



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

June 2008

Message from the President

By Sylvia Smith

BSD CALENDAR:

Thursday, June 5th
"Aspects of Bonsai Design"
program by Bill Valavanis at the
Ft. Worth Botanic Garden

Friday, June 6th
Shohin crape myrtle demonstration
and workshop
(location TBD)

Saturday, June 7th
"History and Influence of Japanese
Classical Bonsai"
program by Bill Valavanis
at North Haven Gardens

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We were not able to make a trip to Brussel's this year but maybe if we plan early we can try again another year. Anyway, hopefully everyone is saving their money to attend the upcoming ABS/LSBF Convention in San Antonio! Remember that this month we have a very special program planned. Our guest artist, Bill Valavanis from Rochester, N.Y. will be giving several different lectures in Dallas and Ft. Worth. I hope to see some of you at all three events and most of you at the lecture, demo and workshop in Dallas. Bill is also organizing the first ever National Bonsai Exhibition. There is still time to give Bill a picture of your tree for consideration as a participant in this prestigious event. For more information please visit www.internationalbonsai.com and click on the National Exhibition icon. With enough participants, maybe we can make this a club effort.

Moving back home, the heat of summer has arrived and it's time to feed, feed, feed until the summer dormancy arrives. Remember: Japanese Black Pine work is done between mid-June to mid-July depending on the size of your tree. All flowering and fruiting trees should not be trimmed until that time to insure flowers and fruit the following year. Deciduous trees would be hard to explain without a workshop or demo because this will depend on the species of tree and what stage of development they are in. Suffice it to say that only well developed Trident Maples should be defoliated, Japanese Maples are not defoliated yearly and are much weaker than the Trident, and Elms grow like weeds so they are constantly being wired then cut back several times during the summer months. Junipers can be wired all summer long and for that matter, summer is a good time to wire anything.

Keep bonsai cool by:

- Adding 30% shade cloth
- Use a shallow pot without holes (or plug holes) and fill it with gravel or crushed lava and place your bonsai on top. Water will collect and serve as an evaporative cooler, good to use on shohin bonsai, kusamono or slab plantings that dry out quickly.
- Buy a cheap package of bar towels, soak them in water and place around the outside of your bonsai pots. These will take the shape of your pots and will keep the temperature of the pots cooler in the summer.
- Buy cheap Styrofoam coolers. Cut them down to fit your bonsai pot in. Some people use gravel or pine bark but I caution the use of pine bark or soil as the roots may grow into these and this is not always good when developing your tree structure as they may produce roots further away from the base of the tree.

Sylvia

June Program – Triple “Bill”ing

The Dallas and Fort Worth clubs are teaming up this month to bring you a spectacular three-part set of programs. Bill Valavanis, the well-known bonsai master from New York is here to present two lectures and a combined demonstration and workshop over the course of three days.

On **Thursday, June 5th at 7 PM**, Mr. Valavanis presents “Aspects of Bonsai Design” at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden (3220 Botanic Gardens Blvd. @ University Drive in the Conservatory). He will discuss in detail characteristics of different bonsai styles and use examples brought by club members to illuminate his concepts. The Ft. Worth club made it a point to invite the Dallas club members, so come and mingle with our Ft. Worth friends.

On **Friday, June 6th at 7 PM** (Dallas location TBD—it’s either going to be at NHGs or President Sylvia’s house), Mr. Valavanis will conduct a demonstration and workshop on shohin ‘Chickasaw’ crape myrtle, starting with a slide presentation, followed by a demonstration, then a do-it-yourself workshop. The cost of this workshop will be \$60, which includes a ‘Chickasaw’ crape myrtle, soil and handouts (bring your own tools). Also bring your own shohin pot or you can purchase one from Mr. Valavanis at the workshop. There is room for about 10 sign-ups. You may attend as an observer for free. Contact Sylvia Smith at (972) 754-9883 ASAP to sign up.

On **Saturday, June 7th at 9 AM**, Mr. Valavanis will give a slideshow presentation entitled “History and Influence of Japanese Classical Bonsai” at North Haven Gardens. This presentation has become a favorite at clubs around the US since Bill introduced it. He has been refining the content of this lecture for some time using an extensive library of old Japanese bonsai books bequeathed to him by Yuji Yoshimura. For more information on this lecture’s origin, check out the following link:
http://internetbonsaiclub.org/index.php?option=com_smf&Itemid=133&topic=21952.0

These are **fantastic opportunities** to listen and learn from Bill, one of the great names in American bonsai. We urge you to participate in as many of these programs as you can!

William N. Valavanis – Biography

An award-winning practitioner and lecturer, William “Bill” Valavanis has been studying bonsai for over 40 years. He freely shares his knowledge, techniques and art on an international scale. He established the International Bonsai Arboretum to promote the horticultural and artistic aspects of classical bonsai art. He also publishes International BONSAI, a magazine in its 30th year of publication.



Courtesy of internationalbonsai.com

Events of Interest



- **BSD June Program - Triple “Bill”ing**

Thursday, June 5th

“Aspects of Bonsai Design”
by Bill Valavanis at Ft. Worth Botanic Garden
(3220 Botanic Gardens Blvd. @ University Drive)

Directions:

<http://www.fwbg.org/maps.htm>

Friday, June 6th

Shohin crape myrtle demo and DIY workshop by Bill Valavanis (location TBD)

Saturday, June 7th

“History and Influence of Japanese Classical Bonsai”
program by Bill Valavanis at North Haven Gardens

See the June Program at left for further details.

- **ABS/LSBF Convention**

June 18 – 22, 2008

San Antonio, TX

www.absbonsai.org

There is still time to sign up for the 2008 ABS/LSBF Convention. The ABS/LSBF has increased the number of options for registration. Visit www.absbonsai.org for more details. With nine exceptional bonsai instructors scheduled, this year’s convention is the biggest in years!

The Many Faces of Bonsai in Texas

JUNE 19TH – 22ND, 2008
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

American Bonsai Society
Lone Star Bonsai Federation

[VISIT THE CONVENTION SITE >](#)



Bill became interested in bonsai at an early age and studied Ornamental Horticulture at SUNY Farmingdale and Cornell University. He has made (cont.) numerous trips to Japan and has apprenticed with masters Kyuzo Murata and Kakutaro Komuro in the famed Omiya Bonsai Village. He is active in organizations at the local, national and international levels. He describes his bonsai as “quiet” bonsai.

May Program Recap

For May, Sylvia Smith presented a detailed lecture and demonstration on repotting tropicals. She covered the timing of repotting tropicals (night time temps minimum of 60° F preferred!), how to remove trees from their old pots, and proper root pruning and maintenance, focusing on the proper techniques for good root pad formation. She also covered soil mixtures, a hot topic amongst enthusiasts.



Sylvia followed up with pot selection criteria, noting that it’s not only based on what looks best, but with horticultural concerns in mind as well. As an example, the particular tree she had at the program had poor nebari on one side, so Sylvia opted to attempt to promote new surface roots by cutting away some cambium on that side. This necessitated using a slightly

deeper pot for this tree than aesthetics would normally dictate so that the wound could be placed comfortably below the surface of the soil.

Sylvia showed how to wire pots that have 4 holes, 2 holes and even only one hole, so whatever pot you choose, you’ll know how to approach it. ☺



Demo Forest Update

Several members have asked about the progress of the elm forest that John Miller put together back in March. Well, John brought in the planting for a little Show-N-Tell.

The forest is progressing nicely and he says that he’s trimmed it about a half dozen times already! He then graciously gave a brief review of how he put it together.



For those who weren’t there, John put this forest planting together using a new technique. He placed a grid structure in the bottom of the pot enabling him to place wires wherever he needed them. The result was a seven-tree planting, all of which were tightly secured.



Photos by J. Bonney

June Bonsai

By John Miller

If you have not registered for the American Bonsai Society-Lone Star Bonsai Federation joint convention in San Antonio, there is still time to do so. Just log on their website at www.absbonsai.org for information. They have added a weekend only registration. Also remember that as members of LSBF you do not have to pay the \$40 to join ABS, just put LSBF member in that slot. This should be a good learning experience since it is in a seminar format; you pick a class in each morning and afternoon slot. Holler at me when you get there.

Since this year has been fairly cool you may still be able to leaf prune if you need to but be careful, it could turn hot in a hurry. Do it only if you think there will be enough time for the tree to mature foliage before hot weather. Put the tree in a semi-shaded location out of the wind until new foliage appears. 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.

Now that night temperatures usually stay above 60 degrees you can repot the tropicals. Just use good repotting techniques as for the spring repotting.

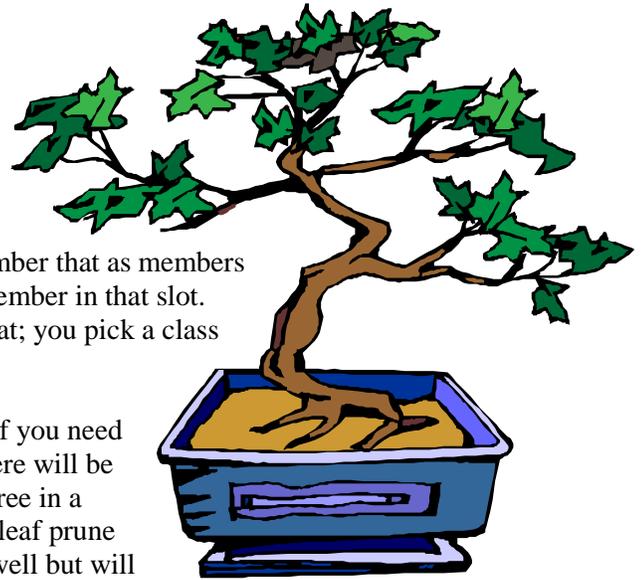
It is important to continue the twig pruning of your trees on a regular basis. While doing this chore, look at the tree to see if there is a need to do some refinement pruning. Refinement pruning is a deeper pruning to replace a branch that has grown too long or too big with a smaller one. This is usually 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.

The extended cool and damp weather is good for fungal diseases like black leaf spot. Treat with potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). After the foliage is hardened a bit you can treat with 1% hydrogen peroxide (1 part 3% peroxide to 2 parts water) weekly. Warm damp weather will bring its own fungal problems like mildew. The same treatment applies.

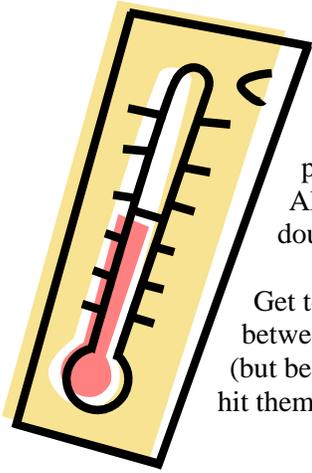
Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids and mealy bugs. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. It will also 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 well. 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 especially the bottom where most are hiding. The secret is to get all them bugs (or they come right back) and to spray on a regular basis. Any bugs or fungus spores hiding in cracks will repeat the infestation in short order.

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 or foil. Leave an air space between the cover and pot and soil.



Most plants in pots will not enjoy a full day of 90-degree 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. There should be some air space around the sides of the pot. Aluminum foil should not be used-it reflects sun rays to the underside of the leaf giving it a double dose of sun.

Get to know you trees like your children. Which ones use more water and which ones stay moist between waterings. If some are difficult to keep happy you can try moving those to a cooler location (but be sure they get their sunlight). Another trick is to group problem trees together so that you can hit them with a shot of water twice a day and not have to spend the time going thru all your trees. ☺

Bonsai Smiths

Howard and Sylvia Smith
www.BonsaiSmiths.net • Cultivators of fine trees
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- The Bonsai Smiths
- Ray Hernandez's Bent Tree Bonsai
- Pegasus Pottery
- Sanderson Creek Bonsai

We are so grateful to these businesses for their generosity to BSD members! If you have a business and would like to offer a discount to club members, please contact George Straw at GSTR@aol.com or James Bonney at amy.james@gte.net.

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