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# The Bonsai News of Houston

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

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Volume 36 Number 6, Internet Edition

June 2007

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### Monthly Meeting:

#### Natal Plum II; Workshop Trees

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, June 6, 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.

The June program will cover several topics. We will have Part II of the Natal plum workshop, so bring your plants back so that we can discuss what you and others have done. In addition, we have just had the LSBF convention and Brussel's Rendezvous. Anyone who attended these events should plan to bring the trees they worked on at the workshops and share with us what they learned about the trees and from the instructors in the workshops.

*-Pete Parker*

### Study Group, Saturday, June 16

Our study group will meet Saturday, June 16, at 9 a.m. at Cabrera Farm Nursery, 3914 Cabrera Drive, Sugar Land 77479. See map and directions at the end of this newsletter. Everyone is welcome-- beginners and seasoned veterans. If you've never been to Cabrera nursery, treat yourself. The setting is beautiful and relaxing. You'll have a great time.

### Roy Nagatoshi Visit, June 8 and 9 Workshop Spaces Still Available

Roy Nagatoshi was born in the United States but spent his early years in Japan. He returned to the United States in 1957 as he was about to enter high school. He learned bonsai initially at the side of his father, Shigeru, and later studied under John Naka. His father opened Fuji Bonsai Nursery in Sylmar, California in 1965 and Roy and Shigeru teach classes there to this day.

Roy received a B.S. degree in ornamental horticulture from California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in 1975. He has been teaching bonsai since 1976 and has been featured by most of the major bonsai organizations in the

U.S. as well as at any number of international events. He is a past president of the California Bonsai Society and developed the bonsai for the movie, Karate Kid III.

Roy will be doing a lecture/demonstration on Friday, June 8, at 7:00 at the Garden Center in Hermann Park. The entrance fee is \$5, and the demonstration tree will be raffled at the end of the demonstration.

On Saturday, June 9, Roy will lead two, ½ day workshops in the Azalea Room of the Garden Center in Hermann Park. The first workshop will run from 9:00 – 12:00 and the second from 1:00 – 4:00. These are bring-your-own-tree workshops and cost \$30 apiece. Roy has experience with a wide variety of tree species, so any good bonsai material is appropriate.

Workshop spaces are still available in both the morning and afternoon sessions.

*-Pete Parker*

### Bonsai Sale, June 2-3

My name is Steve Lessar and I have been an HBS member for about 8 years. Recently, my wife decided to move to Virginia to be near our granddaughters. Luckily for me, I have been invited to go along. Because we will move to temporary housing with our furnishing in storage while trying to select a permanent home and also because I am concerned about the climate change, I have decided to sell all of my bonsai. I have (in my opinion) several nice bonsai and some not so nice with lots of potential. I also have pots, wire, tools, books and magazines to sell. The magazines are in excellent condition and include 32 issues of Bonsai Today 1992 - 2002; Bonsai Magazine 35 issues 1993 - 2004; and Bonsai Journal 18 issues 1999-2003.

The sale will be Saturday and Sunday June 2-3, 2007. My address in west Houston is 19306 Kessington Lane, Houston, TX 77094, phone 281-647-0566

Please call me to schedule an appointment and for directions. Hope to see you soon.

## 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.*

Do you have ants in your bonsai? Some ants are after the honeydew exuded by aphids feeding on the leaves and will leave when you get rid of the aphids. However, if they are building nests in the soil, like my fire ants, that is another story entirely. The tunnels and cavities will prevent proper watering and result in loss of roots. After you get rid of the ants, be sure to grab your chopsticks and work the soil down and eliminate any holes. You will probably need to add a little more soil on top.

This year has been pretty cool. You should still be able to leaf prune if you need to but be careful, it could turn hot in a hurry. Remember do it only on healthy, vigorous trees. Put the tree in a semi-shaded location out of the wind until new foliage appears. Again never leaf prune the atropurpeum varieties of Japanese maples. They do not rebud but will usually come out again next spring.

When night temperatures stay above 60 degrees, you can think about repotting some of the tropicals. I would wait another month though for the buttonwood.

It is important to continue the twig pruning of your trees on a regular basis. While doing this chore, look at the tree to see if there is a need to do some refinement pruning. Refinement pruning is a deeper pruning to replace a branch that has grown too long or too big with a smaller one. This is usually done with the secondary or tertiary branches, not the primary branch coming from the trunk. I prefer to do this refinement pruning on deciduous trees in the winter when I can see the branch structure. But on bonsai like the yaupon hollies, I like to do it at this time when the tree is actively growing so that any winter dieback is apparent. Trees that weep a lot from cuts such as maples or pines should not be done at this time.

The extended cool and damp weather is good for fungal diseases like black leaf spot. Treat with potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). After the foliage is hardened a bit you can treat with 1% hydrogen peroxide (1 part 3% peroxide to 2 parts water) weekly. Warm damp weather will bring its own fungal problems like mildew. Same treatment.

Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. I use the organic foliar feed (1 tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. It also gets any caterpillars and even bagworms. You can use some of the other organic controls like horticultural oil or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully and DO NOT apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods.

It does not do much good to spray if you do not do it correctly. Hose end sprayers have too coarse a spray and usually do not cover very well. All pathogen controls must be sprayed with a sprayer that has a nozzle which produces a fine spray in order to cover the entire leaf surface, top and bottom. You GOTS to get all them bugs or they come right back. And you GOTS to spray on a regular basis. Any bugs or spores hiding in cracks will repeat the infestation.

Even if the days are relatively cool, the sun can still get the pots pretty hot. Not only does this dry out the soil very fast but the tree roots cannot live in a hot soil. A temperature I have heard given is that 120 degrees will kill roots on most plants. I cannot give you a precise to-do list since your backyard is different from mine, but you should be sure that the sun does not hit the pots directly. If you use a cover of any kind be sure that the side of the pot is protected also. A loose weave cover is preferable to solid paper or foil. Leave an air space between the cover and pot and soil.

Most plants in pots will not enjoy a full day of 90 plus sun. Partial shade should be provided. A shade cloth awning is the best as it will protect in the middle of the day. A shade cloth on the west side will protect from the late afternoon sun. This is the worst sun as the temperature is already high and the drier air makes the rays more intense.

Get to know your trees like your children--which ones use more water and which ones stay moist between watering. If some are difficult to keep happy, you can try moving those to a cooler location (but be sure they get their sunlight). Another trick is to group problem trees together so that you can hit them with a shot of water twice a day and not have to spend the time going through all your trees.

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## From *Bonsai Muse*

"*Bonsai Muse*" is the pen name of a long-time HBS member. I hope we will hear from his or her backyard again soon. —ed.

While sitting in my backyard, I started day-dreaming about my trees. I started thinking about the River Birch (*Betula nigra L.*) I purchased back a few years ago and how well-suited this tree is for our area of the country. In my reading, I found the tree is primarily adapted to the floodplain and low lands with lots of water—well, my rain gauge, in the past two days has recorded 4 ¾ inches of rain in my back yard—"that'll work."

I spoke with some folks at our convention in Dallas a few weeks back and I guess the down side for this tree is it doesn't live very long. How long does it live? My understanding is that a bonsai lives much longer than their counterparts in the wild. Maybe as much as three times longer? Well, I probably won't be around long enough to see that tree in old age either!

I was attracted to the tree by the peeling bark which comes off in paper-thin sheets and its formal upright structure. I must say that the price was appealing also; for a modest amount I got two trees—one of which was about 2 inches in diameter. I removed them from the nursery container and planted them in growing pots.

"And now...for the rest of the story." I planted the larger tree in a shallow, plastic growing pot; the soil got too dry and the tree died. Remember back there, when I mentioned they like lots of water? Lesson 1 is they don't like to be dry! The smaller of the two trees is doing fine—remember the 4 ¾ inches of rain I mention earlier? Well, that river birch loved every inch of it.

I will keep you informed on the bonsai river birch later on. For now I'd best be tending to one of my trident maples, because the wire is getting a little tight. Looking around my backyard, the plants in the beds need some attention but that maple can't wait! From by backyard...that's all for now.

--BM

## Ron Martin Dies of Cancer

Ronald L. Martin of Summerville, South Carolina, died Tuesday, May 22, of cancer. In 1985, Ron became interested in the art of bonsai. After retiring from the United States Air Force in 1993, he opened Tokonoma Bonsai in Summerville. He has conducted demonstrations from South Florida to New Jersey and as far west as Texas, sponsored several Ronald McDonald charity events and spearheaded the annual Summerville Bonsai Expo each September. He allowed *The Bonsai News of Houston* to print a number of articles he had written.

## San Antonio Woman Wins Sculpture

On May 19, Irene of San Antonio won *Sensei*, the bronze the bust of John Naka which was raffled by The

Texas State Bonsai Exhibit. Barry Cotton, president of the Greater Austin Japan-American Society, drew the winning ticket on the grounds of the State capitol. The drawing was video taped and will be put on the TTSBE website: [www.ttsbe.org](http://www.ttsbe.org). I want to thank everyone for supporting the Permanent Exhibit.

--Donna Dobberfuhr, *The San Antonio Bonsai Society*

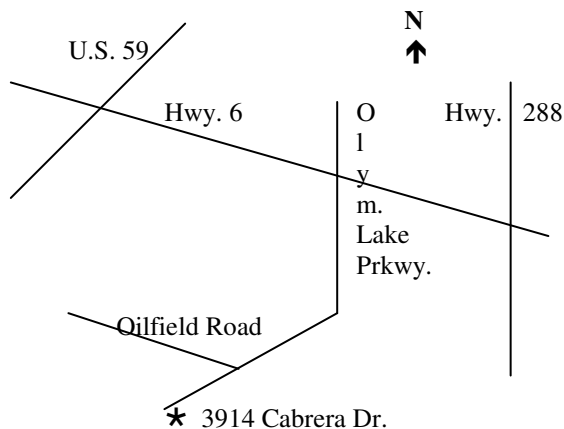
## Calendar of Events

*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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|---------------|---|
| June 6        | Monthly meeting of HBS, cascade Natal plum II; Show & tell—workshop trees, LSBT & Rendezvous  |
| June 8        | Roy Nagatoshi lecture-demonstration, 7:00 p.m. at the Garden Center in Hermann Park. Admission, \$5.  |
| June 9        | Roy Nagatoshi workshops: morning 9-12, afternoon 1-4. Azalea Room, Houston Garden Center in Hermann 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 <a href="http://www.absbonsai.org">www.absbonsai.org</a> or email <a href="mailto:ABS@pfmbonsai.com">ABS@pfmbonsai.com</a> |
| June 23       | SSOT. Follow-up workshop: "Developing Exhibit Quality Shohin Bonsai." 10:30, Persimmon Hill, Austin, Terry or Sheila Ward, 512-280-5575 or <a href="mailto:texshohin@sbcglobal.net">texshohin@sbcglobal.net</a>   |
| <b>July 4</b> | <b>NO MONTHLY MEETING.</b>  |
| July 21       | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.   |
| Aug. 1        | Monthly meeting of HBS, Ficus Fair  |
| Aug. 18       | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.   |
| Sept. 5       | Monthly meeting of HBS, Annual Auction  |
| 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. 3        | Monthly meeting of HBS, shohin bonsai, Terry Ward   |
| Oct. 13-14    | Fall bonsai show, Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park   |
| Oct. 20       | Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.   |
| 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.  |

### Directions to Cabrera Farm Nursery

From Houston take Hwy. 59 south towards Sugar Land. Exit at Hwy. 6 and go under the freeway. Go several miles to Lake Olympia Parkway and turn right. The street name changes to Oilfield Road. Proceed approximately 0.9 miles. Oilfield Road will make a sharp turn to the left (a 90 degree turn). Continue on Oilfield Road another 1.6 miles. When Oilfield Road makes a sharp turn to the right, continue straight. You will then be on Cabrera Drive. Follow Cabrera into the nursery.



For another map, see [www.orchidsandbonsai.com](http://www.orchidsandbonsai.com) or call 281-313-2000.

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For special requests or questions related to *The Bonsai News of Houston*, contact the Editor, Dolores Plaisted, Phone 281-338-5010, 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.