

Bonsai club has new name, new location for show

By MARTY FIGLEY
STAFF WRITER

A bonsai show celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan will be in a new location this year: the Washington Square Plaza, Washington and Fourth in Royal Oak, Thursday-Sunday, June 24-27.

The club's name has been officially changed from the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Oakland County, because so many new members have joined from many areas of the state.

Show hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. June 24-26 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 27. Admission is \$1, free for age 15 and under. For general information about the club or the event, call Marc Makahon at 731-1558.

Plant materials, tools, pots and other items will be available for purchase during the show. Demonstrations by member artists on styling, pruning and techniques for basic care will be offered. One presentation will take place 5-6 p.m. June 24-25. Other demonstrations, each lasting 1-1/2 hours, are scheduled 11 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. June 26, and noon and 5 p.m. June 27.

Jack Whitehead of Keego Har-har has a vast display of this ancient art. Some of this will be seen at the show, including a 15-year-old Japanese Maple that he raised from seed.

"Everybody says you kill your first bonsai," Whitehead said. "I say, 'Oh, no, I didn't, mine is growing in the yard.'"

Whitehead's award-winning collection of miniature trees has been featured in bonsai magazines.

Personal touch

As I walked into his Oriental garden, I felt as though I was entering a lush tropical paradise. As we toured the area he explained what he had done to achieve desired results and shared his future plans.

Japanese Maples of many varieties, Japanese Arale, Pines, Spruces, Dogwood, Tamarack, Ferns, Bamboos, Crabapple, Hardy Almond... the list goes on and on of what has been strategically planted and placed for a pleasing, serene garden.

One specimen collected in the Upper Peninsula is now 53 years old. The oldest one is probably 100 years old.

This garden is more Chinese than Japanese, although some people say it has been Americanized. Whitehead has his own way of styling these growing plants.

"I think every tree is individual — that's why I prefer the Chinese, because they have such a range of trees."

Special features

This year he has pinched back

all the pines and spruces — removed the candle to make the growth thicker and the needles shorter. This can be done with garden variety shrubs and it also controls growth. He has pinched back the maples.

"It's a job when there are three leaves you take (pinch) out the center one. Some are so small that I have to put (on) my glasses and need to use tweezers. This makes for a finer tree."

Some of the roots on the trees have interesting designs that are left for show. Some are tied, some grow naturally and some grow in the air, which thickens them and that becomes a feature of the tree. One principle of bonsai is to make

the base of the trunk larger than the rest of the trunk.

The potted trees are taken into an unheated greenhouse for the winter, where it is as cold as outside, but the plants are out of the wind so they get no wind damage. They are watered during this time.

When the days start getting longer in the spring, Whitehead starts fertilizing with a weak solution of all-purpose liquid fertilizer and then occasionally fertilizes during the summer months. Whitehead uses no chemicals unless it is absolutely necessary.

Correct containers

Part of the art of bonsai is the correct container for each plant.

Tile sale Saturday

Custom-designed Pewabic Pottery tiles will be sold at 50 percent off the regular price during the pottery's tile over-run sale, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 19, in the Waterworks Park Firehouse, 9900 E. Jefferson, just west of Cadillac Boulevard. Call 822-0954 for more information.

Over-runs will be available at half-price for one day only. Pewabic Society member discounts don't apply to this sale.

Rose show scheduled

The Detroit Rose Society's Spring Rose Show will take place during regular mall hours Saturday-Sunday, June 19-20, at Universal Mall, Dequindre and 12 Mile in Warren.

Hundreds of beautiful roses of all types will be featured, from the classic hybrid tea to the delightful miniatures.

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