



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*January 2009*

## January Programs

by Joey McCoy

We're just about to our repotting season and many of us have trees which either need their first Bonsai pot or which need a more appropriate pot. Choosing the right container for our trees is an artform in itself, but it shouldn't be something mysterious and difficult to handle. On **Wednesday January 14th, Mike Hansen will lead the discussion on how to choose a pot for our tree.** There are many elements to consider: color, shape, outline lip, feet, texture, etc., and each of these should be given careful consideration. Please bring a trees and pots to discuss and compare. This should be an interactive meeting and should be helpful to us all!

This is also the time of year when we're able to really study and examine our deciduous trees. While they're beautiful in full-leaf, these Bonsai can only be fully appreciated (in my opinion) when they've dropped their leaves and the beauty of the fine branches can be seen. On **Tuesday January 20th, we will have a Bring Your Own Tree workshop on refining deciduous trees, led by Terry Ward.** This is a great time to make changes in the structure or to even wire out fine branches without the visual clutter of leaves. It helps to set the stage for a more precise spring growth push, and makes planning successive stages of development easier.

## Calendar of Events

**January 14 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**

**Hosts: Alisan Clarke and Pat Ware**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm**

**January 14 ABS Monthly Meeting**

**Pot Selection with Mike Hansen**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

**January 20 ABS Board Meeting**

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

**January 20 ABS Members Workshop**

**Refining Deciduous Trees with Terry Ward**

**Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**



*A Bougainvillea on display at the annual ABS Christmas Party*

## **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](mailto:ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com).

## **President's Message by Joey McCoy**

2008 was a terrific year full of friends and fun Bonsai times! I'd like to thank our outgoing president, Jim Trahan for all of his work in keeping and growing our club during his time. I hope to make our club proud as the new president, and serve as well as the long list of previous Austin Bonsai leaders who have come before me. Mike Watson, our new VP, is the capable new program chair this year, so if he calls you, please give all the help you can. I expect 2009 will be a great year as well!

Our Christmas Party in December went off beautifully, and I'd like to thank Alisan Clarke yet again for being our go-to hostess. To all who brought food, pitched in to help and who came to share the evening, I'd like to say how much it means to have you all there. Our club really has a warm and friendly feel to it, and it's thanks to the outstanding members who give their time and talent each year

We're currently in the see-saw of Central Texas winter, going between the occasional freezing nights to balmy days and some of our trees don't know what to make of it. As I write this, my own trees are in a confused state. Some of them are in deep sleep as they should this time of year, but others haven't dropped their leaves yet, or even slowed down their growth. Here's hoping we don't have a very hard freeze to burn off those confused plants.

I'd like to mention one member feature which many haven't yet taken advantage of, our Austin Bonsai Yahoo Group. It is an online discussion group, where any member can ask a question or comment to the group, and even share photos and video files. For instance, if there's a question about a certain plant species, another member might be able to answer it quickly. It's invite-only, so there is no "spam" which comes with other online activities. I look at it as a quick way to stay in touch with all of the Austin Bonsai online community with one message, to also let people know about upcoming Bonsai events in the area. It's only as interesting or informative as you make it. If there is anyone who would like to be included, simply send me an email at [jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jvmccoy@sbcglobal.net).

Happy 2009 everyone!  
Joey



## *The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit*

### **TTSBE Giving** by Elaine White, Vice-chairman, TTSBE

December, 2008

Dear Texas Bonsai Friends,

We all receive many requests for donations in this season of giving. Will more of you commit to helping build The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit in addition to your other charities?

This will not only be a meditation garden with Texas bonsai on display. It might be your bonsai, that you have cherished for many years.

You might need specific information about a tree from our extensive library or information about other clubs in Texas and a contact person there.

Our museum will house not only oriental art, but a collection of American Bonsai pottery.

We will have the history of each club in Texas recorded as well as the biography and autobiography of longtime members as part of our history.

**OUR MISSION:** To establish a world class bonsai exhibit in Texas.

It has been eight years since TTSBE was founded by 10 bonsai lovers, meeting once a month for this long, the directors have accomplished much and laid the foundation of the organization. We have contacted over 35 different organizations looking for appropriate land and finally the decision was made to purchase if we were going to move forward. **WE HAVE THE LAND—HELP US DEVELOP OUR GARDEN.**

**YOU** can donate a specific amount every year, in several

different ways. You can encourage your CLUB to donate a specific amount every year. You can encourage your LSBF representative to have them donate every year.

Put very plainly, we need this sustainability in order to succeed.

We are so very grateful to all of our volunteers that keep all informed about how we are progressing, not only our club representatives, but the newsletters editors. What a great gift of time, money and commitment the directors have given, that has made it possible for The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit to have progressed this far.

Your Gifts of any of those will be gratefully received.

Thank you,  
Elaine White

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# 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.*

## Bonsai Calendar

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

*Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to [ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com](mailto:ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com)*



**PERSIMMON HILL BONSAI  
STUDIO & NURSERY**

Terry & Sheila Ward      Austin, Texas  
512-280-5575 - [phbonsai@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phbonsai@sbcglobal.net) - By Appointment

## AAGC Report

by Charlotte Cranberg, AAGC Representative

Sara Hensley, the new director of Austin Parks & Recreation Dept. (PARD), was introduced to the board at the December meeting and Christmas luncheon. Mathew Garding, a new staff member hired to work on the ponds, also was introduced.

It will be January before solid figures can be reported on the Dino Exhibit. We feel confident that it will at least be solvent and hopefully make some money. Close to 100,000 tickets were sold and it is hoped that the goal of Dinoland to increase club membership and public knowledge of the existence of the Botanical Garden will be realized. Donna Friedenreich estimated that the dollar value of the club volunteers at Dinoland is \$19,000. That would be for around 2750 hours contributed by members. PARD considers it a success as do we.

Bob Barth from the Cactus Society presented a check for \$5000 to the garden center. This was profit from their show and sale.

Margie Malone will head the 2009 Zilker Garden Festival and Donna Freidenrich will help her.

The nominating committee was elected and if you want to serve on the Executive Committee just let me know. We need people.

Austin Botanical Garden will be hosting the Texas Botanical Gardens and Arboretum in February. We are all invited to attend the lectures.

### Email-only Newsletters

Printing newsletters each month costs the club over \$1,000 per year. You can help reduce this club expense by opting to receive the email-only version of this newsletter, which does not cost the club anything to produce. If you would like to stop receiving the print version of the newsletter, send an email to the newsletter editor at [ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com](mailto:ckmurphy2000@yahoo.com). You will still receive an email version regardless of your choice

## ABS Christmas Party Report

by Alisan Clarke

We need a big thankyou for the Elves. Cooking turkey and hams dressings etc. Deb, Elaine, and Alisan The food was exceptional and more than 47 people came. Hard to count as everyone moved about visiting. The set up and return was smooth as silk with Mike W., Bill B., Jimbo and Joey. Deb helped organize the food and Elaine was a huge after help.

The 3 people who won the scrolls need to give me a call. Ink lesson( Sumi-e) go with them and hanging instructions for "Crain in the Rain"are needed. Thank you all and hope your New Year is very bright.

### 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).

### JADE GARDENS

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

### Directory Corrections

None

### Directory Additions

None

## 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.*

Mycorrhiza, or properly mycorrhizal fungi, was a discussion at one of the meetings last fall. The mycorrhiza aids in plants growth by making soil nutrients more readily available to the plant and in turn gets some of its needs from the trees also. The question was: is it really necessary to apply a powder that you can obtain at an organic nursery? Some thoughts was that they did not need it as their trees had a lot of the fuzzy structure on the roots of their trees. This may be true if you obtained plants from a longtime bonsai nursery and never used any fungicide in your soil. However, I have seen so many trees with no indications of mycorrhiza in their soil. In addition to the old time growers saying to make sure your trees have it I have seen articles in the American Nurseryman magazine documenting the increase in root structure and top growth resulting from use of applying the mycorrhiza.

Therefore, I would recommend that you obtain some and use it when you repot. Use whatever brand lists the most types of fungi as the different types work on different trees.

The coldest nights usually come the last two weeks in January, but dont bet the farm on it. Just watch the forecasts and look at the lows (just ignore the highs, they are for people not plants).

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 isnt 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. Its 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 you 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. Just be careful with the lime sulfur follow label directions closely.

**ABS Christmas Party**  
Photos by Joey McCoy

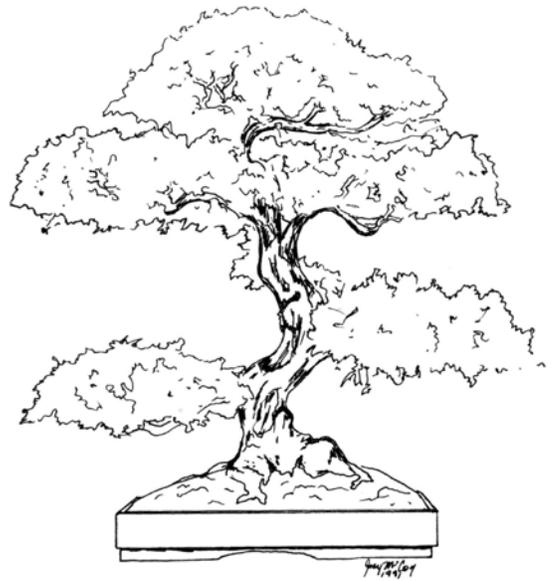


*Trees brought in by members to the ABS Christmas party.*

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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