



THE BONSAI NEWS OF HOUSTON

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY, INC.

Volume 39 Number 7, Internet Edition

July 2010

Monthly Meeting

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

This month, Yvonne Padilla from our sister club of Corpus Christi will show us how to an Emerald Green Ficus in Cascade Style. Besides being such a talented bonsai artist, she's also an extremely knowledgeable horticulturist. As Alan Raymond confirmed, the spectacular Ficus Too Little forest created by Yvonne last year, which Alan won with 25 raffle tickets, is very green and growing strong.

Upcoming Events

July 10 - Saturday Study Group at Cabrera Farms Nursery - 3914 Cabrera Drive, Sugar Land, TX 77479, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Please call Phillip Drilling at 281-313-2000 or 281-980-1615 if you plan to attend, so he'd have refreshments and tables ready for all.

July 17, 24 & August 7 - Intro to Bonsai Course at Bayland Park at 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston, TX 77074. It's between Hillcroft and Beechnut. Call (713) 541-9951 for directions - 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.

July Monthly Tips

We are approaching the summer solstice as I'm writing this, or as I like to call it "Tropical Time". We can now start root pruning/repotting our tropicals. It's safe to root prune our tropicals (Bahamas Black Olive, Buttonwood, Fukien Tea...) now through August/September. We want at least 4 to 6 weeks of very warm weather after we prune

the roots of our tropicals to give the new roots time to establish. You can start on your Texas Ebony, Huisache and other Texas natives if you haven't started yet. It's also safe to keep on re-potting semitropicals like Ficus and figs.

Watch the soils every day so they do not dry out. In these dog days of summer, the soil can sometimes dry out quicker than in 24 hours. I have several plants that need watering 2 times a day and a few that need 3 times. Inspect your bonsai from top to bottom, also inspect the drain holes. Insects are always on the move during the summer. If you discover an infestation, treat according to the label of the pesticide. Apply a fungicide and insecticide at least once every 4 weeks.

Continue to pinch, trim and cut back to develop new branching. A fertilization schedule should be continued at this time of year.

Watch your training wires, so they will not cut into the branches. If you need to re-wire after you removed it (since the branch would not stay in place), do not put the wire over the same "line". Place it over another area of the branch as not to deepen the previous wire line.

When inspecting for insects on trees, check all around the foliage or leaves, in-between twigs and in/or under the pot. Spider mites are very tiny and will kill your trees before you know that they are there! The best way to find the smallest of the attacking insects, spider mites, is to put a piece of white paper under your tree foliage and tap on all the branches. This will knock off some of the little critters onto the paper. If you can mash/smear the specks, they are bugs and need to be eradicated.

We all have our own methods of treating insects. When watering, spray the foliage as well, especially on junipers. This can prevent little critters from taking up residence in

your trees. The spider mites in particular don't care for damp environments and the spray will help knock some of them off.

I use a preventive insecticide and fungicide treatment every 4 weeks during the growing season. Here, that may stretch to 10 months. With indoor growing, insect inspection and prevention is an on-going job year round.

Having several species of trees, I developed a preventive method: spray with insecticide, mite-icide and fungicide (all in one), which can even be mixed with fertilizer. Spray every 4 to 6 weeks during the growing season. If an infestation is found, I treat accordingly since insects have different life cycles. Hence, treatments should be adjusted to their types.

I use a couple of brands of systemic organophosphate insecticides. I found that Ortho makes a couple of types that are very effective for my problems "Orthenex" & "Systemic Insect Killer". Check out their website at <http://www.yardiac.com/labels/Orthenex.pdf> <http://www.bing.com/search?q=ortho+systemic+insect+killer+concentrate&go=&form=QBLH> Orthenex Insecticide has a mite-icide, insecticide and fungicide in it and they both take care of all my problems, without using Neem oil, Kelthane, or Malathion. See below. I have seen that Kelthane is back on the market. This is the best to combat spider mites on Junipers and Serrisa Foetida, but not on Elms... See below.

Always wear protective gear (PPE) when using them!
Always read and follow the labels!
A long time user with these chemicals, this is my experience:

- 1) Do not use Neem oil on any type of Elms. It will defoliate them and can even kill them.
- 2) Do not use Kelthane on any type of Elms. It will defoliate them and can kill them.
- 3) Do not use Malathion on Buttonwoods. It can kill them.
- 4) Do not use Neem oil on Boxwoods. It can kill them.
- 5) Do not use Disyston on Fukien Tea, it can kill them.

Just to name a few problems when growing bonsai down here in South Texas.

* Aphids will attack flowering buds before they start to open. Watch for ants moving up and down the branches and you will see aphids around the buds. Fire Ants are like "cattle ranchers". They will herd the Aphids up from the ant colony to the plant's flower buds and have them feed until they get fat, then herd them back to the colony's nursery to milk the sucrose from them to feed on. They do this over and over again until

the aphids die. Ladybugs are natural predators of aphids, some scale and mealy bugs. They can be purchased by the "pint" at Gill Nursery. Release them at dusk in your yard in the areas where aphids have been spotted.

* Spider mites can attack very fast and this happens all growing season. Spider mites will kill the trees almost before you can notice their presence. If you see signs such as webs, it's probably too late.

* Cuban Laurel Thrips can and will attack several different types of Ficus during the growing season. *Disyston can be used here continually due to the nature of this pest.*

* "The Boogie worms" (little green worms) *ONLY* attack bougainvilleas during the summer. *Disyston can be used here continually due to the nature of the pest.*

As for natural control, wasps are frequently spotted carrying off boogie worms to their nests.

* White flies, scale, grubs and snails (not insects, but still pests) come and go during our growing season.

Here's another beneficial insect to watch for in your garden – most likely you've seen the eggs and larvae of lacewing bugs in your garden at one time or another. The larvae are voracious eaters and will dine on aphids, mites, thrips, insect eggs, small worms and other pesky insects.

David Whitaker

Houston Bonsai Society Board Meeting Minutes

June 2nd, 2010 Houston Garden Center

I. Call to order

Alan called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

II. Roll Call

Present: Alan Raymond, Seda Dawson, Dean Laumen, Buddy Allen, Eldon Branham, Hurley Johnson, Donald Green

Quorum present? : Yes

III. Read and Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve May 5th, 2010 Board meeting minutes with the correction of paying CJ \$25.52 for refreshments , seconded, and passed.

IV. Treasurer's Report

June 2nd, 2010 Treasurer's Report.

Operating bank balance as of 06-02-2010

\$30,432.76

Checks written since last meeting:

5-5-10 #1724 Ruby Holt (refreshments)
\$41.79

5-5-10 #1725 Timeless Trees (3 demo trees for Lone Star College) \$150.00

5-5-10 #1726	Domain Registry of America (5 years website)	\$95.00
5-5-10 #1727	Cabrera Farms (soil)	\$18.00
5-5-10 #1728	Seda Dawson (postage)	\$8.80
5-5-10 #1729	CJ (refreshments)	\$25.52
5-5-10 #1730	Shawn Nguyen (newsletter copies)	\$13.40
5-5-10 #1731	Texas State Bonsai Exhibit	\$500.00
5-5-10 #1732	Fort Worth Bonsai (convention)	\$100.00
Total		\$952.51
Deposits		
5-6-10	Membership	\$105.00
	Lone Star College	\$150.00

Membership as of 06-02-2010: 86 members.
Motion was made to accept treasurer's report, seconded and passed.

V. Expenditures

Expenses made by others:

\$15.00 Timeless Trees-pot for the demo at Warrens Southern Garden

\$35.00 Alex Leong- tree for the demo at Warrens Southern Garden

\$63.11 Christie - refreshments

Alan stated that they received \$50.00 honorarium from Warrens Southern Garden.

Motion was made to pay these expenses, seconded and passed.

VI. Unfinished Business

Publicity Strategy:

Eldon Branham assumed the role of publicity committee chair. Eldon was asked to develop a publicity strategy.

Outreach Committee:

Dean assumed the role of outreach committee chair.

VII. Routine Business:

Lecture/Demos to outside organizations:

Warrens South Garden- Alan Raymond and Alex Leong presented on May 8th and received \$50.00 honorarium.

Alan said he has a family conflict on June 5th and he won't be able to facilitate Saturday Group at Mercer.

VIII. New Business:

Auditing Books:

Alan will contact a CPA to find out how much he would charge for auditing HBA's financial records.

Drawing for LSBF 2010, Fort Worth Convention:

After talking to registration contact of LSBF Fort Worth Convention, Alan announced the 15 members whose names will be in the drawing.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Notes from the Meeting

Alan called the general membership meeting to order at 7:33. Following the introduction of guests and new members, Alan stated that he won't be able to facilitate Saturday Group at Mercer and asked for a volunteer. After reminding dates of LSBF 2010 Fort Worth Convention, Hurley announced the 15 members whose names will be in the drawing. The drawing was held and the winners are: Donald Green, Dianne Green, Joe Tseng, and Ruby Holt.

Clyde Holt announced his demonstration at Galveston County Office in Dickinson.

Hurley stated that Yvonne Padilla will be creating an Emerald Green Ficus in cascade style during July 7th meeting. Alan introduced Tonight's program "Slide Show".

A total of 32 members and guests attended June 2nd meeting.

Minutes submitted by Seda Dawson

Getting to Know HBS

Personal Interview of Buddy Allen

One day, at a party full of new faces, I withdrew myself in a dark corner to make myself invisible. In the room, some of the guests just waited for something to happen. Some tried to make something happen. One lady in that crowd, positioned herself in the center of the room, on the only long sofa and started singing. *How brave!* I thought of her. Then she continues her one-woman show with jokes. *How bold!* I thought. As the night grew more tender and the candles shorter, she shared with the small group her own life stories. I became more and more enthralled in her stories of hardships and victories. Before I knew it, she melted my heart. I began to see the true person behind that apparently tough face, and felt a sudden strong bond to a total stranger. It was then that I realized a simple truth: To know someone is to understand then love that person.

I've been coming to the Houston Bonsai Society meetings, workshops and gatherings for almost seven years. It's been a long time but very enjoyable time. However, when I asked the hand full of friends, who were the authors of spectacular trees exhibited at each monthly meeting, I often could not put a face to the name. Due to

my schedule, most of the time, I don't get to come early enough to meet and chat with other fellow members, sit with the Board of Directors and get to know them. That was my major loss.

Since I eased myself in the seat of the newsletter editor, I thought of making our monthly newsletter a better communication tool, for members to know each other, starting with myself. We learn a lot about trees and How-Tos, but not enough about one another in our club. It's time to feature familiar faces as well as unfamiliar ones, whom we all have seen at meetings from times to times, but never get a chance to really know.

This month, I would like to start with Mr. Buddy Allen, someone I've always revered as a prominent Bonsai Aficionado at of HBS since I joined. Quiet and distant of nature, Buddy shone the spotlight I've reserved for him for many weeks, even though I promised it would only be a brief and painless moment. At the time, I could not understand his reluctance. Finally, one hot midsummer morning, he agreed to end the chase and met me at Cabrera's Farms in Sugar Land.

Phillip Drilling, owner of Cabrera's Farms, greeted me with a big smile and complimented me on choosing to interview Buddy first. For the last eleven years, Phil has learned most of what he knows today about the art of bonsai from this personal mentor, who had trimmed and wired thousands of trees at his farm. Under the porch of Phil's shop, sat an anxious Buddy Allen, waiting for me. Not ready to reveal himself, he started by letting me know that my interview ranks as the fourth most difficult thing in his life. At first, I was unsure how to begin, in spite of a long list of questions I've prepared and typed in my laptop sitting on my lap. One wrong word may shut the interview down. In my head, the words from Thumper in "Bambi" resonated in my head: *If you can't say something nice, say nothing at all!* Since I could not think of a single clever word to save the day, *Mumm* was my word. Phillip also recognized that *Silence Is Gold* in that awkward moment. Quietly I closed and put away my laptop and took my gaze off of this extremely shy Buddy. It was the longest three-minute wait but in time, he felt enough ease to start talking. The sound of his own voice without any interruption seemed to comfort him. He gradually loosened up, to reveal the personal details of his relationship with bonsai.

In November of 1990, he first met Harvey Shore at his bonsai nursery, where Buddy saw the little trees and fell in love with them at first sight. They were a far cry from the violets he and his wife were growing at the time. He learned about another bonsai nursery, Bent Branch Nursery, and visited with Ray Gonzales, its owner, for a

long time. They both encouraged him to check out the Houston Bonsai Society. On January 1991, Buddy joined the club. He's been a devoted member since and served in many capacities, but never as president. He wished to remaining very low key. In spite of his shyness, he was still voted to represent HBS as a LSBF delegate since 1992 till today.

Buddy asked not to be called a Bonsai Master, since that would be an insult to the true Masters such as his own teacher, John Naka, the famous Masahiko Kimura or Roy Nagatoshi. He believes at any age, he will always be a student. It was for that very reason, in the last twenty years, Buddy religiously attended all the State Conventions, except for two. When time permitting, he traveled far and wide to attend the ones in California, Oregon and Florida, to learn from prominent masters from around the world.

Buddy continues to share what he learned from John Naka, the master he calls the Father of American Bonsai: *There's a bonsai in every tree. You just have to find it.* He has devoted the last two decades to learn how. In fact, Buddy buys very few finished trees. As with most true bonsai artists, what satisfies him most is the opportunity to create a masterpiece from untrained raw stock that he has grown and trained over the years. Unlike the impatient collectors who prefer to purchase instant bonsai, he enjoys reducing shapeless trees down to the bare trunk and put them back on the shelf. Every day, he'd watch them grow new ramification and foliage. When he picks up those tiny trees, he observes and listens closely to hear them talk. They guide him to refine the details, and bring out their hidden beauty. Indeed, Buddy has the utmost respect for the tree's own wishes to develop their own natural shape. *A bonsai needs 95% horticulture, only 5% style,* he repeated the words of Guy Guidry. His touch is that 5%.

Those words of wisdom gradually brought him to give away the trees that don't do well in Houston climate or the larger ones that he can no longer care for, to focus on Shohin and mostly tropicals. After trying and buying all varieties of trees, especially Japanese Azaleas imported from Japan, Buddy just wants his future trees to match the energy he has now. *Little,* he said. Next to him, on the bench, sat a humble tiny tree of in a training pot. Last winter, he reduced this seedling to five inches and waited for it to bud back. It sprouted a hand of bright green foliage but all to one side. Buddy read that it asked to be styled as a windswept bonsai. That day, the baby tree left the nursery and went home with big Daddy.

When asked what Bonsai mean to him over the last two decades, Buddy choked on his reply. I sensed I've

unknowingly opened an old wound. Overwhelmed by the seriousness on his face, I resorted once again to silence. I now attribute that lack of words to the Art of Deep Listening. After a moment to recompose himself, he retold a very difficult event. He was working long hours at a very stressful job with one of the largest companies in the country. Everything was rushed rush. No time to rest, eat, live or to enjoy his family. Buddy wanted to de-stress, so he bought a sailboat, hoping to go out to sea alone and to do nothing. To his surprise, what he mistook as a promising pleasurable lifestyle, that sailboat only gave him two happy brief moments: The day he purchased it and the day he sold it for \$85 less.

In retrospect, he recognized that God was telling him all along: *Slow down or I will slow you down.* Ignoring that soft voice for years, on the fateful April 16, 1990, Buddy had a stroke. When he can no longer regain his youthful agility, Bonsai turned out to be a blessing and the best therapy for him. Working on bonsai trees slows him down and make him face his creator, with whom he converses often. When his attention was on the tree he's working on, he actually feels alive while living in the present moment. As his sorrow faded away with his new found form of meditation, his excitement arises from the tiny new leaves or blossoms on his bonsai, daily and more often. Ever since that life-changing day, every morning, Buddy looks forward to seeing new changes on his trees. He also appreciates every opportunity to create more new living works of art. Over the years, as this Bonsai Aficionado matures in his art, the desire to own more trees decreases. He has never sold a single bonsai but gladly gave many of his creations away. A voice in my brain wanted to scream *Throw me something, Mister...* but I could not open my mouth, in fear of interrupting Buddy's chain of thoughts. Now, he has the perfect neighborhood playground at his disposal: Cabrera's Farms. A few days a week, Buddy comes out to Phil's nursery to trim and wire as many trees as he likes. He leaves the 95% care, pest control and watering to Phil and his assistants, just like the way the old masters in Japan have done for thousands of years.

On that note, I remember asking a few gentlemen, many years back, at a Saturday workshop: *Why are there so few women in our club?* Buddy answered: *In Japan, apprentices and wives only pull weeds and water. The most they were allowed to do after six years of training was to defoliate the trees.* I pictured that's what Mrs. Allen was doing at the time, while her husband was out teaching the Art of Bonsai to novices like me. As I reminded him of that clever answer, he told me that in fact, HBS only had male members until 1997, when the first ladies started to join. What a delight to know that Bonsai is not reserved just for men! When asked whom he likes to work with most, Buddy shocked me. He'd rather

work with ladies! In his opinion, men were too headstrong and too set in their ways. Most ladies who came to workshops were new at bonsai. Without pre-conceived notions or stumbling blocks to overcome, they have a lot of fun, follow his instructions with ease and retain the knowledge well.

When we took a stroll by the benches of tiny Bonsai trees in training, Buddy pointed at some Black Pines and told me about each one's history and future style. I was astonished that he remembers every minute detail like a loving mother about her children. Then we came upon a gorgeous but rather large Ficus Nerifolia. He fondly touched its foliage like a proud father petting his son's head. *This is my tree,* he said, *but it lives here.* For some years, he trusted that treasure to the hands of a better horticulturist (Phil) so it would get better care than in his own garden. I tried to snap a photograph of Buddy with his tree but holding true to his low profile, he quickly stepped away. The tree was so big and heavy, so it could not escape my camera. You can admire it in its full splendor below. Once he had walked safely out of the range of my persistent camera, the dear man I just came to know a little bit better, turned around and waved good bye. The lone ranger then hopped onto his iron horse to ride away.



Ficus Nerifolia – Height 40”

Phillip and I both winked at each other: *Success!* For some time in the beginning, we did not even know whether we'd have an interview.

Thank you Buddy for breaking out of your shell and grant HBS (and me) a very profound interview. Even though I walked away with a lot more than I expected, there's still a lot of enigma under those bushy eyebrows that shade your eyes. If you have waited patiently, season after season, to hear each little tree talk, I supposed I would have to remain just as patient to wait for my time before I'd receive more wisdom from you.

Till then, dear Buddy, may those little bonsai trees continue to captivate your attention, bring you a lot of joy and keep you grounded in the present moment.

Shawn Nguyen

Editor's Note

Go Green! Save the Club some Green too!

Nowadays, the growing trend of going paperless is the fastest and most sensible among consumers. This is driven by an environmental consciousness, as well as the convenience and security of delivering confidential information electronically, while saving time, money and effort for our volunteers.

After reviewing the 2010 budget, the HBS Board has made the decision to charge an additional \$5 per year to the members who choose to receive the monthly newsletter by mail. This will help defer some of the cost of printing and postage. The additional charge will be collected starting in 2011 with membership dues. We encourage all members who can to receive their newsletter by email to do so. It's a green worthy alternative. Please call JoAnn, our treasurer, to have your name transferred from the snail mail list to the email list, so you can start receiving a reminder every month.

Since we're adding interviews to our newsletter and eventually a lot of photos of bonsai work from local artists, I assure you that these masterpieces look sharper and much more beautiful in full color on the web.

A big Green Thank You to you!

Shawn Nguyen,

Email me your ideas at hbs.news@yahoo.com

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.

- Jul 7 Monthly meeting: Yvonne Padilla will create an Emerald Green Ficus in Cascade style.
- Jul 10 Saturday Study Group, Cabrera Farms Nursery 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Jul 17, 24 & Aug 7 Intro to Bonsai Course at Bayland Park 9:00 am to 3:30 pm
- Aug 4 Monthly meeting: Bonsai of China - Dr. Hoe Possible work on tropicals.
- Aug 7 Saturday Study Group, Timeless Trees Nursery 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Sep 1 Monthly meeting: Annual Auction of donated items at Houston Garden Center
- Sept 18 Saturday Study Group, Cabrera Farms Nursery 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Sep 30 to Oct 12 BCI China tour and convention, www.bonsaibci.com/BCI_2010/China_10.html
- Oct 6 Monthly meeting: Seda Dawson on Bonsai Horticulture
- Oct. 8 Setup for Fall Show/Sale 6-10, Houston Garden Center
- Oct. 9 & 10 HBS Fall Show/Sale Saturday 9-5 Sunday 10-4 at the Houston Garden Center
- Oct. 16 Saturday Study Group, Mercer Arboretum 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Nov 3 Monthly meeting: Mike Hansen will speak about Japanese Black Pine, particularly needle plucking in the fall.
- Dec 1 Monthly meeting: Christmas Party