

Bonsai from page 1D

...for many reasons.

Club members Len and Ann Buckman of Troy both participate in this art of trees in a pot. They like to watch the development of a plant and see it "grow before our eyes."

"The thing we found, having traveled to the Orient many times, bonsai piqued our interest," Len Buckman said.

"It appeals to a person along many planes. It's an outstanding opportunity in creating living art, something we appreciate and enjoy."

Exhibits at the show will feature beautiful specimens of bonsai trees, from very small to large plants. Plant materials, tools and pots will be available for purchase, local nursery specialists will be happy to assist.

Gordon of Bloomfield Hills, a nationally known bonsaiist, has been creating bonsai for 20 years and has a very large collection.

"I was aware that bonsai required a lot of time, but after I visited a show I went overboard and tried everything imaginable," he said. "By trial and error I've settled to certain varieties."

Cultivating a collection

His collection contains "training" plants to very old specimens, including a 300-year-old Ponderosa pine, some growing in pots that he has made.

We strolled through his extensive outdoor collection, many of which had been overwintered in the indoor swimming pool room and the adjoining potting shed. The temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the room and the exhaust fan to the shed keeps the correct temperature during these months.

All of the collection is amazing: a Golden Full Moon maple (Acer japonicum), a Zelkova with gray bark (in the elm family), a Katsura tree (Cercidiphyllum japonicum), a Bald cypress (Taxodium distichum) with a tiny vine, Oak Leaf creeping fig (Ficus pumila), growing up the trunk, a small Black Mondo grass (Ophiopogon), a member of the lily family, and a gorgeous blooming Satsuki azalea.

Last year his White Cedar (Thuja occidentalis), collected from northern Michigan, won Best-In-Show. It has also received a Mid-American Bonsai Alliance Award.

Growing advice

The easiest plants to grow include white cedars, some varieties of juniper, pines, elms and hornbeams, Gordon said.

Although many people want to start with dwarf plants, "They are more difficult to style because of size," he said.

"It's better to begin with species varieties and reduce the size by pruning, wiring, shaping and pinching."

Water is given often, always enough so that it runs through the soil (twice a day in hot weather). Those plants that require an acid soil are given a sprinkling of cottonseed meal to provide the required acid. Gordon uses a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote or Sierra blend and follows package directions. Soil mixes vary, but must provide good drainage.

Special tools, handforged in Japan, are used to care for his bonsai, and aluminum wire, which is softer and bends easier than copper.

In conjunction with the bonsai, this artist has a collection of rocks that complement the plants. One, a chrysanthemum rock originally from Japan, looks as though it has white blooms of a chrysanthemum embedded in the black surface.

Popularity

Proeya, who is a club member, pronounced the BAHN-SIGH, which is the Chinese pronunciation because of the Chinese character in the writing. BONE-SIGH is the Japanese pronunciation, so either is correct.

"Bonsai began in China more than 3,000 years ago and the Japanese learned the technique and made it more popular in the United States, especially after the 'Karate Kid' movie," she said.

Proeya has practiced bonsai as a hobbyist for 18 years and opened the store seven years ago.

She has seen a lot more interest in bonsai and the questions from customers reflect more knowledge about it. They want to know about classes and clubs where they can learn more and she readily provides the information.

Customers come from as far away as Ohio and Illinois, reporting that she has the most items and the best prices.

For a beginner there are seedlings from \$2.99 up, as well as the finished pieces, priced from \$10 up to a large forest for \$2,500. Rocks imported from China, figurines, tools, soil, wire, books and pottery are offered. Most of the merchandise is geared for indoor bonsai.

Personal service and advice is freely offered and the return policy is generous.

"If a tree dies or is really sick it can be returned for exchange for a new plant with the same value for one-half the price," Proeya said.

This 21st annual show, sponsored by the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan, will contain many plants and show the great variety of bonsai specimens being created by the members.



White Cedar: This is Gordon's award winner.

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Sunday lectures scheduled at DIA this month

A gallery talk, "Social Caricature and Political Cartoons in 19th Century France," has been scheduled 2 p.m. Sunday, June 19, in Gallery S134 at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward.

The talk will highlight satirical sculpture and lithographs from the early to mid-1800s, when Honoré Daumier and J.P. Dantan first wielded sharp-edged wit in the form of caricature statues and illustration. Mary Beth Kreiner of the DIA European sculpture and decorative arts department will lead the lively presentation on this perennially popular and clever art form.

For more information, call 833-3586 weekdays or 833-7900 weekends.

A lecture, "The New Arab-American Musical Tradition," will take place 3 p.m. Sunday, June 25, in the Holley Room at the DIA. Admission is \$5. Call 833-2323 for tickets. For more information, call 833-3586 weekdays or 833-7900 weekends.

Alli Jihad Racy, composer, performer, professor, lecturer and doctor of ethnomusicology at UCLA, will discuss the development of a special Arab-American musical and performing style that melds traditional Middle Eastern influences with those of modern America.

A virtuoso of traditional Arab instruments, Racy performed regularly on Lebanon radio and television before coming to the United States and has recently released an American album, "Ancient Egypt on Lyricbord."

Co-sponsored by the DIA department of education and the ACCESS/Cultural Arts Program, this presentation is designed to share Arabic and Arab-American arts and culture with a broad audience.

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