



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

November 2013

Message from the President

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slysmith@tx.rr.com

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hiramaquinones@yahoo.com

Welcome to November everyone! This is the month for spending time with friends and family and for getting all your winter preparation done. These cooler temperatures and shorter days mean a change to how we care for our bonsai too. All tree species have their own routine for dormancy, so get to know your trees and the work they require to get a good winter's rest. Make sure to select a tree or two to bring to the next club meeting for our November Study Group.

I'd like to send a few messages your way. First, congratulations to two of our current club members. Mark Bynum has recently been appointed LSBF President and Howard Smith has been appointed Vice President for 2014-15. Congratulations to both of you; we know you'll both make substantial contributions to the growth of bonsai in Texas (no pressure, lol).

Also, help me in sending "Get Well" wishes to Jerry Riley who made a couple of trips to the hospital last month. Here's wishing you a speedy recovery Jerry.

Thanks to all those who helped with the auction for making it yet another huge success. It takes the cooperation of everyone involved to make an auction day flow seamlessly. It also takes material to entice buyers, and we are especially grateful for the generous donations that pushed sales. Way to go everyone!!

As the year draws to a close let me remind everyone that our club dues, which have remained at the same amount since I can remember, are due at the end of the year. Please try to bring your dues to one of the next two meetings or mail them in soon using the form at the back of the newsletter. We already have some great artists lined up for next year and your dues help to make that happen.

Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Sylvia

November Program

November 2nd – Study Group - BonsaiSmiths

It is time again to ‘embrace the chaos’ of a study group and join us, along with up to two of your trees for consultation and work under the guidance of Howard and Sylvia Smith.

This month’s session will have a seasonal focus with an initial discussion of appropriate winter care for our unpredictable Texas weather. Our temperatures can swing drastically in our winter months so preparation is the key to keeping our trees healthy and happy during their somewhat dormant period.

Repotting season is also right around the corner, which means that root work is too. For those who start repotting earlier than our next Study group in February, the Smith will also remind us what we learned last year about how to pay attention to the roots as we repot.

If you need assistance with branch placement on your conifers, (junipers specifically) be sure to have them wired before our meeting so that the Smiths can assist with the best branch placement. They will still be growing over the winter so this is a great time for wiring and setting branches.

Other than that, bring your trees, tools, and wire and plan to have fun looking at all the material that is brought in. ✍

Spring Bonsai Show

We are back on track to have a spring bonsai exhibition this March at the Dallas Arboretum. It is scheduled for the first weekend in March, which is the perfect time to show off both your conifer and deciduous trees. Remember that deciduous trees show best when you can see their branch ramification so don’t feel that they must be in leaf to be show worthy.

Please mark your calendar now as it will take a lot of member volunteers to make this happen. It is also a great opportunity to learn more about generally accepted practices for world class bonsai exhibitions.

Upcoming Events



Saturday, November 2nd, 9 – Noon
Study Group - Bonsai Smiths

Saturday, December 7th, 9 - Noon
Japanese Landscaping and Xmas Party

Saturday, January 4th, 9 – Noon
Forest Plantings

Saturday, February 1st, 9 – Noon
Study Group – Bonsai Smiths

Events Elsewhere

November 30th
Bonsai Winterfest, New England
Bonsai Gardens
Bellingham, MA

January 18th – 19th
Bay Island Bonsai Annual Exhibit
Oakland, CA

April 10th – 13th
LSBF State Convention
Houston, TX

April 25th – 27th
Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies
Spring Festival
Hanover, NJ

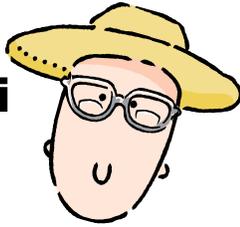
August 15th – 17th
37th Annual Mid-America Bonsai
Exhibit
Chicago, IL

August 21st – 24th
BCI 2014 - Sunrise on Australian
Bonsai
Queensland, Australia

September 26th - 28th, 2015
Artisans Cup of Portland
Portland, Oregon

November Bonsai Tips and Advice

by John Miller



Learn to think in terms related to plant characteristics instead of calendar periods (i.e. use 'when dormant' instead of October, 'candle growth' instead of April, etc). That will enable you to read bonsai articles correctly whether written in Japan, Florida, or wherever. Note that some tree cultivars (like the cork bark black pine) are notably weaker than the standards of the species and require different pruning and care.

Looking at old records can turn up some surprising facts. There is only one month of the entire year, in the Dallas records, that the high temperature did not reach 90 and that month the record high was 89. Surprisingly that month was November not January.

All of this means that you should have your winter quarters ready. Select one for deciduous trees that will be out of the sun. Evergreens will need some sun but some protection from the hotter winter days; a bit of a challenge. Air circulation is good but too much wind will desiccate them, especially in freezing temperatures. Be sure you can check their watering and clean up all debris.

Winter is also a crucial time in the control of many insects. Killing them now means the tree will be able to get started in the spring before they develop sufficient numbers to do damage. Before putting the trees into winter storage treat them for overwintering insects and eggs. Dormant oil spray is good on trees with no green. A dilute solution of lime sulfur is an old gardener's dormant spray for insect and fungus control. Use it on very cool days and dilute it 1 part lime sulfur to 20 parts water. Be sure to read the label on your bottle in case there are different strengths available. This solution should also be applied to bench tops, posts and the soil surrounding them (if you have gravel instead of grass) to eliminate hiding eggs and spores. If you have a greenhouse treat it also before the weather gets too cold to put your plants outside or move them to one end while you treat the other end.

At this time of the year deciduous plants do not need fertilizer. Evergreens will continue a slow growth and will benefit for a light fertilizer feeding. Use one with a lower nitrogen (first number) like 4-8-8 or 0-10-10 and apply at 1/3 the recommended feeding rate.

Most important in winter is to keep the soil moisture at a proper level. This sometimes is hard to do because the trees do not use as much water as when they are growing. However the cold winds will dry out the tops quickly. I believe that most winter damage in Texas is due to lack of water rather than to low temperatures. Mulch helps keep the roots warm and retards evaporation but it makes for difficulty in seeing if the soil is damp enough. Most soils with enough organic material to keep the tree happy in the summer will be too wet if watered daily in the winter and wet cold means root rot. This is another place the Akadama in the APL mix will help.

BIG NOTE: If you have a tree that is weak and unhealthy you should not attempt to style it in any way, just get it happy by adjusting its soil, feeding, and getting rid of any parasites. Styling just adds to its stress and problems.

Repotting of hardy trees can be done anytime the trees are dormant. However it is safer to do that chore in the spring as the buds are swelling. New roots will start forming immediately upon repotting in order for the tree to absorb enough water. If you do repot in the fall you should protect the new roots from freezing during the winter. Do you need to change the pot? Making notes at this time while getting the trees ready for winter will give you 3-4 months to find the proper pot.

When trees go dormant, which indicates a reduced sap flow, they may be pruned, that is have major limbs removed. Trimming may also be done while the leaves are off the trees and you can see what you are doing. Evergreen types will probably still be a bit active. Pruning them should be held until a bit later.

By this time any tropical you have should be under cover. Most do not like the temp below 50 degrees.

Continued on next page

November Bonsai

Tips and Advice (cont'd)

All tropicals should be checked and treated for any insect problems since any insects will multiply fast when they get into warmer quarters. Spider mites and scale can be especially damaging if the plant is moved in the house where the humidity is low.

The semi-tropical plants like crape myrtle, pomegranate, and pyracantha need to go dormant to stay healthy over a long time but they cannot take much cold on the roots. The roots will be killed by temps somewhere between 25 and 30 degrees. These I set down on the ground and mulch for light freezes and then bring into a protected area for the colder winter. Sometimes I will let them go dormant for a month and then take into the greenhouse to start early and I can enjoy their new foliage in January.

Plan your spring repotting tasks so you will have the necessary pots and other supplies. Take advantage of low prices when nurseries are clearing out space for Xmas tree sales. You can sometimes find some.

bargains there especially if you remember that a tree with broken/dead tops may make nice bonsai starter material The dormant season is also a very good time to study your deciduous bonsai. You can see clearly the structure and where improvements should be made. Remove any wire that is tight or where it has done its work and the branch stays in position. Work can be done more leisurely over the winter. Take care not to damage the small buds.

November is when I consider the start of the fiscal year for two needle pines which include the Japanese black pine, Scots pine, and others. This process is needed to develop the twiginess and to get the needles short and keep them that way. Junipers and most other conifers (not the bald cypress) may be included. However I question the desirability of keeping them on the benches over winter because of the possibility of the sun heating the roots too much and causing them to break dormancy or get their roots active. That would cause problem if the temp later falls to 10 degrees. ✍

Club Auction Results

	2013	2011	2010	2009
Total Revenue	\$4,659.00	\$1,935.00	\$1,975.00	\$5,317.25
Payout to Sellers	\$1,700.00	\$1,264.00	\$764.00	\$3,484.00
Profit to the Club	\$2,959.00	\$671.00	\$1,211.00	\$1,833.25

Thanks to all who made the recent auction such a success! The table above shows us our results compared to the most recent three years.

October Program in Review Club Auction

We have several choices for what was the underlying force of our auction's success last month:

- a) One of our first cooler weekends of this fall, after a moderately hot summer with little rain
- b) A two year hiatus from the last auction
- c) Tremendous material and benevolence
- d) All of the above

Last month was the first club auction in two years. It was one of the first "cooler" days of fall with a hope of rain and everyone seemed glad to be able to be out.

The day started with members bringing in trees and items that they wanted to sell or donate to be sold. Trees and materials started pouring in at 8:30 in the morning and continued until the auction began at 9:45 a.m.

The material that was available was of tremendous quality and the quantity. We had over 65 trees for sale, assorted books and magazines, and also had multiple boxes of pots, mostly from our friend George Straw.

Our excellent auctioneer Howard Smith kept things moving along and entertained us along the

way. The sale went very smoothly with very active bidding; the most spectacular being on the last item that was generously donated by longtime club member Van Davis. It was a well developed triple trunk Cedar Elm that had generated significant interest during the inspection portion of the meeting before the bidding started. This tree generated a bidding war that most likely set a record for the BSD auction single sale. We also have to give special thanks to the Ft Worth club for bringing material from Jackie's collection.

Congratulations and thanks to all of the donors, sellers, volunteers, and more importantly to all of the purchasers at this event. Everyone's efforts made this a truly successful event. ✍

Photos courtesy of Lance Williamson



Jeremy D. had the winning bid!

Upper Right: John B. shares his fused maple
Lower Left: Howard S. auctioneer extraordinaire



John Miller

In the News

John Miller says there's a lot more to bonsai than just putting a tree in a pot.

"You're creating something that's beautiful....it's an art form," he said, describing the ancient Japanese practice of shaping miniature trees growing in shallow containers.

"There's a reason we don't put them in deep pot. A shallow pot is part of the optical illusion," he explained. "You make your mind see a tree and not a little plant."

"Anyone can grow a plant, but to get it to look like it's sweeping down the mountainside you have to understand how plants grow," he continued.

"When a tree starts to grow off the edge of a cliff, it's growing up toward the light. But gravity pulls the branches down, so the lower branches have to reach out farther to get the light."

"The Japanese developed the rules to make them (the trees) look like something in nature," he said. "You use a rock as an accent to make you think of a mountain."

Bonsai artists can wire branches to put them in the desired shape, but a wire shouldn't be left on too long or it will scar the tree, Miller said. How long is too long?

A small tree may have to be wired three months to stay in place; if a pine tree is used, that

may be longer. "You can exhibit a bonsai with a wire on, but if the branch is scarred, that's considered a fault," he said.

Special tools are used in shaping the branches to limit growth and meet the artist's design. Miller's favorite for small trees is actually a Fiskars sewing scissors. "It's cheaper than those imported from Japan, and you can find it at sewing supply stores," he said. "For trimming larger branches you need diagonal cutters that are designed for bonsai."

Because of the shallow pots used, bonsai requires more care than a patio plant, for example.

"They need sun to be healthy, but not a full Texas sun. I keep them under a shade cloth in the summer or place them in the yard under partial shade. You learn by experience. I've killed my share of them by under-watering," he said chuckling. "You begin to get a sense of what they need."

His oldest bonsai tree, an ash juniper which he 'inherited' from a friend in 1998, is now approximately 185 years old. Miller became interested in the art of bonsai in 1966 when he found his first book on the subject.

"I did bonsai on my own for about 5 years, and then in October of 1972, the Bonsai Society of Dallas put on an exhibition at the State Fair. I found people there I could talk to. I followed two mentors around the exhibit and listened

to them critique the trees. I also took workshops which are sponsored by the bonsai clubs. My first workshop tree was in 1972, an English box which I still have."

Texas now has six major bonsai clubs, and Miller is a member of both the Dallas and Fort Worth groups.

He grew up on a farm in southwest Missouri, and says he has always been interested in plants and gardening. After serving in the Army from 1951 to 1953, he attended Missouri School of Mines on the GI Bill and graduated with a degree in physics and a minor in electronics. Because his career as an engineer involved several moves over the years, bonsai offered advantages.

"When I moved I had to leave my gardening behind. With bonsai, I could take it with me."

He retired in 1994, and he and his wife, Sue, who also grew up in the country, settled on acreage near Farmersville because they had family in the surrounding area. The Millers have five children, 13 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

"We have our house and my trees, and I keep it mowed," he said, but he does not own any livestock. "I didn't retire to go to work," he explained, grinning.

Miller says that you could call bonsai his hobby, but it is much more. "It's an art form. It's about creating art. It's an emotion."

Article appeared in the *Greenville Harold Banner* and reprinted with permission from its author, Carol Ferguson

Tip of the Month

Top Soil Change



Is your tree not drinking in water like it should because it's in dire need of repotting? **DON'T REPOT!** Although it's tempting to repot your trees early, it is not a good idea to do so. Instead try doing a top soil change. Using a pair of bent nose tweezers scrape off 1/2" - 1" of the soil surface making sure you scrape from the base of the tree out towards you. Always keep in mind the size of your tree and pot to adjust the depth. When done, add a layer of good bonsai soil (Akadama, pumice, lava) and water. This gets rid of clogged fertilizer and weeds, and promotes new root growth closer to the base of your trees. This can be done as long as you are not having freezing temperatures.

Since we have been talking about soil.....

If you want pumice for preparing your own soil mix, fellow club members Alvaro, Jennifer, and Todd made a bulk purchase and still have it available to us. They can bring it to a future meeting. The pricing is as follows:

	Category	Gallons	Price
Bucket	Unsifted	5	\$15
Bucket	Small	5	\$18

Please contact Alvaro now at arciniegas.sin@gmail.com if you are interested in getting some buckets.

Also Ray Hernandez of Bent Tree Bonsai is a good local source for lava rock. See his ad at the end of the newsletter for his contact information.



November'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

Deciduous

- Remove all wire
- When 50% of the foliage changes color - remove the foliage
- Remove fertilizer

Evergreen/Conifer

- Keep recently wired trees from cold temperatures for at least a week
- Slow fertilization down; use one like a 0-10-10.
- Perform winter black pine care
- Work junipers prior to freezing temperatures

Flowering/Fruit

- Stop fertilization
- Restrict flowering to every other year to improve ramification; remove flower buds now

Tropical

- Place in greenhouse or bring indoors for the winter
- Adjust fertilization depending on how warm you keep your greenhouse; little fertilization if placed inside

Link of the Month

Check out the personal blog of Aarin Packard, the Assistant Curator of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

He has some great photos from the time he spent with Ryan Neil at his nursery and studio in Portland.

Capital Bonsai

<http://capitalbonsai.wordpress.com/>

Speaking of Ryan, International Bonsai Mirai has published their schedule of classes for 2014. Check it out at

International Bonsai Mirai

<http://bonsaimirai.com/>

While there, check out some of the potters and their beautiful work he features under 'Galleries'. Repotting season is around the corner so you may find that perfect pot

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.

Learning Opportunities

Bonsai Smiths

Upcoming Classes



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

November 9, 2013 - Japanese Black Pine Session III – **Full**

January 25, 2014 - Japanese Black Pine Session I – **6 seats left**

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

May 17, 2014 - Maple Tree Ramification and Refinement Session I

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 November!

www.BonsaiSmiths.net



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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 (1st) 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

Do Not Cut: For Treasurer Use

Member Receipt

Name: _____ Membership Year _____

Amount Paid: _____ Date: _____ Received By: _____