010</b>	<b>LARCH “MADNESS”—FPC</b>
<b>18 APR 2010</b>	<b>“MAPLES IN APRIL” —FPC</b>
<b>16 MAY 2010</b>	<b>EXTREME MAKEOVERS/ SHOW PREP/ BYOT/ PROPAGATION —FPC</b>
12-13 JUN 2010	DAWES SHOW
12-13 JUN 2010	NATIONAL BONSAI EXPOSITION—ROCHESTER, NY
<b>20 JUN 2010</b>	<b>INITIAL STYLING OF TREES—OAKLAND</b>
25-27 JUN 2010	MABA SHOW—GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
<b>18 JUL 2010</b>	<b>ROOT OVER ROCK / USING TROPICALS—FPC</b>
24-25 JUL 2010	WILDWOOD GARDENS BBQ– SUTHIN SUKOSOLVISIT, GUEST
<b>15 AUG 2010</b>	<b>STYLES OF BONSAI/ SHOW PREP/MEMBER SALES—OAKLAND</b>
<b>18-19 SEP 2010</b>	<b>CBS SHOW —FPC</b>
29 SEPT-12 OCT 2010	BCI IN CHINA
9-10 OCT 2010	INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF BONSAI—PARIS, FRANCE
OCT 2010	SHOW OF THE CAROLINA’S —ASHEVILLE ARBORETUM
OCT 2010	OAKLAND NURSERY FALL FESTIVAL
<b>17 OCT 2010</b>	<b>PHOENIX GRAFTS —FPC</b>
<b>21 NOV 2010</b>	<b>ELECTIONS/ SAIKEI/ STYLES—OAKLAND</b>
<b>DEC 2010</b>	<b>HOLIDAY DINNER —TBD</b>
JUN 2011	ABS LEARNING SEMINAR—LOUISVILLE, KY

**FPC= FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY**  
**OAKLAND= OAKLAND NURSERY, COLUMBUS**

Columbus Bonsai Society  
PO Box 1981  
Columbus, OH 43216-1981

Questions to:  
[Columbusbonsai@hotmail.com](mailto:Columbusbonsai@hotmail.com)  
[HTTP://Columbusbonsai.org](http://Columbusbonsai.org)

Regular Club meetings on  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month  
Meetings Start at 1:45 pm  
All are welcome to attend

CBS Board meets  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month  
at 7:00 pm

***Meeting is at  
Franklin Park***

