

North Carolina Arboretum's Bonsai Collection in Asheville Features Azaleas Among Other Appalachian species

Nan Chase — Boone, North Carolina

Under the leadership of North Carolina Arboretum bonsai curator Arthur Joura, a 1,000 year-old horticultural tradition has been brought to the mountains of western North Carolina. An outdoor bonsai display garden opening October 9, 2005, will be the new home for the Arboretum's distinctive bonsai collection, which has recently become the focus of national attention.

This diverse collection of more than 100 display-quality trees and over 100 plants in training is distinctive because it features many species of native Appalachian plants, including azaleas like the exquisite flame azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*). Joura used Asian azaleas (*R. kiusianum*) to mimic the richly textured rhododendrons that didn't quite work as bonsai.

The \$1.8 million bonsai garden, funded through private donations, is currently under construction and will feature plant displays distributed throughout upper and lower courtyards connected by a winding path. The landscape in the garden features more than 100 tons of native stone. A pavilion will house demonstrations, exhibits, workshops, plant storage, and restrooms. The North Carolina Arboretum is a public institution, open year-round.

On October 8-9, the 10th annual Carolina Bonsai Expo takes place at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. For information see www.ncarboretum.org.

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An example of bonsai is this seasonal interest planting featuring 'Coral Bells' as the focal point, underplanted with Kingsville Boxwood, *Buxus macrophylla 'Kingsville Dwarf'* and a *Cotoneaster*. The planting was done in 2000 and is 22" wide by 22" tall.

(Photograph courtesy of The North Carolina Arboretum, Arthur Joura photographer.)

Daniel Boone Native Gardens and as chair of the Tree Board in Boone, North Carolina. Her work has appeared in The American Gardener, Our State, and Old House Journal.

[This past spring, L. Malcolm Clark, past president of the ASA and

owner/operator of Chandler Gardens in Southern Pines, North Carolina, donated a dozen very old satsuki to this project for training as bonsai, Ed. Thanks to Bob Stelloh for this information.]