



Bonsai Notebook

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A Publication of the Austin Bonsai Society

July 2024 vol 166

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Calendar of Events

July 10, 2024

- ◆ Topic: Texas Ebony
- ◆ Presenter: Mike Lane
- ◆ Time: 6:30pm (Social) 7:00pm (Meeting)
- ◆ Location: Zilker Botanical Garden

July 16, 2024

- ◆ Board Meeting

July 27, 2024

- ◆ Topic: BYOT - Tropical Repot and Wiring
- ◆ Time: 1 - 4pm
- ◆ Location: MBP

2024 Board of Directors

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Refreshments
Ever R.
Gustavo R.

Tree Hosts
Greg S.

President's Message

By Jonathan W.

The extreme heat has been at the forefront of the past several weeks. These tiny trees in tiny pots can encounter all kinds of difficulties resulting from high temperatures and UV rays. I've learned a few things over the years about the practice of bonsai in Central Texas. First item: If the sun on my skin feels like it is burning me... I take pause to consider how my maple tree leaves, bonsai surface roots, and clay bonsai pots may be experiencing that kind of scorching ray. If I'm immediately wanting to get relief from the hot sun and move myself into dappled shade – most of my tree species are likely feeling the same way. Let's also not forget how the lower late afternoon rays can shoot sideways under shaded areas and bake the sides of pots. If my hand doesn't feel comfortable touching or holding my bonsai pot or the stand beneath the pot... roots are probably going through some severe distress as well. Common solutions are: shade cloth, natural shade trees, relocation in the garden, various damp cloths, sphagnum moss, and other special items like styrofoam to place over the pots and/or soil to limit excessive sun and drying heat. My savior last summer, which I'm implementing again this year, has been to run a full-garden supplemental sprinkler 2x per day to cool down the whole bonsai garden and provide intermittent humidity and moisture between waterings. Also many of my trees are no longer in the sun, but relocated to dappled shade until temperatures are lower again. The evaporative cooling has provided quite a bit of heat reduction in my bonsai garden during the heat wave. Each garden is different and what works for one person may not be ideal for your trees, but it is good to try various methods to see what works best for your own collection. If you spend 9 or 10 hours away from home between waterings, it may be best to supplement with some kind of sprinkler and shadier location until the heat wave subsides. I think one year we had several weeks over 100 degrees in parts of Texas and the trees needed special consideration to endure that kind of chronic heat.

Can't be said enough... Welcome, welcome, welcome, to our new members! Reach out and say hi! Keep coming to 2nd Wednesday meetings and future workshop events to get to know future friends and mentors in the bonsai art. Maybe even bring a friend or two who takes interest in bonsai to Wednesday meetings from time to time.

Also, we are always looking for folks to help set-up and take down/clean up at our monthly events so feel free to pitch in any time.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Wood, ABS President

Bonsai quote:

" Bonsai to me: a little tree in a container that touches my soul. If it speaks to my soul much, it is bonsai art. It does not matter at all how it does it, as long as it does it." - Walter Pall, Master Bonsai Artist

Vice President's Message

By Eric B.

Hello again, everyone! I hope you are all staying cool in the heat and humidity, and keeping your trees happy too. On that topic, here are some tips to help your trees cope with the heat.

- Reduce the amount of nitrogen fertilizer provided to the trees when temperatures reach 100+ degrees.
- For most trees, no pruning or major wiring until temperatures cool down a bit.
- Move trees away from fences, walls or other structures that reflect light and heat.
- Shade cloth can be a literal life-saver for your trees.
- Shade the pots with aluminum foil to help keep the roots from getting too hot (roots can start dying when soil temperature reaches 104°), especially on smaller trees/pots. You could just lean some boards against the pots to shade them from the sun. Get creative, and remember: if it seems stupid but works, then it's not actually stupid.
- Use larger trees to provide shade for smaller trees.

Bury smaller trees' pots in soil in a larger pot, up to the rim of the bonsai pot. The larger pot retains more moisture and the roots will grow into the larger pot. I use just regular nursery pots, and regular potting soil. Any roots that grow into the larger pot will be removed anyway, so why use expensive bonsai soil? That said, 100% pumice also works well.

Most of these tips don't apply to tropicals, which can be worked all summer (within reason). But, a bit of shade cloth, moving trees away from light-reflecting surfaces, and possibly misting are still good things for tropicals, under the angry Texas summer sun.

I was really saddened (and more than a bit annoyed) by having to cancel the June meeting due to traffic issues caused by Blues on the Green. We are looking into ways to have a backup plan in case this happens again next year. Currently the plan is to have Brandon visit in October rather than doing the scheduled BYOT night. I will provide more details in a future newsletter.

The Basic Air Layering workshop on June 22 was well-attended, and many air layers were started. We did about 12 or so air layers, on cedar elm, american elm, tiger bark ficus, Japanese boxwood, crape myrtle, Japanese maple, and Chinese fringe flower. Part II of the workshop is in August, when we will check the air layers, and possibly separate any that are ready. Fingers crossed that they all take!

For our July meeting we have visiting artist Mike Lane returning for a demo. Mike will be working on a Texas Ebony. Mike is fun and energetic, so this should be a great evening! The tree will of course be offered in the raffle at the end of the night.

July's workshop is Tropical Repotting and Wiring, at MBP Bonsai Studio (601 Kay Ln., Pflugerville). The workshop will be on Saturday, July 27, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Bring in a tropical tree or two and get help repotting and/or wiring, while you help others with their trees, too. The fee is \$10.

Vice President's Message

By Eric B.

In August we have a visit from Texas artist David Whittaker. David will be doing an ambitious program of not one, not two, but THREE cascade bonsai! He will do 2 larger trees (a Green Island ficus and a Dwarf Jade), and a shohi-sized Pink Pixie bougainvillea. One of the trees will be put into the raffle at the end of the meeting, while the other two will be offered in the club's annual auction in September. We will take an informal vote at the August meeting to determine which tree will be placed in the raffle that night.

August's workshop is, as mentioned above, Part II of the air layering workshop. If you attended Part I, you are already signed up for Part II. The fee for Part II is \$5. Please bring tools, pots, soil, and other supplies to pot your air layers, if they are ready.

Thanks, everyone, and I'll see you on the 10th!

ABS Board Meeting Minutes

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discussion



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Date: June 18, 2024

Location: Virtual

Meeting Attendees:

- ◆ Eric (Vice President)
- ◆ Simon (Secretary)
- ◆ Members-At-Large
 - Ever
 - Judith
 - Dash

President:

- ◆ N/A

Vice President:

- ◆ Discussed Mike Lane visit
- ◆ Talked about programs and preparation for the rest of the year

Secretary:

- ◆ Meeting starts at 7:33pm
- ◆ Last report was accepted without edits

Treasurer:

- ◆ Provide financial updates and balances

Meeting adjourned at **8:08 pm**

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 7/10/ 24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/ Demo	Guest Artist : Mike Lane , Florida https://mikelannesshoh-instudio.wordpress.com/ https://www.kitsunebonsai.com/	Bonsai Pro Mike Lane is sure to bring a wealth of expert knowledge as he demonstrates bonsai techniques on a special tree that will be raffled.	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 7/27/ 24	WORKSHOP	ABS Club members lead this workshop event	BYOT Tropical Repotting and Styling Work - help available for paid club members. 1:00PM -4:00PM RSVP for materials and headcount to: Jebenson99@gmail.com	MBP BONSAI STUDIO 601 Kay Ln Pflugerville, TX 78660	\$10 approx
WED 8/14/ 24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/ Demo	Guest Artist : David Whittaker	Guest Artist program - Styling of 3 different cascade bonsai: Jade with wide trunk, Green Island Ficus, Shohin Pink Pixie Bougainvillea	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
WED 8/24/ 24	WORKSHOP	Eric Benson (ABS Club Member)	Air-layering Part 2 - See the results! Air-layer removal, potting, aftercare TIME: TBD RSVP for materials and headcount to: Jebenson99@gmail.com	11807 North Oaks Dr., Austin (Please RSVP by email for headcount)	Bring Your Own Soil, pot, etc. for air layer transplanting.

Bonsai Calendar – Looking Ahead

Date	Event Type	Artist / Presenter	Topic	Location	Approx Member Cost
WED 9/11/24	CLUB MEETING - Presentation/Demo	Special Event Details Coming Soon!	Program Details Coming Soon!	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome
SAT 9/21/24	BONSAI AUCTION EVENT	Members donate bonsai, tools, supplies, pots, stands, books etc	Fundraiser Auction for Austin Bonsai Society - funds for Guest Artists / Lectures/Demos etc Approx Time: 10:00AM , see future schedule for details	Anderson Mill Garden Club Center Approx 10:00AM 13974 FM2769, Volente, TX 78641	Auction items needed – Generous Bidding Appreciated! Thank you!!
WED 10/9/24	CLUB MEETING - WORKSHOP	Member Guided	BYO Tree - 3 stations around the room. Major styling, Refinement, and-Wiring assistance	Zilker Botanical Garden Center 2220 Barton Springs Rd Austin, TX	donation table items welcome

July Bonsai

by John Miller

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 use 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 f lowers. 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, bougainvillea pomegranate-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.

Reminder for club membership and advertisement

2024 membership fee

Individual	\$35.00
Family	\$40.00
Newsletter monthly advertisements:	\$35.00
Directory advertisement:	\$11.00

You may contact payments.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com for convenient electronic payment options (processing fee will be added).

Reminder: 2023 CLUB MEMBERSHIP FEE AMOUNT INCREASE

Beginning in January 2023, ABS will charge an annual membership fee of \$35 for an individual and \$40/couple pursuant to the vote taken by the ABS Board on May 17, 2022, the discussion by attendees at the June 22 ABS meeting, the newsletter announcement dated June and July, 2022 and the regular meeting vote taken on July 13, 2022. Fees for electronic payments will be added to those amounts.

Memberships are annual and need to be renewed each year by the end of February in order to receive a copy of the 2023 Directory.

New/Renewed Members

Wyatt S.

Morgan B.

Recruiting Authors

With a nod of respect to John Miller, who has been diligently writing monthly columns for our newsletter, we would also like to take this time to invite interested members with knowledge and experiences of local Austin conditions to write articles for beginners and potential aspirants keen on raising bonsai. The Bonsai Notebook is looking for a new voice to author a column providing helpful reminders and tips dedicated to caring for bonsai. Be it a monthly routine or winter procedures, we'd like to welcome new perspectives and experiences to be shared in this newsletter. If interested, please contact: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com.

A warm thank you to John Miller for writing the latest columns. Even I, as the editor, may have taken these last months for granted and have been reminded that life is a charming companion that deserves to be appreciated every day. Thank you for your helpful words!

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P.O. Box 340474
Austin, Texas 78734



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About Us

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.

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

Email: webmaster.austinbonsaisociety@gmail.com