



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

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May 2009

Spring Show, Japan Festival, April 25-26

Our spring show, in conjunction with the Japan Festival, is this weekend, April 25 and 26, 11:00 to 5:00 in Hermann Park in the Japanese gardens.

We still need volunteers to bring trees and set-up on Saturday morning at 8:30. Bring trees Saturday morning and pick them up Sunday after 4:30. We also need individuals to work on Saturday or Sunday or both and to assist with the take down on Sunday.

Parking is a concern; we will have a drop off area for trees and limited reserve parking for those who will work. Get there early to get a parking space.

The festival is a great time to experience ethnic foods and visit vendors selling novelty items and collectables. There will be performances with drums, music, singing, dancing. We always have a large number of people visiting our display.

Monthly Meeting, May 6

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, May 6, at 7:30 p.m., Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments will be served at 7:00.

We will have an open workshop. Bring whatever you want to work on: a tree you bought at the convention, a neglected tree from your benches, a tool sharpening problem, anything you want to work on or need help with.

Saturday Study Group, May 16

The HBS Study Group will meet Saturday, May 16 at Cabrera Farm Nursery, 3910 Cabrera Dr., Sugar Land, 281-313-2000. We'll get started at 9:00 a.m. and work til noon or beyond.

This is the first study group after the convention so come on out and bring those workshop trees and

recently purchased trees for advice or just for show and tell. It is a good time to share what we have learned at the convention and convention experiences. This is also a perfect time to get your hands dirty repotting tropical. If you need bonsai supplies, soil, pots, wire or more trees, Cabrera Farm has it for sale. All are welcome the novice and advanced bonsaist alike.

Enjoy – Learn - Share

--Michael

Congratulations on a Great Convention!

I would like to say thank you to each one of you who came and worked at the 2009 L.S.B.F./ H.B.S. convention. It was great! I can't say thank you enough times or express my gratitude to JoAnn and David, Pete, Hurley, Alan, John and Donald. They did a bang-up job. Many members gave their time working the raffle, registration, vendors, goodie buckets, exhibit, advertising and with the trees and teachers/instructors. It was incredible to watch.

I would also like to thank Boon, Milagros and Roy. They came a long way to share their experiences and knowledge with us. I know that everyone who took a workshop or observed the workshops or lectures or just talked to them, took some new knowledge about bonsai home with them.

Everyone I spoke to said that this was one of the best conventions they attended to in a long, long time. If you missed the show, you missed a great time. If you were at the show, you had a great time.

I thank you all.

--Buddy, Committee Chairman

And we thank you, Buddy, for your hard work and for your years of dedication to the HBS. –ed.

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 is reprinted from the May 2008 issue of The Bonsai News of Houston.

In the Dallas area, May is usually the time you do the leaf pruning job if you have to do it. If you have kept the new growth pinched properly, you are getting the ramification usually attributed to leaf pruning. The only good reason for leaf pruning is to replace foliage that has been damaged by wind or insects. On some individual plants that have large foliage, the new foliage will usually be smaller. Leaf pruning is done only on very healthy trees. Leaf pruning should be done after the spring foliage has matured and supplied the tree with enough nutrients to produce a good crop of new foliage. It must be done well before the summer heat causes the plant growth to slow or stop. In the Dallas area, I consider the very latest time to be Memorial Day. The tree should be fertilized 7 - 10 days before the operation. Cut the stems of those leaves that have them (maples) or cutting across the leaf about 1/16 inch from the twig if leaves are attached direction on the twig (elms). The tree will not need as much water until the new foliage has developed.

If your azaleas have not bloomed yet, consider removing a few buds where they would result in crowded blooms. When the azaleas finish bloom, remove all seed pods and do any reshaping that is necessary. You have 2-2 ½ months (that is, until mid-July) to work on them. They will start setting buds for next years blooms at that time.

When the nighttime temperature stays above 60 degrees, it is time to start repotting the tropical material. Because tropicals have so many different requirements, I will not try to cover their individual needs here. But in general, I like to put them in shade and mist them until the new growth starts.

Warm humid days are favorable for fungal growth. Watch for mildew, black leaf spot on elms and yaupons, among other. As an organic control you can use baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) or better potassium bicarbonate that you can get at a nursery. Hydrogen peroxide in a 1% solution (mix 1 part of the normal 3% commercial product with 2 parts water) can be used on mature foliage. It may burn tender foliage but its only by-product is water when it breaks down.

If you have insect problems, you will need to apply your control, whatever you use, several times. For example, spider mites may go thru the cycle from egg to adult to egg in as little as 5 days. Therefore you should spray 4 times 5 days apart since there may be a few eggs or bugs you miss. Other insects will have a different cycle but that schedule should take care of almost everything.

Aphids, spider mites, and scale continue to be the most prevalent insects. The foliar feeding of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar (1 tablespoon of each per gallon of water) is all the control I use for them. Scale is the most difficult because it is usually covered with a waxy coating (the scale). You may need to use a horticultural oil mixed as directed on the label. Be sure that the direction you read is for summer use as some have two dosages given, one for dormancy (usually the first and strongest) and one for summer. Do not use oil on buttonwood or any other plant not included on the label. You might try a neem oil spray which is supposed to be an organic systemic.

Please note: the commercial variation of my spray that is sold as Garret Juice does not do the same as the above mixture. It is erroneously labeled as the original formula Garret Juice.

If you see damage to the foliage or if the plant is not doing well, look for other problems. If you do not recognize the culprit, ask your favorite nurseryman for help.

Start checking your pots to see if the sun is heating them up. Our summer sun shining on dark pots can make the soil temperature soar and kill the roots. Try putting your hand on the pot. Roots are living organisms and cannot take high temperatures any more than you can. Heating also dries out the soil making you water more often. Any number of ways of keeping the pots cool will work, the requirement being to prevent the sun from shining on them and letting some air circulate around them. I do not care for the aluminum foil methods because I don't care to have the light reflected into my eyes and it is usually applied to tightly around the pot. A simple cloth with a slit to go around the trunk works fine. A good use for old rags.

Remember all the work that you did in the spring? Keep the new growth trimmed so that you haven't wasted your time. While trimming or watering check the wiring periodically and remove it before it damages the branch. If the branch springs back some, rewire it.

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If you are not on a regular organic foliar/drench feed schedule, be sure to use fertilizer cakes with supplemental feeding with a good liquid fertilizer, one that includes the minor elements. Most bonsai I see are malnourished. The liquid water soluble fertilizer gets washed out with the next watering and the tree starves until the next infrequent feeding. There are a number of fertilizers in pellet or cake form on the market or you can make your own.

Potting season will soon be on us. The tropicals this time. You can start repotting them when the nights stay warm. One nice thing about tropicals, they give you a long repotting season by starting with those that take cooler weather and going into summer with some of the ficus and buttonwoods.

It's time to consider becoming more proficient at your hobby. You can learn all the rules, but, without practice, you will not be able to perform. You need practice to learn to recognize the line of the raw material you are starting with. You get this practice and experience by taking part in your club's various study groups, beginner classes, and workshops. If you are not a beginner, try teaching some beginners. The teacher always learns as much as his students by trying to verbalize what he is attempting to teach. Visit conventions, especially the local state convention, and discuss trees with others who share your like for a particular style or species.

Chinese Bonsai Society Show May 30-31

The Houston Chinese Bonsai Society will have its spring show Saturday, May 30 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Sunday May 31 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) at the Chinese Cultural Center, 10303 Westoffice Dr. For a map, see

<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&um=1&ie=UTF8&q=10303+Westoffice+Dr+Houston,+TX+77042&fb=1&geocode=5921779440099010984,29.721089,-95.548860&oi=manybox&ct=14&cd=1&resnum=6>.

This show has wonderful trees. Don't miss it!

BCI Convention, New Orleans, Discount

Bonsai Clubs International will hold its International Bonsai Congress 2009 at the botanical gardens in New Orleans' City Park June 19, 20, 21.

Featured speakers are Peter Chan, Great Britain; Nacho Marin, Venezuela; Sandro Segneri and Massimo Bandera, Italy; Glenis and Lindsay Bebb, Australia; Tedy Boy, Indonesia; Jim and Linda Brant, Pennsylvania; Guy Guidry, Louisiana; Ed

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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.

- Apr. 25-26 HBS spring bonsai show & Japan Festival, Japanese gardens, Hermann Park, 11-5 both days. Set up 8:30 a.m., Saturday.
- May 6 Monthly meeting of the HBS.
- May 16 Sat. study group, 9 a.m. Cabrera Farm Nursery
- May 22-24 HBS club trip to Brussel's Rendezvous, Olive Branch, Mississippi.
- June 3 Monthly meeting of the HBS. Mike Hansen on black pines.
- June 6 Shohin Society of Texas meeting. Tropicals; Sale & Swap. Austin.
- June 13 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- June 19-21 BCI's International Bonsai Congress 2009, New Orleans. <http://www.bonsai-bci.com/index2.html>
- June 20 Saturday study group, Bayland Park
- June 26 Jason Schley, Florida, on grafting. Lecture-demo.
- June 27 Jason Schley, workshops.
- June 27 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- July 1 Monthly meeting of the HBS, John Miller of Dallas on shohin .
- July 11 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- July 7-13 6th World Bonsai Convention, San Juan, PR, Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino www.worldbonsaiconvention2009.com
- July 18 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- July 27 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
- Sept. 19 Shohin Society of Texas meeting. Business; shohin bonsai pot workshop. Austin.
- Oct. 9 Set-up for fall bonsai show, 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.
- Oct. 10-11 Fall bonsai show and sale, 8 – 5 Sat., 8-4 Sun. Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park.

Trout, Florida; William N. Valavanis, New York; stone connoisseurs Willi Benz, Germany, and I.C. Su, Taiwan; ikebana artists Richard Cranford and Dora Ross, Louisiana.

If you plan to attend, consider waiting to register because we may be able to aggregate 10 or more registrants from HBS and get a 10% discount. If we get at least 10, I'll coordinate our registrations.

--Alan Raymond

Second Offering –Introduction to Bonsai

The first offering of the *Introduction to Bonsai* course was such a great success and we had such a great time that we are going to do it again. The educational material, methods and techniques will be covered over five Saturdays -- June 13 and 27 and July 11, 18, and 25 --from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bayland Center in Bayland Park. Bayland Park is located at 6400 Bissonnet south of 59 and west of Hillcroft.

The information presented will cover a broad range of topics. If you are just getting started, this course covers what you need to know to be successful. If you have been in bonsai for awhile, the course can expand your existing knowledge.

The cost for the course is \$25 per person for HBS members and \$40 per person, which includes membership in HBS, for nonmembers.

The registration fee includes the course manual, instructions, and visual presentations. Payment should be made at time of registration. **The deadline for registration is June 3, 2009.**

For course information contact Hurley or Michael at the HBS monthly meetings or by e-mail at education@houstonbonsi.com. 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.

Enjoy – Learn – Share -- Education Committee

Buxus microphylla ‘Compacta’ aka Kingsville Boxwood

The following appeared in the August 2004 issue of The Bonsai News of Houston. It is an excerpt from an article which originally appeared in the June 2004 issue of the Corpus Christi Bonsai Club newsletter. It is from a letter which Lynn R. Batdorf wrote to Anita Hawkins and is reprinted with Mr. Batdorf's permission. Mr. Batdorf is with the International Cultivar Registration Authority for Buxus, U. S. National Arboretum. For more information about boxwoods, see the web site at <http://www.ishs.org/sci/icralist/5.htm> and the links there.--
ed.

Yes, probably the entire bonsai community incorrectly uses the name *Buxus microphylla* /Kingsville/ and /Kingsville Dwarf/ when referring to ‘Compacta’. I’m very glad to set the record straight for you.

Buxus microphylla ‘Compacta’ was registered by Dr. Donald Wyman in his 1963 article “Boxwood Prized Where Ever Hardy Form is Found” which appeared in the 117(7):50 issue of *American Nurseryman*.

Henry Hohman had showed the plant to Wyman who went on to register it. It originated as a seedling selected by William Appleby of Baltimore in 1912. When Appleby died in the 1920s, Hohman bought the boxwood seedlings and began propagating them. ‘Compacta’ was released to the trade in 1937. At the suggestion of Dr. Wyman then of the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts, Hohman originally named the plant *Buxus microphylla* var. *compacta*. Growing very slowly with small leaves and treelike branching has made ‘Compacta’ a perfect and popular choice for bonsai. The first ‘Compacta’ used for bonsai originated from the Kingsville Nursery in Kingsville, Maryland, thus using the source as a name, bonsai enthusiasts call it /Kingsville/ or /Kingsville Dwarf/.

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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.

Boxwood, *con'd from previous page.*

The name selected by Hohman (B. microphylla var. compacta) is a synonym for B. microphylla 'Compacta'. /Kingsville/ and /Kingsville Dwarf/ are also a synonym for B. microphylla 'Compacta'.

I would be grateful if you could pass this registration information on to the larger bonsai community. I find it quite unfortunate to see such a beautiful bonsai specimen as 'Compacta' repeatedly and incorrectly named as either /Kingsville/ or /Kingsville Dwarf/.

As a point of interest, your nurseryman in Kingsville is correct. Also, as you correctly noted, 'Compacta' does throw sports of its own, having given rise to several other registered boxwood cultivars that are stable: 'Curly Locks', 'Grace Hendrick Phillips', 'Helen Whiting', 'Henry Hohman', and 'Sunlight'.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lynn R. Batdorf

International Cultivar Registration

Authority for Buxus

U. S. National Arboretum