



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

Volume 33 Number 5 Internet Edition

May 2004

May Meeting

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, April 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.

Bill will discuss bonsai in the broom style. He'll show us how to start them, how to prune them and some things he did wrong.

If you have a tree in the broom style or a tree that is a candidate for the broom style, please bring it to the meeting.

Saturday Study Group

Our study group will meet Saturday May 15, 9:00 A.M. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet (Bissonnet at Hillcroft--south of I-59 and east of Fondren). Everyone is welcome.

2004 State Convention May 21-23

The Texas state bonsai convention, sponsored by the Lone Star Bonsai Federation, the Houston Bonsai Society and the Corpus Christi Bonsai Club will be held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 21, 22, 23 at the Omni Hotel Westside, 13210 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77079. The convention is not to be missed. Some of the finest trees in Texas will be on exhibit. In addition, a large number of vendors will be on hand and able to supply your bonsai needs--from pots to tools to wire and everything in between, including, of course, trees and accent plants. If you haven't started your shopping list, do it now.

Each of the guest artists--Kathy Shaner from California, Mary Miller from Florida, Guy Guidry from Louisiana, and Sheila Ward from Texas--is outstanding both in the knowledge of bonsai and the ability to

communicate the knowledge and love of bonsai to others. Even if you have waited too long to get into your favorite workshop, attending the workshops as silent observers will be very rewarding.

Make it a point to be there. You won't be sorry.

Calendar of Events

- May 5 Monthly Meeting of HBS, 7:30 p.m.
Hermann Park. Broom style.
- May 15 Study Group, Bayland Community Center
- May 21-23 LSBF State Convention, Houston.
Kathy Shaner, Guy Guidry, Mary Miller
Omni Hotel Westside, 13210 Katy
Freeway, Houston, Texas 77079
- June 12 Study Group, Cabrera Farm
- June 26 Shohin Society Of Texas (SSOT).
Bougainvilleas.
- July 17 Study Group, Bayland Community Center
- Aug. 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 Farm

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.

Hope you took care of your bonsai during the high winds this past week or two. High winds and tender new foliage are not very compatible. If the tree was recently repotted, that compounds the problem. Treatment would depend on how much damage you have to the foliage. If the leaves are dried, move the plant to a protected area and go easy on the watering until new growth starts. Do not pull the dead leaves off because you may damage the latent buds. You may cut the leaf stem if you desire. If the leaves are mostly green with only damaged tips, continue normal care. You can then leaf prune later and obtain new foliage—no fertilizer in either case until the plant starts growing again.

Leaf pruning should only be done on strong healthy trees. If the spring pinching has been done regularly, the ramification will be there. The only real justification for leaf pruning is to replace the old foliage with new foliage which will be smaller and usually will show better fall color due to being less damaged from normal wear and tear. Leaf pruning must be done after the foliage is fully mature and long enough before summer dormancy for the new foliage to fully develop. In most years this would be in May. Care must be taken so that the latent bud will not be damaged. If the leaf has a stem (e.g., maples), cut the stem with your shears. Leaves with no stem (elm) would have the leaf trimmed as short as possible but not right at the twig. After leaf pruning, the tree will not need as much water until new growth is well under way. Sunshine is good but, if the weather gets very hot, afternoon shade would help prevent scalding the inner bark.

All trees that have wire should be checked. Branches swell up fast in spring. I like to cut the wire to remove it so that I don't break any limbs or twigs. Kathy Shaner on the other hand says she never cuts wire because you can be distracted and forget a piece or two. This should be a part of your trimming procedure.

The standard horde of pests will be knocking of your door any day now if they are not already at the dinner table. Pale leaves would indicate spider mites. Aphids and woolly scale are easy to see but you need to look for them. Small caterpillars are easy to miss until you see holes in your leaves. My overall cure for these is to feed the tree. A foliar spray of Garrett Juice (one tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar in a gallon of water) will not only feed the

tree but take care of any vermin there. Be sure to spray the under sides of the leaves too.

For fungal problems, black leaf spot on elms and hollies is one, you may add a tablespoon of baking soda to that mixture. A 1 percent solution of hydrogen peroxide will

work (that is one part of the normal 3% solution to two parts of water). Use care with the peroxide as it could damage very tender new growth.

Repotting season is getting close for tropicals. Generally they may be done whenever the night temperatures stay above 60 degrees. The repotting of tropicals is done when they are in active growth. Be extra vigilant to prevent the roots from drying during repotting.

Nutrition

by Ron Martin

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Ronald L. Martin, who began studying bonsai in 1985, is the proprietor of Tokonoma Bonsai in Summerville, South Carolina. He has conducted demonstrations from South Florida to New Jersey and as far west as Texas. He is also a regular speaker in the Summerville area. Thanks, Ron, for sending us this article.

Your bonsai can suffer from nutrient deficiencies, which is bad, but the good part is that they can tell you what the problem is - you just have to know what to look for. Bad light and poor soil can also cause some of the following, so consider these also.

Nitrogen. Slow growth is the main characteristic, but other tell-tale signs are leaves that turn light green with the tips of new growth becoming yellow. In addition afflicted plants usually have a stunted, spindly look and drop their older leaves.

Phosphorus. Symptoms include stunted growth and late fruit set. Another characteristic is the development of small dark reddish or purple spots on the underside of older leaves that eventually spread.

Potassium. The lower leaves turn a gray-greenish tint, and this discoloration usually works its way up the plant. The off-green is usually replaced by a dirty yellow coloring followed by leaf death. Also the plant stems become slim and hard, and fruit ripens unevenly. This problem is normally most prevalent late in the growing season when plants use much of their available supply of potassium to develop fruit.

Magnesium. Mature leaves turn yellow between the veins, but the veins stay green. Eventually, the leaves turn upward and become brittle. This problem is another one that is most common late in the growing season on plants with developing fruit.

Calcium. Young leaves turn dark green and may even begin to curl. This green is usually replaced by yellow that spreads. While these leaves dry up and fall, the lower leaves of the plant remain relatively normal. Eventually the whole plant becomes weak and wilts.

Manganese. Plants become stunted, and leaf tissue will turn off-white or yellowish and die, leaving dead spots on the foliage.

Zinc. Plants have smaller than normal terminal leaves, and other leaves are pocked with yellow areas that may also include dead tissue spots.

Iron. Young leaves begin to turn yellow between the veins. While the yellowing will spread, the veins, margins and tips will remain green.

Boron. The new growth dies, and buds turn light green and will not form flowers. Also existing leaves are small and misshapen, and plant stems are usually short. This problem usually occurs in high alkaline soils.

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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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