

TEXAS BONSAI



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The Lone Star Bonsai Federation, Inc.

Winter — 2009

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Yvonne Padilla

That was fast! I mean the year of 08 going by so fast. I can't believe it is over. I find the older I get the faster the days and months go by. Oh well, I am just glad to be here. I hope everyone had a very Happy New Year and all of your bonsai are healthy.

It is hard to tell what kind of weather we are going to have for the next two and a half months in this part of Texas. I have all my trees "wintered" in but the weather changes from day to day in South Texas. One day it is 80 degrees and the next it could be 34 degrees. However it is better than the weather in the northern part of the U.S. I am ready for Spring to arrive so I can start repotting. I mixed soil this pasted October and for a change I am ready.

I hope everyone is planning to attend the 2009 State Convention hosted by LSBF and the Houston Bonsai Society. It is scheduled for April 16th-19th at the Marriott, West Chase. The registration forms should be out soon. I think there will be a big rush for the workshops. The Houston Club has selected some wonderful plant material for the workshops. They also have top quality artists, Boone Manakitivipart, Roy Nagatoshi and Milagros Rauber Herrera from Venezuela. I know the economy is not the best at this time, but the price of gasoline has gone down and it is fun to car pool with friends. See everyone in April.

Yvonne



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Readers are invited to submit articles and photographs on bonsai culture and related subjects for possible publication to the Editor. If requested, all materials will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed, stamped envelope. Authors are requested not to simultaneously submit the same article(s) to other publications.

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Bonsai Apex Building

by: Harry Harrington
BONSAI4ME.com

The very top branches of a bonsai are known as the apex. In a mature field-growing tree and a bonsai the apex is seen to be a broad dome of foliage above the rest branch structure.

Whilst building and shaping the branches of a bonsai is frequently described in bonsai literature and is therefore reasonably well understood, apex building, or the formation of the apex, is rarely described and can be difficult to style.

What is the Apex?

It must be understood that the apex is a general term that describes the upper branches and silhouette or shape of the top of the tree. It is part of the branch structure of the tree and not a separate entity that just sits on top of the trunk.

A common fault in bonsai styling in past years has been that the apex has been visibly separated from the rest of the branch structure by a visible gap or band in the foliage. Fortunately, this does seem to be a thing of the past!

The one thing that nearly all bonsai apices have in common is a broad, dome-shaped apex. This is reminiscent of a mature tree; a narrow, pointed apex is normally illustrative of a young tree and should be avoided in bonsai.

Apex building should depend on whether the bonsai is deciduous or coniferous and the style of the bonsai; whether it is naturalistic (realistic) or abstract (styled like a Pine).

Building the apex of a classical, abstract or 'Pine Style' bonsai

This category contains deciduous and broadleaf trees structured in the classical or abstract style. That is, they have largely near-horizontal branches with clearly defined foliage pads.



For trees in this style it is usual to build what is described by John Naka as a 'tree upon a tree'.



The abstract-style apex cannot be used on bonsai styled with natural, upward growing branching.

Building the apex of a naturalistic, contemporary and naturally-styled deciduous bonsai

This category contains deciduous and broadleaf trees that are naturalistic, that is, they are styled and structured to look like a natural deciduous or broadleaf trees.





The uppermost branches grow at upward angles and fan out above the top of the trunk to create the apex and the crown of the tree.



The natural apex style can be used with success on classical, abstract or 'Pine Style' bonsai.

Coniferous Bonsai

This category includes Pines, Junipers, Spruce and similar species that are naturally seen growing in the 'Pine Style' with horizontal branching and clean foliage pads.

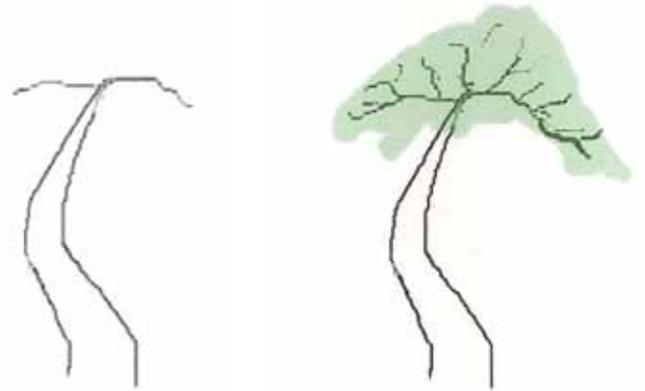
Unlike deciduous species that are in the 'Pine Style', the apex should be built with less (primary) branches growing from the trunk itself. One advantage with building the coniferous apex is that the branches are never bare and the structure is



The easiest way to build a coniferous apex is using the 'T-bar branch'.

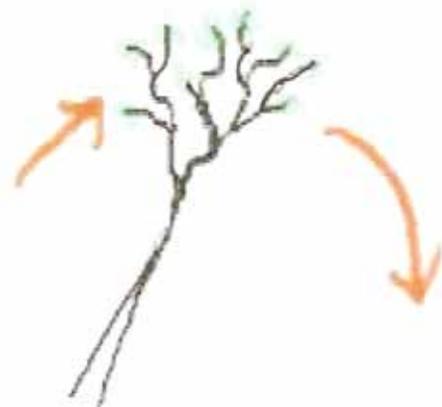
One or two branches at the very top of the trunk are allowed to grow as a (T) bar-branch. Smaller secondary shoots

and foliage is encouraged to grow along the length of the T-bar branch to create a dome of foliage.



The apex of a coniferous tree should not be built from the wheel-spoke branches that are often seen growing on a pine. An apex built this way will suffer with inverse taper at the top of the trunk and will tend to have a bald patch in the middle of the apex.

A more satisfying and possibly more contemporary approach, is to use a small group of secondary branches near the top of the trunk and 'layer' them into a pad of foliage; each individual branch and the overall foliage pad must be kept lighter than any other branching on the tree. This method of 'layering' the apex of a coniferous tree is very often seen used on deadwood or heavily carved trunks and bonsai that are styled using only one or two primary branches.





THE TEXAS STATE BONSAI EXHIBIT

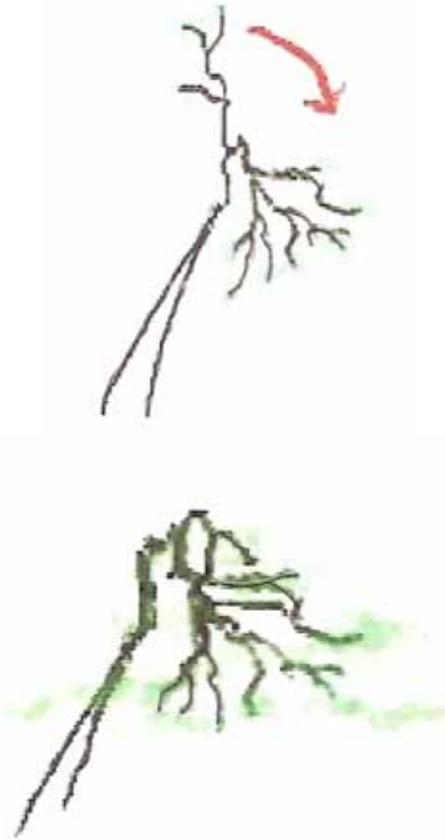
Dear Texas Bonsai Friends,

We 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 world class Bonsai on display, it might be your prized Bonsai that you have cherished for so long on display. You might need specific information about a tree from the extensive library or information about other clubs in Texas and a means of contacting them. The museum will house not only Oriental art, but also a specific collection of American Bonsai pottery. The library will have the history of each club in Texas recorded but also biographies and autobiographies of longtime Bonsai members as part of the history.

THE MISSION: To establish a world class Bonsai exhibit in Texas. It has been eight years since TTSBE was founded. Members have met once a month. The directors have accomplished much and laid the foundation of your organization. The directors have contacted over 35 different organizations looking for appropriate land and finally the decision was made to purchase land for the exhibit if we were to move forward.

WE HAVE THE LAND - PLEASE HELP TO DEVELOP THE BONSAI GARDEN.

YOU can donate a specific amount every year in several different ways. Encourage your **CLUB** to donate a specific amount each year. You can encourage your **LSBF** representative to donate each year. Put very plainly, the sustainability is needed in order to succeed. We are so very grateful to all of the volunteers that keep everyone informed about **HOW** the garden is progressing, not only the club representatives, but the newsletter editors. What a great gift of **TIME, TALENT, MONEY** and **COMMITMENT** all the Directors have given to make it possible for The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit to have progressed so far. Your Gifts in any category will be gratefully received and noted in the history of the garden.



The Shape and Direction of the Apex

The apex should have implied direction that reflects the implied direction of the tree.

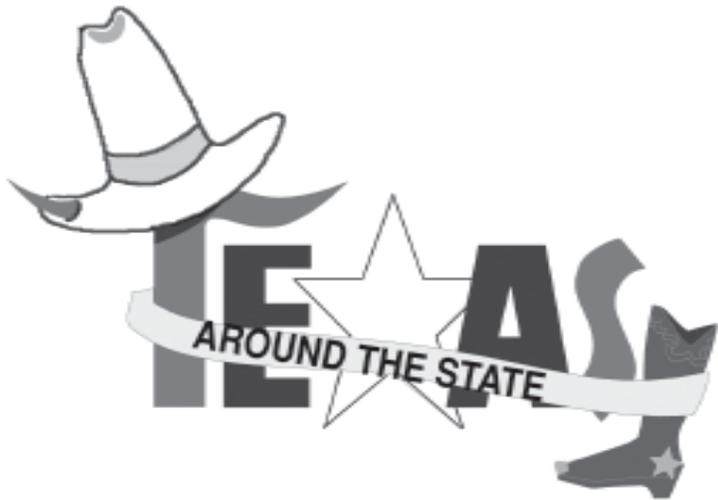
The apex has a roughly irregular triangular shape- that is, one side of the rounded apex slopes more gently than the other. The side with the steeper slope is said to indicate the direction that the tree is facing (toward the sun).

This direction is nearly always facing the same direction as the bonsai's first branch. That is; if the first branch faces left then the apex should also face left.

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Thank you, Elaine White, Vice-Chairman, TTSBE
Website: www.ttsbe.org



Photographs by Joey McCoy



Ficus - *Ficus nerifolia*



Bougainvillea brazilinensis 'Pink'



Bougainvillea brazilinensis 'Pink'



Uncarina roeoesliana



Natal Plum - *Carissa macrocarpa*



Dwarf Yaupon Holly - *Ilex vomitoria nana*



Emerald Green Ficus - *Ficus microcarpa*



PROMOTING ROT IN BONSAI

by: Harry Harrington
BONSAI4ME.com

Note: Since writing this article I have also published a related guide to creating artificial wounds (uro) to hide large wounds. The article should be read alongside this one to offer the enthusiast an alternative method.

Finding rotten areas of wood on a bonsai can often be an enthusiasts' worst nightmare. Rotten wood found within the base of the trunk is weak and often rapidly disintegrates, eating away at the physical and visual foundation of the tree. The resulting large unsightly holes can severely weaken the structure of the trunk and, if only one side of the base of the trunk is affected, can create reverse taper.

Despite these potential problems with rot, this article discusses some of the merits of promoting certain areas of a tree to rot.

This is a technique that allows the enthusiast to create more natural looking features on a tree by harnessing qualities created by the natural breakdown of wood due to continual contact with moisture. It is especially useful for masking large scars on trees that are either difficult or unlikely to heal completely.



This Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) has had two large branches (relative to the diameter of the trunk) removed.

Hawthorns are very slow to heal so this wound could take many years to heal fully.



As can be seen from these images, the branches have been pruned back to stubs and then encouraged to rot. Once the wood has started to rot, the soft fibres have been carefully removed leaving behind the harder fibres of wood that have yet to begin to break down.



In this example, this yamadori Hawthorn has a naturally created root jin. On collection of the tree, the protruding



root was found to be dead and had rotted up to a point very close to the trunk; all the soft, pulpy wood was carefully removed and the remaining stable areas sealed with woodhardener to create a very natural looking jin. If the root had been removed entirely, the resulting scar could have taken many years to heal and it is unlikely that the colour of the healed bark would have ever matched that of the surrounding area. (Note that the root pictured is just over an inch in diameter)

An additional advantage to this technique is that tree species with naturally hard wood can be difficult to carve effectively or sensitively, even with power tools. By encouraging the wood to rot and soften first, manipulation of the wood is far easier. Ordinarily, the fresh wood of hardwood species can take many years to rot if simply left to the elements. To encourage the wood to rot, it must be exposed to continual moisture for at least six months.

I have found that by anchoring fresh sphagnum moss to the area that is to be rotted, the wood is kept continually moist and rotting is greatly encouraged. It is then simply a case of ensuring that the pad of sphagnum moss is dampened every time the tree is watered. The addition of some peat or other moisture retentive material is a useful addition or alternative.



This tree has a very large wound at the top of its trunk where it had been chopped by workmen building a fence, 10 years prior to its collection. The wound had started to rot in places and this had spread downwards into the trunk. At over 4" wide, the likelihood of the opening fully healing is very unlikely so instead, the wound is being opened up to create a hollow trunk.

Areas of very hard wood have been drilled to allow deeper penetration of moisture; this also allows lengths of wire to be inserted into the trunk to anchor the moss. On a regular basis the moss is removed and any newly softened wood removed to keep a strict check on the progress of the rot.

Using this technique has little danger to this particular tree (see additional notes below) the previously damaged cambium has fully sealed many years ago and the rot is not able to penetrate into live wood; it only breaks down wood that is already dead. Once the necessary amount of wood has been successfully removed from the interior of the trunk, the remainder will be fully sealed and protected from any future unwanted rotting.



Important Additional Notes

>Encouraging wood to rot is an unpredictable technique. If a very small specific area needs to be broken down or a certain pattern or ridge on the deadwood area is to be retained, use an alternative method of carving.

>Use only on hardwood species and never on softwood species, particularly those that are ordinarily prone to problems with rot such as Fig, Bougainvillea, Elms, Fuchsia and most tropical species. I have successfully carried out this technique on hardwood species such as Crataegus, Quercus, Taxus and Cedrus. The spread of rot on softwood trees can be too fast and difficult to halt.

>Only use on species of tree that you are familiar with, already understanding the nature of its wood and with which you know you can halt the continued spread of rot.

> Never use on any part of a tree that will be in permanent contact with moisture (particularly soil) in the future. Exposed/deadwood areas of a tree in permanent contact with the soil are already very vulnerable to rotting. Use only on areas that can be successfully allowed to dry in the future.

>Check all areas regularly to check on the progress of the rot.

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Buttonwood - *Conocarpus erectus*

LONE STAR BONSAI FEDERATION MEETING AGENDA

Saturday January 17, 2009 Time: 1:00p.m.

LOCATION:

We will be meeting at a different location, please make note of the email I am forwarding to you from Pat Ware. The new location is the Redbud Center, Room 225, across the street from the previous meeting place.

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL of MINUTES
2. TREASURER'S REPORT
3. OLD BUSINESS

CONVENTION REPORTS

- a. Buddy Allen: 2009
- b. Steven Hendricks: 2010

LSBF VISITING ARTIST:

- a. Versie Marks: 2009
- b. Visiting Artists: 2010

ADMISSION OF BORDERING STATE BONSAI CLUBS:

Yvonne Padilla: Insurance

4. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Yvonne Padilla: LSBF Notebook hand outs and discussion of Notebook
- b. Updating the Texas Bonsai Artist List
- c. Updating Bonsai Sources



Lone Star Bonsai Federation Meeting Minutes October 11, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by President, Yvonne Padilla.

Approval of the Minutes

Yvonne called for any changes to the minutes of the last meeting. Buddy Allen asked that the figure of \$460 for Hagedorn airfare be changed to \$587. A motion was made and carried to approve the minutes as amended.

Treasurer's Report

Pat Ware distributed the Treasurer's report. She reported a deposit of \$2,288.43 as LSBF's profit from the recent LSBF/ABS Convention in San Antonio. The total listed on the Treasurer's report does not include the current LSBF newsletter expenses nor the Visiting Artist expenses. The Miscellaneous Expenses listed referred to a "publishing" program bought by the newsletter editor and approved at a previous meeting. It was mentioned that the newsletter publisher wished to keep the program when his term expired and was willing to pay for the program. Pat Ware pointed out that the program was licensed to the LSBF. It was decided to let the editor decide whether to keep the software or not.

Old Business

Convention Reports

2008 - Marty Klajnowski passed out reports detailing the recent convention, hosted jointly by San Antonio, Austin, and the American Bonsai Society. She noted that the convention took in \$26,000 from sponsors and donations. Marty noted that attendance was lacking both from Texas and nationally. Of 96 full registrants only 60 were LSBF members. Expectations had been around 100 from Texas and

around 100 from ABS.

2009 – Buddy Allen indicated that Houston is on target for hosting the convention in 2009. All trees have been bought and are in Houston with the exception of the trees being supplied by guest artist Roy Nagatoshi. There will be 6 workshops and 3 demos. The hotel room rate will be \$89/night. The registration fee will be around \$120 (estimated). Registration forms will be available in January.

2010 – Steven Hendricks announced that the Fort Worth club has signed an agreement with the Radisson Hotel, North. This is the same hotel at which the previous conventions have been held. Four sets of trees have been purchased. The guest artists that have agreed to come are: Peter Warren (England), Mat Ouwinga, and Guy Guidry.

Texas Visiting Artist

• **2008** – Buddy Allen reported that the Houston leg of Michael Hagedorn's trip was cancelled because of the Hurricane damage. The additional airfare to get him home was \$456. Houston offered to split the added airfare with LSBF. A motion was made and passed to this effect.

Buddy asked for comments about Michael from the clubs. Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin had generally good impressions. The Corpus Christi representative commented that Michael was not at all familiar with tropicals and only finished ½ of the demo. tree. Nor did he want to do a demo, instead preferring to show slides and videos. The San Antonio representative noted that, in the workshop, he did not give equal time to all the trees but picked out one and spent most of his time on it.

• **2009** – Versie Marks announced that the 2009 tour will feature Robert Martinez from Puerto Rico. Robert is 32 years old and a participant in the 2007 BCI Convention in Puerto Rico and will, in 2009, appear at the 1st World Bonsai Olympics in Puerto Rico. Robert's fee will be \$250 for the first event and \$200 per event for the second or third. Versie asked for contact numbers, and cell phone numbers for each club and the number of events each club wished to host. She promised to get a resume to each club



representative. Versie will be trying for a time frame of August or September.

Admission of Border States to LSBF

Yvonne stated that we already have a check from Alan Walker for Lake Charles, LA membership in the LSBF and that Albuquerque, NM also wishes to join. Further consideration of outside clubs joining the LSBF awaits settlement of the insurance issues below.

Insurance

Our current insurance was just renewed in October. It covers us for \$1,000,000 in general liability and includes the conventions and LSBF board meetings. It does not cover the visiting artist tour. Liability coverage for the 340 LSBF members costs \$1237 per year. Convention liability coverage is \$368. Yvonne has found that our current insurance provider will not cover out-of-state-clubs, a problem for expanding the LSBF membership. We may be required to find a different insurance provider. The question was raised, "Can out-of-state clubs join LSBF without the insurance coverage?" Yvonne is researching the question and will report back at the next meeting.

New Business

LSBF Handbook

Yvonne passed out a list of items that she believed each club should have in an "LSBF Handbook". It appears that some current delegates were not passed handbooks from the previous delegates. Yvonne compiled the listed information and volunteered to have it printed and placed in binders, one for each of the member clubs (8). This could be done with the President's \$100 discretionary fund. A motion was made and passed to authorize this action.

LSBF Convention Sponsorship

Buddy Allen presented a summary of proposed guidelines for the future sponsorship of LSBF conventions. It lays out the responsibilities of each sponsoring organization and what share of the profits accrues to each. Note was made that the ABS contributed few helpers to the San Antonio

convention. It was observed by one representative that limiting any outside organization (such as BCI or ABS) to 20% of the profits would effectively eliminate any future collaboration, as neither of the organizations would approve of such a limitation. It was also suggested that a sliding scale for reimbursement could be made based upon the number of registrants brought in by the outside organization. It was also clarified that these were only guidelines, not rules. Yvonne suggested that the guidelines be taken back to the club and discussed, to be voted on next time.

Idealist.org

A friend of Yvonne's brought to her attention a website that serves as a central reference site for all kinds of organizations. One can list events and information about your organization. There was little interest evinced by the representatives as it would require someone to keep track of the information and update it regularly.

Miscellaneous

It was noted that many clubs are not getting their newsletters to the other club representatives. Yvonne mentioned that she brings the other club's newsletters into her club meetings and allows anyone to take them home to read. Steve Hendricks mentioned that he kept his copies to mine for articles for his club newsletter.

Next Meeting

Pat Ware indicated that the next meeting will probably be held on the third Saturday in January at our usual meeting site. Unfortunately, she can't book the room until December. The next agenda will confirm time and place.

A motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM

Steven Hendricks
Secretary



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