



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

Volume 38 Number 9, Internet Edition

September 2009

Monthly Meeting—Club Auction!!!

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, September 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments served at 7 p.m.

At the September meeting we will hold our annual auction for the benefit of the HBS. This is our main fundraiser. Your effort is important. Proceeds from the auction help support guest speakers and other activities for our members. If you missed last year, you missed some great opportunities. This year should be great, too. Bring donations of bonsai-related and non-bonsai-related items, including:

- styled trees,
- pre-bonsai material,
- books, stands, pots,
- tools, aprons, stones, suiseki,
- gift certificates for goods or services,
- logo, pins and convention memorabilia,
- drawings or autographs from bonsai masters.

AND BRING YOUR MONEY!

Cash or checkbook. No plastic. Bid high and often!

No Study Group in September

There will be **no** Saturday study group in September due to other bonsai activities. The next meeting will be October 17 at Cabrera Farm Nursery.

August Study Group. The last HBS Saturday study group met August 15 in Bayland Park. We put the plastic on the tables and got started at 9 a.m. and went til noon, visiting while working on trees.

Ten people attended. Some came just to visit or observe; others brought trees to share, work on or get some input from others. Any and all of these motives are excellent reasons to attend a study group. The trees were in different stages of development from

recently purchased, still in a garden pot, to trees in early or advanced stages of development.

These Saturdays are great opportunities to share, visit and get assistance from others, in a casual atmosphere. The only requirement is to have fun.

--Michael

HBS October Fall Show and Sale

The HBS fall show and sale will be held October 10 and 11 at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park. The exhibit hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

We are looking for volunteers to help place trees in the exhibit on Friday, October 9, starting at 6 p.m. and take down the exhibit on Sunday starting at 4 p.m. We also need volunteers to work during the open hours of the exhibit either a.m. or p.m. or all day if you like. For those who took the introduction classes in 2009, this is an opportunity to share your trees, knowledge and enthusiasm about the art of bonsai. Sign-up sheets will be passed around at the September and October meeting.

We ask that the trees to be in the exhibit be dropped off Friday during the set up (at 6 p.m.) and left on exhibit till 4 p.m. on Sunday. The take down of the show will begin at that time.

This year we will have an area for new members and novice bonsaist to display their complete trees or trees in progress. Along with finished trees, we encourage members to bring trees in different stages of development. It would be great to be able to show and share the process with others, demonstrating how we get to a specimen bonsai.

This is always a fun event with plenty of conversation and questions from the public and vendors offering trees, pots, tools, etc. for sale.

--Michael

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.

That was an interesting weekend we had with the LSBF touring artist. Using the *Ficus subulata* (used to be *nerifolia*) in Dallas and the Raintree in FTW, he taught a lot about doing tropicals, stressing that tropicals are not temperate deciduous trees. During our trip east, I was able to find that they can grow pines (especially Japanese black pines) successfully without any cold weather. Being a tour guide to a visiting artist can broaden your bonsai experience in many ways.

What do you think about while you are watering your trees? Is this just a mindless chore or are you thinking about how that tree is developing and what will need to be done in the future? Good observing would let you plan ahead and obtain materials you need. A different pot perhaps or you may notice the start of an insect problem or the need to get them ready for winter. It pays to make a habit of doing more than just applying water.

Help your trees go into dormancy. Withhold fertilizers from those outdoor trees now. They would need less water as they quit active growth, but on warm days trees with green foliage will still transpire and need that water. Most tropicals have a dormant season also but it is caused by dry conditions rather than cold. These types need to be hardened also by cutting the fertilizer to halt active growth and lighter watering. This will enable them to withstand the transfer to the greenhouse better.

The latest issue of *International Bonsai* has a good article about the minor elements needed for good plant growth. In addition to the big three (N-P-K), thirteen more are important. The article cites the author's experience with applying them to a chlorotic white pine and some deciduous trees. The deciduous responded with improved leaves on the new foliage and the white pine opened the next year with good green needles. He suggests that the proper time to apply is at bud break. Check the fertilizers you use. Many will list the minor elements included. Most organics will have them. My Hollytone has all sixteen elements listed.

Check the trees you still have wire on. When the cooler days get here some trees will expand their branches and get wire cuts rather quickly. You need

to check them periodically over the winter also. Winter growth will usually be pretty slow but can occur, especially on the evergreens. I suggest cutting the wire off. You can easily break the branches trying to unwrap the wire, and it's just not worth trying to save the wire. But you must do it with care; it's too easy to leave one coil on the branch. You should start at the tip of the branch and cut and REMOVE each coil back toward the center. If you need to reapply some wire, take care.

Two other things you can do now. You should prepare your winter quarters and you should study your evergreen trees to determine if you need to do any restyling later on this fall.

Check on the place you expect to winter your bonsai.

- (1) Make sure that it is clean. Debris harbors insects and other plant pathogens. A strong lime-sulfur spray can be used to disinfect the area as well as your growing area after the trees are removed.
- (2) Also be sure that you will be able to check the water needs of the trees during the winter.
- (3) It should be somewhat protected from winds but should have some air movement to help prevent molds from developing.
- (4) Having it in a location where you can see the trees will allow you to enjoy the winter silhouette, *i.e.*, the branch structure and twiginess that are a great part of deciduous bonsai.

There is not too much to be done on deciduous trees at this time. Bugs and other problems are usually not a matter of concern since the foliage will be dropping soon. Evergreens and tropicals will still need to be watched for their insect problems, especially the spider mite which will be active into

Con'd next page.



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI
STUDIO & NURSERY**

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

Monthly Bonsai, *con'd*

fall and on your greenhouse plants all winter. Use the organic spray formula to control them. If we should have a stretch of damp weather, you should be watching for fungal problems, leaf spot, mildew, etc. Treat fungal with potassium bicarbonate (baking soda -- sodium bicarbonate -- will work about as well). I would be okay with using a 1% hydrogen peroxide solution at this time of the year for fungal control.

The organic spray formula is one tablespoon each of liquid seaweed, fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon of water. This once was used as a foliar feed but I only consider it an insecticide.

Pruning and trimming 'can' be done any time that there is not a lot of sap flowing but it's usually advisable to do it during dormancy. Sap flow is indicated by the foliar activity of the plant like in the spring. If your tree went into summer dormancy which occurs during hot weather, then the cooler weather might result in a larger sap flow in late summer or early fall. If your plant gets a flush of new growth it would be advisable to postpone large pruning cuts for a while. Basically let your tree tell you when it is ok to operate.

Check nurseries for possible bonsai material. When the season is over they usually put everything on sale to clear it out so they can fill up with Christmas trees.

100 Memberships Party/Celebration

On August 1 the Houston Bonsai Society had a celebration and party. We were celebrating having 100 paid memberships. There were approximately 45 people in attendance including members, families of members and three individuals from Corpus Christi who came to join in the celebration.

The party was held at the home of Hurley and Ginger. We had hamburgers, hot dogs chips, dips, relish trays, potato salad, adult beverages, soda and deserts. The HBS covered the basic cost of the food with members bringing dishes and desserts. We all had a great time with plenty of discussion, comradery and a shared experience. It was wonderful to be able to visit with members and meet their families. We also got to see Hurley's new shade area/greenhouse. Everyone had a great time!!

At the time of the party we had 103 paid memberships for 2009, a 33% increase over last year. With your interest, help and participation our

membership is growing. So share the fun that you derive from bonsai with others. You, the members, are our best ambassadors.

The board of the HBS would like to thank Hurley and Ginger for allowing us to invade their home and all those who assisted in making this happen, with a special thanks to JoAnn for her involvement and coordination of the gala. Those that attended, we were glad you came; those that couldn't, you were missed. With everyone's help and assistance we can continue to increase our membership into 2010 and beyond. Thanks again!!!

--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.

Sept. 2 Monthly meeting of the HBS. 7:30.
ANNUAL CLUB AUCTION

No Saturday study group in September

Sept. 19 Shohin Society of Texas meeting. Shohin bonsai pot workshop; business meeting. Austin.

Oct. 7 Monthly meeting of the HBS, 7:30.

Oct. 9 Set-up for fall bonsai show, 6 p.m.

Oct. 10-11 Fall bonsai show and sale, 9 - 5 Sat., 10 - 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.

Dec. 19 Saturday Study Group, 9 a.m., Bayland Park

2010

Feb. 5-7 Biennial California Shohin Society seminar, Ramada Inn, Santa Nella, CA. Call 209-826-4444 for hotel reservations ASAP.

Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

P. O. Box 540727, Houston, Texas 77254-0727

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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