



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

Volume 34 Number 4 Internet Edition

April 2005

Spring Show, Sat.-Sun. April 2-3

Several members have signed-up to display trees and/or to work the show. If you did not sign up, you may simply come with your trees or to help work the show. Setup and delivery of trees will be Saturday morning, April 2, between 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. The show and festival runs 10 a.m. through 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Parking permits for members delivering trees and/or working the show will be available at the entrance to the staff parking lot—look for Anthony Cutola or another HBS member at the entrance. Enter the parking lot at the main entrance to Hermann Park, close to the fountain, off of Main & Montrose streets, close to the Sam Houston Monument (i.e., the man on the horse). There will be a golf cart to assist with transporting trees from the parking lot or the path behind the gardens, to the bonsai exhibit tent.

Monthly HBS Meeting, April 6

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, which is located at 1500 Hermann Drive. Come early so you can visit with other members and have refreshments before the meeting begins.

Our April program will be the kickoff of a two-part workshop on shohin yaupon.¹ Ray, a past president of HBS and one of its most senior members, will lead a discussion on yaupon care and styling with particular emphasis on shohin-sized trees and will advise participants about their individual trees during the workshop.

The first 20 folks to register (\$10) for the workshop will receive a yaupon which was purchased as a 3-gal. plant 18 months ago and has been in preparation for this workshop ever since. The trees were repotted last spring and have been pruned several times to reduce the height to shohin size and to develop branching and foliage. We will begin work on the trees at the meeting, so bring your tools and wire.

The second part of the workshop will occur in June when participants will bring back their work so we can compare experiences.

If you have well developed yaupon bonsai of any size, bring them as examples of how yaupons can be styled and developed. As always, bring any trees of any size you would like to show or would like to get help or advice with. Be sure to bring azaleas in bloom!

Dana Quattlebaum, April 15-16

Dana Quattlebaum will be visiting HBS on April 15 and 16. Dana is the production manager at Brussel's Bonsai Nursery and a regular artist at Rendezvous and other forums. He styles and maintains collections for private clients here in the US. He will be doing a black pine lecture-demonstration beginning at 7:00 on April 15th at the Garden Center (\$5 admittance fee). The tree will be raffled off at the end of the program. Dana will also be leading two 1/2 day workshops on Saturday April 16th at the Garden Center. These are bring-your-own-tree workshops and cost \$30 each. Several openings are available in both the morning and afternoon workshops.

April Study Group Canceled

Because of a conflict with the Quattlebaum workshops, we will have NO study group in April.

State Convention, May 13-15

The 2005 Texas state bonsai convention, sponsored by the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF), will be held in Fort Worth, May 13-15 at the Holiday Inn North, 2540 Meacham Boulevard @ I-35 West, Fort Worth.

Early registration runs through April 13. The featured artists are Walter Pall, Germany; Mary Madison, Florida; Estella Flather, Fort Worth; John Miller, Dallas/Fort Worth; and Ray Hernandez, Dallas/Fort Worth. Workshops will be trident maple, Pokomoke crepe myrtle, root-over-rock trident, pinon pine, Chinese elm shohin, bald cypress forest, casuarina

Con'd next page.

¹ A *shohin* is a very small bonsai, usually under 10 inches tall.

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.

Repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it's still too early to repot the tropicals. So what is left to do? Just trimming, feeding, trimming, checking for insects, trimming, shows, trimming. You get the idea. Trimming--that is the pinching, plucking or whatever of new growth--is the process that both develops refinement on your tree and is vital to keep it from growing out of that desired state. This is not pruning which is cutting of branches, which should not be done when there is a strong sap flow which starts when the tree breaks dormancy and continues until after the leaves harden or later.

At the risk of repeating the process too much, I repeat it for the beginners. On elms and other trees with leaves appearing alternately down the shoot, do not let more than 5 new leaves appear. Cut back to 2 or 3 leaves, leaving the last leaf on the side that you want the new growth to appear. On maples and other trees with leaves coming in pairs on opposite sides of the twig, cut the center shoot as soon as you can determine it. Tweezers work best for this operation. Since the shoots do not all open at the same time, this could be a daily chore for the best results.

A good organic program takes care of both the feeding and the insect problems. The trick is to be sure to thoroughly cover the plant including all the leaf axils. I recommend the original Howard Garret mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. (A commercial product called Garret Juice which is to be used the same way uses compost tea, dried seaweed, water, molasses and vinegar. As a fertilizer this should act the same but doesn't seem as good as an insecticide.) I use the mixture both as a foliar spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray it keeps aphids and mites under control. I also use it on cuttings but can't vouch as to whether the results are from supplying nutrients that cannot be supplied due to the lack of roots or if it is from keeping insects away. I try to drench twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs through the foliage. It is a good practice to also use fertilizer cakes on the surface of the soil which feeds a bit every time you water.

Fungal diseases can show up with damp weather. Leaf spot can be serious on Catlin and Chinese elms and on hollies. There are organic fungicides available, baking soda is one. Check an organics nursery or publications. A 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide (dilute the standard 3% store-bought stuff with 2 parts water to each part peroxide) is also recommended but can injure very new foliage.

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, but a tree with full leaves may shed rain water outside of the pot or good sun and low humidity after a front will dry the soil. I suggest that you remove some 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. Most automatic systems just water a spot or two in the pot. Hand watering covers the entire pot and allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually.

PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI

AKADAMA / KANUMA / PUMICE

Premium Plant Foods

ALL NATURAL 5-3-3

FOR ACID LOVING PLANTS 4-6-4

Material, Tools, Potting Mix's, Wire, Pots, Supplies,
Bonsai Services, Instruction, Seminars

Terry & Sheila Ward 512-280-5575
Austin, Texas 78739 By appointment, please

State Convention *con'd.*
and bring-your-own-tree.

This should be a fun-filled weekend for all bonsai lovers. There will be plenty to do, lots of vendors with lots of tools and pots and trees, and lots of fun. If you have not registered, please take time and do so now.

If you have any questions, contact Steve. The web page is www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/3647/. You can also contact me.

Hope to see everyone in Fort Worth.

--Buddy, LSBF Delegate

Thanks to Don and Terry Sommer

The HBS thanks Don and Terry for their generous donation of 209 bonsai containers as well as tools and wire. About 56 containers have manufacturers' seals on the bottom, which adds to their value..

Don and Terry were charter members of the HBS and active in the club from the early 1970s. Poor health--Terry has suffered several strokes--has prompted the Sommers to part with their collection.

The club will use these items for raffles and door prizes and for the club auction in September.



THE ANCIENT BONSAI CO.

OWNER

RON SMITH

BONSAI SPOKEN HERE!

By appointment.

Yaupon Holly - *ilex vomitoria*

by Chuck Ware

Chuck Ware, a master gardener and the proprietor of Jade Gardens bonsai nursery in Wimberley, Texas, is active in the Austin and San Antonio bonsai clubs and the LSBF. This article is from an info-mercial prepared in 1999 and printed in The Bonsai News of Houston, January 2000. It is reprinted with permission of the author, who reserves all rights in the article.

The yaupon holly is a small-leaved evergreen shrub or tree, found from Texas eastward to Florida and north to Virginia. It will reach extreme heights of 40 feet in the East Texas bottomlands, but normally grows to about 25 feet. It grows in almost any soil type.

The yaupon holly has grey bark and is generally multi-trunked. It tends to have a shrub form getting thick and twiggy on the inside. The bright red, sometimes yellow to orange, fruit are quite ornamental and eaten by many birds. The leaves of the yaupon holly are used for making stimulating tea-like drinks and, in strong concentrations, have emetic qualities. The name "vomitoria" refers to the belief that some Indian tribes used yaupon tea as an emetic. To make the drink, the leaves must be roasted in an oven, at 200 degrees F. until they turn brown. The

drink was widely used as a coffee or tea substitute because it is high in caffeine.

The dwarf varieties of yaupon holly are more commonly used for bonsai because of their more compact, slow growth. They can be styled into most shapes and will sprout readily on old wood.

These trees have brittle branches, so wiring should be done with great care; clip and grow is generally best. Constant pruning will reduce the fruit.

Repot each year in early spring, using a standard bonsai mix. It likes a pH between 6.5-7.5. The yaupon holly likes full sun but will adapt to many light conditions. In a container, the yaupon holly will withstand a light freeze but it should be protected during a heavy (25 degrees F.) or extended freeze.

The yaupon holly is resistant to most insects, but it can be subject to scale.

The yaupon holly, dwarf yaupon holly, or weeping yaupon holly, have the potential to be excellent bonsai material. They have the small leaves, tight twiggling and growth on old wood. Older specimens have trunks and root nebari that are highly desirable.

In Memoriam

Alan Perry

Long-time HBS member, Alan Perry, has died. A member since at least 1989, he will be remembered for his generous gifts to the HBS; Alan could always be counted upon to donate top-notch trees to the club auctions. He will also be remembered for his gentle demeanor and, of course, for his thick, velvety moss. He was the club's one and only Moss Master.

Ed Thacker

Ed Thacker, an HBS member almost from its founding in February 1971, died in late summer or early fall, 2004. Ed, along with four or five other members, was "instrumental in keeping the fledgling club going in those early days," says Ramona Medina, a former president of HBS. He served as president and on the board of directors several times.

Ed, together with David Schleser, John Miller, and others, was also instrumental in the founding the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF). "Ed was a building block not only of HBS but also of LSBF," notes Ray Gonzales.

Over the years, Ed donated books, pots, and many other items to the club and gave presentations. Through his contacts in California, he facilitated visits to Houston by John Naka and Ben Oki. "The club is much indebted to him," says Ray Gonzales.

Ed enjoyed collecting trees and had "secret places," where he marked the trees and their location and worked on them in the ground for a year or more before he dug them.

Philosophically, Ed was particularly dedicated to the Japanese style and method of bonsai in its purest form, even eschewing the use of natives and tropicals for bonsai. Although he had not been active in the club in recent years, he remained a force in bonsai in Texas.

Thomas Thompson

Thomas Thompson, known to the HBS as Tommy Thompson, died of a heart attack recently at the age of 70 in his home in Baytown, Texas. He had been an HBS member since at least 1998. In 2000 he served on the board of directors as member at large.

The HBS and your newsletter editor would like to encourage you to notify you us of the passing of our members and supporters.

Calendar of Events

HBS meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park, next to the rose garden.

Apr. 2-3 Spring Bonsai Show, Japanese Garden, Hermann Park

Apr. 6 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30, Hermann Park
Kick off, shohin yaupon, Ray

- Apr. 9 Guy Guidry, Garden Center Rose Room, Hermann Park, **9 a.m.**, Bald Cypress. **1 p.m.** Black pine (1 of 4 workshops over the next year). See March newsletter for details on both.
- Apr. 10 Guy Guidry, Garden Center Rose Room, Hermann Park. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Open workshop. See march newsletter for details.
- Apr. 13 Deadline for Early Registration for the state convention
- Apr. 15 Dana Quattlebaum lecture-demo - 7 p.m. Hermann Park
- Apr. 16 Dana Quattlebaum workshops
- Apr. 16 Study Group, **CANCELED**
- Apr. 23 SSOT: Convention Display; Sale & Swap
- May 4 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30 p.m., Hermann Park
Texas Natives by Chuck Ware
- May 13-15 State Convention, Fort Worth
Walter Pall (Germany); Mary Madison (Florida)
- May 21 Study Group, Bayland Park
- May 27-29 Brussels Rendezvous in Memphis
- May 28-31 World Bonsai Congress in Washington, D. C.
- June 1 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30 p.m.,
Wrap up of shohin yaupon with Ray Gonzales
- June 4-5 Guy Guidry
- June 18 Study Group, Cabrera Farm Nursery
- June 25 SSOT. Tropical Show & Tell; Workshop
- July 6 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30 p.m., Hermann Park
Ugly tree swap; open workshop
- July 16 Study Group, Bayland Park
- Aug 3 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30 p.m., Hermann Park
TBA. Phillip and Alex
- Aug. 20 Study Group, Bayland Park
- Aug. 27-28 Guy Guidry
- Sept. 7 Monthly HBS meeting, 7:30 p.m., Hermann Park
Club Auction
- Sept. 17 Study Group, Bayland Park
- Sept. 17 SSOT. Critique; Business Meeting.

Thanks To Gary

Thanks to Gary who has volunteered to help with the newsletter. Gary will be sending out the email versions of the newsletter for us. With his knowledge of computers and his high speed internet connection, you will get your email newsletters quicker and with fewer glitches.

Of course, we may have a problem or two the first time, particularly with spam filters on the receiving computers. As always, let me know if you experience problems receiving your newsletter—email or snail mail—and if you add or update a security program for your computer (anti virus programs, spyware, etc.), be sure the spam filters will let the bonsai newsletter through.

--Dolores, Editor

The Bonsai News of Houston is a monthly publication of the Houston Bonsai Society, Inc. Copyright © 2005. 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, unless they expressly reserve all rights.

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 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. 3½" x 2" classified ads are run free of charge for one month once per 12-month period, for noncommercial members.