



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

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Guest Artist Schley, June 26-27

Jason Schley, guest artist from Daytona Beach, Florida, will present a lecture-demo on grafting at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, June 26, admission \$5. He will demonstrate various types of grafting, including thread grafting, approach grafting, and grafting new roots. He will work on ficus and bougainvilleas because they are easy this time of year. As always, we will raffle the two trees he works on.

Saturday we have bring-your-own-tree workshops from 9 a.m. til noon and 1p.m. til 4 p.m. The cost of the workshops will be \$25 per person, less expensive than our other workshops. No charge for silent observers. Participation is limited to 10 people per workshop. **We still have openings.** Jason is skilled in tropicals, junipers, black pine and cypress. To see his work, go to his web site, <http://www.schleysbonsai.com/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=14>.

His junipers and pines are great, even though he is located even further south than we are. I was captivated by his grafting of crepe myrtles, specifically grafting the smaller varieties of Chickasaw and Pemoke to standard crepe myrtle trunks. He does not have any shown on his web site but there is a great one on Orlando Bonsai's, <http://www.orlandobonsai.com/?cat=166>.

--Hurley

Monthly Meeting, Miller on Shohin

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, July 1, at 7:30 p.m., Houston Garden Center, Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments will be served at 7:00. John will discuss shohin bonsai. He has asked

that you bring your own shohin for show and tell.

John is director emeritus and former president of the Bonsai Society of Dallas, member of the Fort Worth Bonsai Society, member of the Shohin Society of Texas, a co-founder of the Lone Star Bonsai Federation, lecturer at local clubs and conventions, and contributor to bonsai newsletters throughout Texas. He has provided *The Bonsai News of Houston* with monthly guidelines for bonsai care since March 2001. John last gave a presentation to the HBS in July 1999, on the use of the oak tree for bonsai.

Study Group, July 18, Cabrera Farm

The next meeting of the Saturday Study Group will be on Saturday July 18 at Cabrera Farm Nursery located at 3910 Cabrera Dr. in Sugar Land. The **phone number is 281-313-2000**. We'll crank up at 9:00 am and work, play and visit to around noon or beyond. This is an opportunity to bring your trees if you need in-put or assistance. All are welcome, the novice and advance bonsaist. Bring your trees, tools, wire, or just yourself.

Cabrera Farm has bonsai supplies, soil, pots and a large selection of trees. So if you need supplies or a tree, it is available for purchase.

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 0.8 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 a map, <http://www.orchidsandbonsai.com/>.

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.

July and August are the two most stressful months for bonsai in our neck of the woods. Most healthy trees can take the full sun on their foliage. But the high ambient temperatures and the heating effect of the sun on the pots and soil create temperatures on the roots that they are not designed to cope with. Trees with thin leaves like the Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*, will probably scorch in full sun. They can also suffer from chemical burn from some fertilizers and insecticides which can be more damaging in the heat.

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 air flow is preferable to solid paper or foil. A solid cover or box over the pot would create an oven type enclosure. There should be room for air flow around the pot. A 30-40% shade cloth over pines, junipers, and elms and maybe 50% over maples would be ideal. And don't forget to provide protection on the west side from that mean afternoon sun.

Check your water practices. I prefer to water heavily in the evening (in normal weather). That gives the plant all night to renew itself without losing most of its water to evaporation. Then in the early morning, they get a quick foliage spray and wetting the surface of the soil which may have dried out overnight. Very porous soil may need more morning water. This was what I did while working since the morning task only took 10 minutes or so. Now I still prefer to water heavily in the evening but the morning watering is more done more slowly and trees given a little more individual attention as some of them will not need water in the soil. Be sure to do the double watering bit--water thoroughly so that the dry soil particles will get moistened and then, after a few minutes, water again so that they will soak up fully.

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 with spider mites. I use the organic foliar feed (one tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and 5% apple cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully. 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

When checking the results on your plants after spraying remember that the spray usually will not remove the "evidence" of problems. The webs will still be there after the mites are killed; the shells of the scale will be attached to the leaf or stem. These will have to be removed by hand, by a jet of water, or some other way. A soft toothbrush works good on the scale shells. There is no damage from this leftover evidence, but it prevents you from seeing any new infestation that may occur.

The humidity in summer varies quite a bit but when it sticks around for a few days look for fungal problems to appear, mildew being the most prevalent. Black spot will show up if the foliage stays wet very long. Foliage watering in the morning will usually not be a problem because it dries pretty quickly. Treat with potassium carbonate which you can find at any nursery with a decent organic section. There are several chemical sprays available too.

As a rule we do not feed our trees enough. Since the mix we use has very little nutrient value, we must make up with our fertilizer practice.

Water soluble fertilizers will be quickly washed out. The best "rule" I have heard was given by Matt Ouwinga who primarily grows trident maples.

Matt's rule:

- A. Apply organic fertilizer balls each six weeks. Discard old balls.
- B. Apply fish emulsion every two weeks.
- C. Apply liquid plant food on alternate weeks.

Many spring flowering plants will be setting buds for next years flowers. Azaleas will set theirs toward the end of July. If you prune tips after that, you remove the new buds.

If you use Boon's technique for growing pines, now is the time for removing the candles, late June on bigger trees, later on smaller ones.

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. 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.

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.

Some more words on protecting from the sun. Dappled shade would do nicely because the sun will not shine on one spot very long but partial shade (such as morning sun and afternoon shade) will not suffice when the morning sun is as hot as it is here in Texas. When you put some kind of sun screen on, remember to shade the sides of the pot as well as the soil. Light mulch on top of the soil will work great. Covering the pot with foil or putting it in a box made to fit is of doubtful help but if used there should be room for air to flow around it. Old rags work fine also if they do not blow off. Try to find a cover that will let you monitor your watering easily.

When the humidity is low, I mist my junipers in the evening. I believe the story that in the wild junipers open their stomata in the cool of the evening absorbing any dew that may occur and close in the heat of the day to conserve moisture. The other species may get a foliage spray in the morning.

Your trees too keep growing and need their periodic beauty treatment. Keep the ends trimmed and the stray shoots cut out. It's not that bad when you can sit in the shade with a big lemonade and really enjoy being with your bonsai. That way you will have your tree ready for the fall show or you will be ready to enjoy it when the change of seasons give it pretty colors.



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HBS Speaks Out on Shohin

In April 2002, I asked our members on the e-mail list to complete one of two sentences, "I love shohin because. . ." or "I don't do shohin because. . . ." The responses were printed in the April and May 2002 issues of the HBS newsletter and are reproduced here.--ed.

I love shohin because:

. . . I can carry them! --Butch

* * *

. . . I've always been fascinated by miniatures of anything, including chemistry lab glassware. . . little tiny beakers as small as a thimble. . . plus shohin won't break your back when you need to move or repot and you can have lots more trees in less space.

--Paula

* * *

. . . let's just say that the older I get, the more I like shohin! You can quote me if you like; however, my guess is that you'll get this response from a lot of people!

--Margaret

* * *

. . . they are easy to carry when you are in a wheelchair.

--Name withheld to protect the guy in the wheelchair
But we know who you are, Tom!

* * *

. . . it's very challenging to make them look in proportion. To me, I'd rather see an incredible tree at 6 inches over an equally incredible tree at 30 inches. While larger trees require more actual work and upkeep (at least when I'm working on them), smaller trees are much more difficult to produce the overall effect of having an ancient tree.

Not to mention, the pots are cheaper!

Oh, of course that fact that you can carry several at once doesn't hurt either (literally and figuratively).

--Carter

* * *

1. I have always, since I started bonsai, been attracted to and intrigued by the smallest ones.

Con'd next page.

2. I don't have to use a hand truck to carry them in to meetings or study group or shows. I can put several on a tray or in a box, and lift them easily. They are great for those of us who are "older."
3. I can repot all my trees in one or two days. [Grin]
4. The cost of pots and tools for small ones is much less.
5. They use very little soil; therefore, the cost for potting media is minimal.
6. The cost of material, whether finished or stock, is much less. There is always material available, coming up from seeds in my yard --or from cuttings.
7. The challenge of growing small bonsai and keeping them alive is very rewarding.

--Nell

* * *

I don't do shohin because:

... the detailed design in such a concentrated volume leaves little room for mistakes. One clip and the wrong branch is gone and so is the tree.

--Jim

* * *

... I don't know much about it but I am very curious.

--Mike

* * *

... I don't do shohin because I have not studied or trained in the art of shohin.

--Todd

I don't like shohin because--

it provides an easy excuse for substandard bonsai by allowing taperless twigs to be called "shohin."

I love shohin because--

there are, when done correctly, unique challenges inherent to this size range--both in horticulture, artistry and technique--while still allowing an accurate portrayal of an aged tree.

--Jim

* * *

But nobody said, "I don't do shohin because I can't use my chain saw on them."

#

Texas Tour Speaker in August, Martínez

Each year, with the proceeds from the annual state convention, the Lone Star Bonsai Federation sponsors a speaker to visit the bonsai clubs that are part of the LSBF. This year the Texas Tour speaker is Roberto Martinez from Puerto Rico. Those of you who heard his lecture and attended his workshops in April 2008 know how talented he is. He is particularly good with tropical bonsai.

Roberto will give a lecture-demo Friday night, August 21, in the garden center in Hermann Park. The tree will be raffled. On Saturday morning August 22, he will conduct a workshop from 9:00 to 12:00; and in the afternoon another workshop from 1:30 to 4:30, if enough people sign up to make a second workshop.

Roberto is scheduled to leave Houston Sunday morning and return to Puerto Rico, making Houston his last stop on the tour.

Further details will be announced at the July meeting and in the August newsletter.

--Buddy

Chinese Bonsai Show

The Houston Chinese Bonsai Show was held the last weekend in May. The show was extensive with a large number of club member trees on display. It was also diverse having for sale and/or show printed art, carved jade, gourd art, viewing stones, bonsai pots and trees. They also had an area of handmade crafts.

Upon walking into the display area what struck me was the large open space and the sheer quantity of trees. I spent the next few hours admiring and studying them. What I observed was a distinct approach in styling and designing. There was a fluidity of motion. The styling appeared to use what the trees had to offer -- more of working with the tree and not trying to conform the tree to create the typical right branch - left branch - back branch. I found the effect refreshing and pleasing to the eye, not so formal and structured. I appreciated the opportunity to see a different approach to the art of bonsai. After all, the differences make bonsai an art form.

The show was excellent with plenty for everyone, a real credit to planning and the hard working members of the Chinese Bonsai Society. Well worth the time spent. My thanks to the CBS for sharing!

--Michael

Brussel's Rendezvous

Brussel's Rendezvous was held in Olive Branch, Mississippi, over the Memorial weekend and was three days of bonsai heaven. It was a great experience laced with plenty of food, refreshments, workshops, demonstrations, raffles and camaraderie with hundred of trees in all price ranges.

Nine of us from the HBS attended. We did plenty of shopping while acquiring new techniques, methods and information. Meals were excellent. One night we had fried catfish and another we had pulled pork, with plenty of food provided for breakfast and lunch. It was great to observe and work with different artist not to mention the excellent demonstrations. We always learn so much at this event. Everyone had a great time.

For a few of our members this was their first Rendezvous. I enjoyed walking around with them, watching their expressions and listening to their comments, like, "OH My God!!!" "I Can't Believe This!!!" "WOW!!!" I was the same my first time.

If I had to pick one thing that I found the most interesting it would be a speech/demonstration given by Arthur Joura, the bonsai curator at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, North Carolina. In his demo he worked on a trident maple. The end result was interesting and very dynamic, somewhat abstract. The tree was great and the styling punctuated his lecture. During his demonstration, he spoke about developing an American style or approach to the art of bonsai and the use of native (local) trees. These concepts were obviously well received by a majority of the audience. Heads were nodding and I believe I heard an Amen!

The central theme in his presentations was to approach bonsai in a different way, to get away from the structured and formal approach that most of us have been exposed to. Don't develop trees that look like the pictures in the bonsai books and magazines. Instead create something different in style and design, knowing that not everyone will accept or appreciate the effort. Be original and try creating something uniquely different. Sounds like what art should be!

Some of Arthur's comments are not new to me. I have heard Chuck Ware voice some of the same ideals about using local trees and a taking a different approach. What was new was to hear it at what I consider a major event in the bonsai calendar. We need to thank Arthur for being so bold. And we need to thank Brussel's Bonsai for having a venue that allows the expression of new concepts and ideals. Thank you both!!! --Michael

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.

- 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 18 Saturday Study Group, 9:a.m., Cabrera Farm
 - July 27 Class – *Intro to Bonsai*, 9 a.m., Bayland Park.
 - Aug. 15 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m. Bayland Park
 - Aug. 21 Roberto Martínez, Lec-demo,raffle. Details tba.
 - Aug. 22 Roberto Martínez, workshops, 9-12, 1:30-4:30.
 - 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.
 - Oct. 17 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Cabrera Farm
 - Nov. 4 Monthly meeting of the HBS. Nominations for board and officers.
 - Nov. 21 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m. Bayland Park
 - Dec. 2 Monthly meeting of the HBS. Elections of board and officers. Holiday pot luck supper and gift exchange.
- 2010**
- Feb. 5-7 Biennial California Shohin Society seminar, Ramada Inn, Santa Nella, CA. Call 209-826-4444 for hotel reservations ASAP.

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www.HoustonBonsai.com

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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.

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