



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

December 2013

## Message from the President

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Happy December everybody. I hope you have had a wonderful bonsai year! For me this year has been a reflective one. Sometimes life rattles your roots a bit; it changes your priorities and makes you look at the bigger picture. These are things that make you thankful to have a closely knit family and surprisingly thankful to be part of this wonderful hobby. The camaraderie within the bonsai community is like no other group or club that I've ever been a part of. We don't just grow little trees; we grow friends, respect for life and a bond with nature and its beauty. It's a community of people that has the potential to extend across the world, and it's all right here within our reach.

That said I hope you will join us for the December meeting - with a slight change of the program. Our previously scheduled guest artist will now be having heart surgery at the time of our meeting. That is obviously something you don't put off, so we wish him and his family the best. The meeting will now be an interactive presentation of local member backyard bonsai as well as bonsai gardens from Japan. We will be sharing lots of cool ideas on how to display your trees, as well as how to integrate your backyard to your hobby (and still keep your loved one's happy that you didn't try to take over the backyard!). Add to this our now annual Kolache Xmas brunch and presto, you have the perfect holiday warm fuzzys to end the year with!

Be sure to join us for some camaraderie and a good start to your future bonsai plans.

Happy Holidays!

*Sylvia*

## December Program

### Backyard Bonsai /Japanese Landscaping

#### December 7th

A slight change of plans due to our planned speaker's illness, but we stay on topic for our December program. It is one that we hope will inspire you to incorporate your passion for bonsai into your landscape. The



program will consist of viewing and discussing various members' bonsai backyards as well as historically significant gardens from Japan.



Tree placement is an integral part of bonsai's survival and well being. Members will be ready to discuss some of their creativity in dealing with winter weather, sunlight, watering, and pesky furry critters, as well as how their yard changes seasonally. Sylvia Smith will also show photographs and discuss some of the beautiful Japanese gardens the Smiths visited while in Japan.



We end our year of programs hopefully giving you some great ideas to incorporate bonsai into your backyard design.

Our December meeting would not be complete if we didn't celebrate the season together. Join us to enjoy some sweet and savory kolaches and coffee. Let the lure of homemade chocolate chip cookies bring you there. So come enjoy the festivities and fellowship for our last program in 2013. ✍

## Upcoming Events



Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 9 - Noon  
Japanese Landscaping and Xmas Party

Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 – Noon  
Forest Plantings

Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 9 – Noon  
Study Group – Bonsai Smiths

Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>  
Dallas Arboretum Show

## Events Elsewhere

January 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Bay Island Bonsai Annual Exhibit**  
Oakland, CA

April 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>  
**LSBF State Convention**  
Houston, TX

April 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>  
**Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies Spring Festival**  
Hanover, NJ

August 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>  
**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit**  
Chicago, IL

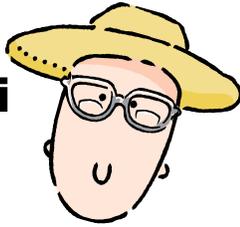
August 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>  
**BCI 2014 - Sunrise on Australian Bonsai**  
Queensland, Australia

September 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
**Artisans Cup of Portland**  
Portland, Oregon

If you have not already done so, please mail, or better yet, bring your membership dues to the next meeting. Please use the form at the end of the newsletter to ensure we have your information up to date. Thanks!

## December Bonsai Tips and Advice

by John Miller



Instead of thinking of December as the end of the year, try to think of it as the beginning of the bonsai calendar. What the trees are doing during their dormant season determines what they will do when growth starts later on.

While you are enjoying the beauty of the winter silhouettes you have time to enhance their appearance by selective pruning and trimming. Get rid of crossing branches and heavy top growth. Let the winter light penetrate to the heart of the tree to stimulate new buds which produce the new growth and strengthen weak branches in the spring.

Evergreen types especially and deciduous to a lesser extent should not have the root ball subjected to alternate freezing and thawing. That process tends to tear and damage the roots. Placing the trees on the ground and using mulch will minimize this problem.

Remove any trash on the surface of pots. This harbors insects and fungi spores over winter there. If you have problems with weeds remove the top half-inch of soil, which contains the majority of the seeds, and replace it with new clean soil.

Watering is as much a problem in the winter as in summer. Since the temperature and humidity vary so much you need to watch the soil and water on an as needed basis. Deciduous trees will not need as much watering as the evergreens, especially the broad-leafed evergreens. Remember that if the soil is frozen the tree cannot take up moisture but the winds will still dry out the top, on deciduous as well as evergreen. Quite a problem; dry kills by desiccation while wet causes root rot. A good soil mix will minimize the problem.

It would be advisable to remove any buildup of moss from your pots. Moss can act much like a thatch in your lawn to prevent water from penetrating evenly. It also prevents you from seeing how dry the soil really is. Remove moss that tries to grow on the trunk and buttress roots as this will hold moisture and cause the bark to decay. Try spraying the moss on the trunk with alcohol.

Even though you are positively sure that you have no bad insects, it is a good idea to use a horticultural oil spray. This kills overwintering insects and their eggs as well. I do not do this unless I find scale type insects because I want to keep the praying mantis egg cases for next year. These guys and the ladybugs take care of my aphids and mites. I also spray the evergreens with the fish emulsion, liquid kelp, vinegar and molasses organic spray during the winter.

Fertilization is usually ignored in the winter. Deciduous trees will only be doing a little root growth at this time and thus will not be utilizing fertilizer effectively. The evergreens could use a low nitrogen fertilizer. Always use one with the trace minerals.

Take care of your tools during this time when you don't use them much. Clean and sharpen tools and apply a good rust inhibiting oil. Remove the buildup of sap and grime. Also clean all your spare pots to be ready for the repotting season ahead.

Bonsai in greenhouses or indoor bonsai will need to be watched for the normal indoor problems. Spider mites and scales are the biggest problems here but aphids may show up. Also keep an eagle eye on soil moisture. Trying to keep the humidity up by placing your trees on a humidity tray can possibly give you some soil problems, root rot or some other fungal disease.

If you have a greenhouse you can use it to work on some of the species that are normally left outside. Elms, Japanese maples, yaupons are some of the species that you can use. Before taking them into the greenhouse you should give them some preparation. They should be given some dormancy. Withhold fertilizer and keep on the dry side (not bone dry) until they start dormancy. Leave them out until they have had some frost, two to three weeks for Chinese or Catlin elm, four weeks for the Japanese maples. I take some small tridents in later in the season (like January). Yaupons will do nicely without much dormancy at all. When you take them in keep in a cooler corner of the greenhouse and give them lots of water and fertilizer. They should respond fairly quickly. Be ready to pinch new growth or you will not benefit at all from the longer growing season.

*Continued on next page.*

## December Bonsai (Con'd)

Get out and locate some good material for enhancing your collection. If the club has a dig scheduled, be a part of it. There are many places where you can find one or two specimen to dig. The problem is in finding a place with enough material to warrant taking the whole club. If you know of a possible location tell one of the officers about it. This comes under the heading of 'be an active member'. The rest of the group (especially your program chairman) will appreciate it.

Be sure to mark your calendar for the LSBF convention in April next year. It will be held in Houston on April 10-14. Registration forms and info should be available soon on the website ([www.houstonbonsai.com](http://www.houstonbonsai.com)). ✍



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## Bonsai Shopping Frenzy

By Sylvia Smith

It was somewhat of a last minute event, but Larry Leone's moving sale was a fun opportunity to get some great bonsai material with lots of potential. If you missed last month's sale not only did you miss out on some great deals but you missed out on a good time. I wanted to share a few pictures with you and encourage all of you to try and join us at these special club events, sales and/or digs.

Next year we are working on a club dig at a new location, a more interactive bonsai show at the Dallas Arboretum, and of course by then we hope to have registrations for the upcoming LSBF Convention in Houston. The dates will be posted in January's newsletter so you can plan your schedules ahead of time. Hope to see you often in 2014! ✍



*Above: Where there's a will, there's a way. Check out those wheels.*



*Below: Who says you need a truck to haul trees?*



*Above: All bonsai people have priorities, right?!*

## November Program in Review Study Group

Our November Study Group with the Smiths proved to be another great meeting. We dived right into the working session as members brought in both conifers and deciduous trees. It was the ideal way to get great advice on what to do next; then be able to get the work started right then and there.

Toward the end of the meeting, we gathered for a great interactive discussion on winter care for our bonsai. There were lots of questions asked about winter care in general but also specific species as well.

As usual, most didn't finish all their work at the session but it gave us a good head start. We are so lucky to have Sylvia and Howard available for these sessions. There are not many bonsai clubs that have members with their degree of training.

Be sure to take advantage of these sessions in the future. The next one is scheduled for our February program, at the height of repotting season and just before our spring show at the Arboretum. And as we learned last year, that means it is root work season as well. ✍



*Above: Howard & Sylvia show us the best way to thing a juniper at this time of the year.*

*Below: Howard provides Leon with some advice.*



*Above: Jerry and Paul share a laugh*



*Above: Q&A session in progress*

*Below: Alvarito is flirting*



## Tip of the Month

### Heavy Lifting with Hydraulics



Have you been daunted by the thought of having to lift heavy pre-bonsai and bonsai in and around your yard? There is a small hydraulic lift cart on the market that can make the task as lot easier. It is from Northern Tool and can lift up to 500 lbs., yet is compact at 28" x 18". Check it out at Northern Tool's website. It is less than \$200 and they can ship it to you. Perhaps you can add it to your Christmas wish list. Thanks to Jeremy Dickson for passing along this tip!

[http://www.northerntool.com/shop/tools/product\\_200365546\\_200365546](http://www.northerntool.com/shop/tools/product_200365546_200365546)

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## Have You Used Coban?

Coban wraps are an elastic medical dressing manufactured by the company 3M and widely available at retail stores (NexCare) and online. It has a stretchy property that adheres to itself. Did you know it can be useful in bonsai too? It is proving to be useful in several different ways.

Consider it as an easy and quick alternative to raffia when bending a large branch. Instead of soaking raffia in water then layering it onto the branch, a few strands at a time, consider using Coban wrap. You will find it easier to apply and may be effective for certain applications. It may not be a show-ready tree at that point in time, but for a tree in the early stages of training it might be an alternative.

Another application might be to help keep an air layer wrap tightly bound. Often times an air layer can fail because the moist medium, such as sphagnum moss, is not help tightly enough to the trunk. No roots form and instead the bark simply heals over the cut. This wrap allows you to hold the sphagnum moss sack tightly against the trunk, and easily unwrap to check its progress and rewrap if necessary.

A third application might be to hold roots firmly in place as you work to create a root-over-rock style. Its elasticity let's you keep the roots tight against the rock without having to tie it off or somehow secure the end. You also don't have to worry about scarring as the roots grow and swell into position.

Thanks to Jean Qureshi for passing along this tip. Give it a try!





## December's To-Do List

This is a simple monthly checklist for those enthusiasts who have the knowledge and skill required to perform the tasks listed. It is intended to tell you 'what' to do, not 'how and why' to do it. Want to know more? Send in any questions you might have or come to any monthly program to discuss further.

### All Species

- Water as needed and keep from freezing
- Top soil change if needed

### Deciduous

- Keep from freezing temperatures but leave outdoors
- Remove all fertilizer cakes

### Evergreen/Conifer

- Provide full sunlight
- Wiring can be done but protect from freeze
- Light pruning and thinning on junipers
- Slow down feedings

### Flowering/Fruit

- Keep from freezing temperatures but leave outdoors
- Remove all fertilizer cakes

### Tropical

- Light trimming if needed,
- Light fertilization if stored in a growing environment

## Link of the Month

Check out the personal blog of Bill Valavantis, a bonsai professional based in New York with over 50 years of study and passion for bonsai. His accolades are too numerous to list here, so be sure to read the 'About' section of his blog.

He has some great photos from a recent visit to Japan. As a matter of fact he has visited Japan over 50 times in his pursuit of bonsai knowledge. Among the many things he has done, he recently visited the area known for beautiful bonsai pots, Tokoname. But he shares with us that not all pots from that area are the same.

<http://valavanisbonsaiblog.com>

Consider subscribing to his blog so you keep up to date on his travels.

Also check out his website:

<http://www.internationalbonsai.com/>

## Did You Know.....

Our club is almost 50 years old. That's right, we were founded in 1965. How should we celebrate? Please let us know your thoughts and ideas. Share them with us at a future club meeting or with any of our board members.

## Club Digs

We are in need of new areas to collect raw material and now is a good time to send out a 'scout party' to check out the property. Do you know of anyone with land available for us to use? Ideally it would be within a 2 hour drive of Dallas with land that is not too densely wooded. Open land that perhaps has been grazed by livestock can make for some good gnarly bonsai. Please let any board member know or talk with Dave Schleser if you know of a potential spot. Dave can be contacted at [ranchu39@yahoo.com](mailto:ranchu39@yahoo.com).

## Learning Opportunities

### Bonsai Smiths

#### Upcoming Classes



June 29, 2013 – Japanese Black Pine Session II / Juniper Workshop

November 9, 2013 – Japanese Black Pine Session III

January 25, 2014 - Japanese Black Pine Session I – 1 seats left

February 8, 2014 - Repotting and Root Refinement – 4 seats left

May 17, 2014 - Maple Tree Ramification and Refinement Session I – 5 seats left

June 28, 2014 - Japanese Black Pine Session II / Juniper Workshop

July 12, 2014 - Maple Tree Ramification and Refinement Session II

We also offer soil mixes. Our APL mix will be available in December!

[www.BonsaiSmiths.net](http://www.BonsaiSmiths.net)



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# Bonsai Society of Dallas

www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com

## Membership Form

Please mail to:

Bonsai Society of Dallas  
P.O. Box 836922  
Richardson, TX 75083-6922

Or bring to any club meeting

Bonsai Society of Dallas meets on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Saturday of each month.

Time: 9:00 AM

Place: North Haven Garden Center  
7700 Northaven Road  
Dallas, TX

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership

Individual Membership: \$25.00

Renewal Membership

Joint Membership: \$30.00

For the convenience of our membership a roster is published for **members only** in March of each year.  
Please check the appropriate box if you do not wish to be included

Include me in the membership roster

Exclude me from the membership roster

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Do Not Cut: For Treasurer Use

Member Receipt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Year \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Received By: \_\_\_\_\_