



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

March 2013

## Message from the President

It's amazing how much the Japanese culture has influenced our lives through bonsai. Sometimes I wonder how different and empty my life would be without it. For me, the last two weeks have included two lectures, work on 7 client collections, and even attending the Dallas Japanese Speech Contest with my daughter who is learning to speak and read Japanese. Howard and I will be working on our private collection soon and before you know it, February will be long gone.

As busy as it is, I'm always reminded how quickly time can pass when you are surrounded by that which inspires you. Working on bonsai really is a calming way to pass time. Along with those elements of Japan that fill the inside and outside our home, it helps to create an atmosphere of calm that seems to suddenly hit me among the chaos. I really can't imagine doing anything different. Bonsai keeps me grounded. It's what I love to share and teach, it's my fun time with my best friend and husband, and it's become who I am.

It's with that same passion that I would like to share bonsai with the Dallas club members over these next two years. I encourage everyone to try and make it to the Convention in April, to share your thoughts with us on what kind of things you'd like to learn during our monthly meetings, to participate in workshops and continue to grow your trees and your passions. That said, make sure you look at our calendar of events and keep informed. It promises to be another great bonsai year.

Happy repotting season!

*Sylvia*

### Spring Bonsai Exhibition

As many of you know, we typically have a spring bonsai exhibition at the Dallas Arboretum for the first weekend of Dallas Blooms. It was our intent to have it again this year, but the folks at the Arboretum got their wires crossed and booked a wedding in our room for Saturday evening. They offered us the room for Sunday, but obviously there is too much work that goes into setting up our show to only have it for one day.

We will again ask them to reserve the room for us in 2014 and remain hopeful that we can once again show off our passion of bonsai to the Dallas community.

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[doggiedigs2@att.net](mailto:doggiedigs2@att.net)

Hiram Quinones, *Member at Large*  
[hiramaquinones@yahoo.com](mailto:hiramaquinones@yahoo.com)

## March Program

### Guest Artist – John Kirby

9:00 AM to Noon

North Haven Gardens

John Kirby, owner and operator of Von's Gardens is a familiar face to those of us who remember him from the vendor room at the Fort Worth Convention a few years ago. John was first introduced to bonsai as a boy by his father who owned "Sumigawa's" a nursery in Cotati, California. It would seem bonsai is in his blood.



John began seriously growing bonsai in the early 90's and then opened his own nursery selling bonsai trees at shows and conventions. Another one of Boon Manakitivipart's students, John has now become one of the largest cultivators of fine bonsai and pre-bonsai in the United States.

He originally established his business, Von's Gardens in northwest Arkansas but he recently decided to move it to the northeast and is adjusting to a bit more cold, ice, and snow than he has before. Are you ready to re-think that one John?

This month John will be teaching us how to grow a fine bonsai from seedling in a relatively short period of time. Come listen to his tips and tricks for accelerating the development of your bonsai by field growing and begin to apply these same techniques on your seedlings, cuttings or air layers.

For those who would like to get their hands dirty, John is bringing seedlings, available to members for \$5 and non-members for \$10. Each participant will receive a tree and guidance on how to prune and wire initially with field growing in mind. You will then want to plant it in the ground and most importantly, maintain it in the ground to grow a bonsai specimen ready to refine and prepare for show.



Please bring wire and wire cutters with you, and remember that this will be one tree per participant while the supply lasts so get there early. ✍

## Upcoming Events



Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9 – 12 Noon  
Guest Artist – John Kirby, Field Grown Bonsai Specimen

Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 9 – 12 Noon  
Guest Artist – Ray Hernandez, Using *Elaeagnus* 'Silverberry' as Bonsai

Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 – Noon  
TBD

Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 9 - Noon  
Bonsai Study Group with the Bonsai Smiths "Summer Bonsai Care"

## Events Elsewhere



April 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>  
**LSBF 2013 State Convention**  
New Braunfels, TX

April 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>  
**International Bonsai Convention and Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) 50 Year Anniversary**  
Yangzhou, China

April 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>  
**MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Festival**  
Grantville, PA

May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Shohin St. Louis III**  
Collinsville, IL

May 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>  
**Brussels Annual Rendezvous**  
Olive Branch, MS

June 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>  
**International Bonsai Colloquium**  
Rochester, NY

October 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Artisan Cup of Portland**  
Portland, OR

## Rio Vista Dig in Retrospect



We could not have asked for better weather conditions for our dig in Rio Vista and we all came away with some great trees. There were about a dozen of us and just about everyone dug at least one, if not multiple hackberrys. The trees are gnarled with lots of interesting twists and turns, thanks to Mother Nature and the many cattle that graze on this land; perfect for evolving into interesting bonsai as either individual or group plantings.

Probably the most challenging element of our dig was the barbed wire we had to navigate. Many of the best trees were located along the many fence lines and our gracious host Lore Devra-Levin gave us permission to cut the wire. Luckily Mark Bynum came prepared to repair it once the trees were removed. He was so very helpful assisting several of us, including first-time collectors, Bill and Carol Muto. Once everyone had their trees out he made sure to go back around and work with each collector to repair the fence and checked that holes were back-filled properly. He is a great guy to have on a dig. Thanks Mark!

Not sure if you want to add a hackberry to your collection? Check out some of these photos from our dig. Can you see the bonsai within? See our next issue for a recap of the Whitesboro Dig! ✂



## February Program in Review

### Repotting and Root Development with The Bonsai Smiths



For many of us when we think February, we think repotting. However last month's program taught us to think root development too. After all, repotting season is the only time you can safely get your hands on the roots and manipulate them in order to enhance how they to look. Strong and impressive roots, i.e. *nebari* are the essence of good bonsai.

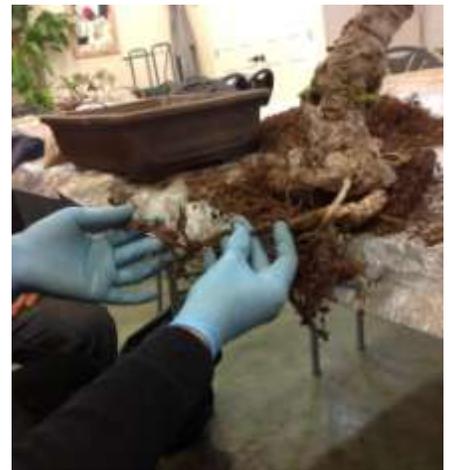
At our last meeting we were once again treated to a session with Howard and Sylvia Smith. This time, the session was divided into two groups; one focused on addressing the fundamentals of getting a container grown specimen into an initial bonsai/training pot and the second discussing and working on root development and repotting.

These are two critical areas of learning that can be daunting to those of us who are novices and experienced alike. For the novices, yes you are going to rip this tree out of its container, remove half of its growing medium, cut off a big chunk of the roots and then put it back in a pot and expect it to live. And for the more experienced, you may have worked on your tree for years only to discover that the existing roots don't provide the foundation to support the overall composition. Both cases provide an opportunity to learn and the Smiths helped us take our bonsai knowledge further.

Using both existing bonsai trees and container-grown nursery stock, the Smiths covered step-by-step the right and wrong way to pot our future prize winners. For several of our newer members, this was their first experience in the world of potting bonsai. For those of us who have repotted before, we were treated to some unique circumstances and sometimes overgrown specimens. In the end, the trees were tamed and prepared for their new lives as our bonsai trees-in-training.

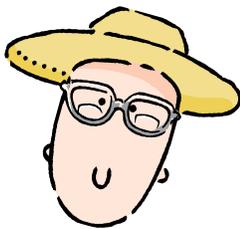


The Smiths are anticipating that this format will continue with next year's repotting/root development workshop and allow all members to spend time at each of these stations to improve our knowledge base. This is a program you won't want to miss! ✍



## March Bonsai Tips and Advice

by John Miller



By this time most of you have finished repotting. Late starting species like the oaks might still be candidates for repotting this year. I like to repot yaupons and olives a little later, mid-March or so. Since I am two weeks or more behind Dallas I have only done a few but will have many done in the next two weeks before our meeting.

If your area is subject to late freezes, check the forecasts and be sure to take precautions. Newly developing roots in either freshly repotted trees or in established pots can be tender to freezes. Trees with new sap flow will also be more tender. And of course the new foliage will not take the cold or the strong winds that dry it and cause leaf burn.

On a clear cold night you can get frost on the leaves even though the temperature is above 32. Any overhead covering, patio, evergreen trees or a light cloth, will prevent that frost.

Now you should get your tweezers and shears ready for the real job ahead. In order to develop the ramification and fine twigs you want you must be pruning the new growth as it develops. More twigs mean smaller leaves also. Waiting until the shoots are three or four inches or longer results in coarse twigs with long internodes. These will have to be cut off and new ones developed if you are to have a good bonsai. Tweezers are the preferred tool for this job. If you do the cutting at the right time the twig will still be soft and can be plucked with the tweezers. After a few tries you will be able to work faster with tweezers than with shears. I prefer tweezers with a dull point, sharp points catch the foliage and rounded points are too big.

Essentially there are two kinds of growing habits, trees with alternate growing leaves on the twigs, e.g. elms, oak, and hawthorn, and those with opposite or paired growing leaves, e.g. maple.

The alternate growing leaves start out with small leaves and each succeeding leaf will be larger and the internodes longer. Also each leaf will have a latent bud in each leaf axial. Therefore if you let the shoot grow to 4 or 5 new leaves and cut it back to 2 or 3, you will be keeping smaller leaves and also getting twice as many growing tips on each branch and each will be

a finer twig. Keep this up and you will soon have nice development on the branches of your bonsai. In determining whether to cut to two or three, note the direction that you wish the end of the branch to take and cut to the leaf which has the bud on that side of the branch.

Tweezers are almost a necessity in working on maples. Clasp the new growing tip that will be extending from the bud but on a lengthening stem. If the new tip is taken off as soon as the leaves separate, the result is that the leaves will be smaller and the stem will stop lengthening. Then two new tips will pop from the new leaf axials and you will have to repeat the tip plucking. I will sometimes help the new pair of leaves to separate from the new tip but be careful not to bruise them.

Junipers should be trimmed with the fingers. As the new growth develops grasp the twigs with one hand spreading the foliage in a fan shape. Then with the other hand grasp the tips between the fleshy part of your thumb and finger and pull it off. Using fingernails or scissors will result in brown tips on the junipers. If the juniper still has needle foliage you can avoid being stuck by moving your hand toward the tip while grasping the twig. This in effect causes the needle to lie along the twig while you are holding it.

As the weather warms up the insects will surely make their appearance. Use the foliar spray (1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar per gallon of water) weekly to control aphid, mites, etc. Spring usually means wet weather so be vigilant for fungal problems such as black leaf spot. You may use a 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide for fungus control.

If you have been doing a good organic program the ladybugs will keep the aphids and other soft bodied insects in check. The praying mantis comes along later on when the weather is warmer. I am seeing a lot of mantis egg clusters since I don't use chemical sprays.

Use fertilizers sparingly at this time. Most contain a healthy supply of nitrogen which causes too much growth. So far I haven't had any problems using the foliar spray, probably because organics need warmer weather to break down into plant soluble nutrients and therefore are not as stimulating in this weather.

Now is the time to pick out your show trees and make sure they get plenty of TLC and grooming to be at their best at show time. Take one to the LSBF convention exhibit in New Braunfels in April. ✍

## LSBF 2013 Convention Update

By Joey McCoy, Convention Chair

Tree Ring Circus – April 11 – 14, New Braunfels, TX



[www.lsbconvention2013.com](http://www.lsbconvention2013.com)

Hello all my bonsai friends and family! I hope everyone is taking advantage of the early Convention registration rates that go until **March 15<sup>th</sup>**. If you are a long-time conventioner, we're working hard to make this a terrific time that you've come to expect. If you are a first time attendee, please come and find out what everyone talks about each year! We are so lucky to have a yearly state convention, so come to experience it, support it, and help it grow.

We have two hotels in the area with special convention rates: The Faust (which is also the "home" hotel) with rooms starting at \$59 a night and Schlitterbahn Resorts with rooms starting at \$45 a night. You must ask for the special Bonsai convention rate. See our convention website for more info.

In addition to the workshop in native Cedar Elm, there is a workshop in a terrific species called a Hillier Elm

(*Ulmus x hollandica* 'Jacqueline Hillier'). These are compact, dwarfed elms with tight leaf inter-nodes resembling a herringbone pattern. The leaves are delicately pointed and smaller than most species. They would be great trees for any level of experience, and would be a good choice for a beginner as they are robust growing and can withstand a lot of training. Expect small sized finished bonsai from this workshop

The Saturday night auction, with valuable bonsai and miscellaneous items available to the highest bidder, just received another fantastic bid item: a signed Fender Squire Stratocaster guitar autographed by Creedence Clearwater Revisited (2 of the 3 original living members of Creedence Clearwater Revival). In addition, the band is donating a CD and T-shirts as well. Do we have some music collectors out there??

So come one and come all to the Tree Ring Circus! ✍

### Links of the Month

For anyone who has thought about air layering, this is a very interesting document. It is from Peter Chan, a well known bonsai artist from the UK.

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bonsaiu/newsletter/AirLayeringGuide.pdf>

Check out some of the Vietnamese bonsai on rocks displayed at the Ha Noi New Year of the Snake exhibit. These are a few amongst 1,500 bonsai and landscapes. How would you classify such styles? Au naturel? Laissez le bon temps rouler? They must grow very fast due to the mild climate, ample heat, plentiful sunshine, and high humidity.

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.497859340257525.107331.372218099488317&type=1#%21/media/set/?set=a.497859340257525.107331.372218099488317&type=1>

### Contestant Needed!

We need a club representative to enter the new talent competition at the convention! It is fun and you could win a new set of tools.

All participants will be given a similar nursery grown tree and they will have a period of time to do an initial styling. That includes a bit of wiring and possibility even the creation of jin or shari if you are so inspired.

This competition is open to club members with less than 5 years experience / membership. There are lots of new members so don't be shy. If you are interested let Jerry Riley know at [jafa625@gmail.com](mailto:jafa625@gmail.com) or talk to any board member at our next meeting.



# Creedence Clearwater Revisited



## Auction

**FENDER SQUIRE STRATOCASTER – SIGNED BY THE BAND**  
**Also CD & T-SHIRTS by CCR**

To benefit the Lone Star Bonsai Federation. Auction will take place  
Sat April 13<sup>th</sup> at the New Braunfels Convention Center at 7:00pm

[www.lsbconvention2013.com](http://www.lsbconvention2013.com)

Creedence Clearwater Revisited, 2 of the 3 living original members of  
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