



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*February 2008*

## January Programs

by Joey McCoy

As most of our trees sleep during their dormancy, it's a good time to take a look at their roots. On Wednesday, February 13th Mike Hansen will lead the group in a discussion about the Nebari (transition area from the trunk into the roots) on our trees. We'll learn why this area is one of most important in Bonsai and what to look for. Some of us have poor looking nebari on our trees and Mike will give advice on how to make improvements. This is to be interactive, so please bring in a tree or two (either with good or poor nebari) so we may discuss.

Our work on roots continues on Tuesday February 19th as we will have an open Repotting Workshop. Please bring in soil, root shears, pots, wire, water spray bottles, and any other appropriate material you'll need for working on your tree. We have some newer members, who would benefit from seeing different repotting in action, so I'd encourage everyone to participate and share their knowledge with others. We will have some experienced members available for questions and help.

Repotting at this time is for temperate climate trees only, please no tropicals. If in doubt, send an email to [jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net)

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## Calendar of Events

### **Feb 13 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**

**Hosts:**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 PM**

### **Feb 13 ABS Monthly Meeting**

**Nebari Discussion with Mike Hansen**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

### **Feb 19 ABS Board Meeting**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 PM**

### **Feb 19 Member's Workshop**

**Repotting Workshop**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

### **Feb 23 Shohin Society of Texas Meeting**

**Workshop - Preparation of '07 workshop trees for state convention.**

**Persimmon Hill Bonsai 10:30 AM**



*A Cedar Elm collected by Joey McCoy at the TTSBE sponsored Red Bird Ranch dig.*

## **Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors**

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**Charlotte Cranberg**

Secretary

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**Collin Murphy**

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### **President's Message**

by Jim Trahan

The American Bonsai Society Seminar will be here in June, just four months away. This is one of the very biggest bonsai events in North America and we have been fortunate enough to co-host this event with San Antonio. Events such as this bring money into our coffers and national attention to the talent that we have locally. These events are also a lot of fun. However, I have some concerns that I would like to address.

Openings for the classes will fill-up quickly. This is even more critical because of the quality of talent and the volume of people registering. If you want to attend the ABS Seminar then you will need to register soon.

There are a lot of wonderful classes that you will not want to miss, including daiza carving with Sean Smith, penjing with Hal Mahoney and a deadwood workshop with Michel Phaneuf. These are just a few of the great classes being offered at the seminar. Contact Pauline Muth at (518) 882-1039 to register. Most of the money generated at seminars and conventions is via the raffles. We are in desperate need of raffle items. While bonsai-related items are preferred, we will accept virtually anything. Bring you donated items to the club meetings and we will store them for you. We are grateful for anything that you can donate.

We are still accepting trees for the exhibit. If you would like to show you trees please send photos of the trees to Jay Nolen at [bonsai-jay@satx.rr.com](mailto:bonsai-jay@satx.rr.com). By sending them to Jay, I will not know whose tree is being submitted. Invitations will be sent following their review.

**Communication to the Austin committee members is virtually non-existent.** It was exceptionally embarrassing to miss a planning meeting because it was not communicated to us. To my knowledge, not one Austin representative attended the meeting. *(I am hoping that the date was buried in an old email, but even then it should have been called out in a timely and more obvious manner.)* If we are going to be a success then we need effective communication of events and developments.

"Bonsai Notebook" is the monthly newsletter of the Austin Bonsai Society, Inc., and is provided to its members without cost.

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.

Articles may be submitted by the 15th of the month for publication in the next month's newsletter. Submissions by sent by email to [ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com](mailto:ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com) or by postal mail to the Editor, in care of the Austin Bonsai Society, 14601 Montoro Dr, Austin, Texas 78728. Original articles for "Bonsai Notebook" may be reprinted if credit is given to the author and to "Bonsai Notebook".

**Notes from AAGC**  
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

January '08 AAGC Meeting

Craig Nazon asked some questions that revealed that another \$40,000 will be due in Sept. for the AAGC to pay on the Dino rental. If we don't get the money from donations we would have to back out and lose the \$50,000 we've already invested and hope to have returned in profits from the Dino event this fall. President Laura said we could withdraw at any point and asked if members wanted to withdraw now. There was no response so most members were behind the project. Further questions by Craig were cut off. There are pledges of money that are not yet in the hands of the treasurer.

Margaret Russell will be setting up school programs for next fall and the Dino Exhibit. She needs someone to work with her on this.

Bob Byer said the deadline for the next "Down the Garden Path" is Jan.31st. The publication goes to 3000 gardeners. They are looking for ads from clubs and garden shops. This is a great niche market for reaching gardeners. Contact me if you are interested. Publication will be March 10th.

The Taniguchi garden lighting is almost ready. Moon lights will be installed in trees in 24 different locations. The Japanese inner gate will be installed in the gardens. It announces that you are going from one area to another in the garden. Huge cypress logs are being used and the gate will hook up with Lauren's Trail.

Charlotte Cranberg  
AAGC Representative

**Public Bonsai Lecture Demonstration with Hiro Yamaji**  
by Mike Hansen

Public Bonsai Lecture Demonstration by Hiro Yamaji

On Sunday February 24, 2008, Mr. Hiroyoshi Yamaji will conduct a lecture/demonstration on the art and horticulture of bonsai. His presentation will begin at 12:30 PM with breaks during the afternoon. The presentation will be very instructive and will give everyone from beginner to advanced bonsai enthusiast new perspectives to add to their own practices.

There will be ample time for questions and answers both during and following the presentation. The tree Mr. Yamaji creates will be raffled at the end of his presentation. Proceeds of the raffle will be donated to The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit.

This lecture/demonstration is open to everyone without charge. Please do not hesitate to come.

Mike Hansen



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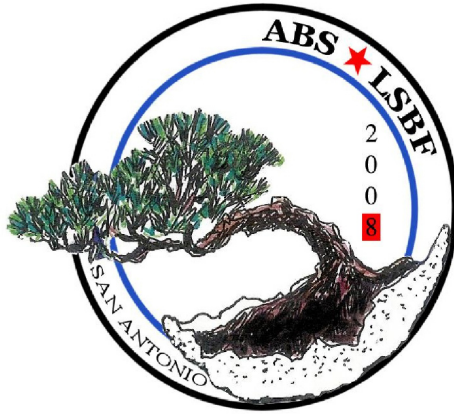
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Collecting Tips by Mike Hansen  
Photos by Joey McCoy



# Special Announcements



## ***ATTENTION ALL COFFEE DRINKERS***

Your 3 pound coffee cans or similarly sized containers are needed for the 2008 Convention. The containers will be used to hold raffle tickets. The containers need to have lids into which a slot can be cut for the raffle tickets. If you have any extra lids for coffee cans, 10 are needed! Bring them to any ABS meeting.

## ***RAFFLE ITEMS NEEDED***

Donations of raffle items are needed for the upcoming convention. Raffle items don't necessarily need to be bonsai-related. Bring them to any ABS meeting. Raffle donations are tax deductible (SABS, 501c3 Non Profit).

## ***ABS/LSBF 2008 COMMITTEE MEETING DATES***

2008 Convention Committee meetings will be held on the following dates at the time and address below:

February 16, March 22, April 26, May 24

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Granzins BBQ  
954 W San Antonio St  
New Braunfels TX 78130  
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12404 Ranch Road 12  
Wimberley, TX 78676  
(512) 847-2514



## January 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.*

The big event we are looking forward to is coming up-repotting season. Normally the 'best' time to repot is when the sap starts to flow and buds swell. Practically we usually need to fudge this a little due to constraints on our time so we need to do it earlier. Never after to buds open. Preparing a group of basic soil can save time at the actual repotting. Mix your favorite recipes in 3 sizes, for small medium and large pots, and then modify them by adding some extra of one material for the particular tree you are repotting. There is no perfect mix but you must decide based on your backyard.

The basics of good mixes:

- Permit free drainage. Use granular material--decomposed granite, lava gravel, pumice, haydite, Turface, etc.
- Provide water retention material--akadama, ground or decomposed bark (organic, should not break down too quickly).
- Provide air space--Use appropriately sized particles.

Moisture retention is controlled by the type of material (e.g. akadama (good) vs granite (poor) and by particle size (finer particles retain more residual water).

A good mix for this part of the world is equal parts of akadama, lava gravel, and pumice.

My viewpoint on akadama is that it is not magic. It is merely the soil native to Japan which is a volcanic island. After lava has broke down they dig it and low fire it to dry it, break it up and sieve it into uniform sizes to use as one part of their bonsai soil. We do not have anything native comparable on the market in the USA. The advantage of akadama is that it holds water uniformly throughout the particle and is soft enough for roots to penetrate easily. Having this source of moisture close to the trunk results in short fibrous roots. So I have started using it on my bonsai. I feel the pinch of dollars too much to utilize it on the growing stuff even tho I am sure it would speed up their development.

Check wire applied last year. During dormancy the woody portions tend to lignify and swell. Severe wire marks can occur. Remove any tight wire.

Early February is the end of the season for major pruning. You may be able to continue for a while on some late sprouting species such as the oaks. After the onset of sap flow you should not try to make big cuts. Cut paste or pruning sealer cannot withstand the hydraulic pressure created by the urge to grow.

One of the ways to enjoy January and February is to have a greenhouse. I have a small lean-to type on the east side of the garage. A small electric heater keeps it fine (45-50 degrees). This keeps my few tropicals and pomegranates. I also let my small elms get 3-5 weeks of cold and then bring them in. They then start greening up in about two weeks. Helps fight the winter blahs.

If there is a significant warm streak, you could get some activity from over-wintering pests. A dormant spray (horticultural oil or a very weak lime sulphur) should be used on outside plants. The lime sulphur should not be used on any green growth or after buds begin to swell. The lime sulphur will also serve to kill fungal spores and help control any bacterial diseases. For the greenhouse use the original organic spray mixture. I get good control of mites, aphids, and even scale with it. It should be used on a regular basis.

My original organic spray is 1 tablespoon each of Fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. This may be used as a foliar spray or an organic soil fertilizer. I prefer to go easy on the soil application until the new growth slows down. Using organic fertilizer cakes on top of the soil is a better way to fertilize. You may make your own or buy one of the commercial versions from your local bonsai vendor. I do not advocate adding potassium bicarbonate or baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to control fungal problems. They will chemically interact with the vinegar. Use them separately if you have mildew or other fungal problems.

## **December 2007 ABS General Meeting Minutes**

by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Trahan.

Visitor, Sunny Huang was introduced and welcomed.

Hostesses Alisan Clarke and Pat Ware were thanked.

Treasurer, Pat Ware presented the end of year statement and the 2008 budget which passed.

Charlotte Cranberg gave the AAGC report which is published in this newsletter.

Mike Hansen spoke about the Bonsai Symposium to be held in San Antonio. He alerted members to the existence of 2 competitions to be held at the Symposium, the John Naka award to go to the best tree styled by you including submission of 3 photos of 3 trees you wish to enter and the Joshua Roth new talent competition in which entrants will be given 8 hours to work on a tree to be judged. This is for newer bonsai enthusiasts. Information is on the ABS web site.

Joey McCoy introduced Mike Hansen who gave the program on collecting in the wild. It had a lot of application to regular growing and repotting so was of great interest to everyone, not just collectors. He also modeled the correct clothing to wear and backpack to carry, full of the necessities for this endeavor. Don't know where he got the hat but it was really "cool".

Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

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### **Directory Additions**

Sunny Huang  
2394 Hwy. 71 W.  
Cedar Creek, Tx. 78612

### **Directory Corrections**

*None*

## **December 2007 ABS Board Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President, Jim Trahan. Present were Pat Ware, Charlotte Cranberg, Jim Trahan, Collin Murphy, and Nancy Moore.

Jimbo, our librarian for many years has resigned, much to everyone's regret.

The board discussed whether to mention a vendor sale in the newsletter. It was determined that our bylaws prohibit this. Any person can buy an ad in the newsletter very cheaply.

The board voted to buy all the tickets for the Spring Festival and give each member 2 tickets if they wished, the remainder to go to a charity.

Some of our chairpersons and co-chairs for the ABS-LSBF Symposium are planning to promote the event on a bigger scale than has been done so far.

Program Chairman, Joey McCoy was absent with illness so the programs will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned to join the workshop group in the auditorium being led by Chuck Ware.

Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

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### **TTSBE Benefit Garage Sale**

by Joey McCoy

On Saturday March 8th, The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit will hold a Benefit Garage Sale at the home of Els Ulug in Austin. If you're looking for a way to de-clutter for Spring-Cleaning, here is a way to make your used stuff benefit the Bonsai community. Please save up any clothing, electronics, toys, furniture, household items and any other gently used items of value. Els will be accepting donations dropped off at her home on Friday March 7th. If anyone would like to come by on Friday to help price and sort, that would be a huge help, and if anyone could donate some time on Saturday to help us sell the items, you'd be one of our favorite people! The Exhibit is currently setting fences and building an entrance and gate into the property, so every dollar helps. Thank you.

Els Ulug  
2600 Foxglen  
Austin, TX 78704  
512-707-9742  
eulug@yahoo.com

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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