



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

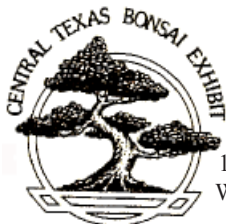
*January 2008*

## January Programs by Joey McCoy

I'm writing this as we are experiencing our first real freeze of winter. Most of the Bonsai are now sleeping or are put into warm enclosures and there isn't a lot of daily care they require. It's during this time of dormancy that we can plan to collect from the wild, and on Wednesday January 9th we will learn from Mike Hansen important tips, tools and information on how to successfully obtain a wild plant for Bonsai training. Most of the impressive Bonsai we see have started life in the wild in some form. The harsh natural elements shape and contort the trunk and branches in ways that we still find very difficult to duplicate. Mother nature is an amazing stylist, and by learning the proper techniques, we can take advantage of the bountiful material all around us. There are several digs planned soon, so come to the meeting to learn or refresh on your collecting skills. Or come to share stories of your own. This should be a great, informative meeting.

Over the last two years, we have had club sponsored urban digs on Boxwood plants. Bill Boytim had generously donated some mature plants, and they will need some decisions made as to their future. On Tuesday January 15, we will have a member's workshop of the first styling of the Boxwoods collected the previous years, led by Chuck Ware. If you didn't take part in the Boxwood digs, please bring another Boxwood to work on or share with the group during the meeting. We all learn from each other at these events, and techniques will be shared. The Boxwood is a personal favorite of mine and I'd love to see other members' trees!

## JADE GARDENS HOME OF



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(512) 847-2514

## Calendar of Events

**Jan 9 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**  
**Hosts: Alisan Clarke & Pat Ware**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 PM**

**Jan 9 ABS Monthly Meeting**  
**Collecting Tips, Tools, and**  
**Information**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Jan 15 ABS Board Meeting**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 PM**

**Jan 15 Member's Workshop**  
**First Styling of Collected Boxwoods**  
**by: Chuck Ware**  
**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

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### **President's Message**

by Jim Trahan

I hope that everyone has enjoyed the holiday season. I had the luxury of having several weeks off, including a week to myself to just drink tea and paint a scroll for my ABS exhibit tree. This tree is a pine and as I write this I am reminded that now is the time to work on it.

January is a good time to work on pines: it is safer to make large cuts because the sap has thickened and wiring is easier because there are fewer needles on pines at this time. This is also the best month to repot pines and junipers, though it may be best to hold off repotting their deciduous cousins until warmer nights arrive.

February is one of the best months to safely collect material. Joey has asked Mike Hanson to deliver a program on collecting trees for bonsai. Though this program is in January, "digging time" will be upon us in the blink of an eye. The more time you have to prepare for the dig, including after care once the trees make it home (ready with soil and large planters) the greater your success will be. We had a very wet 2007 growing season so I think that the viability will be excellent for the trees we collect in 2008.

Even the best material that you collect will take years before it is ready for show as a bonsai. However, the character of the bark and the movement of the primary sections of the tree are often more spectacular than any tree grown from seed in a nursery. The mechanisms of Nature confound the hands of Man. Trunks twist and move in ways that are instantly striking, naturally perfect in their glorious imperfections.

I apologize for moralizing on this, but past events are still fresh in my mind. It is obvious that there are moral obligations to collecting trees from the wild, especially old trees, yet I have seen people do terrible things to trees in their "fever" to collect as many beautiful trees as possible. There is no excuse for letting roots cook in the sun, unprotected. Better to collect a few quality trees and treat them with the care they deserve than to collect a truckload of mediocre trees and allow them to wither in the sun. I have learned many lessons from my trees: kindness, compassion, overcoming the sorrow of loss, and sometimes I have been uncomfortably confronted with my own greed. I hope that others are learning from their trees too.

That said, these digs are a very fun and camaraderie abounds. I enjoy them so much that I have gone on digs just to hang out and help. This will be a great year and I know that we have many great things ahead of us.

"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".

**The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit**  
Sponsoring Two Digs in January 2008  
by Donna L. Dobberfuhl, sec. TTSBE

In January of 2008 The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit is sponsoring two collecting trips.

Some of you are familiar with the location in west San Antonio. Many specimens were successfully collected last year at Red Bird Ranch on Protranco Rd. about 8 miles beyond 1604. This is year it is necessary to reserve a space. The weekends of January 19th and the 26th are available. Please contact Donna Dobberfuhl with your reservation. [Two2views@yahoo.com](mailto:Two2views@yahoo.com) and or 210-326-0860.

The second collecting trip is in Eagle Pass, TX. There are only 3 available spots left. The owner of the property is allowing 10 individuals to participate. This is a three-day trip, leaving Friday January 18th and returning Sunday evening January 20th. The land is described as brush land that is home to many South Texas plant species popular for bonsai. Texas Ebony, Huisache, Kidney wood and desert Yaupon. The land has not been previously scouted for bonsai material so we may spend a day or so looking for appropriate plants. This trip will be a great adventure and it is likely to involve a lot of walking over hilly terrain. We have a choice of good over night accommodations in Eagle Pass and an invitation for breakfast tacos on the ranch in the morning.

Please contact Mike Hansen at: [mbpbonsai@hughes.net](mailto:mbpbonsai@hughes.net).


Don't forget the cameras, the rest of us want to see what has been collected.



**Notes from TTSBE**  
by Joey McCoy

Thank you to all that are using [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) as your search engine and choosing The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit as your charity of choice. Every time a search is made 1 cent is donated to TTSBE. Doesn't sound like much, but with many people using the service, it can add up fast. Since it's powered by Yahoo, the searches are as good as any on the net. Also there is full disclosure of the amounts we're earning. Go to the site and click "amount raised" to see how we're doing for the month or the year. Spread the word to help raise the amount. Another timely feature of Goodsearch is that they have started a new service called Goodshop, where a percentage of the purchase of items at select stores can go to TTSBE. Go to the Goodsearch website and click "Goodshop" to see participating online stores and to see what percentage will go to us. It's always preferable to shop locally for gifts (especially at our hard working local Bonsai nurseries!), but if you're looking for an item at the stores listed, why not have it become a part of a charitable donation as well? Happy holidays to all!

I've been asked to clarify the relationship between The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit and the Austin Bonsai Society. TTSBE is a non-profit 501(c)(3) incorporated entity, existing independent from ABS and drawing its Executive Board from the entire state of Texas. The Austin Bonsai Society is the sponsor organization of the TTSBE that in the beginning was necessary for TTSBE to obtain its incorporation and as such, each member of the ABS is a voting member of TTSBE. In the bylaws, Article IV section 5: "Voting members shall be the officers and directors of the Corporation and all members in good standing of the Austin Bonsai Society."



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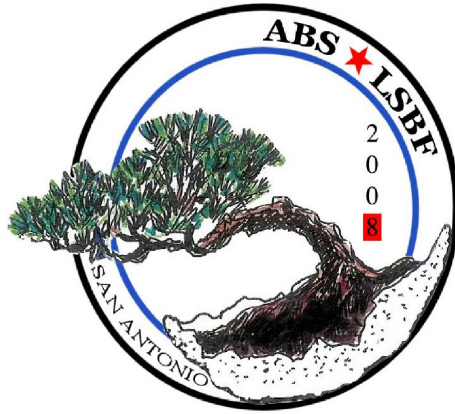
**Notes from AAGC**  
by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

This was a Christmas luncheon in honor of people who have been outstanding in helping in Zilker Botanical Gardens or have given a large gift. Terry Ward was one of the honorees this year and he was thanked for his guidance and work in shaping the Oriental garden and for selecting 3 beautiful Japanese lanterns in different styles to be purchased for the Taniguchi garden. \$1300 was appropriated for this.

Sheila and Terry are seen here at lunch and receiving the award.



# 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.



## ***AUSTIN BONSAI SOCIETY DUES ARE NOW DUE***

\$25.00 individual membership or \$30.00 for two adults at the same address

Bring your dues to the meeting or mail to the treasurer at:

Pat Ware  
12404 Ranch Road 12  
Wimberley, Tx. 78676

## 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.*

There seem to be a lot of digs scheduled throughout the area. Even TTSBE has now gotten into the act and is sponsoring two digs in some great territory. So get out your shovel, loppers, chain saw, and your other favorite collecting paraphernalia. Check and sharpen them and be ready to join your group when a dig is scheduled. That's the best way to get old material that will do well in your area. If you are lucky you may just find one that nature, machinery, or cows have done most of the styling for you.

Your primary job in cold weather is to be sure your trees are well watered before going into a deep freeze. They will be losing water to evaporation but will not be able to replenish it if the soil is frozen. Protection from high winds is also necessary so the tops will not dry out. Sunlight is not necessary on deciduous trees when they have lost their leaves. In fact, it can be bad for the tree because it will heat up the trunk and soil and that could make the tree come out of dormancy too early.

Because the ground holds a more even temperature, I advocate placing the hardy trees on a well drained ground bed in a protected shady area. Then cover the pots with a shallow layer of mulch. You should know which trees have a greater need for water. If you put these trees together it will be easier to check your need for watering while they are in the bed.

I would treat the evergreens in a similar manner but put them where they can get some sun. Evergreens can use a very light feeding during the winter. Maybe 1/4 the summer rate.

Personally, I keep my hardy trees on the benches until the temp goes below 25. Then I set the deciduous and more tender evergreens on the ground below and between the benches until a temp in the teens is expected. At that point I will use old carpet and quilts to cover the benches. For the rest of the winter I leave them there and lift the sides around the deciduous trees for air circulation and uncover fully the evergreens when the temp rises. Sounds like a lot of work but I developed a routine that fits me and it isn't bad.

The tender and semi-tender trees need protection. The semi-tender (e.g. crape myrtle and pomegranate) get left out for some frost but no freezing. When freezing is expected they get put in a cool area. If they show growth again they go to

the greenhouse. It's not a big greenhouse and doesn't give optimum growing conditions but keeps things from freezing.

Tender or tropical trees that are kept indoors will be using more water to offset the lower humidity. Soil will also be losing water faster through its surface. Be sure to watch the indoor trees for insect problems. Most plant insects love a controlled atmosphere like the indoors. Spider mites seem to get the most attention here because they do great in a low humidity and the lack of foliage spraying. Scale can be an easily overlooked source of trouble. The flat green kind can be hard to spot on the underside of leaves or tight against the stem. Indoor trees need to be fertilized regularly and will require periodic trimming as they continue to grow through the winter.

Greenhouses are much the same as indoors. However, most greenhouses are kept more humid. The higher humidity is to the liking of aphids and fungal diseases. It may also result in your keeping the soil too moist with associated root problems. Use your standard insect controls that you used last summer. I use my organic foliar spray all winter.

Back to the outdoor trees. Any long warm spells during the month could activate some of the insect problems but as a rule there are no special needs to look for in January. Spraying with a dormant oil spray will kill adults, nymphs, and eggs of any trying to over-winter on your trees. Some dormant sprays can be used on new growth but better results overall will be obtained if you do it before Valentines Day. A weak lime sulphur dormant spray will also get fungal spores and should be done before Feb 1 and not at all if any green is showing.

If you have your summer display and growing benches cleared, you could use a stronger solution lime sulphur to disinfect that area too. The underside of the benches should be sprayed also. Might even eliminate spider mites next year.

Styling can be done at this time but no repotting unless you are going to keep the tree from freezing after that. Repotting initiates new root development which is usually not very hardy.

A good approach is to study one or two trees thoroughly each day making notes on what needs to be done. January is an excellent time to start any remodeling projects that may be necessary. While the trees are dormant you have better view of the branch structure. Do any need to be moved or removed? Do any coarse branches need to be cut back to a smaller side branch for refinement? Do any long straight branches need wiring to give them motion? Does the tree really need a drastic redesign? You can also trim the twigs back while you have them there.



## The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit Highlights Ending 2007

by Donna L. Dobberfuhl, sec. TTSBE

- The board conducted seven fundraisers during the year.
- Hired a fundraising consultant, Seeds For Change.
- New and expanded and easy-to-update website: [www.ttsbe.org](http://www.ttsbe.org).
- Land was found, 12.2 acres in Mustang Ridge, TX.
- September an anonymous donor gave \$25,000 to facilitate the purchase of the Exhibit property.
- Mike Hansen and Elaine White closed on the site for the Exhibit in Mustang Ridge, TX.
- A investor (a private individual and friend of Bonsai) stepped forward and offered to carry our mortgage at 8 ½ % for 15 years.
- A very large ceramic pot (65"x42"x3.5") was ordered from China for the Cedar elm forest planting donated to the Exhibit by the Pepitone family of Houston.



*Lori Hansen stands next to a Cedar Elm forest donated by the Pepitone family. The forest was recently transferred to its new pot which was ordered from China.*

- Two significant volunteers, Els Ulug nominating committee chair and Debra Van Cleaf organized the database of individuals associated with bonsai.
- Six (6) new board nominees elected in November to start in January 2008; Marie Byer, San Antonio, Greg Setter, Austin, Mike Watson, Austin, Bill Moore, Austin, Nancy Moore, Austin and Els Ulug, Austin.

## December 2007 ABS General Meeting Minutes by Charlotte Cranberg, Secretary

Chuck Ware welcomed everyone to the Bonsai Society Christmas dinner. He remarked that this was the first time in many years that Bill and Liz Cody were absent from our gathering and how much we all miss them.

Mike Hansen moved that members approve 2 amendments to the TTSBE. One to authorize the chairman or vice-chairman to sign legal documents and second, to expand membership to include members who meet an annual donation requirement. Joe Trochta moved the amendments be approved and Chuck Ware seconded the vote. The motion was approved.

Alisan was hostess for the dinner. She prepared the turkey and ham and set up the tables, with help from several members. The side dishes were provided by the members and at least one member got a little high on too many helpings of Sheila Ware's jellied cherry salad with port. The delicious array of member's culinary contributions was unparalleled.

Chuck Ware talked about junipers and brought several varieties to demonstrate the differences among them. A mature juniper bonsai was raffled and won by Jim Trahan.

Members voted the best decorated tree was a pyracantha owned and decorated by Chuck and Pat Ware. It was full of orange-red berries and looked very Christmasy. They received a gift certificate to El Mercado restaurant. Second prize went to Jimbo's rock tree for which he got a box of candy.

A good time was had by all. You don't want too miss this dinner next year.

### Directory Additions

*There are no directory additions this month.*

### Directory Corrections

John Pittenger  
1168 Mission Trail  
Salado TX 76571

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

# Bonsai Notebook

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

