



Celebration of the Chrysanthemum

By Kathleen Emerson-Dell, Assistant Curator



Bairei's 100 Chrysanthemums (Bairei Kiku Hyakushu). Illustrated by Kono Bairei (1844–1895), Published 1891–96.

In traditional lunar calendars of East Asian countries, the ninth month is known as the “Chrysanthemum Moon.” This a time when most other flowers—with the exception of chrysanthemums—wither under the onslaught of frost and icy winds. In 2007 the ninth lunar moon corresponded roughly to the month of October in our Gregorian calendar.

The chrysanthemum is native to China and it was first mentioned in Chinese texts dating back to the 7th century B.C. Its long history of cultivation there, as well as in Japan, resulted in thousands of different varieties of splendid color and unusual form. Originally noted for health-giving properties, wild chrysanthemums were first used in traditional Chinese medicine. Drinking chrysanthemum wine on the 9th day of the 9th month was believed to prolong life because the flower symbolized endurance. In Japan this auspicious day was celebrated as

the Chrysanthemum Festival—one of five sacred festivals observed by the Emperor and his court. Throughout the month they drank warmed sake with floating chrysanthemum petals, wrote poems about the flowers, and purified their bodies with the dew collected from the petals.

Taking the chrysanthemum as our theme for this autumn, we celebrated the noble flower

in many ways. **The Chrysanthemum Moon Exhibit** featured the chrysanthemum stones of China and Japan, along with autumn kusamono and artwork. It also gave us a chance to exhibit one of our library’s old Japanese woodblock-printed books, *Bairei’s 100*



Chrysanthemum Stone. Hunan Province, China. Gift of Kemin Hu.

Chrysanthemums. The installation was augmented by loans of artwork and stones from many friends of the Museum—notably, **Kemin Hu, Tom Elias, Chris Cochrane, Stephen Moran** and **Janet Lanman**. In addition, Kemin Hu gave a presentation on Chinese stone appreciation, and Dr. Elias lectured on the mysteries of chrysanthemum stones.

To complement the indoor exhibit, we grew specimen chrysanthemums for display outside in containers. The plants were painstakingly trained over a number of months. They were staked and disbudded to focus all the energy of the plant on developing large, often single flowers. This work was done primarily by Arboretum staff, **Amy Forsberg** and **Chris Carley**, who transformed the Museum courtyard into a showcase for these traditionally cultivated blooms.



Chrysanthemums in courtyard: C. ‘St. Tropez’ & C. ‘Lili Gallon’.

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December 2007

Dear Member of the National Bonsai Foundation,

One of the fascinations of bonsai is that a well-maintained bonsai will often outlive its owner and, through the emotional impact of the bonsai's character, perpetuate his or her spirit into the future. On a larger scale, this is what the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum means to many admirers of bonsai. For them, the Museum provides the legacy of their collective love of this art form which honors in a special way the beauty of nature.

Assuring this legacy of bonsai, of course, is a legacy of a different kind—the legacy of membership support, donations and bequests for which NBF is so thankful. And so, as 2007 comes to a close, we take a moment to appreciate and embrace the spirit of benefactors like **Mary Mrose** (1910–2003) and **Howard Vanzant** (1915–2006) who directed their legacies to bring about vast improvements to the Museum for the benefit of us all—present and future lovers of bonsai.

During the past year we celebrated our 25th anniversary in support of the Museum. This year we also made a concerted effort to increase our membership. We are very grateful to all of you who have joined NBF during this past year, and we thank those of you who continue to support generously this National Treasure.

If you have not yet sent in your membership contribution for 2008, please do this now so that you will continue to be a member of the Museum community. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience, and the 2008 Exhibits and Programs Poster/Brochure will be sent to you as a small gift of our appreciation for your support.

Thank you and very Best Wishes for this Holiday Season.

Felix B. Laughlin
President

First National Bonsai Exhibition

By William N. Valavanis

For eight decades the Japanese have supported their national show of bonsai at the *Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition*. In Europe, **Danny Use** has sponsored and received excellent support throughout Europe for the *Ginkgo Award Show*. We need an exhibition here in the United States to highlight the beauty and artistry of bonsai throughout our country. People in the United States have talked about and wanted a National Bonsai Exhibition for many years, but the logistics, financial and organizational work are difficult.

After long and careful consideration, I have decided to produce the First National Bonsai Exhibition in celebration of the 30th anniversary of *International BONSAI*, the first and only professional bonsai magazine published in the United States. Bonsai professionals and businesses from across the world are financially assisting in sponsoring the National Bonsai Exhibition and bonsai organizations from Japan and the United States are also supporting this event.

The First National Bonsai Exhibition will be held on October 11–12, 2008 in Rochester, New York in the historic Monroe Community Hospital Auditorium. Over 200 museum-quality bonsai from private collections will be artistically displayed.

The main objective is to display some of the finest bonsai of our country and to promote fellowship between individuals who have the same love and passion for bonsai. The focus of this event is on the beauty and majesty of individual bonsai masterpieces so the world can see the high level of the art in the United States.

After judging the National Exhibition on Saturday, over \$10,000 and awards will be presented at the award banquet in the evening. **Kathy Shaner** and **Suthin Sukolosvisit** will be presenting continuous demonstrations so visitors can take a break from studying the bonsai. A few professional vendors will be providing their bonsai and products for visitors.

The timing of this premier exhibition allows visitors to also visit the Finger Lakes Wine region and Niagara Falls while enjoying the brilliant autumn leaf colors for which picturesque Upstate New York is famous.

Now is the time for everyone to get together for a weekend to share their beau-

ty of bonsai with others so the world can see the current high level of the art in the United States. A commemorative album will be published with professional photos of the displayed bonsai. Please consider displaying your finest bonsai in this historic event and submit a photo for the selection process. Transportation and financial assistance are available for safe transportation to and from the National Exhibition for people living long distances from Rochester.

For information on the details for submitting a photo of your bonsai for the selection process, venue, hotels, awards, vendors, demonstrations and sponsors visit www.internationalbonsai.com.

For additional questions or if you like the concept of a National Bonsai Exhibition in the United States and would like to support this event financially please contact William N. Valavanis at WNV@internationalbonsai.com.



CURATORS CORNER Shade Cloth

By Jim Hughes

In the last NBF Bulletin, I discussed some of the factors that the Museum staff weighs when watering the trees in the collections. Even with these conscientious watering procedures, some of the trees don't stay as hydrated as we would like. As a result, in 2008 we are changing some of our shade cloths used in the pavilions from 30% to 50% and even 60% shade in some cases. We also plan to shade more areas of the pavilions.

It may be global warming. It may be heat build up from some of the pavement improvements we have made in the past few years. It may just be a couple of hot summers in a row. In any case, the pavilions are definitely hotter than we would like them to be on some days during the summer. Taking measures to water down the benches, or place some trees in more



Volunteers adjusting shade cloth.

protected micro climates have not prevented some leaf damage.

In 2008 we look forward to having additional and heavier shade cloth in

place. The added benefit will be cooler pavilions not only for the trees but for you when you visit us.

Museum Notes

- ▶ Assistant Curator **Aarin Packard** will marry **Emily Burch** in Southern California on New Year's Eve. Following a family tradition started by his Dad, he will present the bride with two bonsai as a wedding gift.



Aarin Packard, dressed in a Kendo outfit, gives a Halloween Day tour to a school group.

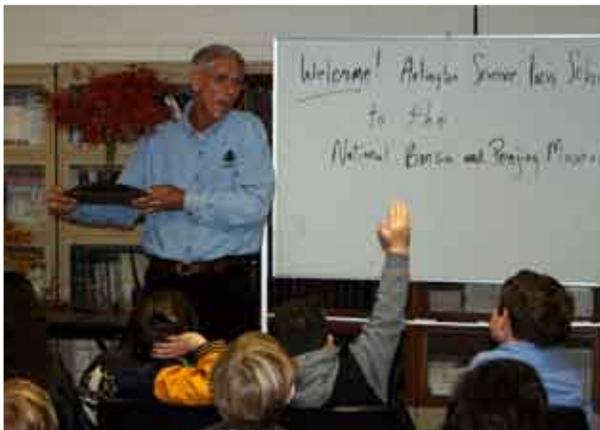
- ▶ Beginning January 2, 2008 Museum hours will be expanded by one half hour. The new hours that the Museum will be open are **10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** The Museum will also be closed on the following holidays: Christmas, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday (January 21) and Washington's Birthday (February 18).

- ▶ **Amy Forsburg** is the new gardener for the Museum. She is a native of Maryland, with a B.A. in Dramatic Arts from St. Mary's College of Maryland and 7 years of experience as a theatre costumer in Washington, D.C. In 2001 Amy changed careers and entered the field of horticulture. She was a full-time intern in the Arboretum's National Herb Garden for one year and completed 24 credits of horticulture classes at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School. Other gardening jobs followed, including 2 years at the U.S. Botanic Garden in downtown Washington, D.C. In 2006, she returned to the National Arboretum as a gardener in the Asian Collections. Now, she is thrilled to work in the Museum and is looking forward to learning about the world of bonsai.



Amy Forsburg.

- ▶ On November 15th students from **Arlington Science Focus School** in Virginia visited the Arboretum to make a presentation to a panel of experts, including three astronauts, on the lunar plant growth chambers that they designed and built. Following their presentation they visited the Museum and peppered Curator Jim Hughes with questions on the growth of trees in small pots.



Jim Hughes with students.

- ▶ The Museum was the lead feature in a special program, "*Unusual Attractions—The WETA Guide*" produced by the local public television station and broadcast in Washington, D.C.



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