



Bonsai Notebook

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

February 2010

February Program

by Mike Watson

What makes a great bonsai? There are many factors involved in our quest to create exceptional bonsai but the first thing we should address is the “nebari” (Japanese for “where the roots go into the ground”).

So, what can we do to improve the quality of our nebari? There are quite a few answers to that question as well.



Mike Watson demonstrating thread grafting at January's workshop

Calendar of Events

February 10th ABS Monthly Meeting Reception

Hosts: Els Ulug and Phina Chen

Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm

February 10th ABS Monthly Meeting

Creating Good Nebari with Mike Hansen

Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm

February 16th ABS Board Meeting

Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm

February 16th ABS Member's Workshop

Creating Good Nebari with Mike Hansen

Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm

February 20th ABS Member's Workshop

Creating Flat Root Base Shohin

Bonsai Workshop

Persimmon Hill Bonsai 10:30 am

On **Wednesday, February 10th**, our own Mike Hansen will demonstrate a very fascinating and effective way of getting beautiful nebari by using a floor tile. To find out how this is done you'll have to come to the meeting!

On **Tuesday, February 16th**, Mike will conduct a hands-on workshop with us where we will learn the “nebari-tile trick” for ourselves. We will each pot up a Zelkova (keyaki) using the special method. There will be a nominal fee which will be announced, along with complete details, at the regular Wednesday meeting.

Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

Joey McCoy
President

Mike Watson
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Collin Murphy
Secretary

Pat Ware
Treasurer

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Member at-Large

Charlotte Cranberg
Member at-Large

Nan Jenkins
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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

Living in the South, wintertime isn't quite as fierce as it is in the North. Most of the days are comfortably cool, we get our rainy, wet season, but also have plenty of gorgeous sunny days. It's a great time to walk through the woods, enjoying nature, and is a fantastic time to collect plants for future Bonsai. Poison ivy is at its low point, biting bugs and snakes are still tucked away, so it's pretty comfortable for us. Deciduous species have lost their leaves and weeds are gone so we can see the trunks of low trees clearly. We recently had a dig in Bastrop (Thank you James!) which turned out to have some great material and really was a lot of fun. I know all who wanted to, couldn't attend, but since it's such a great time of year for digging, I'd ask everyone to keep an eye out for potential spots for us all. Just as not all plants lend themselves to Bonsai, not all properties have the right conditions to create the trunks we look for in Bonsai. They're out there, though! I know there is plenty of land being cleared for construction, and homes and businesses redesigning their landscaping with some outstanding material just being sent to the dump. Keep an eye out for these places, ask permission, and if possible we can set up another couple of digs for our members this year! Oh and try to keep prepared... in Bastrop who knew that in addition to Plums, Junipers, Grapes and Mesquite, we'd be digging Donna's pickup out of a sand trap!

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(call for directions)

January AAGC Meeting Minutes
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

The council voted to approve a request for \$9,250 for pond and stream repair in the Oriental garden. The money will come from the Dinoland money. Phase 1 will cost \$16,250 and Phase II \$15,000. Money is being asked of PARD and we are applying for a Parks grant for help.

The 53rd Zilker Garden Festival will be March 27th and 28th from 10 to 5 daily. This event is AAGC's primary fund raiser, which supports our operating expenses for the year. This expense is our contribution to the city for the use of the building and pays for a hostess who must be present 7 days a week to fulfill our written agreement with the city or we lose our right to use the garden center.

Volunteers are needed for 4 hour shifts on both Saturday and Sunday. Call Julie Johnson at 477-8672 and find out what areas are in need and sign up. You are needed!

In April the Bonsai Society will be featured as the Garden Club of the Month and we will be making a presentation about our club and its history. If you have ideas for the presentation or would like to do it call Joey. Power Point is available.

The next issue of Down The Garden Path, our online newsletter, will come out in mid-March. Submit articles or comments to Bob Byer at txbyer@austin.rr.com by Feb. 28th. This is the last issue before our show.

Charlotte Cranberg, Corresponding Secretary, reported 13,811 volunteer hours submitted to her in 2009. Please keep reporting your hours to your club rep. so we may continue to get credit for the work we do. The city looks at these numbers and uses them in evaluating our contribution.

Charlotte Cranberg
AAGC Representative

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HOME OF



Chuck & Pat Ware
Owners
Visa & MasterCard
e-mail: bonsaijg@gmail.com
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ABS January General Meeting Minutes
by Collin Murphy, Secretary

Joey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He thanked Alisan Clarke and Pat Ware for hosting.

There was one new member, Michael Arce, and no guests.

Joey reminded everyone to sign up for refreshments and take a refreshment bag for you month.

The first club dig of the year is scheduled for January 24th in Bastrop.

Pat distributed hard copies of the budget. Our income exceeded expenses last year by \$315.28.

Joey then introduced Mike Watson. Mike reminded everyone about next week's member's workshop which will cover grafting.

Mike then introduced Donna Dobderfuhl who gave an excellent presentation on Phoenix grafting.

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.

LSBF

It has been asked: What is LSBF? What do they do for Austin Bonsai?

LSBF stands for Lone Star Bonsai Federation. It is the coming together of clubs from all over the state to help promote BONSAI through education and publicity. We now have 7 active clubs plus the Shohin Society, which has members from all the clubs.

Since 1982 LSBF has been the sponsor of an annual convention in Texas. It is hosted by a different club every year but LSBF provides seed money to start each Convention. Each club in the state, thru LSBF, encourages their membership to participate in hopes that all will attend and make it successful.

LSBF also asks a notable bonsai artist to give up 2 weeks of their time to tour the 7 clubs and provide lectures, demos or workshops, whatever the club wants. LSBF pays for the artist's airfare to & from their home state and between cities in the state of Texas. When conventions have been successful LSBF shares half of the profits with the host club. This is LSBF's only source of income besides the \$3.00 annual dues that is paid for each club member. When the bank account permits, LSBF has helped with the fee of the visiting artist.

LSBF also provides each club with a list of artists in Texas that have agreed to a reduced fee and minimum mileage. This way the club can use Texas talent at a reduced cost, and get a viewpoint from another part of the state. Then LSBF will reimburse the club for this artist's fee, only one per year.

Last, but not least, LSBF puts out 3 times a year, an educational publication, which is distributed to all the members of all the clubs.

LSBF has tried to encourage the growth of Bonsai in Texas through education and publicity for those new to the wonders of bonsai; and the development of interaction and relationships of club members throughout the state.

ABS January Board Meeting Minutes

by Collin Murphy, Secretary

Joey called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. present were Mike Watson, Pat Ware, Joey McCoy, Charlotte Cranberg, Collin Murphy, and Nan Jenkins.

Pat gave the treasurer's report. For 2009 our income exceeded expenses by \$315.28.

Each AAGC member club is giving a brief presentation to the AAGC at the beginning of each AAGC board meeting. The presentation should be about 10 - 15 minutes long, and may or may not be a PowerPoint presentation. Most presentations have been about this history of each club. ABS will present on Tuesday, April 13th in the morning. If you are willing to volunteer to give the presentation or have any historical details of the club, please contact Joey.

ABS and the Austin Pond Society are co-hosting the AAGC board meeting on March 9th. If you can help provide refreshments let Charlotte know.

A new refreshment hostess is needed. All this is required is to put together the bags of cups, coffee, utensils, teas, etc that are distributed at the beginning of each year. If you can volunteer for this role please let a board member know.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Bonsai Calendar

California Shohin Seminar
St Louis Shohin Seminar

Santa Nella, CA
Collinsville, IL

February 5 - 7, 2010
May 20 - 22, 2011

Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com and it will be posted here.

Phoenix Grafting with Donna Dobberfuhl

Photos by Joey McCoy



Donna demonstrated Phoenix grafting techniques at January's meeting

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.

Bonsai tasks in February sometime pile up on each other. Generally repotting is not finished before some species need to have their trimming started. And watering, feeding, and pathogen control must be attended to.

Check your work and family schedules and see if there may be conflicts arising. You may need to make adjustments such as doing the repotting at an earlier time than is optimum or twig pruning instead of watching tv.

Usually the first part of the month requires you to continue the winter care. Check the watering, make sure no varmints are doing their thing, 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 provide frost and/or freeze protection for them and 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. Again if your schedule is uncertain it is better to repot early. Note: Do not handle trees by their trunks, that will damage the bark and make it look like reverse taper.

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.

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 and grow another tip. This develops taper and motion

in your branch.

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 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.)

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While you get your trees out of winter storage, look for candidates for showing in your club events. Put them 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.

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 table-spoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon water) works well for me. If you use chemical sprays be sure to read the label closely. 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.

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

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.

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Directory Additions

Michael Arce
arcem18@yahoo.com

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 \$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

