



New Viewing Stone Exhibit Opens

Visitors to the National Arboretum will see 100 American viewing stones from one of the largest and finest private collections in the United States when the exhibition *Beyond the Black Mountain: Color, Pattern and Form in American Viewing Stones* is on view at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum from September 4 through October 13, 2008. The exhibit, brought from California by noted stone collectors **Jim and Alice Greaves**, is a representation of the stones they collected for over 35 years from deserts and rivers throughout North America.

The art of appreciating naturally formed and weathered stones for their evocative qualities is one that originated in China; however, it is the Japanese aesthetic system (known as *suiseki*) that has most influenced collectors of American stones. Dark landscape stones shaped like the mountains of Japan typify *suiseki*. Unlike the centuries-old Japanese tradition, however, American viewing stones can display unique patterns, colors and shapes—the equivalent of a modern movement within the art form. It is for this reason that Jim selected the exhibit's title *Beyond the Black Mountain* as a metaphor to illustrate this evolution of American viewing stones as a more diverse art form.

Kathleen Emerson-Dell, the Museum's Assistant Curator, worked closely with Jim and Alice to develop an exhibition suited to the unique design of the International Pavilion and the Special Exhibits Wing. After a visit to California in January to explore the Greaves' collection, she decided the best approach was to challenge Jim to expand upon his personal talent with thematic displays.

The exhibition opens with a display of dark stones in the Japanese *suiseki* tradition as a point of visual departure for the rest of the show. Nearby, three large stones are placed on low pedestals for visitors to

continued on page 3

BEYOND
THE BLACK
MOUNTAIN

*Color, Pattern
and Form
in
American
Viewing Stones*

SEPT 4 - OCT 13

Selections from
The James & Alice Greaves Collection

National Bonsai & Penjing Museum

Exhibit Poster.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS****HONORARY MEMBERS**

H. Marc Cathey
John L. Creech
Harry Hirao
Daizo Iwasaki (Japan)
Barbara Hall Marshall
Hiroshi Takeyama (Japan)
Yun-hua Hu (China)
Chanbao Xin (China)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Johann F. Klodzen

OFFICERS

Felix B. Laughlin, DC
President
Marybel Balendonck, CA
Vice President
Christopher M. Cochran, VA
Secretary
César Portocarrero, MD
Treasurer

MEMBERS

Julian Adams, VA
Vaughn L. Banting, LA
Mary Bloomer, AZ
David Bogan, IN
James Brant, PA
John Cardon, MD
Roger S. Case, Jr., NM
Dennis S. Donald, PA
Robert Drechsler, MD
C. F. Kwok, VA
Janet E. Lanman, MD
Ron Lang, PA
Cheryl Manning, CA
Brussel Martin, MS
Arschel Morell, MD
Carl Morimoto, CA
Larry Ragle, CA
Glenn Reusch, VA
F. Chase Rosade, PA
Deborah Rose, MD
Wayne Schoech, VT
Thomas Scott, TN
Fay Sharer, VA
Sean Smith, PA
Jack Sustic, MI
Edward Trout, FL
Ted T. Tsukiyama, HI
William N. Valavanis, NY
Jack W. Wells, VA

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

President
American Bonsai Society
President
Bonsai Clubs International
President
Potomac Bonsai Association

ADVISORS

Thomas S. Elias
Director, U.S. National Arboretum
Carole Bordelon
Supervisory Horticulturist
James J. Hughes
Curator
Kathleen Emerson-Dell
Assistant Curator
Aarin Packard
Assistant Curator
Amy Forsberg
Museum Gardener

President's Letter



As this issue of the Bulletin demonstrates, the compass of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum is broader than artistically-trained trees in pots. Here visitors will certainly see beautiful world-class bonsai and penjing, but they will also experience allied art forms, such as viewing stones (suiseki) and kusamono, all displayed in tastefully landscaped gardens or exhibit areas. In the Fall 2007 issue, for example, we focused attention on a kusamono exhibit; in this issue we highlight the current viewing stone and chrysanthemum exhibits.

Yet one sometimes hears comments about the Museum such as: "The trees are the most important thing." On this point most would agree, as the trees are precious, living things that need daily nurturing for

their health and continual care to maintain their aesthetic form. But should the trees be the only permissible focus of this Museum?

Happily, from the beginning the Museum has been—and hopefully will remain—a place for the appreciation of the beauty in nature. The trees will always be the centerpiece of the Museum's collections, but other related art forms revering the beauty of nature will also belong here as well. For example, the original Bicentennial Gift from Japan in 1976 that formed the nucleus of the Museum included not only 53 bonsai but also six viewing stones. This was most fitting because bonsai and suiseki complement one another, each magnifying the beauty of nature as reflected in the other.

In essence, the Museum attempts to distill for the visitor the feelings that tingle our spine and take our breath away when visiting an old-growth forest or an ancient mountain range. Bonsai captures our love of trees, as viewing stones can embody the mystery of the mountains, while kusamono calls us to appreciate the humble beauty of the wild flower.

As the ancients knew, these art forms touch our hearts and lift our spirits. All are welcome in the Museum and we rejoice in their presence here.

Felix

Another Viewing Stone Event

Continued from page 3

part of the weekend. In short, this is a great place to find out what is happening with stones!

If this sounds appealing to you then please plan to register. For more information see the web site www.StoneShow2008.com. You can also contact me directly at StoneShow2008@aol.com or (540) 672-5699.

Like those who love bonsai, if you come to appreciate the subtle yet sublime beauty of fine stones, you will view the world a little bit differently.



Japanese Island Stone "Shimagata-ishi" in a formal display at a previous International Stone Appreciation Symposium.

Beyond the Black Mountain

Continued from page 1

feel different stone textures. Besides a few abstract pattern stones and figure stones, the remaining display is arranged by themes; four wall cases are installed with



"Jazz"—Abstract Pattern Stone—Eel River, California.

stones suggesting the *Four Seasons*, while two of the long bench displays are devoted to opposite ecosystems—*By the Sea* and *Desert Visions*.

Jim shared his insights on collecting and appreciating viewing stones on Sunday, September 7, when he presented *A Collector's Passion: From "Catching the Stone" to Sharing the View*. On October 11, Jim will conduct a workshop for children to learn how to display a viewing stone in a tray (registration required at



Collecting in the Yuha desert of California: Sachiko Dennis, Kathleen Emerson-Dell, Alice and Jim Greaves with their dog Taka.

www.usna.gov/Education/events.html). That same day, Jim and Alice will give a Gallery Talk entitled *Viewing Stones and the Art of Display*.

If you can't make it to the exhibit itself, photos of the stones will be on the NBF website after the exhibits opens. Please see them at <http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/exhibits.html>. A catalogue will be available for purchase at the U.S. National Arboretum gift shop during the exhibition. It can be purchased online after December 1st at www.americanviewingstones.org.



"Panda & Bamboo"—Embedded-image Stones—Oceanside, California/Merced River, California.

Another Viewing Stone Event International Stone Appreciation Symposium

By Glenn Reusch

The viewing stone exhibit "*Beyond the Black Mountain*", which features stones from the collection of **Jim and Alice Greaves**, has many people thinking about viewing stones, *suiseki*, Chinese scholar's rocks, and similar stones. We are most fortunate that the original Japanese benefactors of the Museum included six *suiseki* with their generous donation of bonsai. That gift has borne fruit, as collecting

viewing stones is becoming a popular and expanding hobby for many bonsai enthusiasts. It is also attracting those people who admire bonsai but lack the conditions for its cultivation.

The organizers of the fourth biennial International Stone Appreciation Symposium, **Sean Smith, Jim Doyle, Arthur Skolnik, Marty Schmalenberg, William Valavanis** and I, are enthusiastic stone collectors and we hope to present a program that will expand every participant's enjoyment of viewing stones.

The dates are October 2–5, 2008 and the place is Grantville, Pennsylvania. Headliners this year include: **Seiji Morimae** (Japan); **I. C. Su** (Taiwan); **Peter Warren** (England); **Kemin Hu** (Massachusetts); and **Xiaoshan Yang** (Indiana). Eight other speakers will also teach and sometimes entertain us. In addition there will be three exhibits: a special exhibit from the personal collection



Seiji Morimae of Japan, presenter at the Symposium.



Italian stone, "Old Man".

of **Jim Hayes**; a main exhibit of stones from the collections of the speakers and organizers; and a registrant's exhibit that will display one stone from each attendee. Workshops, vendors, critiques, a banquet, an auction and raffles are all

continued on page 2

Chrysanthemums Bloom

By Amy Forsberg

Last year to mark the Japanese Chrysanthemum Festival the Museum held a Chrysanthemum Moon exhibit of chrysanthemum stones, autumn kusamono and related art work, along with a modest display of specimen chrysanthemums.



Flower of Chrysanthemum 'Evening Glow'.

This year from October 1 through November 15th there will be a larger show of these special flowers in the Courtyard to complement the viewing stone exhibit, *Beyond the Black Mountain* (through the 13th of October), the Autumn Ikebana Exhibit (October 18 & 19) and the Autumn Bonsai Exhibit (October 25–November 16).

What do we think when we hear the word “chrysanthemum” or the shorthand “mum”? The first thing we are likely to picture is the ubiquitous cushion mum that is available at every garden center, grocery store and hardware store as soon as the weather turns cool. As lovely as these may be, they are just one segment of a larger group of plants with a very rich history.

As far back as the 15th Century B.C.E. the chrysanthemum, of which all parts are edible, was cultivated in China as a medicinal herb. The chrysanthemum is considered a symbol of nobility in China, where it is known as ‘ju’.

It made it’s way to Japan around the 8th century A.D, where it is known as ‘kiku’. Its prominence in Japanese culture is reflected by its depiction in the official crest of the Emperor. Japan also has a National Chrysanthemum Day and annual chrysanthemum festivals are celebrated throughout the country each fall.

Dutch explorers to Japan introduced the flowers to Europe during the 18th century. Our name, ‘chrysanthemum’,

bestowed by Carl Linnaeus, comes from the Greek word for gold, which is a reflection of the flower’s original color.

The earliest illustrations of mums show them as small, yellow daisy-like flowers. Out of these humble origins, thousands of cultivars have been bred in a wide spectrum of colors ranging from white through all shades of yellow, orange, red and pink. There is also a wide range of flower forms, which have been codified by the National Chrysanthemum Society into 13 different classes. The flowers of many of these varieties have been bred to be larger than that of a typical cushion mum.

But there are techniques of cultivation that help make each flower even larger still. Plants are ‘disbudded’ repeatedly during the late summer to concentrate the plant’s energies into making just a few very large flowers. Plants must also be staked and restaked during the growing season to keep the stems straight and upright. Regular fertilizing is also required to help support the rapid development of such large flowers.

Here at the Museum we have been following these practices to ensure a spectacular display for the fall show. So we are most pleased to be able to have these amazing flowers in pots all around the museum courtyard this autumn as part of a long tradition that bridges East and West.



Please renew your membership now so that you will continue to receive future issues of the NBF Bulletin. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. You can send either a check or credit card information (name, number, expiration date, and email address).

Categories of Support:

Basic	\$35
Student	\$15
Organization	\$50
Contributor	\$50 to \$99
Sponsor	\$100 to \$249
Patron	\$250 to \$999
Benefactor	Over \$1,000

*Thank you for your support
of the National Bonsai &
Penjing Museum.*



Chrysanthemums on display at the H. William Merritt Gate to the Kato Family Stroll Garden in Autumn 2007.