



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

April 2011 vol 4

April 2011 Programs by Collin Murphy

Our annual show will be here soon. This year it is on May 28th and 29th, only 2 months away. Our members always have great trees to display, and thanks to one of Alisan's previous workshops we also have a good selection of scrolls. But that's not all it takes to make a great bonsai display. Accent plants are an important part of formal bonsai display.

On **Wednesday, April 13th** Mike Watson will give a presentation on accent plants. This will be a program topic that our club hasn't heard in many years and I'm looking forward to hearing some of Mike's tips.

During the members workshop on **Tuesday, April 19th** we'll create our own accent plants. Everyone who attends will create and keep an accent plant in an appropriate pot. There will be a signup sheet at the general meeting on Wednesday. The fee for the workshop is \$3 per person. Be sure to sign up on Wednesday to ensure there will be enough material at the workshop

Calendar of Events

April 13th ABS Monthly Meeting Reception
Hosts: Zerita Rogers, Elaine White
Audrey Lanier
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm

April 13th ABS Monthly Meeting
Accent Plants
with Mike Watson
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 9:00 pm

April 19th ABS Board Meeting
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm

April 19th ABS Member's Workshop
Workshop - Create
Accent Plants
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm



Bill Boytim's presentation at our March 2011 Meeting

Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

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Timmi Kuykendall
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John Muller
Member at-Large

Joey McCoy
Former President

The rate of advertising in "Bonsai Notebook" is \$6.00 per month or \$35.00 per year, for two column inches minimum. Additional space must be purchased in increments of two column inches. Two column inches measure approximately 3 1/2 inches wide by 2 inches high. All ads must be camera ready and prepaid. Changes to ads must be received 30 days prior to the month of the desired insertions. Other newsletter content is due on the last day of the month, in order to be published in the next month's newsletter.

John Muller is the editor of "Bonsai Notebook". He may be contacted at jcm2austx@sprintmail.com.

Austin Bonsai on the Internet

Online discussions
Picture and video sharing
Questions and answers
Upcoming events
NO SPAM

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austinbonsai/>
or
jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net.

President's Message by Mike Watson

The art of bonsai as we know it originated in the country of Japan. Although the basics were brought there from China, the Japanese truly perfected it. We owe a great deal to these folks and now they need our help.

We all know about the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami that has devastated northeastern Japan as well as the continuing crisis regarding the damaged nuclear power facility in Fukushima and the surrounding areas. The tragedies there have touched us all in different ways. Some of us have lived or visited there. Others have friends there, formed through the common interest of bonsai as well as other ties. Some (like myself) have family there.

At our monthly meetings, there will be a donation jar located next to the sign-in sheet. It will be for "The American Red Cross: Japan Earth and Pacific Tsunami Relief Fund". I appeal to you all to give what you can, when you can, and as many times as you can. There is a long road of recovery ahead for Japan and every little bit will help.

On a lighter note, we have the Corpus Christi "Gateway To Bonsai" convention coming up on May 13-15 (actually, there is a very cool event happening on Thursday the 12th but more about that later)! If you've never been to a bonsai convention then you owe it to yourself to go at least once, though I guarantee you that once will not be enough! There will be some great workshops to take as well as the always tempting vendor area. I can't wait!

What I'm excited about is the "Emerging Talent" competition slated for Thursday, May 12th! Each club will select a new member (5 years club membership or less) to take part in the event. I will go into further detail at the next meeting but I will tease you with this... the material is Shimpaku Juniper and the prize is a bonsai tool set (shhh, don't tell anyone I let the cat out of the bag)!

ABS December General Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2011

By Joey McCoy, acting Secretary

President Mike Watson called the meeting to order at 7:25 and thanked Timmi Kuykendall, Nan Jenkins and Collin Murphy for the terrific refreshments.

Deb Van Cleef announced a guest this evening, Mark Dominguez.

Charlotte Cranberg talked about the upcoming Zilker Festival, encouraging members to come. She talked about our planned Bonsai display in the Greene Room, that there will also be food, music (jazz ensemble, steel guitar) and more to see. She mentioned that all those who volunteer will receive a free Zilkerfest t-shirt. Mike pointed out a sign-up sheet for volunteering in the Bonsai booth.

Donna Dobberfuhr wanted to remind us all to be saving our used Bonsai wire for "The Great Wire Weigh-In" happening at the LSBF Convention in Corpus Christi this May. We should save aluminum and copper wire, keep it separated please, and send along to Convention. The club with the most wire will win a large Bunjin pot from TTSBE for club use. Let's help our club win this friendly competition!

Mike reminded us that we should send in our Convention registration this month as the amount goes up in April. More information as well as registration info can be found at our website: www.austinbonsaisociety.com

Still on Convention, Elaine White announced that TTSBE will have a sales booth where items can be sold for individuals with 25% going to TTSBE as a fund-raiser. These can be Bonsai, pots, tools, supplies.

Becki Drozd reminded everyone to buy raffle tickets

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as we had a nice dwarf Maple Bonsai, pots and sharpening tools available.

Mike then introduced Collin Murphy who told us all that Donna's program on Tanuki, canceled in February, will be rescheduled in November (see the new directory). Collin then introduced Bill Boytim, who was giving the program of the evening. Bill talked about what to look for in a sharpened edge, how to sharpen and keep edges sharp on a variety of blades. He gave details about grinding stones, wheels & files and how to use them safely. The files on his presentation are also available at our Austin Bonsai website.

JADE GARDENS

HOME OF



Chuck & Pat Ware

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(512) 847-2514

Bonsai Calendar

LSBF Convention

St Louis Shohin Seminar

<http://www.stlbonsai.org/events.htm>

Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show

Corpus Christi

Collinsville, IL

May 14 - 15, 2011

May 20 - 22, 2011

May 28 - 29, 2011

Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to jcm2austx@sprintmail.com

ABS December Board Meeting Minutes

by Nan Jenkins, Secretary

March 15, 2011

Present: Collin Murphy, John Muller, Timmi Kuykendall, Nan Jenkins, Pat Ware, Mike Watson, Joey McCoy

Call to Order: 7:12

The minutes for February were approved as published in the newsletter. There was no general meeting due to inclement weather.

Treasurer's report: February income over expenses is \$446.23. We have 38 members plus 2 honorary members.

Committee Reports: Vendors for ABS Exhibit will be allowed. Cost will be \$35 per table

LSBF Speaker series: Eric Wiegert is coming from Florida in October. The board chose to invite him for October 2nd for two events, a lecture/demonstration and a workshop all to happen on that day.

Old Business: The new artist competition at the convention will be for those who have been in bonsai work for five years or less. The board will decide in April who to invite to be our representative. They must be registered for the convention and be there on Thursday afternoon for the competition.

New Business: Conversation about the Yahoo website. The board decided to leave it available to all of those who are currently registered on the site rather than limit to members only.

Move to Adjourn: 7:46

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Jenkins, Secretary

How not to collect...

by Joey McCoy

Have you ever been on one of those digs where you were excited to be collecting great pre-Bonsai material, but quickly realize you're in a place that you shouldn't and that this whole thing may not have been a good idea? Early March on a warm morning I decided to collect a twisted Black Willow growing down in a creek. I had noticed it after a big flood exposed it as the only tree left in the area, all others fell over and were swept away. This tree was covered in plastic bags, grass and debris, sticking out in the now open landscape, and easy to get to.

I first grabbed the trunk, shaking it gently to see how continued ...4 How not to collect
solid it's roots held on – it moved well, so should be an easy dig! Grabbing handfuls of the trash clinging to the branches, clearing it away to see the tree, I was thinking what a great find it was. That was until I uncovered a 28" black Water Moccasin coiled in the boughs sunning itself. I jumped back and caught my breath, realizing I was well within its striking distance. It saw me too, so the only thing I could do was to grab a stick nearby and kind of shove it out of the tree into the water. This only seemed to wake it up as it turned right around and swam to the bank next to my feet, completely unafraid. I banged the stick on the rocks trying to scare it off, and finally it disappeared underwater in a cloud of mud. I checked out the other branches to make sure there were no more snakes and double-checked each time I placed a foot down, but all seemed quiet.

continued ...5 How not to collect
OK, that was scary but now to the tree. I realized that I could pull most of the roots from the mud in the water, but other roots "snaking" over exposed rocks on the shore would have to be cut, so reciprocating saw in hand, I severed some of the roots getting it ready to lift. The willow was too heavy to lift out from my position, so straddling the tree with one foot on a rock sticking out of the water and the other on the bank I pulled it, dragging some of the roots free. It was then that I noticed another one of these vipers, only a little smaller. I had disturbed it sleeping among the roots at the water edge. A quick dance to the shore and I was starting to reevaluate the situation. This was not what I'd signed up for this morning: down a creek bed,

Bonsai Tool Sharpening Meeting and Workshop



ABS Members support the Zilker Festival held March 26-27



March ABS Activities

(Photos by Joey McCoy)

April Bonsai

by John Miller

Editor's Note: 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, climate, with its early springs, long summers, late falls and erratic winters.

Rotate, rotate, rotate. Feed, feed, feed. These two things we usually don't do enough or properly, probably because we don't see any result immediately.

In order for your trees to grow equally on all sides, they must receive equal light energy from all sides. Therefore they must be rotated on a regular and consistent basis. The best solution I have heard is from Mark Bynum. He gives each and every plant a 1/4 turn clockwise every Monday.

Most of our bonsai soil is pretty sterile and we water so thoroughly that we leach any small amount there out. If you use commercial chemical fertilizers, you should probably cut the strength of the mixture and apply more often. The same would be true for liquid organic feeds. The best fertilization is to use a solid organic fertilizer. Solid organics break down slowly therefore having a small bit of nutrients available for watering to carry them into the soil. Porous components like pumice will absorb some nutrient filled water and make it available to the plant as needed. There are many solid organic feeds out there and most are good. Just watch for components like chicken manure that will release nutrients too fast and burn the roots. Using mycorrhiza, at least the first time you pot up the tree, should aid the tree.

Most trees will do good in the full sun at this time of year. However, if you have had them in partial shade be careful about moving them directly to full sun. They should be acclimated gradually. Too much wind will cause the leaves to burn. Some damage may not show up until hot weather.

Repotting for most hardy bonsai has ended. Very late budding species like oaks may still be done, depending on your local climate. I also do dwarf yaupon and olive then. It's still too early for the tropics. They should usually be held until the night temps are in no

danger of going below 60.

There are two things to consider when doing the spring trimming. Are you still in the styling stage or are you ready to do the refinement and develop the twiginess that a mature bonsai needs.

If you are still styling, you will need to develop size and movement in your branches by letting those branches grow vigorously, then cut back to a good node and repeat the process on the new shoot. At the same time you must not let the other branches get too powerful. Keep the foliage there trimmed so the energy goes primarily to the developing branch.

If your tree is a mature bonsai or is ready for refinement, Do not let the new growth get large. On elms and other trees with leaves appearing alternately down the shoot, do not let more than 5 new leaves appear. Cut back to 2 or 3 leaves, leaving the last leaf on the side that you want the new growth to appear. On maples and others with leaves coming in pairs on opposite sides of the twig, cut the center shoot as soon as you can determine it. You must get behind the new internode that is emerging. Tweezers work best for this operation. Since the shoots do not all open at the same time this could be a daily chore for the best results. Sometimes it is easier to grasp the new leaves and bend the tip sharply backward breaking the shoot off.

A good organic program takes care of both the feeding and the insect problems. I recommend the mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and 5% apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. I use the mixture both as a foliar spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray it keeps aphids and mites under control as well as any other insect I've had. The prime requirement is to cover the entire plant, top and bottom of the leaves with a fine mist sprayer (no hose end stuff). I try to drench soil twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs thru the foliage.

Fungal diseases can show up with damp weather. Leaf spot can be serious on Catalpa and Chinese elms and on hollies. Mildew shows up later with warmer

weather. There are organic fungicides available, potassium bicarbonate or baking soda (sodium bicarbonate). Check an organics nursery or publications. A 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide (dilute the standard 3% store bought stuff 2 parts water to each part peroxide) is also recommended but it can injure very new foliage.

Be sure to check your soils each day for proper water content. It is easy to assume that the soil has plenty of water when the days are cool or there has been some rain. It is also too easy for a tree with full leaves to shed water outside of the pot or a good sun and low humidity after a front to dry the soil. I suggest that you remove most of the moss so that you can see and feel the soil in order to determine how dry it is. (Moss growing on the trunk or roots will cause the bark to rot also, kill it with isopropyl alcohol) An automatic watering system will be an aid but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Hand watering allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually. Also most automatic systems use a drip system which only waters a small spot in shallow containers.

If you have early blooming azaleas, you should remove some of the buds. Most azalea have way too many buds to look good when they do not have room to open fully. Later flowering plants usually bloom on new growth so most may be pruned now with no loss of flowers. Pruning after flowering may result in new growth and a rebloom. My wisteria frutescens (Am. native) Has bloomed 4 times into late July.

away from people who could help and no one knew I was out here: hmm, maybe I should abandon this dig. But then looking at the tree I realized I had already cut too many roots and it was half hanging out of the water. I couldn't leave it behind like this and anyway, I'm bigger and smarter than a couple of snakes, right?

Moccasin #2 had gone by the time I had worked up enough nerve to go back, and very very carefully I pulled and heaved the tree over the edge. It was then that I noticed the three baby snakes, disturbed just under the rootball, now in the water. I was digging around in a literal viper pit! The craziness of the situation didn't stop me from snapping a few shots of the baby snakes. Taking a hold of some of the branches, I dragged the willow as far away from the water as I could, every now and then shaking it to make sure I didn't have any stragglers. When I finally got it up the bank and down a way to my car I was pretty exhausted and shaking, thinking that another snake would show up at any time from the thicket of the tree. After a lot of poking and shaking it was shoved into the car, wet slippery roots splashing sticky mud everywhere. The top was too big to fit in, so branches stuck out the end of the vehicle like feathers on a bird.

When working with nature it's a good idea not to let your mind play tricks on you. About halfway home I started thinking that there was a very good possibility a couple of the baby snakes hitchhiked into my car and at one point I swear I thought I felt something crawling up my pant leg. I can't imagine how ridiculous it must have looked to passerby's to see this SUV, slapped with mud and half a willow sticking out the back, swerving around while I was grabbing at my jeans stopping an imaginary snake from attacking me. Once home I went through my clothes and car just to be sure there was nothing there. When it was time to start working down the tree, I even enlisted my trusty hunter cat to stand guard to make sure that anything poisonous would have a line of defense to go through first. Chopped back and potted up, I'm thrilled to have this strange tree in my collection, but would I do it again? Well....

Bonsai Notebook

Austin Bonsai Society
P.O. Box 340474
Austin, Texas 78734



The Austin Bonsai Society is a nonprofit organization which exists to help in providing guidance and education for individuals in their desire to learn and expand their knowledge and skill in the arts of bonsai.

The Society holds regular meetings, twelve months a year, on the second Wednesday of each month. Our social period begins at 7:00 PM, followed by our program at 7:30 PM. Normally, unless announced otherwise, these meetings are held in the Zilker Garden Center building, located on Barton Springs Road in Zilker Park, Austin, Texas. We offer a monthly program of interest to the general membership.

The cost of membership is presently only \$30.00 for an individual and \$35.00 for a family membership.

For additional information, please contact the Austin Bonsai Society at P.O. Box 340474, Austin, Texas 78734

