



# Bonsai Notebook

*A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society*

*June 2010*

## **June Programs**

by Mike Watson

What a wonderful show we just had! All of you made it a success and I am proud to have been a part of it and part of this club. Thank you all!

This month's program is one that I have been looking forward to. Many of us have boxwoods that we are cultivating into bonsai. It is an excellent species to work with and can usually yield extraordinary bonsai. One of the drawbacks is their slow growth and getting branches to bud where you need them to. For our monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 9th Joey McCoy will show us a grafting technique that will allow us to do just that. Come to the meeting to find out more!

For our member's workshop on Tuesday, June 15th we will get a chance to practice this technique ourselves. I will announce for details at the regular meeting.

## **Calendar of Events**

- June 9th ABS Monthly Meeting Reception**  
Hosts: Carl and Noreen Quisenberry, and James Costabile  
(Next months hosts: Becki Drozd and Zerita Rogers)  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm
- June 9th Boxwood Grafting with Joey McCoy**  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm
- June 11th - 13th LSBF Convention**  
Radisson Hotel North  
Ft Worth, TX
- June 15th ABS Board Meeting**  
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm
- June 15th ABS Member's Workshop**  
Boxwood Grafting Workshop  
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm
- June 26th Shohin Society of Texas Meeting**  
Persimmon Hill Bonsai 10:30 am



*A row of bonsai on display at May's annual show*

## **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).

## **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).

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

What a fantastic show we had in May! I heard so much praise from the public on the quality of Bonsai and the friendliness of our members. I'd like to thank all those who volunteered their time during the show greeting the public, selling raffle tickets, keeping an eye on the trees, answering questions and keeping everyone in a good mood. We simply couldn't have run the show without these great volunteers. Thank you to our daily demonstrators: Mike Watson and Donna Dobberfuhl. We had quite a turnout each day to watch them style. To all those who brought food and snacks, including Sheila Ward and Alisan Clarke, you helped to keep all the volunteers alert and healthy for the weekend and it was much appreciated! Big thanks go to all our members and their family and friends who helped actually put everything together on Friday and then take it all down and pack it up on Sunday; it all went together so smoothly thanks to you! We had some great volunteers who moved everything from the storage unit and then packed it away again, these include: Jimbo, Bill Boytim, Collin Murphy and David Olguin. A special thanks go to Bill for also fixing our table riser issues (which should make this part of next year's setup a breeze). I'd also like to say thank you to Mike Watson, our VP and Show Co-Chair who was at the show nearly every minute, helped to set up all the show displays, constantly kept an eye on the plants, and who was probably the last person to walk out of the building on Sunday. If I have forgotten anyone, my apologies and please know that you were appreciated! As Chuck Ware said at the end of the show when we were counting our blessings for a clear rain-free weekend, the Bonsai gods were smiling on us!

The upcoming Convention weekend of June 11-13th where all things Texas Bonsai will be celebrated is coming up very soon. Everyone of all levels are welcome to convention and there will be workshops from beginner to advanced. Many of the workshops still have openings (sign up soon!). Even if you don't take a class, the weekend is well worth it. Just the fact that there will be a huge bazaar of Bonsai goods in the Vendor room should be incentive enough! As  
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a registrant, you can still observe all the different events, take part in the amazing raffles and auctions, meet some great local, national and international artists and spend some time with Bonsai friends. I can't recommend these conventions highly enough. The LSBF convention happens once a year in a different city, but is so different year to year that really each is a once in a lifetime. Check out more information at: [www.fwbonsai.com](http://www.fwbonsai.com) and remember when booking a hotel room to ask for the discounted Bonsai rate.

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## **Urban Collecting Using a Reciprocating Saw**

by Bill Boytim

Our club has had several recent plant rescues in which the home owners wanted to get rid of hedges and other landscape plants in a relatively short time frame. Usually an email goes out to the members announcing the availability of the plants and a general timeframe when the donors want the plants removed. In one recent case approximately 30 mature Dwarf Yaupon Hollies were offered, in another case many 30 year plus Japanese Boxwoods were offered. The traditional collecting method is to dig and cut the roots with the shovel or with loppers or a hand saw. In some cases a battery powered reciprocating saw is available and depending on the battery charge may last for a few trees. Most of the above trees took approximately 30 minutes or more to dig using conventional/traditional collecting methods.



*Mature 30 year old plus Japanese Boxwoods to be removed.*

A new method was tried by the author on two recent urban plant rescues, with two other collectors. The trees collected were Yaupon Hollies and Japanese Boxwoods that were in their current locations for many years and had trunk diameters of from two to six inches plus at the base. An electric variable speed reciprocating saw with a nine inch blade was used. This was powered from a house outlet (using a ground fault outlet for safety since it was outdoors and potentially wet). We used a 12 gauge, 100 foot long extension cord to prevent voltage drop over the distance of the cord. Two types of blades were used with about equal results. One was a pruning saw blade and the other was a 6 to 7 tooth per inch wood cutting blade. Blades used were manufactured by Dewalt, Milwaukee, and Vermont American. Longer or shorter blades did not appear to work as well.

Before you use this method or any other collecting method it is very important to find out if there are any electrical wires, water lines, sewer pipes, sprinkler pipes or wiring, drip irrigation hoses, buried soaker hoses, and especially if there are any gas lines in the area that you are digging. The homeowner may be able to provide this information. If not, then look for landscape lighting fixtures, gas meters, sprinkler heads etc. to give you a clue as to any potential buried hazards. The saw does not provide the same clues as a shovel does when you are digging. Sawing on a buried rock would be the same as sawing on a metal gas pipe. A plastic sprinkler pipe or soaker hose would be cut with little effort from the saw.

A near vertical plunge cut was made about 8 to 10 inches from the base of the plant. The blade was tilted towards the roots about 30 degrees from vertical. The saw was kept 8 to 10 inches from the trunk and a circle was cut in the soil around the plant. This cut many of the surface roots. A second lap around the plant was made with the blade at more of an angle from vertical. The second collector at this point inserted their shovel at the cut line and pried the plant up. (A breaker or pry bar could also be used) The saw was then used to cut the roots that were exposed when the plant was pried up. This process left approximately six inches plus of soil under the plant. The first time this method was tried, 12 Yaupon Hollies were collected in less than one hour. Individual plant times were not

calculated. In the most recent collecting of 8 mature boxwoods (estimated to be over 30 years old) it took the author and one collector less than 30 minutes to dig the trees. The shortest time was one minute forty five seconds and the longest took four minutes thirty nine seconds from the start of the cut. Plants collected by this method were very easy to fit into a medium to large plastic garbage bag for transport. The plants collect had good roots and the vertically growing roots were later trimmed so that they would fit in a large plastic mason tray to recover.

Some lessons learned. Bring extra blades. Blades longer than nine inches tended to bind and bend more with the rocks in the soil. Shorter blades did not have enough reach to be effective in cutting the roots without doing a lot of excavating to gain access for the saw. This method may not be as effective on plants that do not have a good fibrous root system. On very large trees the distance from the trunk may have to be increased. Very rocky soils may limit the use of this method. Two last lessons learned, make sure to bring the tool that allows you to change the saw blade and run the saw at one of the higher speeds. At the low speeds the saw will give you a good shaking as the blade will bind in the cut.

Thanks to Mike Hansen, Lori Hansen and Joey McCoy for helping prepare this article and for testing this collection method.



Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Acer Palmatum*

Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Ulmus parvifolia*

Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*Rhododendron indicum*

**Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show**  
Photos by Joey McCoy



*A row of bonsai on display at May's annual show*

## ABS May Board Meeting Minutes

by Collin Murphy, Secretary

Joey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were Becki Drozd, Mike Watson, Pat Ware, Joey McCoy, Collin Murphy, and Nan Jenkins.

Pat reported our income over expenses through April was \$591.56. This includes \$74.50 in donations from the club show. There was also a total of \$228 in raffle proceeds and \$35 in book sales from the show. The total income from the show was \$337.50.

This year's Christmas part will be on our regularly scheduled Wednesday meeting, not on Saturday as it has been in years past.

Soon there will be only two sources for raffle materials for our monthly meetings. The board discussed if any changes need to be made to how we acquire and conduct raffles. One idea was to give someone \$50 each month to purchase raffle items. Another idea was to have rotating club members sponsor raffles similarly to hosting. No conclusions were made about raffles.

The Austin Bonsai Society's 40th anniversary is next year. The board discussed various ways to commemorate our 40th anniversary but no decisions were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



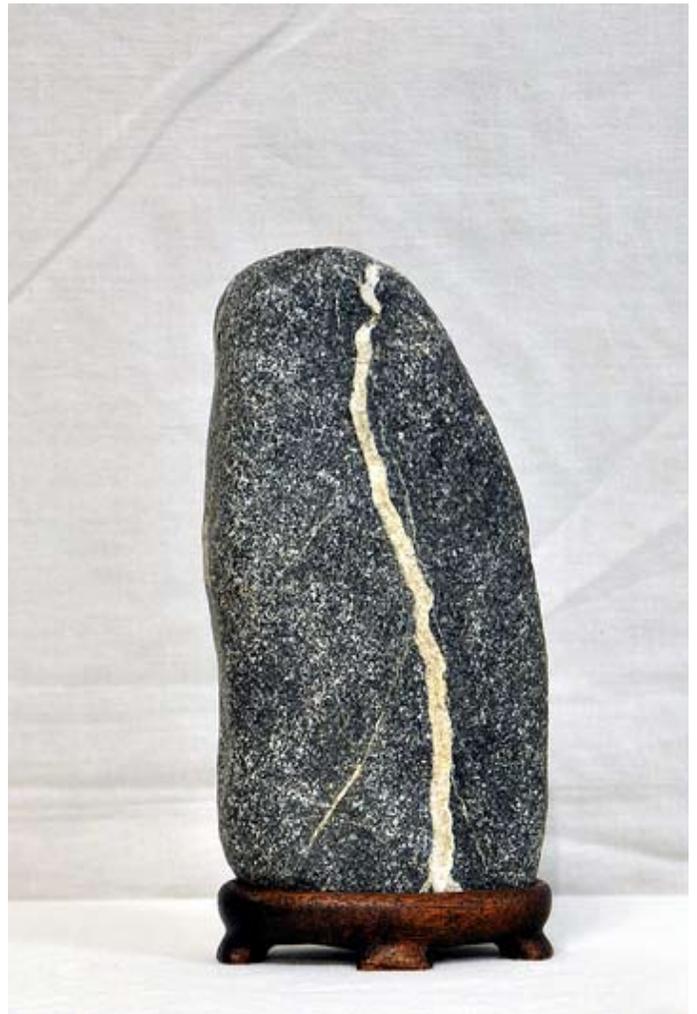
*Suiseki*

## TTSBE GARAGE SALE

*No not this month—in September, but keep us in mind as you do your Spring housecleaning! You do DO Spring housecleaning, don't you??*

*Or whenever the mood strikes to get rid of those things that you're not using!*

*We need all of your good 'ole stuff!!*



*Suiseki*

## June 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.*

Have you sent in your registration for the LSBF convention in Ft Worth yet? It is never too late and you can always register at the gate. Even one day will be well worthwhile.

Repotting season is finally over. Repotting season is now here. In general it is well past the repotting time for most bonsai. Now that night temperatures are above 60 degrees repotting the tropicals is at hand.

If ants, or any other creature, are building nests in the soil, the tunnels and cavities will prevent proper watering and result in loss of roots. After you get rid of the ants be sure to grab your chopsticks and work the soil down and eliminate any holes. You will probably need to add a little more soil on top.

Leaf defoliation should not be done any more on most species. There must be a month of growing temperatures. And never leaf prune the atropurpeum varieties of Japanese maples, they do not rebud very well but will usually come out again next spring.

However, some tropicals can be leaf pruned all summer. The Ficus nerifolia especially benefits by leaf pruning and can be done more than once each summer. That will develop the heavy twiginess you see in the Ficus bonsai from the Far East. I leaf prune my Eleagnus a month before a show if it looks ratty.

It is important to continue the twig pruning of your trees on a regular basis. While doing this chore look at the tree to see if there is a need to do some refinement pruning. Refinement pruning is a deeper pruning to replace a branch that has grown too long or too big with a smaller one. This is usually done with the secondary or tertiary branches not the primary branch coming from the trunk. I prefer to do this refinement pruning on deciduous trees in the winter when I can see the branch structure. But on bonsai like the yaupon hollies I like to do it at this time when the tree is actively growing so that any winter dieback is apparent. Trees that weep a lot from cuts such as maples or pines

should not be done at this time.

Extended cool and damp weather is good for fungal diseases like black leaf spot. Hot and humid bring other fungals like mildew. Treat with potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). After the foliage is hardened a bit you can treat with a 1% hydrogen peroxide (1 part 3% peroxide to 2 parts water) weekly.

The warmer the weather the faster the bugs grow. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. It also get any caterpillars and even bagworms. You can use some of the other organic controls like horticultural oil or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully and DO NOT apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods.

It does not do much good to spray if you do not do it correctly. Hose end sprayers have too coarse a spray and usually do not cover very good. All pathogen controls must be sprayed with a sprayer that has a nozzle which produces a fine spray in order to cover the entire leaf surface, top and bottom. You must get all them bugs or they come right back. And you need to spray on a regular basis. Any bugs or spores hiding in cracks will repeat the infestation.

Even if the days are relatively cool the sun can still get the pots pretty hot. Not only does this dry out the soil very fast but the tree roots cannot live in a hot soil. A temperature I have heard given is that 120 degrees will kill roots on most plants. 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 is preferable to solid paper as it lets you water more easily. Leave an air space between the cover and pot and soil. Do not use foil, it reflects rays back up into the underside of the leaf giving it a double dose of too much sun.

Most plants in pots will not enjoy a full day of 90 plus sun. Partial shade should be provided. A shade cloth awning will protect in the middle of the day. A shade cloth on the west side will protect from the late afternoon sun. This is the worst sun as the temperature is already high and the drier air makes the rays more intense. The trees can take more sun if the pots are covered loosely.

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There should be some air space around the sides of the pot.

Get in the habit of turning you bonsai on a regular schedule. One guy turns his a quarter turn every Monday. That way they will develop all sides evenly. This would fit in nicely with a good routine--say, rotate on Monday, spray on Wed, and fertilize on Fri (if you do not use organic fertilizer cakes).

Its been a long time since I mentioned that watering is a chore that cannot be taken for granted. You cannot safely assume that the rain did the job, trees have a way of shedding water to the outside (the drip line?). You need to check each tree daily. Watering bonsai is a twice around the block type of affair. You water thoroughly which wets the outside of the granule and needs a few minutes to break the surface tension. Then come back and water



*Kusamono Bromeliad*

## ABS May General Meeting Minutes

by Collin Murphy, Secretary

Joey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He recognized Audrey Laneir, Elaine White, and Deborah Van Cleaf for hosting.

Joey reminded everyone that this weekend is the annual show. Sign up forms for various responsibilities are available at the sign-in table. Parking passes are available for volunteers.

Setup begins on Friday at 5 p.m and lasts until 9 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help with setup. Pizza will be provided. You can bring trees during that time.

The LSBF convention is next month (June). Trees are needed for the LSBF display also. Contact Joey if you have a tree you would like to display.

Joey then introduced Mike Watson who thanked everyone who brought trees, stands, scrolls, and accent plants for the evening's program. He then introduced Terry Ward who gave an excellent presentation on formal bonsai display.

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## Bonsai Calendar

**LSBF Convention**

**Roy Nagatoshi Demonstration**

**Roy Nagatoshi Workshop**

**Kathy Shaner Demonstration**

**St Louis Shohin Seminar**

**Ft Worth, TX**

**ABS General Meeting**

**ABS Members Workshop**

**ABS General Meeting**

**Collinsville, IL**

**June 11 - 13, 2010**

**September 8, 2010, 7:30 p.m.**

**September 7, 2010, 7:00 p.m.**

**October 13, 2010, 7:30 p.m.**

**May 20 - 22, 2011**

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

