



## Capitol Hill Steps Up to Provide Assistance to Haiti



The recent catastrophic earthquake that hit Haiti was truly devastating, affecting millions of already impoverished people. They are in desperate need of food, water, temporary shelter and medical supplies. Capitol Hill residents are coming through with donations to show the support of the community, and to hopefully make a real difference in the lives of the Haitian people.

In addition to the many organizations accepting contributions, our favorite local hardware store, Frager's Hardware, has started a fun raising drive to make donating as easy as possible. They are offering to match all donations up to \$5,000 received in their store through February. In addition, the True Value Company, of which Frager's is affiliated, will match the store's total funds dollar for dollar, so each individual donation will have triple the impact. To make a contribution, simply drop your donation into the designated paint cans throughout the store.

As a way to add an extra incentive to make a donation, Frager's is also collecting used books from their patrons, to generate more buzz. If you are still deciding how much to contribute, sift through the piles of books that have been collected in the paint store, and buy them for what you think they're worth. Washington, D.C., our nation's capitol, is showing its ability to help those in need. Consider making a donation to this humanitarian effort today.

**Frager's Hardware**  
 1115 Pennsylvania Ave SE  
 Washington, DC 2003  
 202-543-6157  
[www.fragersdc.com](http://www.fragersdc.com)



THEBRASSKNOB.COM

DC's finest selection of architectural antiques including Chandeliers, Sconces, Stained and Decorative Glass, Garden Ornaments, Tiles, Hardware, Ironwork, Fireplace Mantels, and Much More...



**Anniversary Sale!**  
 February 5-21, 2010  
 All Items 10% to 30% off



The Brass Knob  
 Architectural Antiques

2311 18th Street NW | Washington, DC 20009  
 202/332-3370 | Fax 202/332-5594  
 Open Mon-Sat 10:30-6 | Sunday 12-5

Major credit cards accepted.

A D A M S M O R G A N

## NEWMAN GALLERY & CUSTOM FRAMES

*Serving Capitol Hill since 1984*



Rotating exhibits of local artists

*"High quality design and preservation framing are our top priorities"*

Custom designed mats • Wide selection • Work done on premises

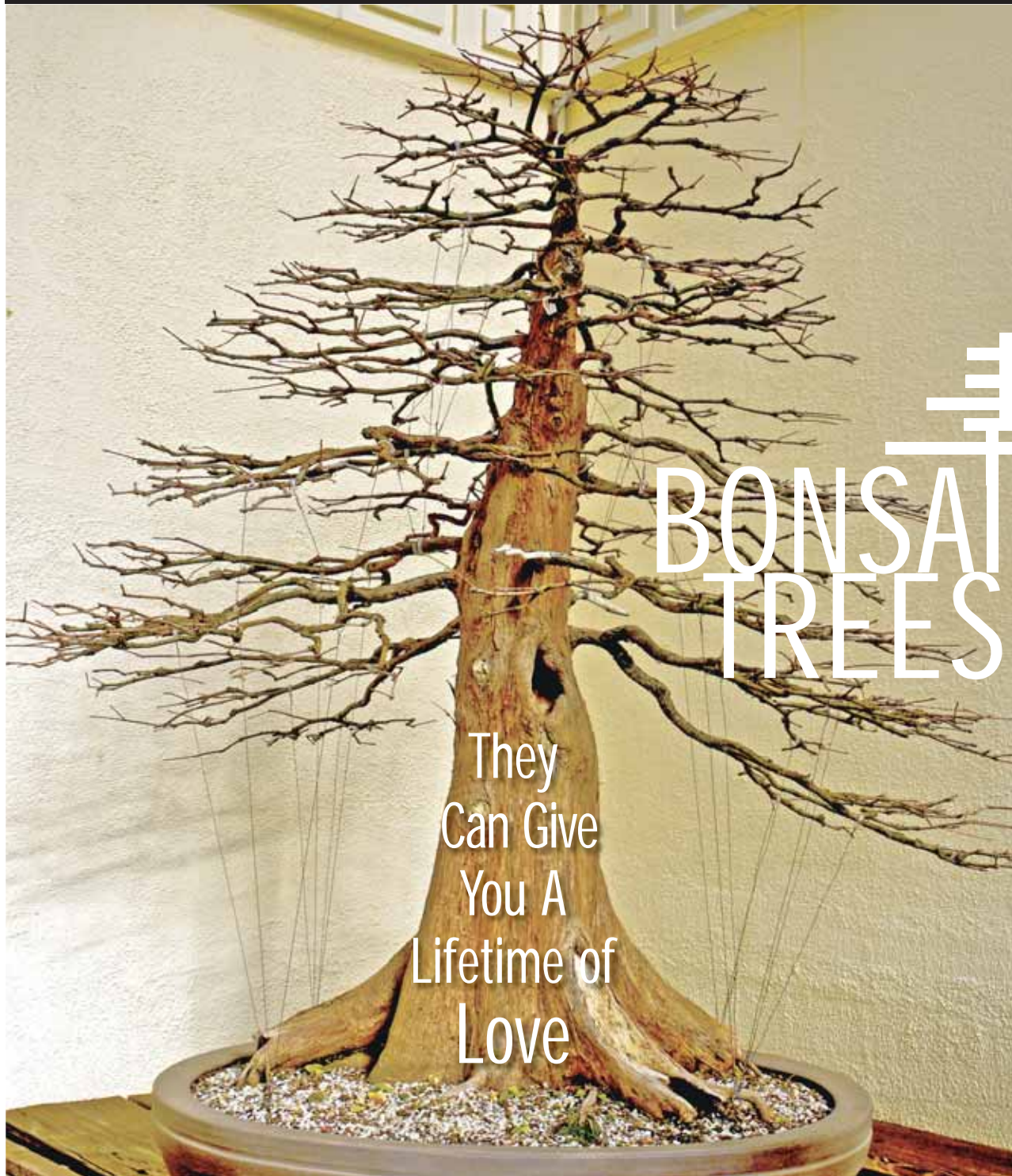
513 11th St., SE (Eastern Market Metro)  
 Tue.-Sat. 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
 202.544.7577

[www.newmangallery.com](http://www.newmangallery.com)



# Homes & Gardens

Bonsai Trees  
Ask Judith: Go! Green!  
Indoor Green  
Dear Garden Lady



To help the bonsai tree create its desired shape, guide wires are sometimes attached. The wires are left in place sometimes for 3-4 months, or for some trees as long as a year.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY RINDY O'BRIEN

In February, we all think about love and relationships during the annual Valentine's Day blitz. Roses of all kinds are flown in from around the world, lasting a few days before their beauty has wilted away. It is estimated that 189 million stems of roses are sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day. But, for a special group of plant en-

thusiasts, this one-day attention to long-stemmed flowers doesn't begin to compare to their love affair with the ancient art of bonsai. Their special beauties may be hundreds years old, having been passed down from generation to generation, and they only get better with time. Of course, the training of the tree may require some

guide wires to be attached to help the branches or trunks bend to the desired shape. "The placement of branches, styling, and the pot all convey deep symbolism and reverence for nature," state the experts at the National Arboretum, which is home to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

First time visitors to the National

Bonsai & Penjing Museum at the National Arboretum all have the same “wow” reaction when they walk through the moon gate and into the serene setting of the bonsai gardens and pavilions. To stand before a tree that survived Hiroshima, view a miniature Bald Cypress forest, or watch a volunteer carefully prune an ancient trident maple, is awe inspiring.

## The History

The trees or plants used in the bonsai process are often as common



Aarin Packard, Assistant Bonsai Curator at the US National Arboretum, prunes fall leaves from one of the museum's bonsai trees.

as a maple or ficus tree. There are hundreds of species that can be pruned and trained to stay in miniature form. The Chinese are credited with being the first to grow a single tree in a pot thousands of years ago.

Zen Buddhist monks carried the trees to Japan in approximately 1195 AD, and over time the bonsai trees became symbols of wealth for the aristocratic classes. Many different styles and forms of bonsai have been created and nurtured over the centuries. For the Japanese, bonsai represents a fusion of strong ancient beliefs with the Eastern philosophies of the harmony between man, the soul and nature.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper ran an article in 1899 entitled, “Japanese Outdone in Dwarfing Trees, Hugo Mulertt Grows Pigmy Maples...” which is one of the first public notices about bonsai hobbyists in America. Interest in the bonsai traditions became more popular as more Asian families emigrated to the



Pots can be filled with a number of trees to create a miniature forest.

US, especially on the west coast, and as returning GIs from World War II brought back pictures and hands-on knowledge picked up during their tours of duty.

## World Class Bonsais at National Arboretum

In fact, the current curator of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, Jack Sustic, started his love for bonsai while serving in the US Army in Korea. Bitten by the bonsai bug, he returned to the states and enrolled in a horticultural program to get his degree. He has been a part of the bonsai scene ever since. Jack had recently returned from Japan when I met him in the museum to learn more about these

national treasures.

The Bonsai Museum was the first anywhere in the world, and it's also the largest and most comprehensive one in the western world. The Arboretum has the finest collection of mature bonsai outside of Japan. Jack says that “in Japan and China the bonsai plants are kept by families in private residences, and are not often displayed in public. So to be able to display so many different kinds of bonsai from so many different countries is truly an amazing feat.”

The idea for the museum came from Dr. John Creech, the third director of the Arboretum, during the preparation for our country's Bicentennial in 1976. Dr. Creech had been a plant

Moon gates were created by the Chinese as beautiful entrances into gardens of the rich upper class. The National Bonsai & Penjing Museum has produced its own moon gate to bring the 200,000 annual visitors into their gardens and pavilions.



explorer working in Japan for the US Department of Agriculture and had made many friends in the Japanese bonsai community. He believed that by sharing the bonsai with America, it would seal the friendship between the two nations. The new Japanese Pavilion at the Arboretum opened in July of 1976 with 53 trees and six viewing stones donated by Japan.

Today, the museum is the most visited site at the Arboretum with over 200,000 visitors yearly. In 1982, The National Bonsai Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established to sustain and support the public museum. The Foundation has over 400 members in all fifty states, and internationally. Many members are leading bonsai experts that not only provide financial support, but also provide advice to the curators, and are often involved in masterpiece displays and educational programs. Basic membership begins at \$35 a year, and you can find more information at [www.bonsai-nbf.org](http://www.bonsai-nbf.org).



The sign for the Museum on the grounds of the US National Arboretum is easy to locate just past the Administrative building.

## Getting Started

Many enthusiasts begin by being introduced to bonsai through a family member. Capitol Hill resident, Assistant Curator, Aarin Packard picked up his interest from his father while growing up in California. He started his own trees at a Capitol Hill group house, where he still keeps them even though he now lives down the street in a new home. He has been caring for his plants for three years after coming to the Washington DC area to complete a master's degree in Museum

Studies at George Washington University. "I saw the job listed when I was graduating and decided I could turn my hobby into a job," says Aarin. He reports that "growing bonsai trees on Capitol Hill is only challenging in finding enough sunlight."

Jack and Aarin agree that caring for a bonsai plant is a lifetime commitment and not for everyone. On the other hand, children to adults can easily learn the tricks of the trade and create and care for a bonsai tree. The stories of passing the care of a tree to the next generation are part of the appeal of bonsai. Caring for a bonsai tree requires daily attention and much patience, but it can help a person step away from their busy schedule to take care of their bonsai trees and plants. This type of gardening provides a natural form of stress relief and peace of mind.

The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum will be offering two all day classes in the spring that teach you how to create and care for a bonsai plant. Also, April 30 through May 2 on the National Arboretum grounds is the annual Bonsai Festival, which is another great way to get started. Local bonsai clubs meet in Washington, Virginia, and Maryland and are happy to introduce the art to a newcomer. Here are just some Bonsai Resources to get you started:

- Potomac Bonsai Association- [www.potomacbonsai.com](http://www.potomacbonsai.com)
- National Bonsai Foundation – [www.bonsai-nbf.org](http://www.bonsai-nbf.org)
- American Bonsai Society – [www.absbonsai.org](http://www.absbonsai.org)
- US National Arboretum – [www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov)

*Rindy O'Brien is the former executive director of the Friends of the National Arboretum and has enjoyed the quiet and beauty of the Bonsai Museum for years. If you haven't visited, winter is a great time to view the trees. The Arboretum is located at 3500 New York Avenue, N.E. and is just 3 miles from Lincoln Park. ★*



**WHERE DREAM KITCHENS COME TO LIFE.**  
FREE MEASURE AND DESIGN SERVICES | FINANCING AVAILABLE

From cabinets to countertops to hardware and tiles, Bradco and Bertch will help you create the kitchen you've always dreamed of. Stop by our showroom or visit us at [BradcoSupply.com](http://BradcoSupply.com)

**HYATTSVILLE | 301.779.4440**  
3404 Kenilworth Avenue



**Time For A Makeover**  
[www.cherylcorsorson.com](http://www.cherylcorsorson.com)

**Gardens** **Landscapes**

**Cheryl Corson Design L.L.C.**

202-494-5054 [cheryl@cherylcorsorson.com](mailto:cheryl@cherylcorsorson.com)

Our website just got a whole lot better!!  
[www.capitalcommunitynews.com](http://www.capitalcommunitynews.com)

Let's imagine these possibilities together.



Wentworth, Inc. winner of 6 NARI METRO DC CHAPTER awards

Architecture | Interiors | Construction



Fine Home Remodeling  
240.395.0705 • [wentworthstudio.com](http://wentworthstudio.com)