



Bonsai Notebook

www.austinbonsaisociety.com

A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

May 2011 vol 5

May 2011 Programs by Collin Murphy

Our annual show this year is Memorial Day weekend, May 28th and 29th, less than five weeks away. How are your trees and accent plants looking? During April's workshop we created several nice accent plants I hope survive for the show. Be thinking about timing when pruning a tree for our show. A tree pruned in early May need one additional pruning before the show because everything is growing so vigorously now.

On **Wednesday, May 11th** Terry Ward will give a program on creating formal bonsai displays. Although you may have seen this program last year, we usually hear this kind of information only once per year and it's usually forgotten a year later. In order for a successful program, bring your trees, accent plants, stands and scrolls to Wednesday's meeting. Trees do not have to be show ready but should be close - all major pruning done, no weeds and in a suitable pot. During the program we'll create different formal bonsai displays using the material people bring in.

The workshop on **Tuesday, May 17th** will be an open workshop. Bring in a tree for last-minute touch-ups before our show, or bring in a tree you pick up at the LSBF convention (you're registered for the convention, aren't you?)

Finally, we need volunteers for our show. The work will be the same as previous years. We'll need people to help load and transport backdrops from our storage facility in North Austin on Friday, setup the show Friday evening, serve as docents on Saturday and Sunday, and then break everything down on Sunday afternoon. Sign-up sheets will be available during May's general meeting.

Calendar of Events

May 11th ABS Monthly Meeting Reception

**Hosts: Sheila Ward,
Phina & Marlon Chen
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 pm**

May 11th ABS Monthly Meeting

**Creating Formal Bonsai Displays
with Terry Ward
Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

May 17th ABS Board Meeting

Zilker Garden Center 7:00 - 7:30 pm

**May 17th ABS Member's Workshop
Workshop - Open**

**Last-Minute Touch-Ups
Zilker Garden Center 7:30 - 9:00 pm**



Mike Watson's presentation at our April 2011 Meeting

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.

John Muller is the editor of "Bonsai Notebook". He may be contacted at jcm2austx@sprintmail.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.

President's Message by Mike Watson

As I write this I am also on a jet flying back from my week-long visit to Japan. While I was there I had the chance to visit some amazing bonsai nurseries and see some very inspirational bonsai and suiseki exhibits at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum. As beautiful as they all were, it's nice to be back in Austin in time for the very eventful month ahead. Yes, May is going to be very exciting for us bonsai lovers!

First off, we have our club program with Terry Ward. It is always a pleasure to attend his bonsai exhibit program and even more of an education to hear his insights as to the "do's and don'ts" of exhibiting our trees.

The weekend after that, we have the Corpus Christi convention. This is going to be a real blast for all who attend! If you haven't registered yet I highly recommend you do so soon. There are some great workshops scheduled but the open seats are disappearing fast!

Finally, during Memorial Day weekend, we will have our annual club show. I can't even begin to tell you all how much fun this event is. If you've taken part in the "behind the scenes" in the past years then you know what I mean. If you haven't then, do yourself a favor and volunteer for the setup and tear down. Talking about bonsai, reading about bonsai, attending workshops and lectures, etc. are all wonderful things but remember, bonsai is first and foremost an art. Setting up trees at a show or exhibit is really where the rubber meets the road. Displaying bonsai to show their most interesting aspects is the ultimate achievement. Taking part in a show is the absolute best way to learn this. Also, volunteering to be a docent at the show is another fast track to improving your knowledge of this art form. Please consider giving a little of your time to help out. You will be glad you did!

ABS April General Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2011

By Nan Jenkins, Secretary

President Mike Watson called the meeting to order at 7:45 and thanked Zerita Rogers, Elaine White and Audrey Lanier for the tasty refreshments.

Deb Van Cleef introduced a returning member, Valerie Morris.

Elaine White reminded members of the Wire Collection Project of TTSBE. Our next meeting will be the last time to bring in wire to be weighed at the state convention.

There were fliers available for members to put up to tell people about our annual exhibit in May. Everyone was encouraged to take some to place in businesses in your area.

The quarterly Shohin Society meeting will be 10:30 Saturday, April 15th at Terry and Sheila Ward's.

Mike Watson is collecting money for earthquake and tsunami relief for Japan. The collection jar was at the registration table.

Convention registration early bird sign up ends on April 23rd. Mike passed out a sheet of names of people who are eligible for the new talent contest at the convention and asked those interested in the contest to check their name. ABS will provide registration money for the person selected by the board.

Our exhibit will be Saturday and Sunday, May 28 and 29, with setup on Friday evening. We will

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sign up for needed projects and help with the exhibition next month.

Mike Watson led a discussion and program on Kusamono ("grass thing") or Shitakusa ("under grass") that are our accent plants. It was an informative and helpful presentation.

Colin led the raffle, and all items were raffled off.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03.

JADE GARDENS

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Chuck & Pat Ware

Owners

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e-mail: bonsaijg@gmail.com

web page: <http://www.bonsaiexhibittexas.com>

12404 Ranch Road 12

Wimberley, TX 78676

(512) 847-2514

Bonsai Calendar

LSBF Convention

Corpus Christi

May 14 - 15, 2011

St Louis Shohin Seminar

Collinsville, IL

May 20 - 22, 2011

<http://www.stlbonsai.org/events.htm>

Austin Bonsai Society Annual Show

May 28 - 29, 2011

Know of an upcoming Bonsai event of interest to club members? Send the details to jcm2austx@sprintmail.com

ABS April Board Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2011

Present: Collin Murphy, Joey McCoy, Pat Ware, Becki Drozd and John Muller.

Call to Order 7:06

The Minutes for March were approved as published in the Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report:

Income over expenses was \$580.37, as of March 31st .

Committee Report:

The Convention for 2013 is going to be shared with San Antonio, and Austin will take the lead. Planning will need to start soon for the location and other activities.

A need for donation at our Show is being requested. We need 10 – 12 items.

Old Business:

Becki Drozd will be the ABS representative the Convention in the Emerging Artist Competition.

As mentioned in last month's Newsletter, vendors will be participating at the ABS Show, which is May 28 – 29, 2011. Currently four (4) tables have been spoken for by three (3) vendors.

New Business:

The dates of ABS Show and Christmas Event for 2012, using Zilker Gardens, are being requested.

Move to Adjourn – 7:40

Respectfully submitted by John Muller, acting Secretary

Accent Plants was the Subject of the April Meeting



April ABS Activities

(Photos by Joey McCoy)

The Accent Plant Workshop

The Beginning - Taking Stock



The Process and Transformation



The Finished Products



April ABS Workshot Activities

(Photos by Joey McCoy)

May 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.

Last month I forgot one of Mark Bynums rules when rotating bonsai. Do all the bonsai at one time, then do your watering. That way you don't forget some. An aid might be to put a marker in the same position in all pots, then you will immediately see any that got missed.

Three new tasks present themselves this month, repotting tropicals, leaf pruning and keeping roots cool.

The hot sun shining on the pot, especially the dark colored ones, can raise the temperature to the point of killing the roots. Especially sensitive are the nice growing tips at the edge of the rootball next to the pot. If the pot feels hot to your hand think about how the roots feel, after all they are living things too. These temperatures can be kept lower by shading the pot with any porous material. Putting sphagnum on the surface is good but the sides need to be protected too. Do not use any solid material like newspaper on the surface of the soil as it will cause you watering problems. And speaking of watering problems do not rely on rainfall to water for you, some plants shed the water to the outside. You must check them yourself.

Leaf pruning is the cutting off of many or all of the leaves in order to induce a new flush of growth similar to the growth after breaking dormancy. Sometimes the excuse is made that you get two seasons of growth. However if you do the proper trimming during the growth phase the plant is continuing to produce the division

of twigs necessary for ramification and the stress of leaf removal is unnecessary. The real justification for leaf pruning is to replace old or damaged leaves with a newer set that will be prettier in a show or in the fall.

A tree being subjected to leaf pruning must be healthy and vigorous. Weak trees will have problems coping with the stress. The pruning must be done while there is still a month of good growing weather left meaning before the end of May in the D-FW area. The tree should be fertilized a few days before pruning. When pruning defoliate strong branches fully while leaving some leaves on weak branches. Usually interior branches will benefit by having their foliage kept on. When the leaves are off you can check the branches for undesirable characteristics. Cut vertical growing, hanging, or crossing branches. Leave any major work for next fall. After this work watch your watering, the tree will not use nearly as much water as when in full leaf so do not overwater. When growth starts get you tweezers out and keep up with the trimming. Do not let the new shoots get long internodes.

When the night temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees you can start thinking about repotting those tropicals. They need the warmth for good root growth. Remember that the warmer temperatures and spring winds will cause the roots to dry quickly so have a spray bottle or some damp cloths handy. Keep them shaded until they recover.

The old methods were to repot azaleas after they finished blooming thinking that the tree needed nutrients from the roots for their blossoms. The newer thoughts are that the plant has all the necessary nutrients available in the bud and to repot the azaleas in the spring while they are still dormant. If you repot after blooming, do

not remove as much soil and keep them shaded until they recover and are growing well. I am now recommending that you use Kanuma soil for your azaleas. The first year I bought some I ran an experiment. Using azalea cuttings of the same size age etc I planted some in kanuma and some in my regular mix. They were grown side by side under shade cloth receiving the same light water fertilizer etc. The ones in the kanuma were much happier and grew nearly twice as much as the others. The only plausible explanation I can come up with is that the kanuma retains a large quantity of water while at the same time has a lot of air in the soil thereby giving a humid medium for the roots without being overly wet.

Insects are waiting for a chance to get hold of some well fed and very tasty snacks. If you give them half a chance they will move into your bonsai almost overnight and are usually hard to spot until damage shows up. The most prevalent ones are aphids, spider mites, and scale. Leaf miners and various caterpillars will sneak in too. I use the organic foliar spray (1 tablespoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, molasses, and apple cider vinegar in one gallon of water) to control all these. Gary Marchal once said that he has changed from the Safer soap insecticides to using horticultural oil spray the year around. Note that the horticultural oil spray is a more refined and lighter version of the old dormant oil spray that could only be used in the dormant season. Do not use oils on those species such as the buttonwood that have a sensitivity to oil. If in doubt please read the label on the product you wish to use.

A problem I had not had until I moved to the country is a leaf gall on elms. The gall is much worse on the native american elm than the others. Damage is supposed to be cosmetic only. It

is caused by a mite. The best control would be to use a horticultural oil during winter dormancy. It seems to only appear on the early growth.

Treat for fungal problems too. Leaf spot, mildew, and such can be treated by using potassium bicarbonate obtainable from any good nursery. A substitute would be sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). Use one tablespoon per gallon as a spray and be sure to cover both sides of the leaf. The organic people say it is ok to use these products together with the foliar spray but I would just as soon use them separately because the bicarbonate (base) reacts with the vinegar (acid) and only a few (elms and hollies) at my place need the fungicide treatment anyway. An interesting possible treatment for fungus problems by used both organic gardeners and holistic medicine is cornmeal tea. If you know anything about it I would appreciate hearing.

Keep the moss from growing on the trunks where it damages the bark. Spray with a vinegar but keep it off the trees foliage.

Go to the convention in Corpus and enjoy sharing your hobby with like nuts. I would suggest you sit at a table with members of another club, they are really very nice people and sometimes you make some good contacts too.

See you there

LSBF (Lone Star Bonsai Federation), of which all members of the Austin Bonsai Society are members, has a website which might help members understand the organization better.

Please go to: <http://www.bonsai-lsbf.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 \$30.00 for an individual and \$35.00 for a family membership.

For additional information, please contact the Austin Bonsai Society at P.O. Box 340474, Austin, Texas 78734

