

Article on Destination Asia

Destination Asia – By the Numbers

The Destination Asia Festival at Morton Arboretum was held on August 5, 6 and 7. We participated in this first full-blown event since the pandemic caused two years of cancellations, although the Arb did schedule a one-day event outdoors last year.

- We had 19 members display a total of 56 trees at the event.
- Both BC Bonsai and Phil Malhiot were vendors at the show.
- As usual, we set up the Sycamore Room on Thursday and had trees delivered on Friday.
- The Sycamore Room was open for viewing for about 2 ½ hours on Friday night and we had at least 416 people view the show in that short time based upon People's Choice votes cast. A few visitors, but very few, chose not to vote.
- Chris Baker did an excellent commentary on each tree on Friday evening. We videoed that commentary and should present that to the society at a future meeting. Pictures of the displayed trees should be on the PSBS website.
- Chris awarded the Best in Show to Jennifer Price's Lodgepole Pine. Second place went to Dan Turner's Japanese White Pine, which also won the People's Choice trophy, getting more than 1 in 7 of the votes for the People's Choice.
- On Saturday, we had 653 votes during the 7 ½ hours we were open.
- Dan Kosta did the Saturday morning demonstration in the courtyard, styling a juniper. That tree was offered in a raffle to the general public and was won by Jan G. of Darien. She is a regular at the Arb and loved winning the tree. We gave her a packet of material about care prepared by Nick DiBattista. We may hear more from her.
- During Saturday afternoon, Chris Baker styled a red pine from the Grow Plot/Char's backyard as a demonstration. That tree will be raffled at the October General Membership meeting.
- Sunday worked out to be a little different. The Arb called early in the morning and told us that it was cancelling Destination Asia that day due to the threat of thunderstorms, which never really materialized. We were allowed to stay, because we were inside, resulting in 332 ballots cast for People's Choice. At first, we expected to close early, but there was a very steady stream of visitors and so we stayed the entire scheduled time.
- Larry Magee was scheduled to do the demonstration in the courtyard on Sunday afternoon, but instead styled a blue spruce in the Sycamore Room. That tree should be in the General Membership meeting raffle in November.
- On Sunday, we talked to the people at the Information and Membership Desks at the Arboretum and they were very appreciative of us being there all day as many people came to the Arb expecting to see Destination Asia, without knowing about the cancellation. The desks were very happy to have our show to refer those people to, so they were not entirely disappointed.
- We presented four workshops at the Thornhill Education Center on the west side of the Arboretum. Three were taught by Jim Beck and Linda Camp at BC Bonsai and one by Jennifer Price. The workshops were for Brazilian Rain Trees, Junipers, Fukien Tea, and Chinese Elms.

There were 20 workshop spots purchased. The Chinese Elm workshop was sold out and the Fukien Tea almost sold out.

- Teardown went smoothly and all materials are now safely stored in our storage unit until next year.

All in all, a very enjoyable show. My favorite job is to work the doors in the Sycamore Room and I heard many rave reviews of the show by our visitors. There were a few glitches, largely because we had not run the show for three years and had forgotten some of the problems which may arise. We will fix those spots for next year, with the 2023 festival already scheduled for August 4, 5, and 6, 2023. We are working on lining up our Guest Judge now.

Thank you again to all the exhibitors, vendors, workers, demo volunteers, and workshop teachers. A special thanks to Chris Baker, who proved to be a great choice for a Guest Judge. He was always positive in his critique, which was important to me as a first-time exhibitor. Congratulations to the winners, who had amazing trees. This is an all-hands-on-deck project for the society. We could not do it without your time and efforts. I am excited to see what happens next year!

Craig Cronquist