



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

Volume 32 Number 4 Internet Edition

April 2003

April Meeting

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society will be held Wednesday, April 2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park. Refreshments will be served beginning at 7 p.m. Be sure to come early so you can visit with other members before the meeting begins.

The April program will be presented by two of HBS' long-time members: Pete Parker and Donald Green.

You're all ready to walk out the door for that special field trip...you have permission to be on the property—so what's left to do to make the outing successful? What do you take? Come hear Pete discuss what advanced planning/preparations are necessary to ensure success. The vitality of the collected specimens is the goal, and Pete's knowledge is valuable to all serious bonsai enthusiasts.

The second part of our April program will be Donald's presentation on the preparation of fertilizer cakes. Donald will share his expertise, techniques and the ingredients necessary to create cakes that promote healthy bonsai.

There's sure to be a great deal of valuable information shared at the April meeting. Come join us! Learn more about making your next collecting trip successful, and your next batch of fertilizer cakes a valuable contribution to the well being of your trees.

See you at the meeting!

--Ken

Study Group: April 12

Our study group will meet Saturday, April 12, at 9 a.m. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, Bissonet at Hillcroft (south of 59 and east of Fondren). Everyone is welcome--beginners and seasoned veterans. We all have a good time.

--Buddy, Donald

Spring Bonsai Show April 5-6

The HBS spring show will be April 5-6 in the Houston Rose Garden Center located in Hermann Park. The show times will be 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

HBS members are encouraged to display one, or more, of their trees. We plan to have a variety of trees on exhibit, ranging from the small shohin to the larger trees that stand three to four feet. There will be an exhibit of bonsai trees developed by some of our talented younger members—children. On both days, several members will conduct demonstrations and give presentations while they work on trees. Members have volunteered to serve as hosts, to greet and answer questions of visitors. Vendor members will be available for visitors who might want to take home their own tree (s) and/or related materials. The spring show, and fall show, are indeed our opportunities to share with the Houston community our trees and our love for the bonsai art.

The set-up time for the show will be Friday night 6:30—8:00 p.m. Members may bring their trees on Friday night or early Saturday morning. It is best to bring trees on Friday night to get an early start and be a part of the fun that is involved in setting up an exhibit. The show will end on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. We would like to ask all members to leave their trees on exhibit until at least 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

--Donald

Volunteers Needed for Teas

We will need volunteers to meet and talk to people at Teas' nursery on April 12 from 9am to 3pm to tell them about the Houston Bonsai Society. Bring a tree and talk about how to care for it. The location will be at the 4400 Bellaire Blvd., which is the main store.

At the next meeting we will be asking for volunteers to come and help!

--Ken

LSBF Symposium 2003 Update

If you have not registered for the Lone Star Bonsai Federation's July symposium, don't delay. The Texas native workshop is full with four on the waiting list and the others are filling up pretty fast. Get your registrations turned in.

--Buddy

Monthly Bonsai Care

by John Miller

John Miller, who writes a monthly column for the Bonsai Society of Dallas and the Fort Worth Bonsai Society, has agreed to share his column with us. We need to make adjustments for our warmer, damper climate.

Timing is most critical for the things that you will be doing at this time of the year. Pruning and styling can be done almost at your leisure. Repotting, though best done just when the buds are showing growth, can be done any time the tree is dormant. But once the growth starts you must keep it trimmed within a couple of days span or even daily like for maples. And insects like aphids can show up and cause permanent damage in a short time.

In order to keep the internodes reasonably short, the opposite leafed species should have the central growing tip plucked as soon as it can be determined. If not done, the first internode (from the bud to the first set of new leaves) will continue to elongate, the leaves get larger and the twig will thicken also. The maple species are especially notorious in this way. Sometimes the new tip will be wrapped up in the new leaves and you should carefully open them to get the growing tip. I also do this on my oaks which have alternately growing leaves. If the plucking is not done soon enough and the twig has grown too long, you can cut it back and leave the papery looking sheathes. New buds will sprout from there also. That is not really desirable but is better than long sparse branches. Better to do the job right the first time and trim the new shoots every day as they open.

On most alternately leafed species the timing is not so critical. However if you let them go to 8-10 leaves before cutting back, you will take a lot longer to develop the tree and may have larger leaves and thicker twigs. Your tree will also look shaggy most of the time too.

On azaleas you should remove a lot of the buds. The plant usually puts on too many and the flowers are too crowded to look good. Where there are two or more buds in a cluster, remove all but one. If there are several on each branch, thin some of them. This can be done at any time during the winter right up to the bloom time in spring. Doing it sooner will save the tree some energy. Other flowering plants can also be disbudded if the flowers are large or too thick. On trees you have in development you should remove any fruit to conserve energy for the growing process.

Watch closely for insect damage as well as the onset of fungal problems. Warm humid days favor the aphid. They can show up in alarming number in a hurry. When they cover the new soft stem they can suck enough sap to stunt and disfigure the new growth. Other types that sneak up and are sometime hard to spot are the different types of scale. Spider mites will be present but usually are not in sufficient numbers to cause damage until summer. For insect control I rely on the organic foliar feed spray, 1 tablespoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, apple cider vinegar, and molasses

per gallon of water. You can spray weekly as it also feeds the tree.

My most prevalent fungal problem is the black spot on the elms and yaupon hollies. There are a couple of organic controls for fungus spores. You can use 1 tablespoon to a gallon of water of either potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). The other is a 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide. This would be using one part of 3% hydrogen peroxide to two parts of water. 3% Hydrogen peroxide can be bought at the grocery or drug store. I would suggest not using it on the tender new growth in the spring.

It is too early to repot tropical species. Most of these want to be repotted in the active growing season when the night temperatures stay above 60 degrees. Their roots don't like to grow in cool weather and you can't repot if roots don't grow.

Be sure to check your soils each day for proper water content. It is easy to assume that the soil has plenty of water when the days are cool or there has been some rain. It's too easy for a tree with full leaves to shed rainwater to the outside of the pot or for a good sun and low humidity after a front to dry the soil. I suggest that you remove most of the moss so that you can see and feel the soil in order to determine how dry it is. (Moss growing on the trunk or roots will cause the bark to rot also) An automatic watering system will be an aid but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Hand watering allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually.

Workshops are provided for you by your club officers at other places like the LSBF convention. Use them to learn bonsai, you cannot get it all from looking at pictures. Books just do not explain it well enough. To get the most from a workshop, you should prepare the material well in advance. You can usually cut the top back some and try to grow some new lower foliage to have more for the master to work with. Again most of your active club members will be willing to give some advice.

PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI STUDIO and NURSERY

Your Quality Source

**Bonsai Material, Tools, Soil, Wire,
Supplies, Pots, Bonsai Services,
Instruction, Club Programs & Seminars**

Terry & Sheila Ward

512-280-5575

Austin, Texas 78739

E-Mail: PHBonsai@aol.com

Calendar of Events

Apr. 2	Monthly Meeting of HBS
Apr. 5-6	HBS Spring Show
Apr. 12	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
Apr. 12	Shohin Society of Texas, Critique & Refinement
May 17	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
June 14	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
June 21	Shohin Society of Texas, Exhibit Trees; Sale & Swap
July 11-13	LSBF Symposium, Austin. Ted Matson and Ed Trout. Tex. Talent: Hansen, Holmes, Hubbard, Klajnowski, Padilla, Setter, Ware, Wilken. www.wimberley-tx.com/~bonsaijg/2003.html
Aug. 16	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
Sept. 13	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
Sept 20	Shohin Society of Texas, Carving & Follow Up
Oct. 11-12	HBS Fall Show
Nov. 15	Saturday Study Group, 9:00, Bayland Park
2004	
Feb. 6-8	Shohin Seminar, Ramada Inn (1-209-826-4444), Santa Nella, CA
May 21-23	LSBF State Convention, Houston. Kathy Shaner, Guy Guidry, Mary Miller

Letter from the President

Have you ever thought of being a mentor to someone in Bonsai? I was thinking if we have some members interested in being a mentor, the club can start a list of mentors. Then a person needing a mentor could contact the closest mentor to them or make arrangements at the meeting to become that person's mentor. This would help members needing help and direction. We would need both a list of mentors and a list of mentorees. This would help keep interest and knowledge alive and growing in our club.

I am also interested in the history of our club and would like to compile a short history page. If any of you have some history of the club to share, please give me an email. We can compose a small history page or pages of our club and put it in the library.

We need you, your information, knowledge and involvement. Email me or contact me at the meeting with you information and ideas. You have a voice and a place in

our activities, growth, and continued success. See you at the meeting and Spring show.

--Virgil, President

Letter to the Editor

To whom it may concern:

To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of U.S.-Japan relations this year, the Japan-America Societies and National Association of Japan-America Societies will establish a special web site. Besides links with relevant US-Japan relations sites, Japanese government sites and Japan-related organization sites, the web site will include a calendar of Japanese cultural festivals.

If your organization hosts Japanese cultural festivals, we encourage you to register them at JAS's official 150th Anniversary web site to promote local participation in those events. To register your festivals, please visit the 150th Anniversary web site at

<http://www.japanus150.org/register.html><http://www.japanus150.org/>.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Fuki Watanabe

National Association of Japan-America Societies

733 15th Street, NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20005 Tel: 202-783-4550

Fax: 202-783-4551 www.us-japan.org

The Bonsai News of Houston is a monthly publication of the Houston Bonsai Society, Inc. Copyright © 2003. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the consent of the editor or a member of the board of directors. Exceptions exist, however, for other not-for-profit and non-profit bonsai organizations or associated bonsai and bonsai nursery newsletters. HBS participates fully with reciprocation of contents and materials between other LSBF member organizations and others. Authors who submit articles for this newsletter thereby give permission to such organization to reprint.

For special requests or questions related to *The Bonsai News of Houston*, contact the Editor or the **Houston Bonsai Society, Inc., P. O. Box 540727, Houston, Texas 77254-0727, www.HoustonBonsai.com**.

The deadline for submission of articles is 8:00 p.m. the Wednesday 2 weeks before the monthly meeting. *The Bonsai News of Houston* is available by e-mail. To receive a copy by e-mail instead of regular mail, contact the editor at the address above.

Space for advertising in *The Bonsai News of Houston* can be requested by contacting the editor. Advertising rates for a business-card-sized ad (approx. 3 1/2" x 2") are \$6 per month, \$30 for 6 months and \$50 per year (12 issues). A full-page ad is \$25 per month. Rates are subject to change without notice. 3 1/2" x 2" classified ads are run free of charge for one month once per 12-month period, for noncommercial members.

Haiku

The last haiku purported to be actual computer error message in Japan:

Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

Isn't that better than "Your computer has performed an illegal operation?"
