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# The Bonsai News of Houston

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

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Volume 36 Number 2, Internet Edition

February 2007

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## Monthly Meeting

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

Michael McCluskey, member and former officer of HBS, will give a presentation on Japanese maples. If you have a Japanese maple, bring it (or them) and share your experience.

## Study Group for February Cancelled

Our Saturday study group for February has been cancelled. We hope to see you all on the bonsai tour of Central Texas bonsai nurseries.

## Central Texas Bonsai Tour—February 17

There has been a lot of interest in the upcoming Central Texas Bonsai Tour. We're hoping you'll be able to join us on Saturday, February 17. An overview of the day's activities and some basic directions follow. This information—and maps with additional directions—is also available on the HBS website in the Calendar of Events.

Everyone will meet at Sam's Wholesale Club at the intersection of Highway 6 and Interstate 10. Arrive at the parking lot by 5:45 a.m. and meet in front of Sam's in the lot facing Highway 6. Departure time is 6 a.m. Please be punctual.

Breakfast will be at the Oakridge Smokehouse at the Schulenberg exit. We should arrive at approximately 7:30 a.m. for breakfast and we'll depart for Luling at 8:30 a.m.

Exit Interstate 10 at Highway 183 to Luling. Proceed to the first traffic light; take right on Highway 183. Then go to the first traffic light and take a left on Highway 80 toward San Marcos.

At San Marcos, Highway 80 turns into Highway 12 past IH-35. Approximately three miles past San Marcos is the "Country Estates Sign." Everyone will stop at the gasoline station near this sign. You will need to decide if you want to go to Bennie Badgett's (green maples and azaleas) or Jade Gardens (cedar elms, maples, etc.). There will be a leader to

take you to either location. Individuals who go to Bennie Badgett's will eventually join the group at Jade Gardens to have lunch together in San Marcos.

After lunch, the group will proceed north on IH-35 toward Austin. We will exit at FM 1626. You will need to decide if you want to go to Persimmon Hill Bonsai (shohin, et al.) or to MBP Bonsai (black pine, trident maples, etc.). There will be a leader to take you to either location. Individuals who go to Persimmon Hill will eventually join the group at MBP Bonsai.

At the end of the day, when we leave MPB Bonsai, take a left (heading south) off Kay Lane onto FM 685, which becomes Dessau Rd. Make a left onto Parmer Road; proceed until you get to Highway 290—then take a left onto Highway 290, which leads to Giddings. From Giddings, everyone should plan their route home or follow a leader into Houston.

Detailed instructions and maps will be provided when you arrive at Sam's Wholesale parking lot that morning.

*—Ken Credeur*

## Membership Fees Are Due

Your membership fees are due. Renew now to be sure you do not miss a single newsletter or any information about up-coming events. An individual membership is \$25.00; a family membership, \$30.00. A membership form appears at the end of this newsletter.

## Spring Bonsai Show

It's that time of year again, members, and our spring show is just around the corner. We will hold the spring show in conjunction with the Japan Festival the weekend of April 14th - 15th, in the Japanese Garden in Herman Park.

It's never too early to think about which tree to bring and begin preparing it for the show. We will need volunteers to staff our exhibit and help put up/take down the display.

*—Anthony Cutola*

## 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.*

With the potting season coming up a few words about "soils" is probably in order. These can be prepared in advance to ease the strain if you have several bonsai. The basics of good mixes:

- Permit free drainage. Use granular material-- akadama, decomposed granite, lava gravel, pumice, Haydite, Turface, etc.
- Provide decomposition material (organic, should not break down too quickly)-- ground or decomposed bark
- Provide air space--Use appropriately same-sized particles.

Moisture retention is controlled by the type of material (e.g., akadama vs. granite) and by particle size (finer particles retain more residual water).

Check wire applied last year. During dormancy the woody portions tend to lignify and swell. Severe wire marks can occur. Remove any tight wire.

Early February is the end of the season for major pruning. You may be able to continue for a while on some late sprouting species such as the oaks. After the onset of sap flow you should not try to make big cuts. Cut paste or pruning sealer cannot withstand the hydraulic pressure created by the urge to grow.

Remember, the best time to repot any tree is when the new growth activity is just getting started. For deciduous trees this is evidenced when the buds are just starting to swell. Having your soil mixes (it takes more than one type) ready before the season starts lets you spend your time getting them done at the best time. Sometimes your work will prevent you from being able to pot when you would like. In these cases, repotting should be done earlier in the month, never after new foliage has broken. Also after repotting, the plants must be protected from freezes. The new roots develop quickly and are very tender.

One of the ways to enjoy January and February is to have a greenhouse. I have a small lean-to type on the east side of the garage. A small electric heater keeps it fine (45-50 degrees). This keeps my few tropicals and pomegranates. I also let my small elms get 3-5 weeks of cold and then bring them in. They then start greening up in about two weeks. Helps fight the winter blahs.

If there is a significant warm streak, you could get some activity from over-wintering pests. A dormant spray (horticultural oil or a very weak lime sulphur solution) should be used on outside plants. The lime sulphur should not be used on any green growth or after buds begin to swell. For the greenhouse, use the organic original Garret

Juice mixture. I get good control of mites, aphids, and even scale with it. It should be used on a regular basis.

Garrett Juice is 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. This may be used as a foliar spray or an organic soil fertilizer. I prefer to go easy on the soil application until the new growth slows down. Using organic fertilizer cakes on top of the soil is a better way to fertilize. You may make your own or buy one of the commercial versions from your local bonsai vendor. I do not advocate adding potassium bicarbonate or baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to control fungal problems. They will chemically interact with the vinegar. Use them separately if you have mildew or other fungal problems.

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## 25th LSBF Convention

by John Miller, Dallas

Have you made your reservations for the 2007 LSBF convention in Dallas? Remember, there will be no workshops at next year's convention. We have an impressive lineup of talent for this year's 25th LSBF convention. You can't beat the collection of Marco Ivernezi, Boon Manakatipart, Suthin Sukosolvisit and Shane Cary. Add to that Mike Hagedorn just back from study in Japan, Sylvia and Howard Smith, both of whom completed Boon's three-year intensive course and have their own nursery, and John Miller who plays around Texas. Boon, Suthin, and Shane are bringing some of the workshop material in. Boon has been prepping the large demo trees for two years.

Registration forms may be gotten on line at [www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com](http://www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com) or from your LSBF representative. Hotel information is as follows: Holiday Inn Select Dallas - Love Field 3300 W. Mockingbird Dallas, Texas 75235.

Enjoy a reduced rate of \$79 per night by calling the hotel at (214) 357-8500 or (877) 211-3289 and informing the reservation personnel that you will be attending the bonsai convention, or register on the web. Be sure to mention the discount code: BSO.

A more formal display area is planned and will have a section for suiseki and also for antique bonsai pottery. These will require special security measures. It would be

*Cont'd page 9*



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI  
STUDIO & NURSERY**

**Terry & Sheila Ward    Austin, Texas**  
**phbonsai@sbcglobal.net    - By Appointment**

## Lone Star Bonsai Federation Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 p.m. by President, John Denton. He welcomed Kathleen Williamson as the new representative for the Shohin Society of Texas.

**Approval of the Minutes.** A motion was made and carried to approve the minutes as amended.

**Treasurer's Report.** Pat Ware presented the treasurer's report. She noted that an extra \$250 was budgeted for the LSBF newsletter to allow the addition of a page of color illustrations as requested by Carl Quisenberry, editor. She pointed out that the extra money was offset by the elimination of lunch costs and termination of the lease on the credit card imprinter. After discussion, a motion was made and carried to approve the treasurer's report. Yvonne pointed out that her email address was listed incorrectly in the newsletter. Her correct email address is:

### LSBF Conventions.

**2007** – John Miller discussed the upcoming convention in Dallas. He indicated that a website was available through the Bonsai Society of Dallas web site. The web site includes pictures of the workshop trees held by the Dallas club but not those that will be brought in by individual artists such as Suthin who will be providing his own Itowigawa shimpakus. The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Select, adjacent to Love Field. The hotel rooms are \$79/night and the reservation code is BSO. John reminded each club to provide a raffle item. Marty Klajnowski inquired if the convention has any insurance coverage for theft. It was pointed out that the LSBF has blanket coverage for personal liability but not for theft. John agreed to inquire of the hotel.

**2008** - Marty Klajnowski discussed the 2008 convention which will be hosted jointly by San Antonio, Austin and the American Bonsai Society. The convention will have no "daily" reservations--only "full" reservations. The exhibit will have a \$2 admission fee for non-registrants. Trees for the Joshua Roth Competition will be provided by the ABS.

The vending area will be 12,000 sq. ft. It is unclear as to whether the vendors will be required to be full registrants. The registration fee is not yet known. This year's (2007) ABS convention registration fee is \$315.

Corpus Christi will supply San Antonio with a credit card imprinter. It need only be activated.

The hotel will be El Tropicana, rooms to be \$129 or \$139/night. The hotel is providing suite upgrades to the visiting artists, and the Austin, San Antonio, and LSBF presidents. In addition, the hotel is providing 2 free rooms to the convention committee for the length of the convention to do with as they like. There will be 3 lunches, 2 dinners and daily snacks provided.

The hotel owns no skirting so any required by vendors will be available for \$5/day. Vendors may bring their own. The ABS had asked for someone from LSBF to join as a board member. Mike Hansen has agreed.

The ABS asked us to provide names of several artists that we would like to see present seminars at the convention. Marty took down several names and will pass them on but has had no word of who has been asked or accepted.

**2009** – Buddy Allen indicated that Houston will host the convention in 2009

### LSBF Speaker Tour

**2007** – Yvonne Padilla announced that Pedro Morales has accepted the invitation to be the 2008 LSBF speaker. He will charge \$250/event. She is trying to schedule our tour to follow his appearance in Rochester, New York. That would put the tour start around the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> of September. Yvonne passed around a sheet on which she asked representatives to write down the number of events we will sponsor and the dates of our regular club meetings. She will try to accommodate them as much as possible.

**2008** – Buddy Allen volunteered to organize the LSBF speaker tour for 2008. He asked that each representative bring back their club's suggestions for speakers.

**Expanding the LSBF.** At the previous meeting, Marty Klajnowski had presented a proposal for the LSBF to expand the federation to include adjoining states. She asked for returns from the clubs as to their thoughts. She emphasized that this is not a deciding vote for expansion. She is merely seeking an expression of interest in looking into the idea. Buddy Allen indicated that after discussion, the Houston club voted "No". Yvonne indicated that Corpus Christi club was interested in hearing more about the matter (Yes). Carl Quisenberry indicated that the Austin club had discussed it but had not reached a decision. All other clubs were urged to bring the issue up at the next meeting and to email John Denton with a vote of "Yes" or "No" by the end of February.

**Nominating Committee.** President John Denton suggested that it was not too early to put together a nominating committee for the next term which will commence in 2008. John volunteered for the committee, as did Buddy Allen and Carl Quisenberry.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting will be held June 9 at 1:00 in the LCRA Board Room located in the Hancock building at 3700 Lake Austin Blvd.

A motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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### LSBF Convention *Cont'd.*

helpful if you made advance contact with the exhibit chairman or any member of the convention committee if you would like to exhibit a tree, stone, or pot.

Any questions will be promptly answered. One contact would be John Miller,

The convention information is also on the web. Go to <http://www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com/> and click on the convention.

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### 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.*

- Feb. 7 Monthly meeting of the HBS. Mike McCluskey on Japanese maples.
- Feb. 10 Shohin Society of Texas (SSOT), "Developing Exhibit Quality Shohin Bonsai." Persimmon Hill, 10:30, Austin. Brown bag lunch or hot dogs provided by SSOT Kitty. For information, Terry or Sheila Ward, [texshohin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:texshohin@sbcglobal.net) or 512-280-5575.
- Feb. 17 ~~Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.~~  
CANCELLED.
- Feb. 17 Trip to Central Texas vendors
- Mar. 7 Monthly meeting of the HBS. Donald Green, root-over-rock trident maple.
- Mar. 17 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Cabrera Farm Nursery
- Mar. 24 SSOT. Select shohin bonsai for LSBF convention, Large Plant Reduction workshop, 10:30, Persimmon Hill, Austin.
- Apr. 14-15 Spring show in conjunction with the Japan Festival. Hermann Park Japanese Garden.
- Apr. 20-22 25<sup>th</sup> LSBF State Bonsai Convention, Dallas. Holiday Inn Select, 3300 W. Mockingbird.
- Apr. 21 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- May 19 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- June 16 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Cabrera Farm Nursery
- June 21-24 American Bonsai Society (ABS) with Virginia Bonsai Society. 2007 Learning Seminars. Virginia Beach at the Cavalier Resort Hotel. For information [www.absbonsai.org](http://www.absbonsai.org) or email [ABS@pfmbonsai.com](mailto:ABS@pfmbonsai.com)
- June 23 SSOT. Follow-up workshop: "Developing Exhibit Quality Shohin Bonsai." Persimmon Hill, Austin, 10:30
- July 4 **NO MONTHLY MEETING.**
- July 21 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- Aug. 18 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- Sept. 15 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- Sept. 15 SSOT, business meeting and "Pot Making Workshop for Accent Plants and Kusamono," Sheila Ward and Bob Swindle.

- Oct. 13-14 Fall bonsai show, Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park
- Oct. 20 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- Nov. 17 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Cabrera Farm Nursery
- Dec. 15 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.

#### 2008

June 19-22 Convention hosted jointly by San Antonio, Austin and the American Bonsai Society at the Tropicana Hotel on the river walk

#### 2009

State LSBF bonsai convention in Houston.

### Epoxy Sealer for *Jin* and *Shari*

by Jim Rader

*Jim Rader has been an active member of bonsai clubs for 19 years, 16 of those years with the HBS. Jim has often contributed to our newsletter and given presentations at our meetings. Thank you, Jim, for this article and for all your support.*

The August issue of *Workbench* magazine contains an article which describes an epoxy sealer. The epoxy is still a two-part material that must be mixed like other epoxies. However, this epoxy is also mixed with a solvent and ends up just a bit thicker than water. The old wood on your driftwood still needs to be cleaned up and prepared before the epoxy is painted on. The epoxy is then painted on in repeated coats until the wood is saturated and the epoxy is completely soaked in. The whole thing is allowed to completely cure and then can be sanded to remove any gloss that may occur. Then the lime sulphur can be brushed on and tinted, then dried.

The article says that the epoxy is available in a two-pint kit for \$37.00 from Jamestown Distributors, on line at [jamestowndistributors.com](http://jamestowndistributors.com) or telephone, 800-497-0010.

This sounds like a material that will stabilize the rotting wood on our bonsai and be a big help as we create or maintain the driftwood on our plants.

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### Mycorrhizae: ALWAYS Read Labels

by Dolores Plaisted

*Dolores has been an active member of the HBS since 1997 and an inactive member for a number of years before that. She has been editor of The Bonsai News of Houston since May 1999.*

I may be the only person in HBS who didn't know about this potential problem, but if this little blurb helps even one other member, it's worth it.

I have a number of commercial samples of mycorrhizae (fungi that form a beneficial relation with the roots of a plant). I use the samples from time to time in my potting mix. I needed to repot three black pines a little early this year and decided to use mycorrhizae in the soil mix. I didn't

read the ingredients. The package said, "Mycorrhizae." That was enough for me.

As it turned out, this particular sample of mycorrhizae also contained hydrogel, a copolymer gel in crystal form, designed to increase water retention and reduce the need to water so often. The crystals absorb water, some absorb three or four HUNDRED times their weight in water! You add the hydrogel to the soil. When you water, the crystals absorb water, swell up and turn into little globs of gelatin. They look like little globs of Jell-O that had just a little bit too much water in the mix. Some of the globules in this particular brand were at least three-eighths inch in diameter.

I have used hydrogel in the soil mix for my jaboticaba with great success. It was happy, and I was even happier because I didn't have to water twice a day, but black pines (and many other trees) prefer to be on the dry side and need a well drained soil with high aggregate content. Hydrogel could be fatal for them.

Of my three pines, I think (but I'm not sure) that I forgot to put mycorrhizae in the first pot. The second pine is a shohin—small pot, not much soil—and so after talking with Buddy Allen, I decided to slip it out of the pot, gently remove the globs I could easily reach, and put it in a larger pot with fresh, dry soil.

The third tree—a big monster—cannot be "gently slipped out of its pot." I have stuck two thin, wooden sticks into the soil to the very bottom of the pot on two different sides. I can pull them out and put them back, like dip sticks to check oil. If I always reinsert them in the same spot, I shouldn't do too much damage to the total root system. With my "dip sticks," I can monitor its watering very carefully.

The only good news is that all three trees were very healthy. I'll just have to wait and see what happens. I know from personal experience, black pines can take a lot of abuse.

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For special requests or questions related to *The Bonsai News of Houston*, contact the Editor, Dolores Plaisted, 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.

## HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please fill out and mail in or bring to a meeting)

**Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:** (Select one)      \_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$25.00)      \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$30.00)

**Membership Classification:** (Select one)

\_\_\_\_ Local member      \_\_\_\_ Out of town member      \_\_\_\_ Vendor      \_\_\_\_ Bonsai club

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STREET:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP CODE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOME PHONE:** (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ **WORK PHONE:** (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ **E-MAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Do not publish my address to general membership*      \_\_\_\_\_ *Call here ONLY if absolutely necessary*

**Payment Amount Enclosed:**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Paying with:**      \_\_\_\_\_ Check      \_\_\_\_\_ Cash

**MAIL TO: HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY**

**P.O. BOX 540727**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS 77254-0727**