



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

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May 2005

Monthly Meeting: Chuck Ware

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, May 4, at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, located at 1500 Hermann Drive. Come early so you can visit with other members and have refreshments before the meeting.

Chuck Ware, proprietor of Jade Gardens in Wimberly, Texas, will discuss native trees of Texas as bonsai.

Chuck came to Texas as a flight navigation instructor at the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi during the 60s. After leaving the Navy, he was an elementary schoolteacher, in Wimberly, for 25 years. His love of the sciences, and the arts, led him naturally to bonsai.

Chuck is active in the Austin and San Antonio bonsai clubs, has served as president of the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF), is a master gardener, and has given lectures and demonstrations to gardening and bonsai clubs all over the state of Texas. In 1995, he and his wife, Pat, opened The Central Texas Bonsai Exhibit as part of Jade Gardens. This exhibit is an assortment of a great variety of trees, different styles, and some trees done by major artists. The exhibit is open to the public in an effort to better educate Texans to the world of bonsai.

State Convention, May 13-15

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

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, casuarinas 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

Study Group, Sat., May 21

Our study group will meet Saturday, May 21, at 9:00 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 learn and have a good time.

--Anthony, Buddy

Guy Guidry in Houston First of Four in a Series

Guest artist Guy Guidry, owner of Bonsai Northshore in Covington, Louisiana, conducted workshops for HBS on Saturday April 9 on bald cypress and black pine and held open workshops for members to bring material of their choosing on Sunday. Guy brought a number of cypresses and black pines with him and allowed participants to work on his trees, with an option to either purchase the tree or send it back to Guy's nursery.

Guy is known among bonsai enthusiasts for his passion for the Louisiana bald cypress. He told HBS members that this was "The Tree" for bonsai. He encouraged us to err on the side of over watering bald cypress, which, like Guy, typically makes its natural home in the swamps of Louisiana. In discussing bald cypress, Guy frequently references his beloved tree, affectionately named, The Twister, which can be viewed at his website at www.bonsainorthshore.com.

During the black pine workshop, Guy contrasted the reduced moisture needs of the pine to the cypress. Black pines do not favor over-watering and require thorough drainage of the pot. Guy shared his secrets for good

Con'd page 26.

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.

The first thing to be done is to be sure you will be at the convention in Ft Worth on May 13-15. There will be some great info by Walter Pall and Mary Madison. Plenty of bonsai supplies and stock by the vendors.

If in spite of your efforts a tree gets dehydrated from being in high winds or from lack of watering, some special care will be needed. If the tree was recently repotted, that compounds the problem. First move the plant to a protected area out of the sun and winds, then mist the foliage, branches and trunk.

Treatment would depend on how much damage you have to the foliage. If the leaves are dried, 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. No fertilizer until the plant starts growing again. If the leaves are mostly green with only damaged tips, continue normal care. If the tree is not stressed too much, you can then leaf prune later and obtain new foliage.

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. The tree should be given an extra shot of fertilizer two weeks before pruning. 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 (e.g., elms) 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 off 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 on 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 and when they are in active growth. Be extra vigilant to prevent the roots from drying during repotting.

Most Americans do not fertilize their bonsai properly. We are addicted to quick and labor saving techniques. Chemical fertilizers tend to fall into that bin. Plants can only utilize a small amount of nutrients at a time. Organic fertilizers break down slowly by microbial action. When you water over an organic fertilizer, you wash those nutrients into the soil, constantly providing the required small amount of food. Water soluble chemical fertilizers give a large quick dose of food. However our bonsai soils do not capture the fertilizer as well as dirt or commercial planting mixes. The next time you water you wash all nutrients away and the tree starves until the next feeding. I do not like loose organic fertilizers because they tend to wash into the top layer of soil and reduce the air space and keep the soil too moist. Ball type fertilizers do not do that.

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Library

We are in the process of reorganizing the HBS library. To help with our cataloging efforts, please return any HBS books or journals you may have. Thank you.

--Margaret, Hurley, Kerry

Guy Guidry (*con't*)

drainage: be certain that your black pine's pot has four holes in the bottom - one for each corner of the pot and consider using various methods to suction excess moisture from the bottom of the pot. A black pine with proper watering will have needles that are stiff to the touch. A soft feel indicates a problem.

During the open materials workshops on Sunday, Guy helped members work with a variety of trees. Several participants brought azaleas, which left with no foliage, but lots of promise for the next year. Guy recommended a repotting schedule of every 2 years for tropicals, every 5 years for deciduous trees, and every 5 to 7 years for pines. He encouraged members to stop over-using chopsticks to repot bonsai, because over packing the soil tends to impede good drainage. He demonstrated his method of hand-packing the soil mixture.

In discussing the health of all varieties of bonsai, Guy emphasized the importance of getting to know your tree well, and of watching for small changes in foliage color. He advised that the majority of problems and death of bonsai stem from improper watering, and that we should be watching our tree, and not the soil, to determine the sufficiency of watering.

Guy will return the weekend of June 4 and 5 to continue his series of workshops with HBS. Members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to study with a nationally recognized artist. There are some openings remaining for June workshops and HBS members who act quickly will receive priority before these slots are opened up to the public.

--Pam

Dana Quattlebaum Addresses HBS

HBS members were delighted by guest artist, Dana Quattlebaum on Friday and Saturday, April 15 and 16. Dana is the production manager at Brussel's Bonsai and a nationally recognized bonsai artist.

On Friday evening, Dana presented a lecture on the care and development of black pine. He laid out details of a fertilization schedule and shared his techniques for improving ramification and branch development. Because black pine do not appreciate lingering moisture, Dana stressed the importance of sifting to eliminate dust in the soil mixture when repotting the black pine every five to seven years. Likewise, he cautioned against too much pine bark, because it breaks down into soil too quickly. He recommended a recipe of 25% each of haydite, lava rock, low-fire acadama and pumice, explaining that the varied shapes and textures of these constituent elements insured an environment of good drainage, so that moisture would not become trapped to create root rot. Later, Dana styled a black pine he selected from Ron Smith's The Ancient Bonsai Company nursery, and the newly-designed tree was won in a raffle by new member, Rossanna Cromwell.

On Saturday, members brought their own material to

Dana's morning and afternoon workshops. While working with participants, Dana emphasized that the art of bonsai should be shared with others. HBS thanks Dana for sharing his techniques with us.

--Pam

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.

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| 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 Drilling and Alex Leong |
| 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. |

Spring Show a Big Success

Thanks to all who brought trees to the spring show and gave time to work at the display. Everyone seemed to have a good time and our efforts generated a lot of interest and new members. Thanks again.

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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 address above.

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