



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

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Bonsai Tree and Pot Sale, April 1

Do not miss the bonsai tree and pot sale on Saturday, April 1, 2006, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, in the Houston Garden Center of Hermann Park. Trees will range in price from \$40 to \$600. Bonsai containers in various sizes and styles will be priced from \$1 to \$300.

The conditions of sale will be by cash or check. We will not be able to process payment by credit or debit cards. All items will be sold as marked, with the buyer determined by the first person to hold the item. Should more than one person hold an item, the item will be sold to the higher bidder (start of bid is the marked price).

Some pots will be packaged together and must be bought as a complete package. Proceeds from the sale will be used to support the programs and activities of Houston Bonsai Society.

April 5, Monthly Meeting--Azaleas

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, April 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, which is 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.

April Program. Because the trident maples for the workshop originally scheduled are not ready, we are postponing that program until next year. Instead, we will have the azaleas program originally scheduled for May. Alex Leong, long-time HBS member, and Phillip Drilling, also a long-time member of HBS and the proprietor of Cabrera Farm Nursery, will present a program covering azaleas varieties, care, and styling. At this time of year, we are sure to see some stunning azalea specimens. Bring your own azalea to share with us or to get help if you need it.

Changes to May and August. In May we will have a ficus-on-a-slab workshop. I have ficuses (several varieties) and slabs and will lead a two-part workshop for club members to style and plant either a single tree or a small

group on a rock slab. In August we will have the second installment of the ficus-on-a-slab workshop.

--Pete

Spring Bonsai Show, April 8-9

Again this year, the spring bonsai show will be held in conjunction with the Japan Festival in the Japanese gardens in Hermann Park. Show times will be 9a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, April 8 and 9. Setup will start at 8:00 am on Saturday morning.

--Anthony

Yvonne Padilla on Saikei, April 22

Yvonne Padilla of Corpus Christi will conduct a workshop on the art of saikei at 9 a.m., April 22, at the Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet (Bissonnet at Hillcroft--south of I-59 and east of Fondren). Saikei is a sister art to bonsai and is the use of stones, trees, soil and accent plants to create a landscape (a forest, mountain terrain, etc.)

The cost for the workshop will be \$15 and you can sign up at our April meeting. Silent observers are welcome to watch (\$5). You will need to provide the materials for your saikei. See the article by Yvonne in the March newsletter for information about saikei and what kind of trees and materials you will need. You need to get started on your muck now!

Yvonne is a noted bonsai artist and one of the staunchest supporters of bonsai in Texas. She first became involved in bonsai in 1980, and often drove to San Antonio, Austin and Houston to attend lecture/demos and take workshops from such notables as John Naka, Bill Valavanis, Roy Nagatoshi and many others.

Con't p. 18

No Study Group in April

Our study group will not meet in April. Hope to see everybody at the Spring Bonsai Show!

--Anthony, Buddy

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.

I hope your bonsai are not as mixed up as mine. After the prolonged hot weather last fall most of my trees made a late surge of growth which then did not have time to properly mature before the hard freeze in early December. Other than that, the winter has been very mild and the different species are not opening in their proper order, some of my oaks, maples, elms all opening in the same week. I normally count on Chinese elms the first week of March with no oaks until April with the others nicely spaced in between. So as I write this I should be in the middle of my repotting instead of mostly done without time to do a proper trimming of new growth.

So in April, repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it's still too early for the tropicals. So what is left to do? Just trimming, feeding, trimming, check for insects, trimming, shows, trimming. You get the idea. Trimming, that is the pinching, plucking or whatever of new growth, is the process that not only develops refinement on your tree but also is vital to keep it from growing out of that desired state. This is not pruning which is cutting of branches and which should not be done when there is a strong sap flow. This trimming starts when the tree breaks dormancy and continues until after the leaves harden or sometimes later. (Note: this trimming does not apply to those areas where you need to grow a new or longer branch to fill a bad design spot).

At the risk of repeating the trimming 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 others 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. Use a hand or pump up sprayer to get a fine spray to cover all, a hose end sprayer doesn't cover good enough. This is also true if you want to use commercial chemical sprays.

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 it does not seem to work as good as an insecticide.) I use the mixture as both a foliar feed spray and a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray it keeps aphids, mites, loopers, bagworms and other insects under control. I try to drench twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs thru 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. Commercial water-soluble fertilizers wash out with the next watering and result in poorly fed, pale bonsai.

Fungal diseases can show up with damp weather. Leaf spot can be serious on Catlin and Chinese elms and on hollies. Mildew can be a problem when the weather turns warm. 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, 2 parts water to each part peroxide) is also recommended but it can injure tender 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. A tree with full leaves may shed rainwater outside of the pot or a good sun and low humidity after a front may 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 and lets you see that the pot is draining properly. A clogged drainage hole can drown some trees in less than a week.

Most trees will do good in the full sun at this time of year. However, if you have had them in partial shade be careful about moving them to full sun. They probably should be acclimated gradually. Too much wind will cause the leaves to burn. Some damage may not show up until hot weather.

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By appointment please

Padilla on Saikei *(con't)*

She has been a major supporter of the state bonsai organization, the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF), and has attended every state convention except one.

Through the years, her interest settled on South Texas native trees, several varieties of tropicals and the art of saikei. At the 1981 convention in Corpus Christi, Melba Tucker was one of the guest bonsai artists. Yvonne took the saikei workshop Melba conducted and was impressed with the use of stones, trees, soil and accent plants in a tray. That is when she made saikei part of her special interest.

She has conducted lecture-demos and workshops for several bonsai clubs in Texas and has shared her knowledge with youth groups, master gardeners and other organizations.

She has been active in garden clubs for over 35 years, has served on the LSBF board for over 10 years and has

Con't p. 19.

Bonsai Exhibit at Houston Flower and Plant Expo

The Houston Bonsai Society was among several plant and flower clubs/societies invited to participate in the Houston Flower and Plant Expo at the George R. Brown Convention Center, May 5-7. Please see the following link for detail about the Expo--

<http://www.houstonflowershow.com/societies.asp>

HBS has been given space at the Expo to exhibit our bonsai trees and to distribute printed materials—at no cost.

We can also earn money for our club. HBS will be paid 50% of tickets sold prior to the opening of the Expo, at presale prices. Admission to the event is \$7.50, but presale tickets will be \$4.99 and our club will make half. In addition our club will be paid 25% of rental fees paid by vendors that we referred to the Expo.

This is an excellent opportunity for us to share our bonsai with the public and to recruit new members to HBS. In order to make this a successful opportunity, we will need members to 1) sell pre-event tickets--\$4.99 each, 2) put trees in the exhibit at the Expo, and 3) agree to work the exhibit booth a few hours during the Expo. We will distribute tickets and have sign-up sheets available at our monthly meeting, or you may contact me. *--Donald*

Pedro Morales To Be in Houston

HBS is pleased to announce that Puerto Rico's internationally renowned bonsai artist Pedro Morales will be visiting us August 4 and 5 this year to present a lecture-demo and one or two workshops. I'll provide more background on him and the arrangements in the coming months. *--Pete*

Kathy Shaner in Austin

The dates are set for Kathy Shaner's 2006 seminar sponsored by Persimmon Hill Bonsai in Austin. It will be on Saturday, October 28 and Sunday October 29. The fun

and excitement will get underway Friday afternoon the 27th with drinks and snacks at Persimmon Hill followed by a no host dinner at a near-by restaurant.

Kathy's theme is.....you'll have to wait to find out when you get your registration form this summer. It's going to be an exciting program covering an important aspect of bonsai you probably have never seen done or even read about.

Please reserve the dates and mark your calendars. This seminar is gonna be a real keeper!

--Terry Ward, Persimmon Hill Bonsai, Austin

Securing a Forest Planting in the Pot

by Ron Martin, Tokonoma Bonsai

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For the purposes of this short article I am going to assume that you know how to pot a tree. Mound the soil, secure the tree and all that. I just want to show you how to modify those procedures to make it easier for you to put a forest planting in a pot.

Normally securing a bonsai into the pot is not really a hard thing to do. Just run wire through the drainage holes and around the root ball. But what to do when there are several trees in that one pot? How does one secure a bunch of trees through just two drainage holes? Not to mention all the hands needed to hold those trees in position while you are tying that wire.

My fascination with forest plantings began a few years ago. Didn't take long to find out just how hard it could be to properly position and secure those trees. I finally came upon a method that works like a charm. For me at least.

First one must determine the exact position in the pot that the primary tree will occupy. This is the largest and strongest tree and will act as an anchor for all the other trees. Secure this tree in the pot as you normally would. Make sure that it is firmly in place. It will be the only tree tied into the pot below ground level. The rest of the trees will be tied to the primary tree with, for the lack of a better word, scaffolding. *(con't next page.)*



The next tree is placed in position and a length of wire is twisted around the trunk. This wire is then wrapped around the trunk of the primary tree. This should hold the second tree loosely in position. Put a little soil around the root to help secure the trees. The third tree in the pot is attached to the primary tree and the second tree as well. This will give you a triangular scaffolding that will hold those trees in a surprisingly sturdy manner.

Now one can put the rest of the trees in by tying them to one of these three trees. All one has to remember is to select the right tree to attach to. As you are putting trees in and tying them together remember that triangular scaffolding we started off with and expand on it. Just keep attaching triangles to it. By the time the last tree is put into the pot, all trees are tied back to that primary tree that was securely attached to the pot. We have a remarkably sturdy structure.



It also means that trees can be precisely set. Even the angle of the trunk can be locked in place. Depending on how many turns are put in that wire, it will either pull or push on the tree.

Even after the composition is finished and the soil packed in place, minor changes can be made. All one has to do to change a trunk angle is to either remove or increase the numbers of twists in the wire.

So now we have our masterpiece completed. Bet you thought I would forget how silly the forest would look on display with all that wire above ground. How will I hide it?

The simple answer is I won't ;o) Before long all the trees roots will grow enough to fuse together underground locking all trees in the pot. Once that is done, the scaffolding can be removed. They will stay in place all on their own.



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Note, for sharp color photos, you can receive the newsletter by email. --editor.

Padilla on Saikei con't.

served as president of the Corpus Christi Bonsai Club and the president of the Corpus Christi Area Garden Council.

It's always a treat to have Yvonne in Houston. Make time, this busy month, to attend her workshop. You won't be sorry.

Calendar of Events

The HBS meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive, next to the rose garden.

Apr. 1	Bonsai tree and pot sale, 9 to 12, Hermann Park
Apr. 5	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Alex and Phillip, Azaleas
April	NO STUDY GROUP
Apr 8-9	Spring Bonsai Show w/ Japan Festival
Apr. 22	Yvonne Padilla, saikei workshop, Bayland Center
Apr. 22	S.S.O.T. Workshop, raft style by John Miller. Terry Ward, Austin, texshohin@sbcglobal.net
May 3	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30, Ficus on a slab workshop, Pt. 1, Pete
May 5-7	Houston Flower and Plant Expo George R. Brown Convention Center
May 20	Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park
June 7	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Yvonne Padilla (Corpus Christi), forest plantings
June 17	Mike Hansen: Candle pruning and series wrap-up Garden Center Azalea Room, Hermann Park
June 17	S.S.O.T. Workshop, Steven, tropical shohin refinement and air layering. Shohin display for the CCBC/LSBF convention. Annual sale & swap meet. Austin.
June 24	Saturday Study Group, Cabrara Farm Nursery
July 5	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Open workshop
July 14- 16	State Bonsai Convention, Corpus Christi
July 15	Saturday Study Group, Bayland
Aug. 2	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Ficus on a slab, Pt. 2, Pete Parker.
Aug 4 & 5	Pedro Morales, details tba.
Aug. 19	Saturday Study Group, Bayland
Sept. 6	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Club Auction

Sept. 16	Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park
Sept. 16	S.S.O.T. Panel critique. Annual business meeting. Workshop, Alisan, Japanese style scroll.
Oct. 4	Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30 Pete, Growing Bonsai from Seed & Cuttings
Oct. 7-8	Fall Bonsai Show
Oct. 21	Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park
Oct. 28-29	Kathy Shaner in Austin, Persimmon Hill. Terry or Sheila Ward, phbonsai@sbcglobal.net
Nov. 11	Saturday Study Group, Cabrera Farm Nursery
Dec. 16	Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park

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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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