



The Bonsai News of Houston

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

Volume 38 Number 1, Internet Edition

January 2009

Monthly Meeting

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, January 7, at 7:30 p.m., Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments will be served at 7:00.

Club Dig, Saturday, Jan. 17

The HBS will have a club dig on Saturday, January 17. The Addicks location has been scheduled, and we may also be able to dig in the Wallisville area. More details will be available at the January meeting of the HBS. [For photographs of the HBS and TTSBE digs in 2008, see the March 2008 HBS newsletter, available online at www.HoustonBonsai.com. -ed.]

TTSBE Digs, January 24 and 31

The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit is pleased to sponsor a dig again this year at Red Bird Ranch in west San Antonio. Two weekends are available, January 24 and 31. TTSBE has sponsored this dig for the past two years, and we are pleased to offer it again. Those of you who have participated in the past know how successful this location has been. To participate, give Donna Dobberfuhl your name and contact information.

Species available include *T. persimmon*, cedar elm, oak, sugar hackberry, mt. laurel, candalia, and some other natives that both clubs in the region are experimenting with.

To be included, contact Donna. Please put the word, "dig," in the subject line so I don't miss your email.

WOW!!! New Course Only \$25.00!!

The Houston Bonsai society is proud to announce the offering of the course, *Introduction to Bonsai*. The text and course material were prepared by the American Bonsai Society, and the course is being put on and offered by the HBS locally. The educational material, methods and techniques will be covered over four Saturdays February 7, 21, 28 and March 7 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Bayland Center in Bayland Park. Bayland Park is located at 6400 Bissonnet south of 59 and west of Hillcroft.

Con'd page 4.

Guy Guidry and Azaleas: in Houston March 14 and 15

That's right, you have been asking for it, and now we have it. On Saturday, March 14, in the morning, we will have a lecture-demo on azaleas with Guy Guidry. In the afternoon we will have a workshop. On Sunday, March 15 we will have additional workshops. All activities are with the world famous Guy Guidry and will take place at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park.

The Saturday morning lecture-demo (with raffle) will cost \$5.00 per person; tickets for the raffle will be available. The workshops will be offered two ways: for \$60.00 HBS will provide an azalea for you to work on, or for \$30.00 you can bring your own tree (limit, one tree). Either way, you get the guidance, instruction and assistance from Guy. Payment for the workshops is due at time of sign-up

Cont'd page 4.

Study Group for January Cancelled

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.

Mycorrhiza, or properly mycorrhizal fungi, was discussed at one of the meetings last fall. Mycorrhiza aids in plant growth by making soil nutrients more readily available to the plant. In turn mycorrhiza gets some of its needs from the trees. The question was: is it really necessary to apply a powder that you can obtain at an organic nursery? Some thought that they did not need it at all because their trees had a lot of the fuzzy structure on their roots. This may be true if you obtained plants from a longtime bonsai nursery and never used any fungicide in your soil. However, I have seen so many trees with no indications of mycorrhiza in their soil. In addition to the old time growers saying to make sure your trees have it, I have seen articles in the *American Nurseryman* magazine documenting the increase in root structure and top growth resulting from the mycorrhiza.

Therefore, I would recommend that you obtain some and use it when you repot. Use whatever brand lists the most types of fungi because different types work on different trees. *[Note that some brands of commercial mycorrhiza contain other additives, such as hydro gel, a copolymer that increases a soil's water retention by as much as 50 percent. Read the list of ingredients. -ed.]*

The coldest nights usually come the last two weeks in January, but don't bet the farm on it. Just watch the forecasts and look at the lows (just ignore the highs, they are for people not plants).

Your primary job in cold weather is to be sure your trees are well watered before going into a deep freeze. They will be losing water to evaporation but will not be able to replenish it if the soil is frozen. Protection from high winds is also necessary so the tops will not dry out. Sunlight is not necessary on deciduous trees when they have lost their leaves. In fact, it can be bad for the tree because it will heat up the trunk and soil, and that could make the tree come out of dormancy too early.

Because the ground holds a more even temperature, I advocate placing hardy trees on a well drained ground bed in a protected shady area. Then cover the pots with a shallow layer of mulch. You should know which trees have a greater need for water. Put these trees together to make it easier to check the need for watering while they are in the bed.

I would treat the evergreens in a similar manner but put them where they can get some sun. Evergreens can use a very light feeding during the winter, maybe one-fourth the summer rate.

I keep my hardy trees on the benches until the temperature goes below 25 degrees. Then I set the deciduous and more tender evergreens on the ground below and between the benches until a temperature in the teens is expected. At that point I use old carpet and quilts to cover the benches. For the rest of the winter I leave them there and lift the sides around the deciduous trees for air circulation and uncover fully the evergreens when the temperature rises. Sounds like a lot of work, but I developed a routine that fits me and it isn't bad.

The tender and semi-tender trees need protection. The semi-tender (*e.g.*, crape myrtle and pomegranate) get left out for some frost but no freezing. When freezing is expected, they get put in a cool area. If they show growth again, they go to the greenhouse. It's not a big greenhouse and doesn't give optimal growing conditions but keeps things from freezing.

Tender or tropical trees kept indoors will be using more water to offset the lower humidity. Soil will also be losing water faster through its surface. Watch the indoor trees for insect problems. Most plant insects love a controlled atmosphere like the indoors. Spider mites seem to get the most attention here because they do great in low humidity and the lack of foliage spraying. Scale can be an easily overlooked source of trouble. The flat green kind can be hard to spot on the underside of leaves or tight against the stem. Indoor trees need to be fertilized regularly and will require periodic trimming as they continue to grow through the winter.

Greenhouses are much the same as indoors. However, most greenhouses are kept more humid. The higher humidity is to the liking of aphids and fungal diseases. It may also result in your keeping the soil too moist with associated root problems. Use your standard insect controls that you used last summer. I use my organic foliar spray all winter.

Back to the outdoor trees. Any long warm spells during the month could activate some of the insect problems but as a rule there are no special needs to look for in January. Spraying with a dormant oil spray will kill adults, nymphs, and eggs of any trying to over-winter on your trees. Some dormant sprays can be used on new growth but better results overall will be obtained if you do it before Valentine's Day.

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From Our President

First I want to wish each and every one of you a happy and prosperous new year.

As we enter 2009 I thought it might be useful to suggest a few goals for the Houston Bonsai Society for 2009:

- Make the LSBF/HBS "Spirit of Bonsai" convention in April a roaring success. To do that, we will need every member of the HBS to participate in preparations for and activities of the convention. You'll hear a lot more on this in the next few months.
- Grow the membership of HBS. If each of us would invite at least one other person to attend and join our society, we could share our "Spirit of Bonsai" with many more good people.
- Learn more about the art of bonsai. To do this the HBS board last year established an Education Committee that has planned several classes and workshops for 2009 in which we may learn the traditional guidelines of bonsai creation and care and share our practical observations with each other. Your participation in these events will certainly enrich our mutual experiences.

If we can accomplish these goals, 2009 will have been quite a successful year. I look forward to seeing each of you at our meetings, classes and workshops.

Monthly Bonsai, *cont'd.*

A weak lime sulphur dormant spray will also get fungal spores and should be done before February 1 and not at all if any green is showing. Just be careful with the lime sulfur; follow label directions closely.

Officers and Directors for 2009

At its December meeting the HBS elected the following officers: Alan Raymond, president; Michael McCluskey, second vice president; JoAnn Batey, treasurer; and L.D. Dornell and Nancy Foley, members at large.

Our thanks to them for giving up their time to make our organization work. Thanks, too, to outgoing officers Donald Green and Anthony Cutola for their hard work and to JoAnn Batey for serving another term as treasurer. Without the dedication of members such as these, we would not have a club.

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.

- Jan. 7 Monthly meeting of the HBS. **Bring raffle items.**
- Jan. 17 HBS club dig, field collection, details tba.
- Jan. **STUDY GROUP CANCELLED.**
- Jan. 24 TTSBE dig, Red Bird Ranch, San Antonio
- Jan. 31 TTSBE dig, Red Bird Ranch, San Antonio
- Feb. 7 Course: *Introduction to Bonsai*, Bayland Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Instructor, Hurley Johnson.
- Feb. 7 SSOT, Austin, "Shohin Bonsai Redesign." Is there a shohin bonsai in your back yard that is styling challenged? Or, a couple "off" a bit? Not for sure what changes to make? This workshop is just what those trees need. Contact Terry or Sheila Ward, 512-280-5575 or texshohin@sbcglobal.net.
- Feb. 8 Free lecture-demo by Hiroyoshi Yamaji, open to the public at MBP Studio, Austin. Contact Mike Hansen, www.mbpbonsai.com.
- Feb. 21 Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park.
- Feb. 21 Course: *Introduction to Bonsai*, Bayland Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Feb. 21 Kingwood Garden Center, "Day of Learning," HBS bonsai demonstrations.
- Feb. 21-22 Trident maple dig, MBP Studio, Austin. Price depends upon the size of the maple. Contact Mike Hansen, www.mbpbonsai.com.
- Feb. 28 Course: *Introduction to Bonsai*, Bayland Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mar. 7 Course: *Introduction to Bonsai*, Bayland Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mar. 14 Guy Guidry on azaleas. Hermann Park, lecture-demo, workshops.
- Mar. 15 Guy Guidry, azaleas, Hermann Park, workshops.
- Apr. 17-19 State LSBF bonsai convention**, Houston Marriott Westside. Boon Manikitivipart and Roy Nagatoshi, both from California, and Milagros Rauber Herrera from Venezuela.

Raffle Items Needed for Convention

We are collecting raffle items for the April convention. **PLEASE BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO THE MONTHLY MEETINGS.**

Some suggestions: Items you've made; gift certificates (including services you can provide); household items; bonsai items (trees, pots, tools, books, pins, aprons, autographs or other memorabilia, or other bonsai accessories); gardening tools or decorations; books (bonsai, general gardening, or general interest); CDs or DVDs; jewelry.

2009 Membership Fees Are Due

The Houston Bonsai Society's membership fees are due in January. An individual membership is \$25.00; a family membership, \$30.00. Memberships run from January to December of the year.

Did you know:

Your membership fee is one of the major methods by which the HBS finances and funds its operation and activities such as guest speakers, demonstrations, workshops, tree raffles, refreshments, etc

Your membership fee aids in funding the production of *The Bonsai News of Houston*, a monthly HBS publication with valuable information and educational information about the art of bonsai and up-coming events.

Being a member makes you eligible to participate in workshops offered by the HBS.

Included in your fee is a membership in the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF), our state organization, so your HBS membership helps support their financial activities such as funding the annual tour speakers and aiding with the annual state conferences.

Your membership fee aids in funding the production of *The Texas Bonsai*, a newsletter published three times a year by the LSBF.

The small membership fee goes a long way and without it our/your bonsai organizations, both local and state, could not operate. Your membership and participation is critical. If you have not paid your 2009 membership fees, please do so as soon as possible. You can see how important it is. Those that have already paid, thank you for your payment, support and punctuality.

Enjoy – Learn – Share. --Education Committee

Introductory Bonsai Course, *con'd.*

The information presented will be extensive, covering a broad range of topics. If you are just getting started, the course covers what you need to know to succeed. If you have been in bonsai for a while, the course can expand your existing knowledge and increase your skill level.

The cost for the course is \$25.00 a person. That's right. The total cost is only \$25.00! The cost includes the course manual, instructions, and visual presentations. Payment should be made at time of registration, as this will be open to all. For registration and information, contact Hurley Johnson at the HBS monthly meetings or by e-mail, hurley@all-tex.net.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in bonsai, whether just getting started or long time bonsaist. Make plans to attend and sign up early to make sure you get a seat.

Enjoy – Learn – Share. --Education Committee

Guy Guidry, Azaleas, *cont'd*

Guy Guidry is a world-class bonsai artist and owner of Bonsai Northshore in Covington, Louisiana. Guy is sought after for his ability to work with all tree types. He is known for his work on bald cypress.

Azaleas Provided??? The azaleas that the HBS will provide were acquired from Bennie Badgett in San Marcos. All the trees are approximately 25 years old, three feet tall, and of the Satsuki variety. The value of the trees is \$60.00 to \$75.00 each. You can get a tree and instruction for less than the cost of the tree, and you don't have to drive to San Marcos.

So, mark your calendars and be prepared to sign-up and spend the weekend. Why not sign-up for more than one workshop? Do two workshops, either bring-your-own-tree and a provided azalea -- or do two provided azalea workshops. This is a great opportunity that may not come again.

Enjoy – Learn – Share. --Education Committee



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI
STUDIO & NURSERY**

Terry & Sheila Ward Austin, Texas
512-280-5575 - phbonsai@sbcglobal.net - By Appointment

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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.

Space for advertising in *The Bonsai News of Houston* can be requested by contacting the editor at the address above or at www.HoustonBonsai.com. 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.

stolen. This happened at least five times, it was all in fun. We closed hoping for everyone a safe and happy holiday season. All in all everyone had a most excellent time.

A special thanks to everyone who pitched in and made this happen!!!!

2008 Holiday Dinner Gift Exchange

by Michael McCluskey

Our dinner gift exchange was held on December 3 at the Houston Garden Center. We had 45 members, spouses & visitors in attendance. The hall was decorated with lights, ornaments and Christmas trees. The room was divided into two parts one area for dining the other for the gift exchange. Rossana Cromwell brought in an alpine forest landscape, including snow, for a centerpiece. The dining tables and serving area were decorated in red and green. Three tables were full of food and drinks with desserts overflowing into the kitchen. Gifts were piled waiting to be open. The scene was set and it was festive.

We all dug into the food with sparks and conversations flying. There were all sorts of culinary delights available from turkey, ham, vegetables, desserts, specialty dishes, cranberry sauce, drinks, etc. It was a feast.

After consuming our fill, and with plenty of food left over, offices were installed and Certificate of Appreciation was awarded. The recipients were Anthony Cutola, C.J. Everson, Donald Green, Alex Leong, and Dolores Plaisted. They received a certificate and a Pappas gift card for their service and commitment.

We then moved on to the gift exchange. Christy Esmahan took over the fun process of number selection, opening, stealing and freezing gifts. The gifts consisted mainly of wines, books, trees, pots, decorative items. Our hearts went out to Ken Credeur. He would open a gift only to have it

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

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