



---

---

# The Bonsai News of Houston

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

---

---

Volume 36 Number 8, Internet Edition

August 2007

### Monthly Meeting, August 1

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be held Wednesday, August 1, 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.

This month's program will be on ficus bonsai. Please bring in any examples that you have, particularly any unusual species. We'll spend the first part of the program talking about the different varieties of ficus bonsai. During the second portion of the program, we'll break into smaller groups and see demonstrations of grafting, air layering, defoliation, and possibly other techniques commonly used with ficus.

--Pete Parker

### Alex Leong To Speak in Kingwood

Alex Leong is doing an "Introduction to Bonsai" presentation, open to anyone interested, at the Kingwood Garden Center (1216 Stonehollow Drive, Kingwood, TX) on Saturday, July 28, at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome!

Google map to Kingwood Garden Center:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=1216+Stonehollow+Drive,+Kingwood,+TX+77339&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=25.715644,58.447266&ie=UTF8&ll=30.050597,-95.240865&spn=0.01367,0.028539&z=16&iwloc=addr&om=1>

--Alan Raymond, HBS Member

### Study Group, Saturday, August 18

Our study group will meet Saturday, August 18, at 9 a.m. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonet (Bissonet at Hillcroft--south of 59 and east of Fondren). Everyone is welcome-- beginners and seasoned veterans alike. It's a great time to work on your tropicals.

### Fall Show

The fall show is back this year and will be held in the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park the weekend of October 13 and 14. It's not too early to start preparing your trees.

--Anthony Cutola

### Pedro Morales is coming to Houston

Pedro Morales from Puerto Rico is the LSBF tour speaker for 2007. He will be in Houston September 21 and 22 at the Houston Garden Center in Herman Park. Friday night Pedro will do a lecture/demo, working on a large shimpaku juniper that was purchased at Brussel's Bonsai Nursery in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

There will be two workshops Saturday, the first one starts at 9:00 and ends at 12:00 noon. The second workshop starts at 1:00 and ends at 4:00. The cost of the workshop will be \$25.00 per tree at each workshop. There will be a sign up sheet at the August meeting or see John Denton or Buddy Allen. Be sure to sign up early to ensure your place in the work shops because there are only 10 opening in each work shop.

--Buddy Allen

### Kathy Shaner's 12th Annual Seminar

Kathy Shaner will give a seminar in Austin, Saturday, October 20 and Sunday, October 21, 2007. The presentation will be a show and tell, how-to from beginning to end packed full of bonsai techniques you can use!

Add Sheila's Saturday night supper and you have a fantastic week-end of learning, sharing and gourmet food.

Reserve Kathy's seminar dates on your calendar. Complete details and registration form will be on the way to you in late August. It's going to be another great seminar!

--Terry & Sheila Ward, Persimmon Hill, Austin

## 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.*

*This article was reprinted from The Bonsai News of Houston, August 2006. As we are all aware, most of Texas has had significant amounts of rainfall this year. My yard—front and back—is beginning to look like a tropical rain forest. Watering bonsai has **not** been a problem—the problem has been keeping some plants dry! My pines, junipers and recently repotted tropicals are spending lots of time under glass-topped patio tables. When they aren't there, I have to remember to tip the pots to be sure they are draining thoroughly. And so far, I haven't had to cover any pots to protect them from the sun-- sun? What's that?*

*With all the rain, keeping up with pruning (and therefore, nice ramification) has definitely been a problem. This year, I'd tried a new organic fertilizer recommended by Terry Ward, and even it is getting washed through the soil at an accelerated pace—with resulting accelerated growth! And finally, wire cuts are also a potential threat with all the burst of growth. —ed.*

Thought you would like the Corpus Christi advice on tropicals and other items (by David Whitaker)---Keep on re-potting semi-tropicals like ficus, and figs. You can start on your Texas Ebony and tropicals. Keep an eye out on the temperature and if is going to fall below 70 degrees (yeah right, below 70 in South Texas in June) you need to protect your newly re-potted tropicals (Fukien tea, Bahama Black Olive, Buttonwood). When repotting, be sure to wire the tree securely in the pot to give it good stability against the winds. Putting rocks on top of the soil for a few days can also help brace the tree.

It is NOT recommended to repot any deciduous trees that you need to root prune. If you must repot due to problems with tree, change the pot or repot it in larger container only. DO NOT prune the roots. These deciduous trees have very tender roots at this time of year.

Watch the soils every day so they do not dry out. Inspect your bonsai from top to bottom, also inspect the drain holes. Insects are on the move since the last rain. Inspect for ANY and all insects and treat accordingly. If you discover an infestation, treat according to the label of the pesticide.

Watch your training wires, so they will not cut into the branches.

Along with a regular fertilization during June, I would suggest to add one or two drops of Super Thrive per gallon of water to help maintain health and prevent heat stress. ---That's not any different from the Dallas bonsai care at this time of the year. My criteria for repotting tropicals is for the night temperature to stay above 60. I would emphasize to check the wires on your trees and also see that the drains are not blocked in any way. Especially check them after a rain to be sure that your pots have drained properly. If necessary, put a small board under one end of the pot to aid in draining.

Many spring flowering plants will be setting buds for next year's flowers. Azaleas set their buds toward the end of July. If you prune tips after that you remove the new buds.

Now that night temperatures are staying above 60 degrees you should think about repotting some of the tropicals. Most tropicals do well with an annual repotting. Keep the tropicals trimmed, as they will be growing like crazy. However, if you want flowers on those that produce on the end of the twigs, bougainvillea-pomegranate-crape myrtle, you will have to forgo the bonsai shape to let them flower. These species should be pruned more drastically before the growing season starts so they can still be in a pretty good shape.

Pots out in the sun can get pot 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 120 degrees. That 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 that allows airflow is preferable to solid paper or foil. An article by Dr. Bill Cody suggests that his experiments show that an afternoon watering at 2 p.m. will go a long way to keep the soil temperature in a desirable range, while a box close around the pot does little to protect it. My opinion that the reason for this is that the sun still heats the soil and there is no airflow to cool it. A solid cover over the pot and box would create an oven type enclosure.

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. Preventative medicine is best. By the time you see signs, the damage is already done, especially spider mites. I use the organic foliar feed (1 tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. Add a tablespoon of baking soda if you have mildew or other fungal problems. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully and do not apply oil-based chemicals to buttonwoods. A hose end sprayer does not work very well. Its droplets are too large and you have little control over where it goes. Use a pump sprayer with a fine spray and cover both top and bottom of leaves.

You can fertilize with most organic type fertilizers without worrying about burning the roots in hot weather. Don't use hi-powered types though, such as guano or one heavy on the chicken manure unless you use them very lightly. If you use chemical types, follow the label. If they do not specify any temperature restrictions, try using a weaker solution than normal. Without a lot of organic material in your soil, you should use a weaker solution but more often to provide a more even feeding. Most of us do not fertilize our bonsai enough anyway.

And finally, keep up the ramification pruning. As long as you keep the roots happy the plant will probably continue to grow. Tropicals will now be growing at their fastest.

## The Bonsai Muse

While sitting in my backyard, I started day-dreaming about my hornbeam. Must be three years now that I purchased the American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) from a fellow in South Carolina. The tree was collected in that part of the country, and he told me they were common on the East coast. Well, the tree arrived at my office in a cardboard box about 3 feet square. Luckily, I was expecting it and was able to load it into my truck as I would never have gotten it into my car.

Safely home, I un-packed the tree from its box full of foam peanuts and saw some green leaves at the top – OK! After pulling the tree out of the box, I proceeded to chase foam peanuts around the back yard as, my luck goes, it was a windy day. (I still find an occasional peanut in the yard to this day.) The tree survived its trip to Texas very well and is growing quite nicely in the wood growing box that it arrived in.

Fast forward to this year's early spring which found the tree about 4 feet tall and almost as wide. I decided to create a new top, which would be about 18 inches above the soil level, so the tree would appear very large at the base. I knew where the front would be, so I selected a long shoot, which I bent easily. Next, I drilled a hole at the proper location that was just a little larger than my shoot. The spring buds had not started to swell so it made threading the shoot a little easier.

With my new thread graft in place everything looked good to go. I sat the hornbeam back on its stand in the flower bed in the backyard and waited.

"And now for the rest of the story. . . ." As you are aware, our weather this spring has been a bit difficult—lots of rain. One of those downpours, which dropped 3 plus inches of rain, arrived with very high winds. I arrived home from work and found the big hornbeam on its side. Luckily, the adjacent shrubbery had cushioned its fall. After replacing the tree on its stand, I looked for any damage.

Upon inspection, I found some damage, and, sure enough there was a broken branch. You've probably guessed by now that the very carefully positioned thread graft, which was well on its way to becoming the new apex, was broken.

The hornbeam was not seriously damaged although the new apex was history. "Bonsai will teach you patience." Three years into development of the big hornbeam and the ideal apex is another year away—if I am lucky.

I need to do something about those unstable tree stands! From my backyard...that's all for now.

--BM

## TTSBE Raffle Winner

On June 14, at the San Antonio Bonsai Society meeting, The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit presented raffle winner Irene Britton with the bronze sculpture of John Naka called, *Sensei*. A short story written by Irene about how she first met John Naka as a teenager was read

aloud, and then the artwork was handed over to her. Present were TTSBE directors Donna Dobberfuhl and Joey McCoy. Donna Dobberfuhl sculpted the bust and donated it to TTSBE.



--Joey McCoy, San Antonio

# 石头

**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

### 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.*

- 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 & "Pot Making Workshop for Accent Plants and Kusamono," Sheila Ward and Bob Swindle. 10:30, Persimmon Hill, Austin, Terry, Sheila Ward, [texshohin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:texshohin@sbcglobal.net) or 512-280-5575.
- Sept. 21 Pedro Morales, Fri., lecture /demo, shimpaku juniper
- Sept. 22 Pedro Morales, Sat. workshops, a.m. and p.m.
- 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.
- Oct. 20-21 Kathy Shaner, Persimmon Hill, Austin. Terry or Sheila Ward, 512-280-5575, [phbonsai@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net)
- 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.
- 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.

### Your Help Needed

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department has removed the drink machine from the garden center in Hermann Park. It might help to get a replacement machine if HBS members called the Parks Director and requested a replacement. Call Joe Turner, Director of Parks, 713-845-1000.

### New Email Address

Note that because of the change from Time Warner to Comcast, the Houston Bonsai News (Gary Teeter) has a new email address: [houstonbonsainews@comcast.net](mailto:houstonbonsainews@comcast.net).

*The Bonsai News of Houston* is a monthly publication of the Houston Bonsai Society, Inc. Copyright © 2007. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the consent of the editor or a member of the board of directors. Exceptions exist, however, for other not-for-profit and non-profit bonsai organizations or associated bonsai and bonsai nursery newsletters. HBS participates fully with reciprocation of contents and materials between other LSBF member organizations and others. Authors who submit articles for this newsletter thereby give permission to such organization to reprint, unless they expressly reserve all rights.

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.