



# Bonsai Notebook

*www.austinbonsaisociety.com*

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*February 2011*

## February 2011 Programs

by Collin Murphy

One year ago our own Donna Dobberfuhl gave a presentation on Phoenix grafts. A Phoenix graft is grafting a living tree onto a piece of deadwood. Usually this is done by grafting a live juniper onto an interesting piece of juniper deadwood. With a Phoenix graft, on old, dead, but interesting trunk can be brought to life again, and even have better foliage than when it was alive. TTSBE is fortunate to have several interesting ashe juniper trunks that are prime candidates for Phoenix grafts. On **Wednesday, February 9th** Donna will give us an update about what she has learned in the past year. Pay close attention - there may be an upcoming workshop on Phoenix grafts!

## Calendar of Events

**February 9th ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**  
Hosts: Els Ulug & Joey McCoy  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm

**February 9th ABS Monthly Meeting**  
**Phoenix Grafts**  
with **Donna Dobberfuhl**  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 9:00 pm

**February 15th ABS Board Meeting**  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm

**February 15th ABS Member's Workshop**  
**Open Workshop**  
by popular demand  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm



**Chuck Ware's presentation at our  
January 2011 Meeting**

Our monthly members workshop will be on **Tuesday, February 15th**. This will be an open workshop, which are becoming more and more popular. Wouldn't you like to have a couple hours to work on your trees without any interruptions? You can do any kind of work - from styling to repotting. There are always some more experienced members who can answer questions and give advice. If you have that one tree you've been meaning to do some work on, but can never find the time, February's open workshop will be a great opportunity.

## Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

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**Timmi Kuykendall**  
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**John Muller**  
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**Joey McCoy**  
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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. 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](mailto: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](mailto:jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net).

## President's Message by Mike Watson

We've had a pretty mild winter this season with only a handful of real freezes (at least in south Austin, where I live). Don't let it fool you though! There will likely be colder weather on the way. I keep almost all of my trees on the ground during the winter. The sun heats up the ground during the day and then radiates back up through the pots at night. Except for periods of sustained freezing temperatures, this simple setup works pretty well. Your bonsai area may require extra, or maybe less protection depending on your micro climate. Just don't forget to check up on them from time to time. They still need some water and growth is still going on albeit at a slower pace.

I want to take this opportunity to remind our members that your membership automatically includes you into the Shohin Society of Texas. It's a great group that meets four Saturdays a year and is hosted by Terry and Sheila Ward. We spend about four hours doing fun workshops with a break at noon for the famous "chili dog lunch" (vegetarian available on request). If you haven't come to a meeting I highly recommend that you come check it out! Just ask me, or one of the other members for more information.



**Jimbo at the January workshop - Raft Style**  
(Photos by Joey McCoy)

## ABS December General Meeting Minutes

by Nan Jenkins, Secretary

Mike Watson called the meeting to order at 7:30. He thanked Chuck and Pat Ware and Alison Clarke for providing refreshments, and reminded members to sign up to provide refreshments for this year's meetings tonight. Alison said that the packets for the hosts are in the back of the room, and explained the new Zilker policy that we go green and use non-disposable plates and cups.

Mike told us that 2011 dues are due. There is an increase this year of \$5.00 to \$30.00 annually per person or \$35.00 for a couple.

The TTSBE newsletters are available for those who did not receive one.

There are two digs coming up: January 15-16 at Alison's and January 23 at the TTSBE property. Donna Dobberful will let us know about a dig in San Antonio at Red Bird Ranch when it is decided.

Pat Ware passed out a report on the 2010 budget showing a net income of \$1036.13 over expenses.

Chuck Ware presented the program on creating a tree by developing the trunk, pruning and wiring branches, and working with the natural style of growth of a particular species of tree. As usual, he was entertaining and educational.

The raffle was held at the end of the meeting. We adjourned at 9:25.

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## ABS December Board Meeting Minutes

by Nan Jenkins, Secretary

Mike Watson called the meeting to order at 7:08. Present were John Muller, Timmi Kuykendall, Becky Drozd,

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Mike Watson, Collin Murphy, and Nan Jenkins. Guests present were Joey McCoy, Charlotte Cranberg, and Chuck Ware.

Pat presented the treasurer's report from 2010 and gave the board a copy of the budget for 2011.

There was an extensive discussion regarding the Lone Star Bonsai Federation convention in 2013 or 2014. ABS needs to decide if we want to host the convention in 2014 or if we want to ask San Antonio if we can co-host with them in 2013. Issues brought up were the amount of work required, experience within the club

## JADE GARDENS

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## Bonsai Calendar

LSBF Convention

St Louis Shohin Seminar

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

Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show

Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to [jcm2austx@sprintmail.com](mailto:jcm2austx@sprintmail.com)

Corpus Christi

Collinsville, IL

May 14 - 15, 2011

May 20 - 22, 2011

May 28 - 29, 2011

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leadership, amount of money earned, selection of trees and maintenance of them until the convention, and the amount of lead time needed in planning.

Nan moved that we decide to host a convention, seconded by Collin and passed unanimously.

Nan moved that we ask San Antonio if they would like to go together to host in 2013. Pat seconded and passed unanimously. Mike will contact Kevin Preston in San Antonio to ask if they would like to work with us.

The minutes in the newsletter were approved as presented.

Charlotte presented a motion for a by-laws change from the Austin Area Garden Clubs to change the position of Vice-President of Public Affairs from an elected to an

appointed position. The motion failed. The board then recommended that the position be eliminated and the duties be assigned to the president.

Charlotte presented a letter from Terry Ward concerning the possible adoption of the Tanaguchi Garden by ABS. Don Freeman was present at another meeting, so he came into the board meeting at our request to explain what "adoption" might mean and things that we might do as the club. The board decided to delay the decision until the following meeting.

Becky brought a concern regarding the raffle. There is only one vendor to bring items for the raffle now, and the sales of tickets are not covering the costs. Does the board want to continue the raffle? After discussion, it was decided to continue for awhile to see how it goes. We will strive to see that no one loses money on it, including the vendor.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28.

## CLUB DIG - BASTROP

This month (**FEBRUARY 20TH**) we have a club dig in Bastrop, but it's going to be a double treat as we're going to start on one piece of property from 10am-12pm which contains mostly deciduous trees (Wild Plum, Hackberry, Cedar Elm, Yaupon, Mustang Grape, Pecan, Osage Orange and more). We'll then break for a sack lunch and compare finds, then afterwards move to the second property from 12:30 - 3:00pm where it's almost all conifers (Loblolly Pines, Ashe Junipers, and many small understory bushes). Think of it like a Bonsai collecting lightning round! James has graciously lent his property to our use and I look forward to some of the terrific finds that await! It's easy to get to and a beautiful drive. Here are the directions:

The people who want to go to the dig in Bastrop, can either look up my address (**341 Laura Lane, Bastrop TX 78602**) on Google Maps or follow the directions below.

1. Take hwy 71 to Bastrop.
2. LT onto hwy 95 (toward Elgin).
3. RT onto Hoffman Rd.
4. When you reach the 'Piney Ridge' sign, stay left.
5. LT onto Laura Lane for about a mile.
6. Property on left side of road (341)

\*Note: If the ground is wet, park along road, If we have a dry spell by then, pull into drive and proceed to house. **DO NOT PARK BY HOUSE, SOFT GROUND!**

**Dig at Alisan's**



Ligustrum Vulgare Buxifolium

**Dig at TTSBE Property**



Pyracantha



*(Photos by Joey McCoy)*

## February 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 weather mostly determines what tasks you have to do in February and when to do them. Keep in mind that even if a mild Feb causes the trees to break dormancy and you must repot early there may be a cold time later on when you must protect them. The average date of the last freeze is just that-an average-there will be some years when the last freeze is later.

Usually the first part of the month requires you to continue the winter care. Check the watering, make sure no varmints are stripping the trees, 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 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. If your schedule is uncertain it is better to repot early. Note: When repotting do not handle trees by their trunks, that will damage the bark and make it look like reverse taper.

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. Use a sprayer that produces a fine mist and be sure to cover the bottoms of the leaf too. If you use chemical sprays be sure to read the label closely. Some trees, especially buttonwoods, are sensitive to oil based chemical sprays. 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.

When pruning for development, that is growing the branches you need and developing the secondary branches you will allow the new growth to elongate and thicken the base of the branch. Be sure to wire it in order to have the proper angle where it originates. When it is thick enough you will cut it back really short and grow another tip. This develops taper and motion in your branch. It helps develop secondary branching also.

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.

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 4-5 leaves. Then cut it back to 2 or 3 leaves. Decide on which direction you wish the new leader to go and cut to the leaf on that side. A new shoot is 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

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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 doing 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. It can be done until the sap begins as evidenced by the buds swelling. Check last years 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. 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, look for candidates for showing in your club events. Put them up front where you will give them more TLC. Keep their grooming right up to snuff from the beginning, don't wait and 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.

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

## REMEMBER

**Yearly dues are due in January. The membership rates are :**

**\$30.00 for an individual membership**

**\$35.00 for a family membership**

**\$15.00 for a student membership**

*Only club members who have paid the current year's membership dues receive newsletters, are listed in the Membership Directory and can participate in the monthly workshops.*

**Please sign-up for Refreshments!**

# 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

