



Bonsai Notebook

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

February 2009

February Programs

by Mike Watson

It's that time of year again! Time to get down and dirty and repot those trees that need it. Hopefully you've got your soils put together, your root cutting shears nicely sharpened, and all of your pots picked out for their respective trees. Or, if you're like me, you've procrastinated and February becomes a frantic flurry of activity!

Let's pause for a moment before our "mad season" and think about the act of repotting. Everyone has their own technique, soil recipes, time table, etc. but how many of us have ever watched someone else's technique to get a few pointers?

I have been a member of this club for 3 years now and have never seen a true repotting demonstration. Sure, we have seen an occasional quickie, out of season repot as part of a styling demonstration, but never an in-depth study on this all important aspect of our bonsai.

On **Wednesday, February 11th**, our own **Chuck Ware** will demonstrate "**The Outs and Ins of Repotting**". I am sure that everyone will agree that Chuck always give us an entertaining as well as informative program so be sure and take notes. I am really looking forward to this one!

The following **Tuesday, February 17th**, we will have a **Repotting Workshop** where we will get "hands-on" with our trees and share techniques, tips, soil recipes, and so on. Be sure to bring your own tools, pots, soil, and tree (of course!) as these will not be provided. It would also be a good idea to bring a bus tub or bucket (or something similar) to put your old soil in so we can keep the mess to a minimum. I hope you can all attend!

Calendar of Events

**February 7 Shohin Society of Texas
Redesign Workshop
Persimmon Hill Bonsai 10:30 am**

**February 8 Hiroji Yamaji Lecture and
Demonstration on Refinement
MBP Bonsai 12:00 pm**

**February 11 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm**

**February 11 ABS Monthly Meeting
The Outs and Ins of Repotting
with Chuck Ware
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

**February 17 ABS Board Meeting
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm**

**February 17 ABS Members Workshop
Repotting Workshop
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

REMINDER

Yearly dues are due in January. The membership rates are the same as last year:

\$25.00 for an individual membership
\$30.00 for a family membership
\$12.50 for a student membership

Only club members who have paid the current year's membership dues receive newsletters and can participate in the monthly workshops.

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. Other newsletter content is due on the last day of the month, in order to be published in the next month's newsletter.

Collin Murphy is the editor of "Bonsai Notebook". He may be contacted at ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com.

President's Message by Joey McCoy

Late January and early February are actually very exciting times in the Bonsai world. I've been mixing up soil components, choosing pots and beginning to repot my trees (many of which have needed it for the past 2-3 years, but because of a busy schedule have had to wait). I have Bonsai, which are going into better containers and others, more excitingly, which are going into their first Bonsai pots. It's such a pleasure to eliminate those large black plastic nursery pots! Also it's not too soon to be thinking of our annual show in May, to place those special trees in pots in which they'll shine.

As I write this, we've already had an urban dig here in Austin, the first of the TTSBE-sponsored digs at Redbird Ranch and another one on the way. There has been some amazing material pulled from the ground this year, and I hope to see some of it on display in our shows in the years to come! Collecting trips are a rare opportunity (for the right material and at the right time of year) and I'd encourage everyone to give it a try. Also if anyone would like to sponsor a dig, to organize it, I'd highly recommend it. Sometimes we know of a neighbor who's redesigning their garden, or needing to replace a fence and trees and shrubs must be removed. It's the ultimate in recycling to be able to turn unwanted plants into art!

Planning has begun on the visiting artist program for 2010 and if anyone has any suggestions on an artist we should try to get, let me know. I'll gather the list of the best of them and deliver the names to the LSBF committee chair. I have some names in mind already, but I'd love to hear from others in our membership on who they would like to see.

JADE GARDENS

HOME OF



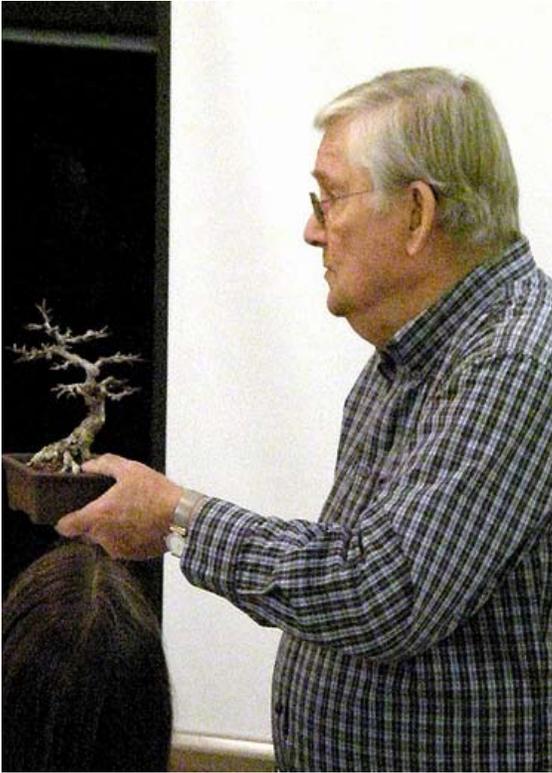
Chuck & Pat Ware
Owners
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12404 Ranch Road 12
Wimberley, TX 78676
(512) 847-2514

e-mail: bonsaijg@wimberley-tx.com

web page: <http://www.wimberley-tx.com/~bonsaijg>

Deciduous Tree Refinement with Terry Ward
Photos by Joey McCoy



Terry Ward gave advice on deciduous tree styling and ramification during January's member's workshop

ABS General Meeting Minutes

by Collin Murphy, Secretary

New President Joey McCoy welcomed everyone back from the holidays and reminded everyone about the potential for hard freezes. He asked if anyone had changes or additions to the previous minutes and there were none.

Joey thanked Alisan Clarke and Pat Ware for hosting.

Joey introduced a new member, Zirita Rogers, and also welcomed guests Harry Meilink, Sharon Tedford, and Trudy Willadson.

There is an urban dig of yaupon hollies this weekend (January 17), contact Joey for more information. The Redbird Ranch digs are also scheduled for the last two weekends in January.

Pat is coordinating the signup for hosting the monthly meetings. Alisan brought the supplies for the first six months and will bring the supplies for the second six months mid-year. Pat also distributed copies of the year end financial report containing the budgeted amounts and the actual amounts spent. There was approximately \$1,400 more in income than spending, mostly due to the Learning Seminars in San Antonio this year.

The registration for this year's LSBF convention in Houston will be available in February.

Joey introduced Mike Hansen who gave a program on pot selection which included a video and an interactive pot selection exercise with audience members.

Bonsai Calendar

SSOT Quarterly Meeting	Persimmon Hill Bonsai	February 7, 2009	
Hiroshi Yamaji Demo	MBP Bonsai	February 8, 2009	www.mbpbonsai.com
SSOT Quarterly Meeting	Persimmon Hill Bonsai	April 4, 2009	
LSBF Convention	Houston, TX	April 16 - 19, 2009	www.houstonbonsai.com
Shohin St Louis	St Louis, MO	April 24 - 26, 2009	www.stlbonsai.org
SSOT Quarterly Meeting	Persimmon Hill Bonsai	June 6, 2009	
ABS Learning Seminars	Boise, ID	June 11 - 14, 2009	www.absbonsai.org
SSOT Quarterly Meeting	Persimmon Hill Bonsai	September 19, 2009	

The phone number was omitted on the registration form for the Houston/LSBF Convention April 17-19, 2009. It is 713-914-9180

Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com



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AAGC Report

by Charlotte Cranberg, AAGC Representative

The president announced that the profit on Dinoland was \$154,977.98. This is to be split between PARD and AAGC with both parties agreeing to put the money in accounts where funds would only be used for Zilker Botanical Garden.

Presale tickets are now available for the Zilker Garden Festival on March 28th & 29th. Only AAGC clubs will have the opportunity to purchase these advance tickets at \$3.00 each. Regular prices will be \$5 for adults and \$3 for children over age 3. Money due March 10th to Dolores Rumpf.

All clubs will be offered a free booth, this year only, on the escarpment trail (that is the beginning of the Dino trail) for selling or just handing out literature. The area is larger than the 10'X10' space in other areas and is shaded. This is being done to accustom people to this new area, as it is somewhat separate from the parking lot area. There will be no booths in the rose garden or near Bee Caves Road.

Clubs are being asked to sponsor a gift costing from \$50 to \$100 for the Raffle which last year raised \$10,000.

February 7th is the deadline for the next "Down the Garden Path".

Gayle Herring presented the council with a check for \$3,189 from the Texas Botanical Garden Society which has recently disbanded. The money is earmarked for horticulture. Also, \$500 was given for a memorial arch plaque for Willie Koucuric who was an active member of TBGS.

Texas Botanical Gardens and Arboreta will be here on Feb. 19th through Saturday. There will be speakers, demos and kid stuff for "Green Garden".

If you are interested in more details on the Dinoland expenses and credits please see me.

Directory Corrections

None

Directory Additions

None

ABS Board Meeting Minutes

by Collin Murphy, Secretary

Joey called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Present board members were Noreen Quisenberry, Joey McCoy, Mike Watson, Collin Murphy, and Carl Quisenberry.

Charlotte reported that all AAGC club members are being offered a free booth at this year's Zilker Garden Festival. The board needs to decide if we want a booth this year. AAGC also wanted to know if anyone wanted to use the Green Room during Zilker Garden Festival. Charlotte will convey to AAGC that we want two tables in the Green Room this year.

All AAGC clubs are being asked to sponsor \$50 - \$100 gifts for this year's Zilker Garden Festival raffle. ABS may have some items acquired at the Learning Seminars in San Antonio last year. Joey will check our storage facility to see if we have anything suitable to donate.

Charlotte read the AAGC Meeting Minutes.

Mike discussed the upcoming programs for 2009. We can't always count on the main meeting room at Zilker for our workshops. There are topics for most months.

We discussed purchasing a printer to print newsletters and other items. Perhaps the cost could be split with TTSBE. No decision was made on this.

LSBF will bring in one visiting artist this year. We need to provide a list of desired artists by the June 15th LSBF meeting.

Collin needs to tell Carl by May the number of ABS members who need hard-copies of the LSBF newsletter.

Joey adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

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

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.

February is when repotting will generally get underway. It helps if you do some preliminary work. Get a sufficient amount of materials for whatever is your favorite mix or mixes. Then sift them into sizes you need (I like 3 sizes, small for shohin, medium for mid size trees and large 1/4" for the bigger bonsai). Then you can premix three different sizes of soil. At repotting then I will often adjust the mix for the particular tree I am working with by adding an extra bit of one ingredient or other in order to adjust water retention to suit that tree.

Spring is sometimes thought of as an event occurring on some particular day and that all the bonsai will need to be repotted, pruned, fed, etc at one time creating a mass of work. In truth, spring is a long drawn out affair and each species has its own time table in dealing with it. To be really successful in bonsai, then, you must know what each species you have will need and how it responds to your own backyard climate. If you have kept your trees from freezing they will want to start growing much earlier than those kept outside all winter. Typically, in my collection which stays outside, the elms will be first, foliage showing about the end of February or the first of March depending on the winter, along with the earliest maples. Then later in March, the rest of the maples and most of the others. The deciduous oaks will come out around April 1. The live oaks and the cork oaks usually drop their leaves and get their new foliage at the end of March into April. A lack of cold will bring them up earlier and a lot will delay their bud break.

All bonsai functions should be done when your tree tells you that the timing is right.

Repotting 'can' be done at any time during the dormancy but new roots are susceptible to freezing so you need some place to protect them after repotting. The best time to repot the deciduous temperate zone trees is when the buds are swelling but before green is showing. Generally this will be before the last of the freezing weather. Trees that leaf out early, maples and elms, can withstand a few degrees of frost but if repotted you must protect the newly growing roots. Sometimes setting them on the ground will be sufficient. Some species such as the oaks and willows are naturally programmed to wait much later so that there is very little chance to get nipped.

The newer wisdom on azaleas is that you also repot them at this time. The roots will be reestablished by blooming

time. This is much easier on the tree than waiting until after bloom when the temperature will be hot. (An aside note: later on, before blooming starts, you will be removing a lot of excess buds anyway which will reduce the stress on the tree at that time).

When new growth appears, keep it pinched so you keep the internodes short and develop a compact set of twigs on the branches. On alternate leaved species (e.g. elms) pinch when the shoot gets 4 or 5 leaves. Fingernails or shears can be used. If the twig gets too long it will be tough and you have to use shears. On opposite leaved trees (maples) pinch the central shoot as soon as it can be distinguished from the two leaves. To do this really right you need to use pointed tweezers.

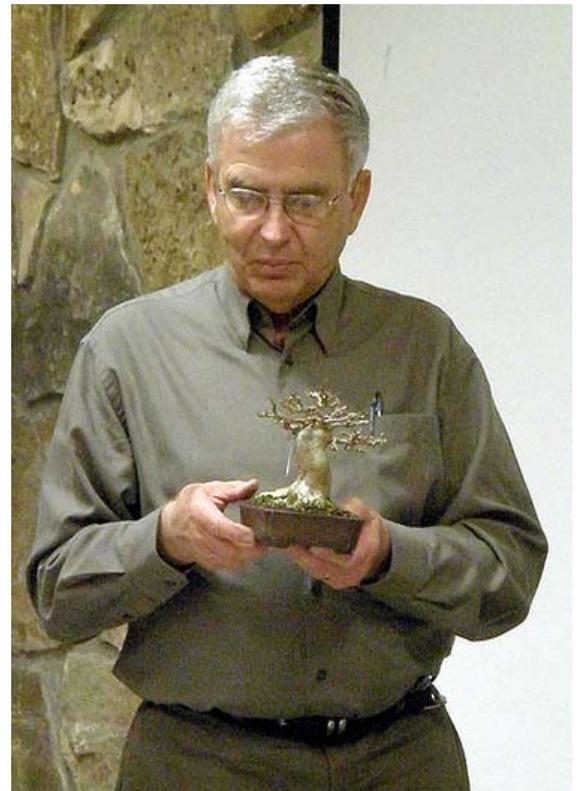
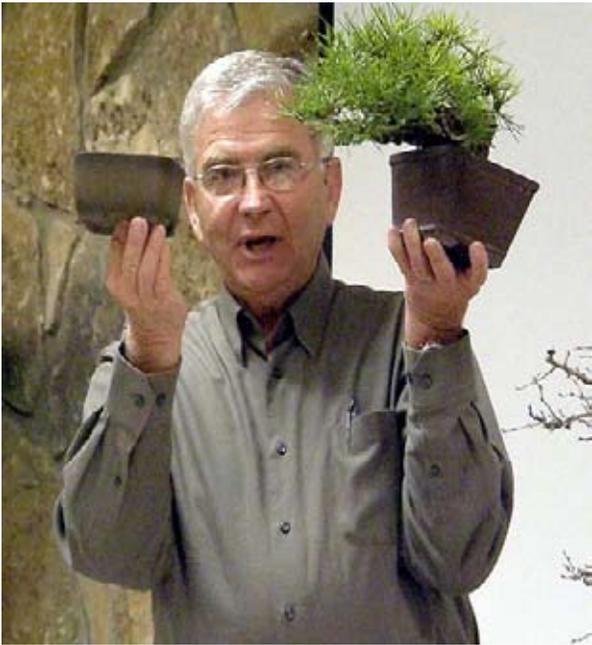
Spring flowering plants will have their buds set on last years growth so pruning them will remove some flowers. Those that bloom later in the year will generally bloom on this years growth. Pruning them will reduce the amount of flowers. In some cases such as crape myrtle, tip pruning of the branch will result in no flowers at all. In these cases you must decide which is most important, ramification or flowers. A compromise would be to prune the branch shorter than you normally would and then let it bloom on new growth which will at the proper length, at least for the first flowering of the season.

When the growth starts the tree will need fertilizer. However, use one that has a small amount of nitrogen (the first number). The tree is naturally programmed to grow rapidly at this time so you don't need to encourage it further. Feed lightly to maintain a healthy green foliage. Trace minerals should be added to help with both the foliage color and the color of blooms.

If you have not used an horticultural oil, the time is fast running out. The oil would be used to kill scale and overwintering mites and other boogers. When new growth starts oil might damage the tender foliage. When new growth starts, the problems to look for are the above mentioned mites but especially aphids and mealy bugs. These can be controlled as well as giving the plants the required fertilizer by using an organic spray (1 tablespoons each of liquid kelp, liquid fish emulsion, apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon of water). All these are available in any organic nursery.) If leaf spot, mildew or any other fungal problems appear, use a 1% hydrogen peroxide solution (dilute the normally available 3% using 1 part peroxide and 2 parts water), a baking soda spray, or a commercial fungicide.

I have not used the commercial organic spray sold as "Garret Juice" but I have had reports that it does not work well as an insecticide.

Pot Selection with Mike Hansen
Photos by Joey McCoy

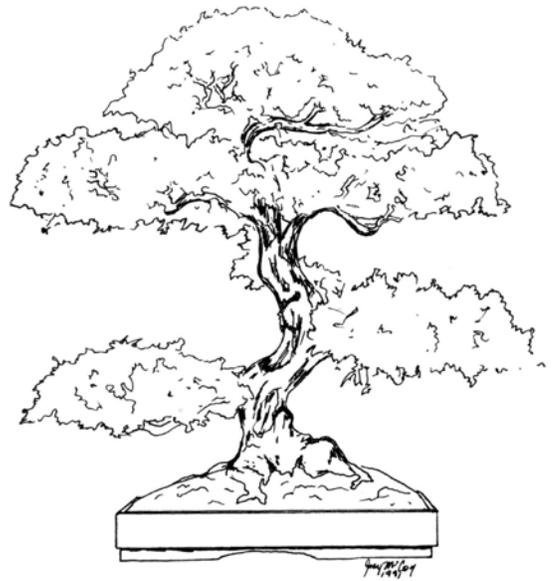


Mike Hansen discusses how to select a pot for a given tree, and Donna Dobberfuhl selects an appropriate pot for a trident maple

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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