



The Bonsai News of Houston

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
Houston Bonsai Society, Inc.

Volume 39 Number 2, Internet Edition

February 2010

Monthly Meeting: Repotting

The next meeting of the Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) will be Wednesday, February 3, at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive. Refreshments and Curbside Consultation at 7:00.

At the February meeting, local **pottery artist Andrew Sankowski** will demonstrate "throwing pots" with his potters' wheel and will bring samples of his work. Andrew owns Moss Rock Studio in the Woodlands. It is an art gallery, pottery gallery, and workshop. His website is www.mossrockstudio.com

In March we will have a **workshop on boxwoods**. We will have 10-15 trees available, cost will be \$20-25, and we will provide the soil. Some are Kingsville, some Saunders, some Morris midget. Bring your own pot.

Feb. 6, Saturday Study Group

The HBS study group will get together on Saturday February 6 at Timeless Trees Nursery. We'll get started at 9 a.m.

This is a good time to do repotting of deciduous trees. Repotting methods and pruning of maples will be covered along with concerns involving other trees brought to the get together. There are different approaches used when repotting based upon the type of tree, age, vigor etc. So bring your root hooks, wire, pots, screen and bonsai tools.

If you need bonsai supplies, Timeless Trees Nursery has it for sale. All are welcome, the novice and advance bonsaist, so come and enjoy and share with others the art.

--Michael, Second Vice President

2nd U. S. National Bonsai Exhibition:

A Letter from William N. Valavanis

Now is the time to begin preparing for the 2nd US National Bonsai Exhibition which will be held on June 12-13, 2010, at the Monroe Community Hospital Auditorium, Rochester, New York. Last year the exhibition was held in autumn to highlight colorful foliage and fruit. June was selected this year so the beauty of your bonsai can be displayed in leaf, and hopefully flower (Satsuki), too.

The three sections of the auditorium will be used for displaying bonsai. Vendors will be across the hall with the demonstrations. Saturday evening's award banquet will be held at the Holiday Inn Airport, also the recommended hotel. At the award banquet our three international judges, Kunio Kobayashi (Japan), Farrand Bloch, (Belgium) and David Easterbrook (Canada) will announce the winners and present cash awards. Finally a benefit auction will complete the evening's event. Kunio Kobayashi from Japan

Con'd page 11

Thank You

I truly appreciate the honor of receiving the Houston Bonsai Society 2009 Certificate of Appreciation handed me at the LSBF meeting. I hope to be able to continue serving for a long time in the future. Thank you, again

--John Miller, Dallas-Fort Worth

HBS Seeks Newsletter Editor

Our newsletter editor is resigning no later than June 1. If you are interested in editing our newsletter, please contact, 281-358-9562 or amraymond@kingwoodcable.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.

Bonsai tasks in February sometime pile up on each other. Generally repotting is not finished before some species need to have their trimming started. And watering, feeding, and pathogen control must be attended to.

Check your work and family schedules and see if there may be conflicts arising. You may need to make adjustments such as doing the repotting at an earlier time than is optimum or twig pruning instead of watching tv.

Usually the first part of the month requires you to continue the winter care. Check the watering. Make sure no varmints are doing their thing. Watch for signs of new growth. The sun gets pretty hot on some February days. Do not let your trees get too much heat and break their dormancy. If they do, you will need to provide frost and/or freeze protection and you will need to get their repotting done fast. New foliage will require some wind protection also.

The optimum time to do repotting on cold hardy plants is when the buds are just beginning to swell. It should be finished by the time the new green is starting to show. One exception is the dwarf yaupon holly. It may be held and repotted a little later as it grows best when the temperature is nice and warm. Juniper may be done a little later also, it is hard to determine when growth starts. Do the pines when the buds begin to elongate. As a rule this will put your repotting from the middle of February to the end of March. Again if your schedule is uncertain, it is better to repot early. Note: Do not handle trees by their trunks, that will damage the bark and make it look like reverse taper.

The critical thing to have excellent bonsai is to do the trimming of the new growth correctly. This is what develops the ramification, twiginess and small leaves you desire. This trimming is where the real work of keeping your bonsai as bonsai is. Basically there are three types of growth on your trees, opposite leaves, alternate leaves, and the adult juniper growth. The best example of opposite growth is the maples, of alternate would be the elms and oak.

When pruning for development -- that is, growing the branches you need and developing secondary branches -- allow the new growth to elongate and thicken the base of the branch. Be sure

to wire it to have the proper angle where it originates. When it is thick enough, cut it back and grow another tip. This develops taper and motion in your branch.

After the tree is styled you will prune to develop the twigs and small leaves which give the tree the look of age. Not done correctly, the twigs will be too fat and heavy and the leaves larger than they need be.

On alternate growing type of plants, let the new growth grow to 4 or 5 leaves. Then cut it back to 2 or 3 leaves. Decide which direction you wish the new leader to go and cut to the leaf on that side. New shoots may also emerge from the leaves behind that one. Keep this up as long as the tree is putting out new shoots.

Watch the new growth of alternately leafed tree closely. You will see the bud opening with two new leaves spreading apart. Between the two new leaves a new growing tip will be seen. The sooner this tip is removed, the shorter will be the internodes. If it not removed, the stalk behind the leaves will continue to grow. This stalk becomes the internode when the twig continues to grow. On maples especially, the proper tool to use is tweezers that have a fairly sharp point. You must clip the tip behind its leaf node. Sometimes you will need to gently open the new leaves to get the tip in time. This is also true for oaks.

Everyone uses the term pinch when describing how to trim junipers; however, that is not a good term. When working on scale foliage, you do not want to use scissors because they will cut across the scale and create brown tips on your branches. The proper technique is to pluck the tips by holding the new foliage between the fleshy parts of your thumb and finger. Never use the nails which would bruise the scale foliage. I do this also on the bald cypress although it is possible to cut with scissors without cutting their needles.

On the subject of pruning, you can still do styling work until the sap begins as evidenced by the buds swelling. Check last year's wiring especially at the base of the branch. Remove it if necessary. Branches will swell when growth begins.

Spring flowering plants have their buds set. Wiring and other work could damage them. It would be best to leave them until after they bloom. If the azaleas have too many buds you should remove some. The flowers should have enough room to open without being unduly crowded. Wisteria blooms on new growth. The new growth should be left to get long enough to have flowers. (American wisteria, *wisteria frutescens*, will bloom on very young plants and will re-bloom several times if new growth is pruned after it blooms.)

While you get your trees out of winter storage,

Con'd next page.

look for candidates for showing in your club events. Put them where you will give them more TLC. Keep their grooming right up to snuff from the beginning, don't wait to try to do a last minute trim. If the pots are clean, a light coating of Leaf-Shine will help keep them that way and make any last minute touchup easy.

Aphids will show up about as soon as new foliage. The new foliage can be tender so be careful of sprays. Spider mites and scale will be in any warm locale on evergreens and in the greenhouse. The organic spray (one tablespoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon water) works well for me. If you use chemical sprays, be sure to read the label closely. If you get moss on the bark of your trees, try isopropyl alcohol. After the moss is killed, pick it off carefully so as to not pull the bark away.

Take advantage of any collecting trips you can go on. They make it easy to have a 50 or 100 yr old tree within your life time.

PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI

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National Bonsai Exhibition, *con'd* and Marco Invernizzi from Italy will be demonstrating their bonsai magic on two large junipers at the exhibition. Dr. Alice Chen will show her techniques for Oriental brush painting.

Now is the time to choose your finest bonsai for the selection process and send me a photo. Bonsai displayed in the 1st US National Bonsai Exhibition cannot be shown this year. It is important to show different masterpiece bonsai and I'm interested in displaying more clinging-to-a-rock style, cascade style and flowering bonsai to provide seasonal beauty and diversity. All displayed bonsai will be featured in the Commemorative Bonsai Album. There is a \$50 entry fee for each selected bonsai or shohin bonsai display composition, which will be collected after your bonsai has been selected. Please send your photos to me for the selection process. **The deadline**

for submitting photos is April 15th. Studio photos are not necessary and digital photos are preferred. Once your bonsai has been selected additional information will be provided.

I'm trying to assist bonsai artists transport their bonsai across the country and seeking a few dedicated people, especially from the entire West Coast who might be willing to drive a small truck or van (provided and with all expenses paid) to safely bring and return bonsai. If you or know of a friend who might like to see our country and assist with the transportation, kindly let me know. Or, if you have any other ideas please let me know.

We need all the help we can get for promoting and advertising the 2nd US National Bonsai Exhibition. Attached is a flyer, and I have several thousand available for you to distribute. Please let me know how many you would like for your use or group. The National Bonsai Exhibitions are sponsored by dedicated people and businesses. We could not accomplish this without this special group who sincerely want to support the American bonsai community. As in the past, financial support in any amount will be most welcome and needed. Sponsor names will be included in all advertising, promoted at the exhibition and will have an advertisement in the upcoming Commemorative Bonsai Album.

If you would like to financially support the 2nd US National Bonsai Exhibition the donation categories are:

Sponsors: \$1,000 plus

Patrons: \$500 plus

Benefactors: \$100 plus

Donors: Any amount appreciated

Any assistance you could provide for the success of the 2nd US National Bonsai Exhibition would be gratefully appreciated. As you will notice we have the support of major bonsai artists, suppliers as well as organizations from around the world. With your assistance I'm certain the world again will be impressed with the high level of bonsai in the United States. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or ideas to make this event a success.

With Best Regards,
William N. Valavanis

For information, contact Bill at 585-334-2595 or WNV@internationalbonsai.com or visit <http://www.internationalbonsai.com/>, the web site for The International Bonsai Arboretum.

And, Houston, we need to be there!

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2010 Membership Fees Are Due

The HBS membership fees were due in January. An individual membership is \$25.00; a family membership, \$30.00.

Can a Drop of Water Cause Leaf Burn?

A recent study by Hungary's Eotvos University looked into the question whether water causes leaf burn on plants. The answer is yes and no. Water droplets had no effect on smooth leaves such as those of maple and ginkgo. On hairy leaves, however, such as those of some ferns, the droplets were held above the surface of the leaf and indeed caused burn.

For information see EurekaAlert, <http://tinyurl.com/yjp5lfb>.

Creating Flat Root Base Shohin Bonsai Workshop, February 20

Saturday, February 20, The Shohin Society of Texas will have a workshop called, "Creating Flat Root Base Shohin Bonsai." This workshop is all about creating shohin bonsai with flat root systems. Olive, oak, trident maple, wisteria, bougainvillea and redwood have been found to respond to the advanced techniques used to create a flat root system. It is probable that ficus and possibly yaupon holly will also respond to the techniques. Start looking now for 1 gallon to 5 gallon listed trees.

The workshop will follow the procedure developed by Doug Philips. To prepare, visit Doug's website at <http://www.dugzbonsai.com/index.htm> (click on "Olive Tour"). Also read his detailed article, "Flat Cut Olive Trees," in the winter 2002 edition of *Bonsai: The Journal of the American Bonsai Society*. If you do not have the magazine, check your home club's library. Both the website and article give great show-and-tell details. This will be an exciting workshop.

The workshop will be in Austin. For information, contact Terry or Sheila.

Establishing an Advance Study Group

There will be an open meeting on Saturday, January 30, at 9 a.m. in Bayland Center in Bayland Park to discuss an advance study group. The plan for an advance study group will be presented to the board at the February board meeting for review.

Meeting attendance will be the best indicator of interest and need. So, if interested, attend this meeting and come to express your ideas. This will be an open meeting with an open discussion. All are invited to attend. If you are unable to attend and want to express your thoughts, please send them to Michael via email to rollingdragon@yahoo.com by January 27.

Bayland Park is located at 6400 Bissonnet (Bissonnet at Hillcroft—south of 59 and west of Hillcroft).

Enjoy-Learn-Share --Education Committee

Repotting Methods

By Michael McCluskey 1-14-2010

There are many techniques, methods, activities and factors in the development of a tree into a Bonsai. The single most important activity is repotting because the surface root structure and the base of the tree defines the overall appearance and character of the bonsai, with the health and longevity of the tree depending on the root system.

Maxim: "As go the roots so goes the bonsai."

Generally speaking there are three broad categories of tree types: deciduous, evergreens and topical/sub topical. For all types of trees, repotting is best done during the time of year when the tree is less active or dormant.

Deciduous trees lose their leaf in an annual cycle. The best time to repot them is shortly before the emergence of new leafs (bud break). Evergreen trees retain their growth of scales or needles. The best time to repot them is in the winter months during dormancy.

Tropical & Sub Tropical trees are best repotted when the low temperature is 60 degrees or higher and for some types 70 degrees or higher.

Note: For more detail on the optimum time to repot specific tree types see article "Bonsai Tree Repotting Calendar Houston/Gulf Coast Area," under *Articles* on the Houston Bonsai Society website, www.HoustonBonsai.com.

There are various methods of repotting from typical, full, partial, up-potting, repotting after field collection and emergency repotting.

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Typical repotting is used on healthy bonsai trees where 75% to 100% of the soil is removed along with up to one-third of the root system, then repotted using growth medium. This puts great stress on the tree so no other activity should be attempted until the tree has fully recovered.

Full repotting (bare rooting) is used on healthy trees where all the soil is removed and replaced with new soil or growth medium. Extensive root pruning, root removal and root placement is practiced in this method. The combined activities put the greatest stress on trees so no other activity should be attempted until the tree has fully recovered.

Partial repotting is used for repotting weak trees, growth control and in the process of root reduction.

Method 1 The first year remove all soil from one side of the root ball leaving the roots intact then repot using new soil or growth medium.

The next year do the same thing to the other side.

Method 2 Remove just the soil from the base of the trunk outward 2 to 3 inches leaving the outer perimeter of soil/roots intact, and then repot adding new soil or growth medium. Depending on the health of the tree the outer ring of the root ball can also be reduced.

Method 3 With a saw remove the bottom third of the root ball (soil and roots) next remove 50% to 75% of the remaining old soil exposing the roots, then repot adding new soil or growth medium.

Method 4 With a saw remove the bottom third to one-half of the root ball (soil and roots) leaving the balance of the root ball in tact, then repot using new soil or growth medium.

In Methods 1 through 3 typically no more than one-third of the existing root system is removed.

Up-potting is where the tree is being moved into a larger container; typically the root ball is only minimally disturbed. If the tree is root bound take a razor blade (single edged) and vertically score the outer most roots on the outside of the root ball. Do this in a number of places and then repot adding new soil or growth medium. The scoring will encourage root growth outward into the new soil in the pot.

Potting field-collected tree in this case there are few or no fine root. Cut the existing roots flat with the bottom of the pot. Coat the cut areas with growth

hormone. Place the tree into a container with soil that retains moisture (not your normal bonsai growth medium). Use regular potting soil or a mixture of half medium course sand and half peat moss. Make sure the roots are well below the soil surface to prevent drying out. It is best to water twice a day for the first few months, periodically applying liquid root stimulator. As the tree starts to show signs of growth begin a regiment of organic liquid fertilizers half strength.

Emergency repotting is done at any time that it is obvious that the tree is going to die or circum were taking no action would result in the death of the tree. An inspection of the roots and soil will define what is needed to ensure the survival of the tree, less action being better than too much. This is a case of due no further harm. A partial repot either Method 1 or Method 2 should be the first consideration.

After repot care involves placing the tree in a shady spot for a week or two and misting the foliage on those trees that retained their leaves. Continue to monitor the trees watering as needed. Do not allow the soil to dry out, keep the soil moist. Hold off on the fertilizers until there are signs of new growth then use liquid organic fertilizers half strength. The frequency will depend on the soil or growth medium that the tree is potted in.

Keep in mind that repotting puts great demands and stress on the tree. So to minimize stress it is important to repot at the correct time, to evaluate the trees health and to determine the appropriate repotting method. Each tree is unique and has special needs so no one method should be applied to all. No matter which repotting method is used typically no more than one-third of the root system is removed. Enjoy - Learn - Share

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Happy 39th birthday, HBS!

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. Refreshments and Curbside Consultation at 7:00 p.m.

- Jan. 30 Meeting to discuss advance study group.
9 a.m., Bayland Center, Bayland Park
- Feb. 3 Monthly meeting of the HBS, Hermann Park.
Sankowski, pottery artist.
- Feb. 6 Saturday Study Group, Timeless Trees, 9 a.m.
- Feb. 5-7 Biennial California Shohin Society seminar,
Ramada Inn, Santa Nella, CA. Call 209-826-4444
for hotel reservations ASAP.
- Feb. 20 Meeting of The Shohin Society of Texas in
Austin. Workshop: Creating shohin with flat-cut
root base. 10:30 a.m.
- Mar. 3 Monthly meeting of the HBS, Hermann Park.
Boxwood workshop.
- Mar 20 Saturday Study Group, Bayland Park, 9 a.m.
An open meeting with a one hour video at 9:15
The Growing Art of Bonsai. Additional activities -
Wiring, pruning and trimming of trees for bonsai.
- April 15 Photo deadline for National Bonsai Exhibition
- May 22-24 Rendezvous, Brussel's Bonsai Nursery, Olive
Branch, MS, Memorial weekend, May 22, 23, 24.
For information,
http://www.brusselsbonsai.com/about_us/rendezvous09.shtml or call 1-800-582-2593.
- June 12-13 2nd U. S. National Bonsai Exhibition, Rochester,
NY. contact Bill Valavanis at 585-334-2595 or
WNV@internationalbonsai.com
- Sept 30- BCI China tour and convention,
Oct. 12 http://www.bonsai-bci.com/BCI_2010/China_10.html

BONSAI

INTRODUCTORY COURSE 2010

\$ 125.00

Plus optional additional cost for tools and/or materials

Includes membership in HBS for 2010

The course fee is \$100.00 for current member of the HBS

Lunch is on your own

Held three Saturdays April 17 & 24 May 8

From 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

At Mercer Arboretum

The text and course material was prepared by the American Bonsai Society and is being offered by the Houston Bonsai Society locally. The course fee includes a course syllabus, instructions and visual presentations. The educational material, methods and techniques are extensive and cover the information needed to get a great start on a fun and enjoyable activity, the art of bonsai.

Mercer Arboretum is located at 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd in Humble TX. Seating is limited so the course fee is due at time of registering. The deadline for registration is April 10, 2010. Questions about the course can be made via E-mail to education@houstonbonsai.com.

Registration can be made by mail or at the HBS monthly meeting. The HBS meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at the Houston Garden Center in Herman Park, refreshments are served at 7:00 with an open meeting following at 7:30. General information about the HBS is available on our website at www.houstonbonsai.com.

Enjoy-Learn-Share

Checks should be made payable to HBS and mailed to:

Houston Bonsai Society

P.O. Box 540727

Houston, Texas 77254-0727

Please include a phone number, E-mail address and/or mailing address

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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.

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.