



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*July 2008*

## July Programs by Joey McCoy

What a fantastic and exiting Bonsai Seminar we had a couple of weeks ago in San Antonio! I hope everyone is rested up and ready for our July programs here in Austin. On **Wednesday July 9th Terry Ward will lead the group in a hands-on, interactive program on wiring.** We are going to break up into 10 groups of 2 with the material will be provided by Terry. We will each need to bring our own wire cutters, concave cutters and Bonsai shears. At the end of the evening, the group will vote on the results! This should be an exiting and informative program, and a whole lot of fun.

Following up on wiring, on **Tuesday July 15th we will have a Wire-Your-Own-Tree workshop** overseen by Terry Ward. This is where we can take some of the skills from the previous meeting and apply them to our trees. Please bring all your own materials (Bonsai, wire, cutters, etc.) to this meeting.



*Shohin Society of Texas display at the ABS Learning Seminars*

## Calendar of Events

**July 9 ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**  
Hosts: Audrey Lanier and Elaine White  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm  
(Hosts for August's reception: Everyone - potluck at joint meeting with San Antonio)

**July 9 ABS Monthly Meeting**  
Wiring Techniques with Terry Ward  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm

**July 15 ABS Board Meeting**  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm

**July 15 ABS Members Workshop**  
Wiring Workshop with Terry Ward  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm



*A Suiseki on display during Peter Aradi's presentation at June's monthly meeting*

## Austin Bonsai Society Board of Directors

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**Trident Maple - *Acer buergerianum***

## President's Message by Jim Trahan

The ABS Symposium was a lot of fun and an incredible amount of work. The exhibit could not have been completed without the help of these people: Collin Murphy, Alfred Lopez (San Antonio), Els Ulug, Alan Walker (Lake Charles, LA), Elaine White, Mike Watson, Terry & Sheila Ward, Chuck Ware and Mike Hansen. Some of these individuals generously contributed trees when asked at the last minute, necessitating hours of preparation to get their trees ready for the show. Others devoted essentially two days of sweat and heavy lifting to get everything loaded and unloaded... both ways. Some helped by constructing tables and backdrops when I was on my own. Lastly, two of these people encouraged me when I was at my emotional nadir to marshal all my strength to get the trees set in place. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you!

It appeared to me that everyone was having fun at the convention. It was the largest array of vendors I have seen at a bonsai event—we even had three suiseki vendors! The raffles were generous and fun. I was able to develop new friendships with people from across the country and pal around with people I have known for years. I met people with whom I never thought I had a thing in common with, yet talked as intimately as with my own family. What a great surprise!

Besides palling around, my favorite part of the event was carving daiza for my suiseki. I spent all day in classes with Sean Smith. This was an absolute delight! For me, getting to study with a daiza carver of this quality and acquiring a new skill makes the event completely worth the cost.

Marty and Mike did a great job pulling this off and deserve a lot of thanks from everyone in attendance. This was not an easy convention to put on. There were many hardships that they had to face that most of us will never know of, yet they continued to smile and made the best of a tough situation. Was it a success? It is a success because everyone is still talking to each other.



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**Suiseki with Peter Aradi**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Various Suiseki brought in by members for June's monthly meeting*

**American Bonsai Society Learning Seminars 2008**

Photos by Joey McCoy



*Donna Dobberfuhl was runner up in the Joshua Roth  
New Talent Competition*



**Bald Cypress - *Taxodium distichum***



**Japanese Maple - *Acer palmatum***



**Maidenhair Tree - *Ginkgo biloba***



**Kingsville Boxwood - *Buxus microphylla* 'Compacta'**



Catlin Elm - *Ulmus parvifolia* 'Catlin'



Dwarf Yaupon Holly - *Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'



Trident Maple - *Acer buergerianum*



Japanese Black Pine - *Pinus thunbergii*

**American Bonsai Society Learning Seminars 2008**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



**Display at the ABS Learning Seminars**

American Bonsai Society Learning Seminars 2008

Photos by Joey McCoy



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## Foster Care a Tree Program

By Alisan Clarke, The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit

The collected cedar elms, *Ulmus crassifolia*, in the photographs are part of an exciting new hands-on program from TTSBE. These trees, along with others, are available for foster care! To see photographs of more trees in the program contact your clubs TTSBE Representative.

Foster care is a program where an individual can pick a tree — ranging from rough material to styled bonsai — and become its foster parent at the TTSBE development site. Trees are available for bonsai skill levels ranging from basic through advanced. Skilled bonsai artists will consult with each foster parent about their tree and help design a development program. Foster parents are responsible for the maintenance and development of their tree for a renewable one-year commitment. This includes pruning, pinching, weeding, spotting and addressing any problems with the tree and, as needed, wiring, repotting and styling. Watering, insect/fungal control and feeding are taken care of by other volunteers.

Becoming a foster parent requires dedication and a commitment of time. Bonsai enthusiasts who live outside the greater Austin area can work with TTSBE to set up their schedule. Schedules must include a minimum of three to five timely, hands-on sessions per year with the tree. Foster parents must adjust their time to meet the plants' needs throughout the year. A co-foster parent will look after the tree at other times.

Becoming a foster parent is a large responsibility. However, the rewards make it well worth it. Pride in developing your foster tree, advancing your skills, learning new techniques,

the camaraderie in sharing with other foster parents plus some special perks.

If you are interested in joining our foster care program or have questions, please contact your local bonsai clubs TTSBE Representative or Elaine White at [ewbonsai@austin.rr.com](mailto:ewbonsai@austin.rr.com) or 512-266-2655.

### CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

#### Austin Bonsai Society

Els Ulug

#### Bonsai Society of Dallas

John Miller

#### Corpus Christi Bonsai Club

Jesse Willars

#### Fort Worth Bonsai Society

Gail Williams

#### Houston Bonsai Society

Alan Raymond

#### Longview Bonsai Society

Todd Davis

#### San Antonio Bonsai Society

Donna Dobberfuhl

#### Shohin Society of Texas

Sheila Ward



## June 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 & Chuck Ware, Collin Murphy, and Charlotte Cranberg.

Treasurer, Pat Ware reported \$801.41 expenses over income for May. We made \$432.36 on the Bonsai Exhibit but paid the yearly storage fee which put us in the red. \$5019 was removed from the CD and put into a money market fund at 4.95% interest which gave the club a much better return on the money. It expires in 2012.

The transportation expenses voted on at the last board meeting for transporting material to the convention will be a seminar expense and not our and San Antonio expense according to Jim who talked to the ABS about it.

Charlotte Cranberg  
Secretary

## Directory Additions

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## Directory Corrections

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(512) 989-5831

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Pflugerville, TX 78660  
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## July 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.*

July and August are the two most stressful months for bonsai in our neck of the woods. Most healthy trees can take the full sun on their foliage. But the high ambient temperatures and the heating effect of the sun on the pots and soil create temperatures on the roots that they are not designed to cope with. Trees with thin leaves like the Japanese maple, *Acer Palmatum*, will probably scorch in full sun. They can also suffer from chemical burn from some fertilizers and insecticides.

I cannot give you a precise to-do list since your backyard is different from mine but you should be sure that the sun does not hit the pots directly. If you use a cover of any kind be sure that the side of the pot is protected also. A loose weave cover (Howard and Sylvia us some cheap bar towels) that allows air flow is preferable to solid paper or foil. An article by Dr. Bill Cody suggests that his experiments show that an afternoon watering at 2PM will go a long way to keep the soil temperature in a desirable range while a box close around the pot does little to protect it. My opinion that the reason for this is that the sun still heats the soil and there is no air flow to cool it. A solid cover over the pot and box would create an oven type enclosure. A 30% shade cloth over pines, elms, junipers and maybe 50% over maples would be ideal. And don't forget to provide protection on the west side from the mean afternoon sun.

Check your water practices. I prefer to water heavily in the evening (in normal weather). That gives the plant all night to renew itself without losing most of its water to evaporation. Then in the early morning, they get a quick foliage spray and wetting the surface of the soil which may have dried out overnight. Very porous soil may need more morning water. This was what I did while working since the morning task only took 10 minutes or so. Now I still prefer to water heavily in the evening but the morning watering is more done more slowly and trees given a little more individual attention as some of them will not need water in the soil. Be sure to do the double watering bit--water thoroughly and then after a few minutes water again so that the dry soil particles will get moistened.

Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. Preventative medicine is best. By the time you see signs, the damage is already done, especially spider mites. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and 5% apple cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully. Do not apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods. A hose end sprayer does not work very well, its

droplets are too large and you have little control over where it goes. Use a pump sprayer with a fine spray and cover both top and bottom of leaves

When checking the results on your plants after spraying remember that the spray usually will not remove the 'evidence' of problems. The webs will still be there after the mites are killed, the shells of the scale will be attached to the leaf or stem. These will have to be removed by hand, by a jet of water, or some other way. A soft toothbrush works good on the scale shells.

The humidity in summer varies quite a bit but when it sticks around for a few days look for fungal problems to appear, mildew being the most prevalent. Foliage spraying in the morning will usually not be a problem because it dries pretty quickly. Treat with potassium carbonate which you can find at any nursery with a decent organic section. There are several chemical sprays available too.

As a rule we do not feed our trees enough. Since the mix we use has very little nutrient value, we must make up with our fertilizer practice. The best "rule" I have heard was given by Matt Ouwinga who primarily grows trident maples.

Matt's rule:

- A. Apply organic fertilizer balls each 6 weeks. Discard old balls.
- B. Apply fish emulsion every two weeks.
- C. Apply liquid plant food on alternate weeks.

Many spring flowering plants will be setting buds for next years flowers. Azaleas will set their but toward the end of July. If you prune tips after that you remove the new buds.

Now that night temperatures are staying above 60 degrees you should think about repotting some of the tropicals. Most tropicals do well with an annual repotting. I would emphasize to check the wires on your trees and also see that the drains are not blocked in any way. Especially check them after a rain to be sure that your pots have drained properly. Keep the tropicals trimmed as they will be growing like crazy. However, if you want flowers on those that produce on the end of the twigs, bougianvillapomegranate-crape myrtle, you will have to forgo the bonsai shape to let them flower. These species should be pruned more drastically before the growing season starts so they can still be in a pretty good shape.

Some more words on protecting from the sun. Dappled shade would do nicely because the sun will not shine on one spot very long but partial shade (such as morning sun and afternoon shade) will not suffice when the morning sun is as hot as it is here in Texas. When you put some kind of sun screen on remember to shade the sides of the pot as well as the soil. A light mulch on top of the soil will work great. Covering the pot with foil or putting it in a box made to fit is of doubtful help but if used there should be room for air to flow around it. Old rags work fine also if they do not blow off. Try to find a cover that will let you monitor your watering easily.

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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