



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

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January 2004

January Meeting--Chuck Ware

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, January 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, located at 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments will be served at 7 p.m. Be sure to come early so you can visit with other members before the meeting begins.

Chuck Ware will discuss soils, a timely topic with repotting season upon us. We'll have soil on sale (from Phil) if members are interested.

--Pete

Saturday Study Group, January 10

Our study group will meet Saturday, January 10 at 9 a.m. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet (Bissonnet at Hillcroft--south of I-59 and east of Fondren). Everyone is welcome--beginners and seasoned veterans alike. We all have a good time.

--Don, Buddy

Club Dig--January 17

I have a dig planned for Saturday, January 17, in the Addicks Reservoir area on the west side of Houston. Take I-10 West to Eldridge and go North on Eldridge to the intersection with Patterson. Plan to meet at 9:00 on Patterson right at that intersection. Do not stop along the side of Eldridge. Past experience (per Richard) is that we will find elms, Parsley Hawthorns, hornbeams, yaupon, oaks and hackberry.

See page 3, below, for the checklist I use to pack for a dig:

--Pete

New Officers; Representatives

In December the HBS membership elected the following officers and representatives:

First vice president: Pete

Secretary: Janel

Members at large: Bill, Phil

LSBF Delegate: Buddy.

LSBF Alternate: John

HBS officers also serve on the board of directors. The LSBF delegate and alternate represent HBS with the Lone Star Bonsai Federation, the Texas state bonsai organization.

Thanks to these members for agreeing to serve--or continue to serve--the HBS. Thanks also to out-going officers, Ken, Deborah and Harvey. The willingness of members such as these to give up their time and energy makes our club possible.

Membership Dues Are Due

The deadline for renewal is February 18. Renew now and not miss a single newsletter or any information about up-coming events. An individual membership is \$25.00; a family membership, \$30.00. A membership form appears at the end of this newsletter.

Kathy Shaner in Austin

Kathy Shaner will conduct her annual bonsai seminar in Austin March 20 and 21, sponsored by Persimmon Hill Bonsai. The 2004 theme is "Challenging Styles," dealing with formal upright, cascade and semi-cascade. Kathy will discuss plant selection, styling, development, potting mixes, pruning techniques, problem solving and much more. Details will be in the seminar registration to become available in mid January.

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, with its early springs, long summers, late falls and erratic winters.

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What do you do to make your task of watering easier? If you are observant, you know that some of the bonsai will dry out faster than others. By grouping these bonsai in a particular area of your winter storage, you will be more certain to get them watered when they need it and be less apt to over-water the ones that stay moist longer. After being gone for a few days, I found that 3/4 of my bonsai still had sufficient moisture but a few were quite dry. In cases like this, I prefer to hand water with a bucket and dipper so that I take time to do look at each pot.

Indoor trees will be using more water to offset the lower humidity. Soil will also be losing water faster through its surface. Be sure to watch the indoor trees for insect problems. Most plant insects love a controlled atmosphere like the indoors. Spider mites seem to get the most attention here because they do great in a low humidity and the lack of foliage spraying. Scale can be an easily overlooked source of trouble. There are usually more severe problems with plants that have been kept outdoors in summer then brought in without any treatment. Indoor trees need to be fertilized regularly and will require periodic trimming as they continue to grow through the winter.

Greenhouses are much the same as indoors. However, most greenhouses are kept more humid. The higher humidity is to the liking of aphids and fungal diseases. It may also result in your keeping the soil too moist with associated root problems.

After tending to the daily needs of your trees, take time to study one or two thoroughly each day. January is an excellent time to start, and remodeling projects that may be necessary. While the trees are dormant you have better view of the branch structure. Do any need to be moved or removed? Do any coarse branches need to be cut back to a smaller side branch for refinement? Any long straight branches need wiring to give them motion? Does the tree really need a drastic redesign? Also trim the twigs back while you have them there.

Any long warm spells during the month could activate some of the insect problems but as a rule there are no special needs to look for in January. Spraying with a dormant oil spray will kill adults, nymphs, and eggs of any trying to over-winter on your trees. Some dormant sprays can be used on new growth but better results overall will be obtained if you do it before Valentines Day. The weak lime sulfur dormant spray mentioned last month will also get fungal spores and should be done before Feb 1.

If you have your summer display and growing benches cleared, you could use the lime sulfur to disinfect that area, too. The underside of benches should be sprayed also. Might even eliminate spiders next year.

While you are doing the refinement and/or restyling as mentioned above, you may discover that you need to know more about bonsai. Look at the club calendar and see if there isn't a workshop that would help you create better bonsai. Most clubs have times that you can get advice or training, such as beginners workshops, Q&A sessions. Local bonsai nurseries may sponsor visiting artist workshops. Magazines, books and the like are great, but they are limited in how well they can cover any particular subject. Having your question answered orally with some give and take will give you a much better understanding of the topic. Also a different artist may explain in such a way that you understand it better.

As far as costs are concerned, I do not subscribe to the excuse that they charge too much. Most workshop fees are about \$25 (no material supplied). That is much less than you pay for any sporting event or even a movie nowadays (popcorn and drink included). And you get something to take home from that workshop. It won't take you very far in your car--72 miles round trip (\$25 divided by 35 cents/mile). So please get out there and learn more about our hobby.

I hate to mention any specific names but to illustrate the availability here are some. In Dallas area are Bent Tree Bonsai and BonsaiSmiths who sponsor Shane Cary each month. Austin has a scheduled beginner session and several nurseries, two of which I am familiar. Persimmon Hill sponsors Kathy Shaner and the Shohin Society meeting. MPB Bonsai Studio has regular events. Houston has study groups and some nurseries. Ft. Worth has their 4th Thursday meeting night at the garden center. All you need to do is look at your newsletter, club web site, or just ask most anybody at the meeting.

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512-280-5575 Austin, Texas 78739
E-Mail: PHBonsai@aol.com

Letter from the President

I would like to thank all the members for their active participation in the meetings and workshops. Without the active involvement of the members, the society would die.

A special thanks goes to the outgoing board members (Ken, Deborah, Harvey) for their time taken away from family and other activities to keep this society alive. Thanks also to the new board members Bill, Phil for taking an active role in the coming year and Janel for the past two years and the next two years service. I would like to thank Paula, who has taken care of the refreshments and is continuing to be involved with the refreshments. Thanks to Dolores for all the great newsletters and to all the individuals who submit information to the newsletters.

Many members work behind the scenes and give up time, energy, money to make this society, THANKS. It takes all of us together. The board members are a central contact point or focus point for ideas, information, planning from all the membership. The board is there to be contacted, to voice opinions to, to receive workshop ideas from all the membership. You may not want to serve on the board, but that does not mean you can't give ideas, information, and share likes and dislikes to them.

We will be looking for people to help with the upcoming convention. Can you give an hour or a few hours of your time? Give us a call, let someone know. Thanks to you members for letting me serve. This first year has been a learning experience and I'm still learning. This year will be a great year to be involved, to learn, to share, to grow and to enjoy. I know I have missed many names that have served, I did not mean to leave anybody out. Again thanks to all, the membership, board and the unseen few.

--Virgil President, HBS

Collecting Checklist

Prepared by Pete

1. Mattock
2. Spade or shovel
3. Bucket
 - a. compound loppers
 - b. folding pruning saw
 - c. twine
 - d. contractor quality plastic garbage bags
 - e. misting bottle – full
 - f. leather gloves
 - g. pocket knife
 - h. root rake
 - i. safety glasses
 - j. water/Gatorade
 - k. first aid kit

4. Method to transport tree back to vehicle

If close to vehicle add:

1. Axe
2. Bow saw

For rocky areas add:

1. Pry bar

Calendar of Events

Jan. 7	Monthly meeting of HBS. 7:30 p.m. Chuck Ware Discusses Soils.
Jan. 10	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
Feb. 6-8	Shohin Seminar, Ramada Inn (1-209-826-4444), Santa Nella, CA. For forms and map, Terry Ward, 512-280-5575 or TexShohin@aol.com
Feb. 7	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
Feb. 21	Shohin Society Of Texas (SSOT): Propagation. <i>Contact: Terry or Sheila Ward at 512-280-5575 or TexShohin@aol.com.</i>
Mar. 13	Study Group, Cabrera Farms
Mar. 20-21	Kathy Shaner, at Persimmon Hill Bonsai, Austin Details tba.
Apr. 3-4	HBS Spring Bonsai Show
Apr. 17	Shohin Society Of Texas (SSOT). Convention exhibit; accent plant program; sale & swap
Apr. 17	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
May 15	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
May 21-23	LSBF State Convention, Houston. Kathy Shaner, Guy Guidry, Mary Miller
June 12	Study Group, Cabrera Farm
June 26	Shohin Society Of Texas (SSOT). Bougainvilleas.
July 17	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
August 21	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
Sept. 18	Shohin Society Of Texas (SSOT). Business and panel critique.
Sept 18	Study Group, Bayland Community Center
Oct. 9-10	HBS Fall Bonsai Show
Nov. 13	Study Group, Cabrera Farms

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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.

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