



# The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.**

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December 2004

## December Meeting

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, December 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, which is located at 1500 Hermann Drive. Be sure to come early so you can visit with other members before the meeting begins.

We will elect officers for 2004. The nominees are:

President: Donald

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Anthony

Treasurer: Janet

Members at large: Mrs. C. J.  
and Gary.

The December program will be our annual holiday dinner and gift exchange. This meeting is one of the most entertaining club events of the entire year.

The gift exchange rules are explained on page 72, below.

Before the gift exchange, we will have a covered dish dinner. HBS will provide the meat, drinks and plates, napkins, forks, knives, and such. Each member will bring a side dish, bread or a dessert.

Come join your fellow club members for a special evening of fun and fellowship.

--Pete, Virgil

## No Study Group in December

Our study group will not meet in December. Join us at the holiday party, Wednesday, December 1, at 7:30 p.m. in Hermann Park. Bring trees you have questions about for on-the-spot analysis!

--Donald, Buddy

## Membership Fees Are Due

Your membership expires at the end of this month. Renew now to be sure you do 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.

## Calendar of Events

Dec. 1	Monthly meeting of HBS: Elections, pot luck dinner, gift exchange.
<b>2005</b>	
Jan. 15	Study Group, Bayland Park
Feb. 19	Study Group, Bayland Park
Mar. 19	Study Group, Cabrera Farm Nursery
Apr. 16	Study Group, Bayland Park
May 21	Study Group, Bayland Park
June 18	Study Group, Cabrera Farm Nursery
July 16	Study Group, Bayland Park
Aug. 20	Study Group, Bayland Park
Sept. 17	Study Group, Bayland Park
Oct. 15	Study Group, Bayland Park
Nov. 19	Study Group, Cabrera Farm Nursery
Dec. 17	Study Group, Bayland Park
May 13-15	State Convention, Fort Worth Walter Pall (Germany); Mary Madison (Florida)
<b>2008</b>	
	Bonsai Clubs International convention, San Antonio

## 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.*

Want to know how cold it could get to? Try looking at the dew point temperature. That is where the nighttime temperature could go to on a clear windless night. I base my bonsai activities on that just in case the conditions on which the official forecast is made change overnight. Probably the most important thing you can do this month for your deciduous bonsai (outside of proper watering) is to treat them to kill any over wintering pathogens. Some insects spend the winter in cracks or fissures on the tree. Others live in the soil. Still others lay eggs either on the tree or in the soil. Same goes for fungus spores. Use a horticultural oil spray. This is a lighter, less toxic version of the older dormant oil spray. If you use it accordingly to the label directions for strength and temperature, you should be able to use it on the evergreens also.

I just read an article in Golden Statements regarding practices used by a nursery in Japan. They use the old old old dormant spray of diluted lime sulfur--the same stuff we use on jin and shari. The liquid lime sulfur is somewhat caustic so should be used with caution. Application should only be made to fully dormant plants: evergreens with fully mature foliage and deciduous trees with tight winter buds. They use a dilution ranging from 1:40 to 1:10 depending on the month of application with no applications at all in the warmer months. I would suggest a 1:20 rate in December, January, or very early February. Application at other times must be made at a higher dilution and may need more applications.

Lime sulfur is both an insecticide and a fungicide. Therefore the Japanese use it also on the bench tops and the soil surrounding them. Wet the soil and pot thoroughly both BEFORE and AFTER application. This serves to dilute the lime sulfur entering the soil and to keep the white residue from staining the pot. It is best to apply lime sulfur at midday, in clear weather, so that it dries and sets before rain, dew, or freezing temperatures reduce its effectiveness.

The appeal to me is the use to eliminate fungal growth on the benches due to being wet so often. I wonder about it leaving a powder after drying. I think I will try it in a couple of places and see what happens.

Watch the watering. Dormant plants do not take as much water out of the soil. There will be much variation in the needs of the different bonsai. Cool temperatures do not dry the soil much, but a windy day will evaporate water directly from the soil very quickly and also take it out of the bare branches. More bonsai are lost in winter to dryness than to the cold. Especially watch the plants that will need repotting next spring. Pots full of circling roots do not hold much water, but those that had a lot of organic matter in the soil mix may be soggy. Organic matter that has composted

during the summer will be very fine textured and hold on to the water a long time.

While you are enjoying the winter silhouette, you may plan any improvements to be made. Are there any crossing branches? Any that have grown too long or too thick can be cut back to a smaller branch and ramification improved. Do any of the branches need repositioning?

Keep any evergreens that are growing pinched. Some junipers especially want to grow during the warmer parts of the winter. Those like the dwarf yaupon tend to be self pruning in winter: they grow and then get nipped back by the next freeze. Renew the lime sulfur treatment of jins and shari.

If you have a greenhouse, you can use it to work on some of the species that are normally left outside. Elms, Japanese maples, yaupons are some of the species that you can use. Before taking them into the greenhouse, you should give them some preparation. They should be given some dormancy. Withhold fertilizer and keep on the dry side (not bone dry) until they start dormancy. Leave them out until they have had some frost. Two-three weeks for Chinese or catlin elm. Four weeks for the Japanese maples. I take some small tridents in later in the season (like January). Yaupons will do nicely without much dormancy at all. When you take them in, keep in a cooler corner of the greenhouse and give them lots of water and fertilizer. They should respond fairly quickly. Be ready to pinch new growth or you will not benefit from the longer growing season.

Take time to clean up around your bonsai area. Remove leaf droppings, clipped twigs and any other organic matter. Pick up any trash that may have accumulated. This will help remove sources for unwelcome bugs and fungi to exist through the winter. Clean unused pots and prepare soils screens and tools for next springs work.

And lastly, go out and enjoy those bonsai some more.

*Reprinted from The Bonsai News of Houston, December 2002.*

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### Gift Exchange Rules

The rules for the HBS holiday party gift exchange are simple:

1. Everyone wraps and brings a gift with a value of \$20 or less.
2. Everyone draws a number.
3. The person with #1 ("Alphie") starts by picking a gift.
4. The second person ("Betty") can either pick a new gift or take Alphie's gift.
5. The third person ("Garret") can either pick a new gift or take Alphie's or Betty's gift. A person whose gift was taken either picks a new gift or takes someone else's gift (but not the gift just taken from him).
6. And so on.
7. Once a gift has been taken two times, it cannot be taken again. It is "frozen."

After everyone has a gift, the person with #1 gets to pick from all other gifts, EVEN the "frozen" gifts, because he or she did not have that choice in the beginning. If the person with #1 takes a gift, they simply swap with the person they are stealing from.

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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](http://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 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.

## HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please fill out and mail in or bring to a meeting)

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:** (Select one) \_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$25.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$30.00)

**Membership Classification:** (Select one)

\_\_\_\_ Local member      \_\_\_\_ Out of town member      \_\_\_\_ Vendor      \_\_\_\_ Bonsai club

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STREET:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP CODE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOME PHONE:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **WORK PHONE:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **E-MAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Do not publish my address to general membership*      \_\_\_\_\_ *Call here ONLY if absolutely necessary*

**Payment Amount Enclosed:**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Paying with:**      \_\_\_\_\_ Check      \_\_\_\_\_ Cash

**MAIL TO: HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY**

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