

## Morgan County Master Gardeners Class

February 7, 2008

### Chinese New Year "Year of the Rat"



#### FOOD

Traditionally, the Chinese New Year celebration is 15 days long and starts on a new moon and ends on a full moon. Each day of the celebration has special meanings. Even the foods served carry certain significance. For example:

**Dumplings = Wealth**  
**Noodles = Longevity**  
**Whole Fish = Togetherness and Abundance**  
**Seaweed = Good Luck**

Offer your guests a tray of candies. This is called a "tray of togetherness" according to Chinese tradition and an arrangement of eight dazzling confections will guarantee that the New Year will start of sweetly.

## Indianapolis Bonsai Club

The Indianapolis Bonsai Club meets monthly at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 2450 Shelby Street, Indianapolis IN 46203, on the First Wednesday of each Month at 7:00 p.m. For information, visit the Indianapolis Bonsai website at [www.indybonsaid.org](http://www.indybonsaid.org). The January newsletter lists a complete 2008 calendar of events, and states that visitors are welcome at meetings.



*Courtiers and Guests,  
Chinese art, c706*

This artwork depicts an early bonsai demonstration.



2008 US Postage Stamp – Chinese New Year  
Red Lanterns are used for luck by the Chinese.

### Chinese Dumpling Recipe

'Pot stickers are one of the most popular types of Chinese dumplings. This recipe includes a dipping sauce and instructions on making the dough.

### Dumpling Dough

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup boiling water
- Filling:
- 8 ounces celery cabbage (Napa cabbage)
- 3 tsp salt, divided
- 1 pound lean ground pork
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green onions, with tops
- 1 TB white wine
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Dash white pepper

### Dipping Sauce

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Other:
- 2 - 4 tablespoons vegetable oil

Cut the cabbage across into thin strips. Mix with 2 teaspoons salt and set aside for 5 minutes. Squeeze out the excess moisture.

In a large bowl, mix the celery cabbage, pork, green onions, wine, cornstarch, the remaining 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon sesame oil, and the white pepper.

In a bowl, mix the flour and 1 cup boiling water until a soft dough forms. Knead the dough on a lightly flour surface about 5 minutes, or until smooth.

Divide the dough in half. Shape each half into a roll 12 inches long and cut each roll into 1/2-inch slices.

Roll 1 slice of dough into a 3-inch circle and place 1 tablespoon pork mixture in the center of the circle. Lift up the edges of the circle and pinch 5 pleats up to create a pouch to encase the mixture. Pinch the top together. Repeat with the remaining slices of dough and filling.

Heat a wok or nonstick skillet until very hot. Add 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, tilting the wok to coat the sides. If using a nonstick skillet, add 1/2 tablespoon vegetable oil. Place 12 dumplings in a single layer in the wok and fry 2 minutes, or until the bottoms are golden brown.

Add 1/2 cup water. Cover and cook 6 to 7 minutes, or until the water is absorbed. Repeat with the remaining dumplings.

To make a dipping sauce, in a small bowl, mix the soy sauce with 1 teaspoon sesame oil. Serve with the dumplings.

## How to Grow Bonsai

REF:

[http://ny.essortment.com/growbonsai\\_pc\\_b.htm](http://ny.essortment.com/growbonsai_pc_b.htm)

Bonsai are not genetically dwarfed plants. They are created from nearly any tree or shrub species and remain small through pot confinement and crown and root pruning. Some specific species are more sought after for use as bonsai material. This is because they have characteristics

that make them appropriate for the smaller design arrangements of bonsai. There are many different ways to acquire, cultivate and grow bonsai. Several of the most common include: growing from seed, cuttings, air layering and grafting.

When choosing a plant look for a tree with many branches; a wide trunk, preferably wider at the base; the leaves of the plant should be naturally small; the lowest branches should start close to the ground; and, to add the illusion of age to the tree, try to find a plant with radiating roots present.

When choosing a pot for the plant, aim for shallow pots unless the tree you choose has a thick trunk – the wider the trunk the deeper the pot needed. The pots must have drainage holes, and pots that have been glazed on the inside prevent the plant from breathing.

After you have chosen a plant it is a good idea to plant it either in a large pot or in the ground until it has matured. This will speed up the growing process and give the roots greater strength. To increase the mass of branches, prune the tree continuously.

When you feel the tree has matured enough to be styled into a bonsai, prepare the pot by covering its drainage holes with insect screening or thin fabric. This prevents the soil from clogging up the holes when you water the plant.

When you fill the pot with potting mixture choose a mixture for outdoor plants. The Bonsai is not an indoor plant. The tree will not be as strong once it has been potted, so style the tree before you remove it from its location.

When you un-pot the plant from its initial location, get a stick and loosen the soil from around the roots. Scrape up to a third to a half of the old soil away. Using a pair of scissors, trim the roots that are exposed outside of the existing soil. You can now place the tree in the pot, filling the rest of the pot with your potting mixture.

After decorating the top of the potting mixture with pebbles, moss or fine bark, you are now ready to style the plant. You can shape the trunk of the tree by using wire. Wind a thin piece of wire around the trunk of the tree and to the branches you wish to shape. Bend the tree gently allowing the wire to hold it in place. The wire can be removed from the tree when the branches do not spring back if the wire is released. With continuous pruning and trimming, your artistic talents will show as the tree matures. You have now created a Bonsai