

## GARDENING

# Ancient art of bonsai still growing strong

**BY MARTY FIGLEY**  
**SPECIAL WRITER**

Last year I received a beautiful 10-year-old cotoneaster bonsai from Peter Evanoff of Southfield.

He and his late wife, Roz, became personal friends as we shared information about the

**Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan.** Roz was an extraordinary publicity chairman for many years.

Cotoneasters are in the rose family and very useful ornamental shrubs.

Although we don't know the exact species of mine, the glossy green leaves turned a maroon

shade during the winter and it sported bright red/orange berries. Now the leaves have changed back to green and it is blooming with splendid tiny white flowers.

## What a plant!

Peter trained my bonsai and presented it to me with the advice, "Water it daily in the growing season." That advice not only helped my plant to thrive but encouraged me to really look at it and enjoy it each day.

During the winter months it sat in a cardboard box that had the top and bottom removed, at the east corner of the porch, which protected it from strong winter winds. It received enough moisture from the snow cover and came through beautifully. I am so ever grateful for my gift and for my friends.



MARTY FIGLE

### Art form

That leads me to telling you about bonsai. In Japanese, the word *bonsai* means "tree in a pot." Bonsai is an art form that uses both design and horticulture.

Bonsai are created to look like stylized versions of natural trees in their various forms and environments. Pine trees on a rocky shoreline and the lone tree in a farmer's field have a representation in the long accepted bonsai styles.

The modern art form of bonsai has roots that reach back to China in the third century B.C. Naturally dwarfed and twisted trees were collected from mountain tops and transplanted to pots for display. Gradually, techniques evolved to create and maintain the same effect on other trees.

**Beautiful bonsai:** *This beautiful cotoneaster bonsai was a gift from Peter Evanoff.*

During the cultural exchange between China and Japan of the 12th century, the art came to the Japanese. It was in Japan that bonsai was refined and elevated to its greatest potential. Most of the techniques in use today are the result of generations of Japanese refinement.

The greatest myth about bonsai is that they are a specific kind of tree with a shape that they simply grow into. The distinctive bonsai "look" is actually the result of many years of work. Bonsai aren't simply grown; the bonsai artist has designed, pruned and trained the entire tree to achieve a work of art.

## Show

Now to the show. The Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan will have its 28th annual bonsai show and sale 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 9 (with demonstrations noon to 2 p.m., 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.); and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 10 (with demonstrations 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2-4 p.m.). The place: the Washington Square Building, at the corner of Washington and Fourth streets in Royal Oak.

Admission is \$3, free for under age 12.

Do plan to attend and enjoy

this beautiful ancient art of miniature Japanese trees at the exhibit, see a demonstration and become acquainted with the techniques.

This is a chance to buy bonsai pots, tools and accessories as well as live plants. In addition, there will be a bonsai raffle - you may be the winner!

For additional information, visit the Four Seasons Web site at [www.geocities.com/sfbcm](http://www.geocities.com/sfbcm) or contact Todd Renshaw, president, phone (248) 585-9916, e-mail [scott13@vwnet.com](mailto:scott13@vwnet.com).

This year the show is taking place in conjunction with the Royal Oak Clay and Glass Show.

## GOODGARDEN TIPS

■ Two innovative plant supports for trees, tomatoes, flowers and other plants such as peonies, ornamental grasses, dahlias and other tall plants are now available. The supports need a stake and are available in kits or sold separately.

Their green color makes them blend with the plant. They can be reused for many seasons. See them at [www.tmateo.com](http://www.tmateo.com); or call (812) 256-1069 or fax (812) 256-9344.

■ The unusual Garden Park of Holly, 976 E. Maple in Holly, is open for tours each Thursday. Call Sandra Hilty at (248) 634-9300 during park hours (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) for more information.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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