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February 11, 2008

**YOUR NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING MUSEUM
NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

The President's Budget for FY 2009 proposes to "downsize" the U.S. National Arboretum — which could cripple the ongoing operations of your National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

THE FACTS

In 1927, Congress established the National Arboretum "for research and education concerning tree and plant life." The Agricultural Research Service, which operates the Arboretum, is ignoring this Congressional mandate and proposes to eliminate the "Education" part of the Arboretum's mission. ARS would do this by cutting 40 percent of the Arboretum's budget for its Gardens Unit and Education & Visitor Services Unit, which would result in a possibly fatal loss of staff and services. The National Bonsai & Penjing Museum is part of the Gardens Unit and it is dependent on the Education Unit for many services.

As you probably know, the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum is the first and finest museum of its kind anywhere in the world. It was created in 1976 with the construction of the Japanese Pavilion on the grounds of the National Arboretum to display the bonsai given by the people of Japan to the American people to celebrate our country's Bicentennial.

In 1982, the National Bonsai Foundation was incorporated and since that time, with your help, we have raised millions of dollars for this Museum. In collaboration with the Arboretum, we have made the tree and stone collections among the best in the world. Together we built more than 10 structures within the Museum complex and are in the process of completing a courtyard project that will make the Museum totally accessible to every visitor.

With generous contributions from across the nation, some of the facilities that we have built include: the John Y. Naka North American Pavilion, the Yee-sun Wu Chinese Pavilion, the Haruo Kaneshiro Tropical Conservatory, the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion, the Yuji Yoshimura Visitor's Center, the Maria Vanzant Upper Courtyard, the H. William Merritt Entrance Gate, the Kato Family Stroll Garden, the Melba Tucker Demonstration Arbor, and the Rose Family Garden surrounding the Lower Courtyard.

If Congress approves these reductions in the Arboretum budget, it will mean that the staff of the Museum will be cut, programs will be curtailed and pavilions will be closed. We cannot allow this to happen.

ACTION NEEDED

Please send a letter asking Congress to reject this short-sighted and harmful budget proposal and restore the funds needed to maintain the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Your letter might include the following points:

- (1) You are a strong supporter of this Museum and its mission to educate the public about bonsai and penjing;
- (2) It is a unique treasure that must be preserved; and
- (3) It is part of our national legacy.

You should mail your letter to the Chairs of the Senate and House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees as follows:

The Honorable Herbert H. Kohl, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
2362A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

If you contact your own Representative and/or Senator in Congress, please ask him or her to contact the Chairs of the Senate and House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees shown above.

If you are not yet a member of NBF, there is no better time than now to join. We need you now more than ever before.

Thank you for your support!



Felix B. Laughlin
President