



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*August 2008*

## August Programs by Joey McCoy

The regular August meeting will be a special occasion – because we will have a meeting and not a picnic (as was planned in our directory). On **Wednesday August 13th** we will have **Chuck Ware to present our program on Hot Bonsai**, appropriate for the season of August in Texas. He will attempt to look into three main areas. The first is Tropical Bonsai, because this is the time of year they are at their prime. The second area is a look at the more temperate trees because this is the time that they have the most stress. The third is an attempt to refresh our memories and interject, when possible, some of the thoughts and writings of a Bonsai guru we haven't heard from in a while, Dr. Bill Cody, who has studied the condition of our Bonsai in heat.

Since many of us have specific trees or problems we want to talk about, we are going to start at 7:00pm with an informal study group format, and then go to a more formal program at 7:30.

On **Tuesday August 19th** we will follow up this program with a **Bring-Your-Own-Tree discussion/workshop with Chuck Ware**. Any topics covered during the previous meeting can be applied or discussed on your own tree. Tropicals can still be worked on heavily, but temperate trees are almost asleep until the cooling rains of Fall. Bring in your tree, or come and participate and learn from others.

## Calendar of Events

**August 13 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm**  
(Hosts for September's reception: Candy Hansen and Els Ulug)

**August 13 ABS Monthly Meeting**  
**Hot Bonsai with Chuck Ware**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

**August 19 ABS Board Meeting**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm**

**August 19 ABS Members Workshop**  
**Bring-Your-Own-Tree Discussion/**  
**Workshop with Chuck Ware**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**



*A Bougainvillea on display during July's monthly meeting*

## Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

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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.



*Refreshments at July's meeting were a big hit*

## President's Message by Jim Trahan

It has been nice to get a respite from the heat and drought right before me move into the hottest month of the year. No elixir ever made for plants can replace slow and steady rain. Temperatures throughout the summer have averaged five degrees above normal. Despite this rain, I am already dreading August. I've placed bar towels or shade cloth over my trees that are in the afternoon sun. While not as inconspicuous as the shade cloth, the bar towels have the dual benefit of shading the pot from the sun and cooling the pot as water evaporates from the towel after watering. I also use a misting bench set on a timer to wick the heat out of the air during the hottest parts of the day. Even with these methods it is no simple matter to keep bonsai cool during late summer.

Bonsai enthusiasts in the far North must contend with the severe cold and have adapted several methods to protect their trees. By now these methods for cold protection seem almost routine to us and are widely published. By contrast, little thought has been given to protecting our trees from the triple digit heat of summers in the Southwest. The methods that each of us use are seldom if ever discussed in bonsai literature. The exception to this is the great work done by Dr. Bill Cody who has gone a long way toward identifying the array of problems surrounding heat and bonsai. He has also done a great job investigating methods of reducing temperatures in the root zones of bonsai. His research is a must read for anyone trying to grow healthy bonsai in the Southwest.

Our summer heat is perhaps the most important issue we deal with for successful bonsai cultivation in our area. A stressed tree now will be a recovering tree in spring when it is time to repot. The August 13th program with Chuck Ware on "Hot Bonsai" could not be timelier.

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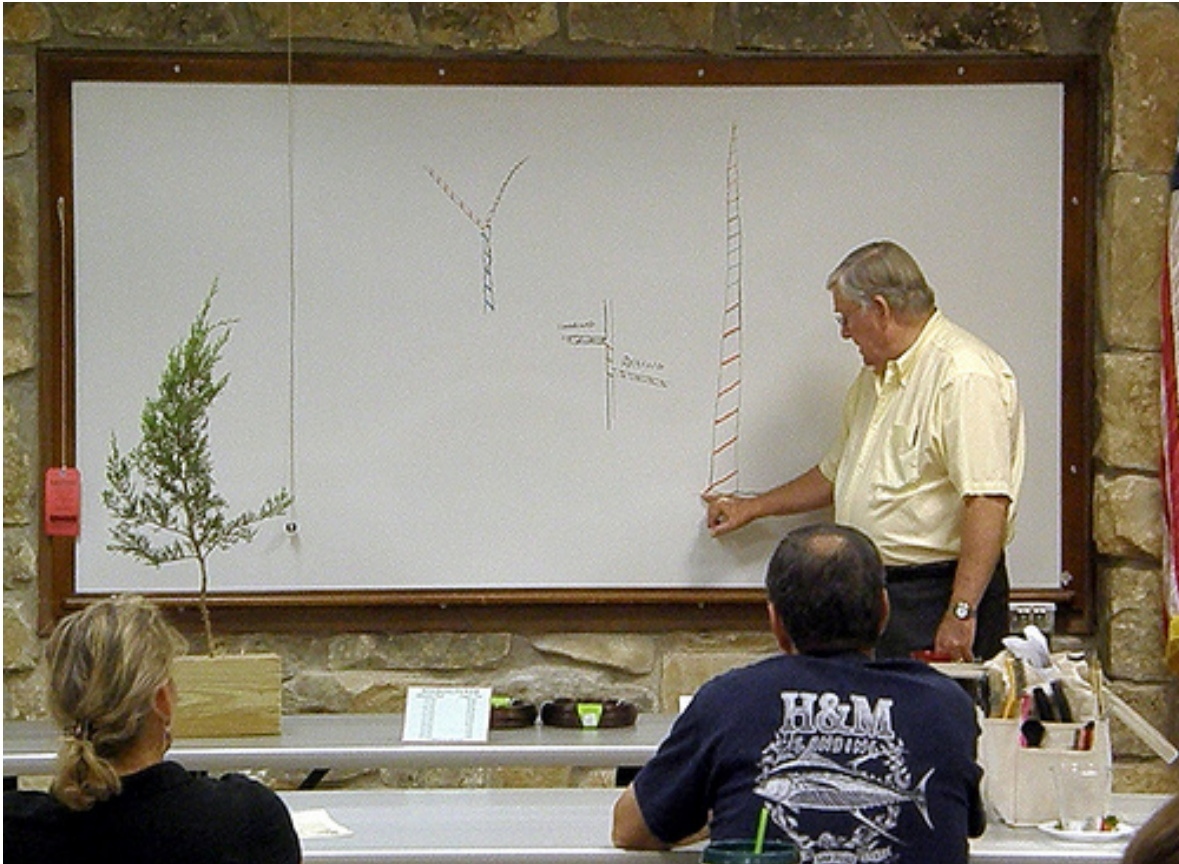
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**Wiring Techniques with Terry Ward**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Terry Ward showing the appropriate spacing to use when wiring*



*Terry critiquing the branches wired by audience members*



**Wiring Workshop with Terry Ward**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Members practiced wiring techniques at July's Workshop*

## **Foster Care a Tree Program**

By Alisan Clarke, The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit

The collected cedar elms, *Ulmus crassifolia*, in the photographs are part of an exciting new hands-on program from TTSBE. These trees, along with others, are available for foster care! To see photographs of more trees in the program contact your clubs TTSBE Representative.

Foster care is a program where an individual can pick a tree — ranging from rough material to styled bonsai — and become its foster parent at the TTSBE development site. Trees are available for bonsai skill levels ranging from basic through advanced. Skilled bonsai artists will consult with each foster parent about their tree and help design a development program. Foster parents are responsible for the maintenance and development of their tree for a renewable one-year commitment. This includes pruning, pinching, weeding, spotting and addressing any problems with the tree and, as needed, wiring, repotting and styling. Watering, insect/fungal control and feeding are taken care of by other volunteers.

Becoming a foster parent requires dedication and a commitment of time. Bonsai enthusiasts who live outside the greater Austin area can work with TTSBE to set up their schedule. Schedules must include a minimum of three to five timely, hands-on sessions per year with the tree. Foster parents must adjust their time to meet the plant's needs throughout the year. A foster parent will look after the tree at other times.

Becoming a foster parent is a large responsibility. However, the rewards make it well worth it. Pride in developing your foster tree, advancing your skills, learning new techniques,

the camaraderie in sharing with other foster parents plus some special perks.

If you are interested in joining our foster care program or have questions, please contact your local bonsai clubs TTSBE Representative or Elaine White at [ewbonsai@austin.rr.com](mailto:ewbonsai@austin.rr.com) or 512-266-2655.

## **CLUB REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Austin Bonsai Society**

Els Ulug

### **Bonsai Society of Dallas**

John Miller

### **Corpus Christi Bonsai Club**

Jesse Willars

### **Fort Worth Bonsai Society**

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(call for directions)



## August 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.*

Every once in a while you hear something that makes you really wonder. I won't go into the whole story but will remind you that keeping your trees in a greenhouse during the summer in Texas is not tender loving care. Even tho they have vents there is not enough air circulation to keep the temperature anyway near ambient. Much better to just have them outside. A shade house constructed so that you can roll the top up allows you to give enough shade now and let the tree get full sun in the spring. A 30% shade cloth on the sides can be used a wind break and aid in controlling insects. Keeping the top shade cloth down during the winter serves to prevent the sun from breaking the dormancy of deciduous trees and will give a small amount of cold protection. Of course, you could cover with plastic to turn it into a greenhouse.

Quit pruning your azaleas because they have set buds for next years bloom. Other spring flowering plants also set buds during the fall but most have so many blooms that you can still keep them in shape.

In the real world, plan your soil mix for your average conditions and then tilt the pots if you have a long wet spell and give an extra watering when hot and dry. Use some loose covering on the pot to shade it from the sun. A windbreak could help with tender leaved trees.

Remember to water twice. Wait a few minutes after the first watering for the dry soil particles to absorb some of the water on their surface. Then with the surface tension reduced the second watering gets the particle wet.

The stress caused by the temperature will give any insects a chance to wreak havoc. Watch for the spider mites especially this month. The morning spray will help knock some off. The organic foliar spray will keep them down also. Light weight horticultural oils are available as well as neem oil sprays. Doont use oil sprays on buttonwoods. Check any sprays for heat limitations. Chemical sprays are available but most chemical reactions are accelerated by heat and may damage plants. Read the labels!

Any rainy spell can bring some fungal problems. Powdery mildew or black leaf spot are a couple of them. That is why I use the foliar spray in the morning, so that the leaves will dry quickly. The organic websites say you can mix baking soda with the foliar spray for fungal control. However I have decided to do separate sprayings. The foliar spray has an acid (vinegar) which would react with the baking soda thereby reducing the effectiveness of both. Anyhow all your trees would benefit from the foliar spray but not all would have a fungal problem. Potassium Bicarbonate (available in nurseries) would be a better choice than baking soda which is sodium bicarbonate.

Be careful about applying fertilizer in hot weather. Even organic fertilizers create some chemical reactions and the above remarks apply here too. The solid organic balls are best to use as they release nutrients very slowly and do so during each watering. By the end of the month the nitrogen applied to the tree should be reduced. A little may be put on into September but the tree needs to be allowed to stop growth to get ready for dormancy. Evergreen trees benefit from a low nitrogen fertilizer through the winter.

Deciduous trees usually slow their growth during summer so you can do some pruning on them. However pruning can stimulate new growth that may not have time to harden before winter resulting in some dieback of the new growth. On these trees its better to wait until later. After leaves have fallen you can see where corrections need to be made more easily.

Its never too early to think about having your tree ready for a show. Identify (in you mind) any tree or trees you think you would like to exhibit and give them a little extra care: twig pruning, a guy wire to move a branch a little, that kind of thing, a very small change can make a world of difference.. At the Ft Worth 4th Thursday open workshop night a member brought a tree to discuss what improvements could be made so as to be shown at the convention the next year. Bonsai is the ultimate plan ahead hobby.

As for planning ahead, help your club out by locating dig sites for next winter. If you have doubts about a site, ask someone to scope it out for\with you. New sites are always needed.

## July 2008 ABS General Meeting Minutes

by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM in the library of the Austin Area Garden Center by Vice President Joey McCoy, in the absence of President Jim Trahan. Present were Pat & Chuck Ware, Collin Murphy, Mike Watson and Charlotte Cranberg.

Pat reported that the Day Lily Society has asked if we will give them our show date again this year and take their date which is one week later, as we have agreed to do in the past. The board voted to leave our show date on the 3rd weekend which is much better for us from several points of view. We regret they have a continuing conflict between their Austin show and their regional show, but we can't continue changing our show date.

Our August meeting will be on the second Wednesday as usual. Joey will make arrangements for a speaker.

Treasurer, Pat Ware reported \$980 expenses over income for June.

The Hagadorn visit in September was discussed. Program Chairman, Joey McCoy will contact each nursery to bring a possible demo tree to the Hagadorn lecture demo in September. The workshops will be Tuesday the 9th and the lecture demo will be on the 10th. The fee for the workshop will be \$45. Bring your own tree.

Volunteers are needed for the Dino Exhibit in September and October. Call Charlotte to volunteer. You will get to come to some very interesting docent training classes for the exhibit.

Charlotte Cranberg  
Secretary

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### Directory Corrections

*None*

### Directory Additions

Joel Sarchet  
105 W Milton  
Austin TX 78704  
(512) 699-0001  
joels@mac.com

## Kathy Shaner Workshop

The Foster Care Parents that have signed up will have a free workshop with Kathy Shaner specifically with their tree, on Oct.6 '08 at Elaine White's Lakeview Bonsai garden.

You will be given advice and suggestions on your tree starting at 9:00am – 12:00pm.

We will break for a locally catered lunch from 12:00 – 1:00pm on the deck overlooking Lake Travis. Everyone will pay for their own lunch and can choose from several menus from the local area.

In the afternoon bring-your-own-tree session starting at 1:00, you may attend without signing up for the Foster Care Tree Program. Cost of this Workshop is \$40:00 and will last 'till about 4:00pm.

We will be working outside, so wear your grubbies and layers, as the weather is unpredictable.

You may attend both or only one session-or if you want to work on your tree in the pm you can observe the first session at no cost. Maximum number of participants is 8. Contact Elaine White: (512) 266-2655 or [ewbonsai@austin.rr.com](mailto:ewbonsai@austin.rr.com)

Elaine White



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**Terry & Sheila Ward**      **Austin, Texas**  
512-280-5575 - [phbonsai@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net) - By Appointment

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 \$25.00 for an individual and \$30.00 for a family membership.



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

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**Austin, Texas 78734**

