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# The Bonsai News of Houston

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

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Volume 36 Number 10, Internet Edition

October 2007

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### Monthly Meeting, Mike Hansen

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, October 3, 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.

Mike Hansen will give a presentation on tool care.

Mike and his wife Candy are the proprietors of MBP Bonsai Studio in Pflugerville, Texas, just outside Austin. Mike has studied—and then taught—bonsai for over 30 years, first in Minnesota and, since about 1985, in Texas.

Mike is involved in local, national, and international bonsai organizations, having served as president of Bonsai Clubs International and of organizations in Minnesota and Texas. He has received the National Bonsai Foundation's award as Outstanding American Bonsai Artist and has exhibited trees nationally and internationally. In 1994, Mike led a delegation to the People's Republic of China under the sponsorship of the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program and Bonsai Clubs International. While in China, he was invited to speak to the Shanghai Penjing Club.

Currently Mike is Chairman of The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit, Inc.

Those of you who have taken his tool-care workshops in the past know we are in for a treat. Mike's presentation is guaranteed to be interesting and fun. See his article below for what you need to bring.

--Pete Parker

### Bonsai Tool Maintenance

Bonsai tools seem like a wonder of the toolmaker's art when they are new. Sharp and clean, they make clean cuts almost effortlessly. However, after a while, that sheers or branch cutter seems to be doing more mangling than cutting, and the amount of effort required cut even small branches is off the chart!

What happened? We will dig into the issue of tool maintenance, resharpening and minor repair in our program on Tool Maintenance. Bring your tools and any maintenance supplies you currently use including any stones

you may use for sharpening your tools. Also, bring a small branch you can use for testing the success of your newly earned tool maintenance skills.

--Mike Hansen, MBP Bonsai Studio, Pflugerville

### Fall Show, October 13-14

The HBS fall show will be held Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14 in the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park. Show times will be 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

We need more members to place trees in the exhibit. The sign-up sheets will be circulated again at our regular October club meeting. We also still need volunteers to work at the exhibit. Working at the exhibit is always a lot of fun. It's an opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of bonsai enthusiasts.

Set-up time will be Friday, October 12, at 6:00 p.m. We would like to ask all members to please leave their trees on exhibit until at least 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Take-down will begin at 4:30 Sunday.

--Anthony Cutola

### Saturday Study Group, October 20

Our study group will meet Saturday, October 20, at 9 a.m. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonet (between Beechnut and Hillcroft--south of 59 and east of Fondren). See map at the end of this newsletter. Everyone is welcome-- beginners and seasoned veterans alike.

### News from TTSBE

*A state bonsai exhibit is being established in the Austin area to showcase some of the outstanding bonsai that have been developed in Texas by Texans. Mike Hansen, Chairman of TTSBE, has provided the following update. --ed.*

**Extra Good News!!!** The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit, Inc., announces the purchase of 12.2 acres of land for our bonsai garden!

The property is on Old Lockhart Highway, in the village of Mustang Ridge, which is located in southeast Travis

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## 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.*

If you have not checked your wiring yet this fall, you had better look at it. The fall growth can make the tree swell up and get bad wire marks in a hurry. If the tree/limbs do not stay where you want them, then rewire it, placing the new wire in a slightly different path or possibly wrap in the opposite direction.

Watch your watering now that the temperature is a little lower. Cut back on the watering but do not allow the trees to dry out. Trees require less water during the shorter days and lower temperatures. However you need to remember that the wind can still stress the trees and dry out the soil; so you should water by checking the soil and not just on a given schedule.

Insects will continue to be present. Cooler (but not cold) days mean a resurgence of the aphids. Mites will also still be around. Scale also can be a problem. Treat with a light horticultural oil which will kill the adults and also wipe out the eggs and over-wintering pupae. Be sure to cover all the cracks in the bark to get to the eggs. The organic spray (one tablespoon each liquid kelp, fish emulsion, apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon of water) will work on evergreens and will also give them some nutrients. The dead scale will probably have to be removed physically. A soft toothbrush works for me. I sometimes need to wet the branch to loosen the scale.

Feeding of deciduous trees should be discontinued for the winter. Evergreens and conifers will benefit from a low nitrogen feeding. One such mix might be 70% cottonseed meal and 30% bone meal. Being organic, this will breakdown into nutrients more slowly as the season gets cooler and the trees activity slows also. The organic spray given above can be used as a soil drench but dilute it a little more. Kelp is an excellent source of the essential minor elements needed by plants.

As the trees loose their foliage, you can study their trunk lines and branch structure. Any faulty styling and the general design features can be observed more easily and corrections planned. Look for crossing branches. Cut vertical growing twigs both growing up and those growing down. Reduce long internodes by cutting back and growing new extensions. Clean out heavy branch clusters that make the tree look too dense. Be particularly attentive to the formation of heavy branches in the top part of the tree where faster growth often occurs. Work can be done now or later during the winter at your leisure, but it is too easy to forget about it when the tree is in winter storage.

Some may repot in the fall but I feel that it is counter-productive to do so. New roots are more prone to freeze damage if we get a bad winter. It has been stated that the

key to safe repotting is to minimize root disturbance and to exclude severe root pruning. This seems to me to be a recipe for developing root problems, poor drainage leading to root rot and the inability of the old soil to hold enough water to last all day. No heavy pruning will lead to the lack of refinement and a top-heavy tree. I would recommend that you do the above paragraph this fall and repot at the proper time next spring which is when the buds swell and new growth is imminent.

Creating some shohin bonsai can lead to some winter enjoyment. Since they do not take much room, you can find a space in the house or a small greenhouse. Let them go dormant for a short period and you can take them in and have new growth in a very short time. Small elms are especially good for this. Then sit back and enjoy your little fellows in the house while the winter wears on.

## Kathy Shaner, Wiring: Basic to Extreme

October 20 and 21, Persimmon Hill Bonsai will host its 12th annual seminar presented by Kathy Shaner. This year the topic will be "Wiring—Basic thru Extreme." Kathy will give hands-on instruction from the basics right up through techniques of bending large trunks and the use of rebar in bending.

Persimmon Hill Bonsai will open at 2:30 Friday, October 19 for early arrivals. At 5:30 refreshments will be served. Friday evening at 6:30 there will be a no-host dinner at a Japanese restaurant.

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Seki Bonsai

Santa Fe, TX

409-927-4595    409-766-0630

[www.sekibonsai.com](http://www.sekibonsai.com)



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI**  
**STUDIO & NURSERY**

**Terry & Sheila Ward    Austin, Texas**  
512-280-5575 - [phbonsai@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net) - By Appointment

### The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit, *cont'd.*

County. Access to the future exhibit site is currently from the north via Hwy.183 approximately 15 minutes south of Austin Bergstrom International Airport and in the future 2 minutes from the interchange of the new toll roads 130 and 45 South.

The 12.2 acres are rolling undeveloped pasture land with few small trees, between two 12+ acre lots zoned for single family homes. The property is on a good road, with water and electric available.

The mayor and city council of Mustang Ridge voted to permit us to build the garden on this single family zoned lot and are excited to have us!

The directors of TTSBE are pleased with the purchase of this land and excited about being able to move on with plans for the exhibit! TTSBE was able to make a generous down payment; however, we will have a 15-year mortgage.

The generosity of many people has allowed us to get to this first important step in our exhibit's development, but this is just the real beginning, and we would like to retire the mortgage early! The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit is counting on everyone and every club in our bonsai family to put the exhibit on their annual giving list. We are counting on you to help make TTSBE a world class bonsai exhibit.

**Use Goodsearch; Support TTSBE.** As Chairman of a nonprofit educational organization, I am always looking for opportunities to raise funds. For many, a fundraising appeal conjures up feelings of instant pain and resistance. Well, I would like to ask you to help us in a most painless way.

As a nonprofit organization, we are registered with a web search engine called Goodsearch. It is every bit as powerful as Yahoo, and every time someone uses it in our name we receive a small donation. The idea is that if enough people use Goodsearch regularly, the small donations add up for The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit, Inc.

I am asking you to help us as you search the web by going to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and typing in The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit in your favorite charity box. Click "verify." Then click on, "Add Goodsearch to your IE, Firefox, or Mac toolbar " and follow the instructions. Goodsearch will appear on your Internet browser, and each time your search you are helping The Texas Stat Bonsai Exhibit, Inc. build a world class, permanent bonsai exhibit in Texas.

Check out our web site at [www.ttsbe.org](http://www.ttsbe.org) for more information. You will want to check back in a few weeks to see our new web site! We will feature some exciting announcements. While you are there, don't forget to sign up for newsletter announcements of developments as they happen.

Thanks!

--Mike Hansen, Chairman, TTSBE  
MBP Bonsai Studio, 601 Kay Lane, Pflugerville, TX 78660

### Kathy Shaner on Wiring, *cont'd.*

Registration begins Saturday at 9:00. Saturday evening supper (included in the cost of the seminar) will be at Persimmon Hill. Sunday's session will be from 9:00 a.m. til noon. Kathy will give an optional bring-your-own-workshop Sunday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:30. Basic registration includes observing the workshop.

Registration fee for the seminar is \$100.00 per person and, for the workshop, \$45.00 per person. For complete information and a registration form, contact Terry or Sheila Ward, 512-280-5575 - [phbonsai@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net).

If you have never had the opportunity to work with Kathy Shaner, this seminar would be an excellent opportunity. Kathy is not only an accomplished artist, she is also a wonderful teacher.

### Pedro Morales

If you missed Pedro Morales' visit, you missed an excellent presentation and great workshops.

In styling a shimpaku juniper, Pedro proved (as if proof were necessary!) that his skills and talents are not limited to tropicals.

"The first rule in styling bonsai," Pedro said, "is to have taper in the trunk. The first thing you must do in styling is to



Pedro Morales works on the juniper.



Finished juniper. A golf tee marks the front.

turn the tree and examine it from all sides to determine which view gives the best taper." Other elements may eliminate that view as front, but that is where you must start.

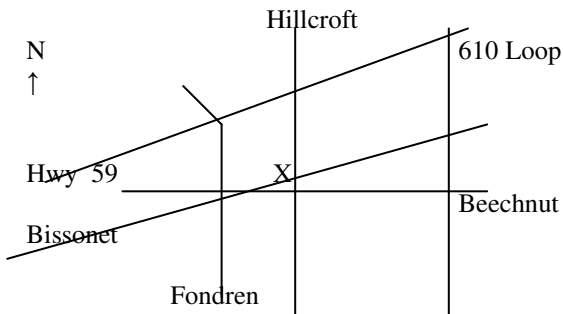
"The second rule," he went on, "is one of proportion. The first branch must be at a point one-third of the way up the trunk." Pedro applied these rules to the demonstration tree, and the result was truly lovely.

Pedro also brought news of the 6<sup>th</sup> World Bonsai Convention to be  
*Cont'd next page.*

held in Puerto Rico July 7 through 13 at the Condado Plaza Hotel and Casino (yes, you read right—and *casino!*). The convention will feature the first ever “Bonsai Olympics,” with competition in a number of categories. There will be a separate tree-styling event(s) for professionals. Gold, silver and bronze will be awarded in each category. Sounds like fun.

### Directions to Bayland Park

The October study group will be held at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonet (Bissonet between Beechnut and Hillcroft--south of 59 and east of Fondren).



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For special requests or questions related to *The Bonsai News of Houston*, contact the Editor, Dolores Plaisted, e-mail [bonsainewshouston@yahoo.com](mailto:bonsainewshouston@yahoo.com) 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.

### 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.*

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| Oct. 3      | Monthly meeting of HBS. Mike Hansen, Tool Care and Maintenance   |
| Oct. 13-14  | Fall bonsai show, Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park  |
| Oct. 20     | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.  |
| Oct. 20-21  | Kathy Shaner, Persimmon Hill, Austin. "Wiring—Basic thru Extreme." Terry or Sheila Ward, 512-280-5575, <a href="mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net">phbonsai@sbcglobal.net</a>                |
| Nov. 7      | Monthly meeting of HBS, Nomination of officers-directors, Open workshop  |
| Nov. 17     | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Cabrera Farm Nursery   |
| Dec. 5      | Monthly meeting of HBS, election of officers-directors, holiday party—potluck supper, gift exchange.   |
| Dec. 15     | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.  |
| <b>2008</b> |  |
| June 19-22  | Convention hosted jointly by San Antonio, Austin and the American Bonsai Society at the Tropicana Hotel on the river walk  |
| <b>2009</b> |  |
|             | State LSBF bonsai convention in Houston.   |
| July 7-13   | 6 <sup>th</sup> World Bonsai Convention, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino<br><a href="http://www.worldbonsaiconvention2009.com">www.worldbonsaiconvention2009.com</a> |