



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*April 2008*

## April Programs by Joey McCoy

Do some aspects of plant growth have you scratching your head? Wondered why branches can fuse together at points, root at others and what all this means? **Wednesday, April 9th** we will have our very own **Bill Boytim** talk to the group about **Layering and Grafting**, the way the tissues of a tree functions and how we can make it work for us in Bonsai. Among other things, we're able to place/replace branches, improve the nebari, and turn one tree into two or more. This isn't a magic trick, but plant mechanics and Bill is here to demystify the process for us all. Knowing the workings of a plant and how to apply techniques, we'll learn ways to save bad trees and to make good trees better!

It may seem a while away, but our May show is coming up on us very soon. On **Tuesday, April 15th**, **Jim Trahan** will lead the group in a discussion about **preparations to show our trees**. Please bring in trees, stands, accent plants, etc., you'd like to exhibit, and



*A Japanese Maple on display during the  
March Monthly Meeting Reception*

## Calendar of Events

### Apr 9 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception

**Hosts: Connie King and  
Charlotte Cranberg**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm**

(Hosts for May's reception: Collin Murphy, Nan Jenkins,  
and Timmi Kuykendall)

### Apr 9 ABS Monthly Meeting

**Layering and Grafting with Bill Boytim  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

### Apr 12 Shohin Society of Texas Meeting

**Three Person Critique  
Persimmon Hill Bonsai 10:30 am**

### Apr 15 ABS Board Meeting

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

### Apr 15 ABS Members Workshop

**Show Preparation with Jim Trahan  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

### Apr 26 ABS Convention Committee Meeting

**Granzin's BBQ  
New Braunfels 10:00 am**

we'll discuss ways to enhance their appearance. We don't have a judged Bonsai show, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't put our best face forward. This will be a loose discussion/workshop, giving us enough time to prep our best plants for the public. Also keep in mind that the American Bonsai Seminar is happening in June and we'll need to start getting trees ready to show in this display as well. This is a good excuse to have another set of eyes on our trees to perhaps catch things we might have missed. See everyone there!

## Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

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“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.

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### President's Message by Jim Trahan

Registrations and hotel reservations are lower than expected, just two months from the ABS Symposium in San Antonio. The planning committee estimated that we could fill 200 rooms for the Symposium and this is what we have been committed to. Put simply: LSBF, ABS and SABS will be billed for the rooms that are not filled. This directly affects your club by depleting club coffers and reducing the quality programs that we are able to provide.

While the nightly rate for the rooms may seem expensive to some, I have paid more for less at other conventions. Considering that it is on the River Walk, I think it is very reasonable. It cost my family the same price 25 years ago for a room on the River Walk.

Being in the same hotel as a convention is more than a small convenience, it allows you to easily interact with fellow enthusiasts though out the day. It affords you a safe place to store your demo trees, raffle items and other purchases. Items stored under the skirts of tables are at risk of being lost or stolen; plants stored in cars will cook during the day. In short, staying at the same hotel as the ABS Symposium allows you to fully participate in the event.

Obviously, if reservations are lower than expected then event enrollment is down also. Besides urging you now to enroll in the Symposium and book reservations in the hotel, we are working on plans to encourage all of you to participate. There are many details to consider but I hope to reveal one of these plans to you at the next general meeting.

If you get nothing else out of this:

1. Please-**Please-PLEASE** enroll in the ABS Symposium and stay at the hotel.
2. Everyone benefits from your participation—including you.

If you would like to volunteer to be a docent for the exhibit please contact me at [malhomme@austin.rr.com](mailto:malhomme@austin.rr.com) so that I can begin making a schedule. Exhibition docent is one of the most enjoyable parts of a bonsai event. It is an opportunity to learn from experts and educate neophytes. To me it is the place where bonsai interacts with the public.

Volunteer docents for the exhibit may be guarding and discussing one tree. Yes, one tree. This is all that has been submitted. If you have a tree that you think is ready for the show, submit a photo of your tree to Jay Nolen at [bonsai-jay@satx.rr.com](mailto:bonsai-jay@satx.rr.com).

Grewia Repot Workshop with Donna Dobberfuhl  
Photos by Joey McCoy



**Insect Control with Jim Trahan**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Jim Trahan gave a detailed presentation on garden friends and foes*

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**Zilker Garden Festival Volunteers**  
Photos by Charlotte Cranberg and Joey McCoy



*Mike Hansen presenting Garden Talk: Pruning Your Yard, Bonsai Style.*



*Mike Watson styling a Japanese Maple at the Educational Booth.*



*Sally Thomas and Joey McCoy at the Educational Booth.*

**Zilker Garden Festival Volunteers**  
Photos by Charlotte Cranberg and Joey McCoy



*Charlotte Cranberg with best in show for horticulture at the flower show in the garden center.*



*Elaine White working on a juniper at the TTSBE table.*



*Joey McCoy and Collin Murphy at the Educational Booth.*

**Zilker Garden Festival Volunteers**  
Photos by Charlotte Cranberg and Joey McCoy



*Chuck Ware at his booth helping to promote bonsai.*



*John Pittenger on the cart both days all day driving folks to and from their cars with their plants.*



*Alisan Clarke, Joey McCoy, and Connie King at Bonsai Society Educational Booth. Joey was the organizer of the exhibit and was there both days running it.*

**Zilker Garden Festival Volunteers**  
Photos by Charlotte Cranberg



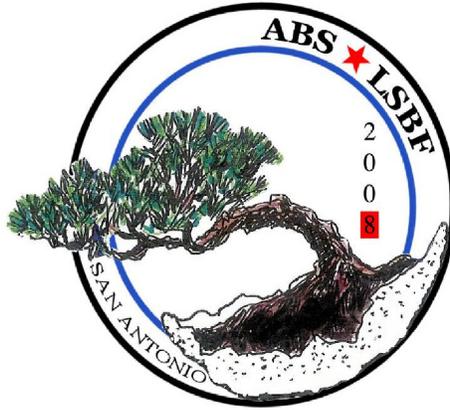
*Bill Boytim discussing Bonsai at the Educational Booth.*



*Sunny Huang talks to the public about Bonsai at the Educational Booth.*

*We thank all the volunteers, those pictured as well as Els Ulug who is not pictured.*

# Special Announcements



## ***EL TROPICANO HOTEL RESERVATIONS***

The telephone number for reservations at the El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel recently changed. Their new telephone number for reservations is 1-866-293-1842

## ***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:

April 26, May 24

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

Granzins BBQ  
954 W San Antonio St  
New Braunfels TX 78130  
(830) 629-6615

**March 2008 AAGC Meeting Minutes**  
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

We have recieved \$18,000 from the Junior League for DinoLand and another \$6000 in volunteer time from their members. Also, H-E-B has donated \$5000 to the DinoLand Exhibit.

It was voted to hire someone to build a dinosaur topiary to be started and worked on during the Zilker Festival to demonstrate how it is done. The cost will be not more more than \$1000.

Parking charge for weekends will begin now. There will be 5 free parking tickets in the back near the greenhouse for each club for their show weekend. You will have to pay to park in the garden center parking lot if you don't have a free ticket.

The upcoming Zilker Garden Festival was discussed.

Charlotte Cranberg  
AAGC Representative

**March 2008 ABS General Meeting Minutes**  
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

President, Jim Trahan called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Austin Area Garden Center. He thanked hosts Terry & Sheila Ward and Jim Baumann.

Treasurer, Pat Ware passed out the new membership directories and urged people to buy tickets for the raffle to be held at the Garden Festival.

Elaine White passed out ads for the club bonsai exhibit to be held in May and asked members to distribute them.

Charlotte Cranberg gave the garden council report and encouraged members to volunteer for the Zilker Garden Festival and to come and hear Mike Hansen speak on "Pruning Your Yard Bonsai Style" at 1:30 on Sunday as part of the invited speakers "Talks Under the Tent" series.

Joey McCoy introduced Jim Trahan who gave the program on insects.

Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

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**March 2008 ABS Board Meeting Minutes**  
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM by President Jim Trahan in the library of the Austin Area Garden Center. Present were Pat Ware, Collin Murphy, Mike Watson, Joey McCoy and Charlotte Cranberg.

The board decided to hold a raffle, the prize being 2 nights at the Convention hotel. All Austin Bonsai Society members who have registered at the Convention hotel will be eligible. The drawing will be at the convention.

We will pay Andy Graham for a ficus which he will provide for his lecture demo in August. That will be raffled off.

Collin asked that the final deadline for the newsletter be at noon on the first of the month and newsletters will post marked by the 4th so members get their newsletter in a timely fashion.

Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

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**Directory Corrections**

*None*

**Directory Additions**

*None*



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI  
STUDIO & NURSERY**

**Terry & Sheila Ward      Austin, Texas**  
512-280-5575 - phbonsai@sbcglobal.net - By Appointment

## 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.*

We have had more rain this year and not as cold as usual. This is favorable for having more problems from the insects and fungal diseases. Aphids especially are showing up. Mildew usually won't be seen until it warms more but with our Texas weather that could be here before this article gets in print. Leaf spot could be a problem.

Fungal diseases can show up with damp weather. Leaf spot can be serious on Catlin and Chinese elms and on hollies. There are organic fungicides available, baking soda is one. 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.

A good organic program takes care of both the feeding and the insect problems. The trick is to be sure to thoroughly cover the plant including all the leaf axils. Use a hand or pump up sprayer to get a fine spray to cover all, a hose end sprayer does not cover good enough. This is also true if you want to use commercial chemical sprays.

I recommend the organic mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. I use the mixture both as a foliar feed spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray, for me anyhow, it keeps aphids, mites, loopers, bagworms and other insects under control. I try to drench twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs thru the foliage. It is a good practice to also use fertilizer cakes on the surface of the soil which feeds a bit every time you water. Commercial water soluble fertilizers wash out with the next watering and result in poorly fed pale bonsai. They are intended for use in soil that retains water for a long period such as commercial house plant mixes.

(A commercial product called Garret Juice which is to be used the same way uses compost tea, dried seaweed, water, molasses and vinegar. As a fertilizer this should act the same but it does not seem to work as good as an insecticide.)

Late March or early April is when I repot things like Dwarf Yaupon Holly and Boxwood. They do well when kept in light shade and out of the wind. Repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it's still too early for the tropics.

Depending on temperature some tropics may be done by the end of April.

If you have early blooming azaleas, you should remove some of the excess buds. Most azaleas will have way too many buds for the tree to look nice if all are left and are too crowded to open fully.

So what is left to do? Just trimming, feeding, trimming, check for insects, trimming, shows, trimming. You get the idea. Trimming, that is the pinching, plucking or whatever of new growth, is the process that both develops refinement on your tree but is vital to keep it from growing out of that desired state. This is not pruning which is cutting of branches which should not be done when there is a strong sap flow which starts when the tree breaks dormancy and continues until after the leaves harden or later.

At the risk of repeating the process too much I repeat it for the beginners. 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. 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.

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. A tree with full leaves may shed rain water outside of the pot or a good sun and low humidity after a front will dry the soil. I suggest that you remove some 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 also cause the bark to rot.) An automatic watering system will be an aid but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Best use might be to use it for a shot of watering in the morning and again at noon, then do hand watering in the evening. Most automatic systems just water a spot or two in the pot. Hand watering covers the entire pot and allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually and lets you see that the pot is draining properly. A clogged drainage hole can drown some trees in less than a week.

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 probably should be acclimated gradually. Too much wind will cause the leaves to burn. Some damage may not show up until hot weather.

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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P.O. Box 340474  
Austin, Texas 78734**

