



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

May 2019

## Message from the Vice President

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May will be an unusual month for the Bonsai Society of Dallas. Our monthly meeting will take place at 3pm in the afternoon – not morning. Special thanks to the nice people at North Haven Gardens who made accommodations for our schedule change. Also, we are hosting both a demonstration and a workshop, but on different weekends. Our guest artists are traveling from faraway places, so let's show them a warm Big D welcome.

Our guest artist, Austin Heitzman, wants us to bring bonsai trees to our monthly meeting. He will show us how to enhance their appearance with natural stands. Let's have another iteration of our 15-minute "Show and Tell" pilot program at our May meeting, during which a limited number of members who brought trees will have an allotted period of time to show off one tree. Tell us whatever you want about your tree. *Show and Tell* will take place after announcements and before introduction of our guest artist. *Show and Tell* was one of our BSD member's ideas. If you have any ideas that can improve our programs or have skills that you would like to share at a monthly meeting, please contact me in-person or email me. I want to help make your ideas a reality.

On a positive note about last month, I was delighted that our very own Chris Scholz taught that you do not need expensive equipment to capture great bonsai photos. Thankfully, he demonstrated that the 5 basic topics to keep in mind. On a not-so positive note, the storms kept us from traveling to Houston for the National Bonsai Convention. So, I hope to hear stories from those of you who did attend.

There are six months between now and our elections in November. If you are interested in contributing to the leadership of our club, it is never too early to demonstrate initiative. We welcome you to observe any or all board meetings. Feel free to ask any leader about his or her role, or about the current vacancy of the LSBF Alternate position.

Lastly, as we gear up for summer vacations, be reminded that having a backup plan is important, especially as the hot summer sun sets in. Sprinkler systems are always a plus during such times. If you are unable to structure systems specifically for your bonsai, set your trees near in-ground systems and increase the watering frequency. Consider soliciting the help of a bonsai friend to visit your yard and water while you are gone. It is a more secure way to avoid sudden sprinkler mishaps. With our BSD roster in-hand, each of us should have contact information on members who might be able to lend a helping hand. You could even hire a bonsai company to maintenance your during your absence. Whatever you decide, have a backup plan. One dry spell can kill during the heat of summer, so be prepared.

*Emily White*

# May Program

## Guest Artist Austin Heitzman on Bonsai Stand

**3pm to 5pm, May 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**North Haven Gardens**

Austin Heitzman is a furniture maker based in Portland Oregon. He specializes in custom furniture and bonsai stands made from locally salvaged city trees. His pieces are influenced by a deep love of nature and an appreciation for Japanese art cultivated through his exploration of bonsai. Austin likes to contrast refined carving and clean lines with the natural defects in the tree making each piece a collaboration between himself and nature.



Austin's presentation will detail traditional bonsai display; how to pair an appropriate stand with your tree and pot, and correct use of a Jita for an accent. It will also go over contemporary American bonsai display and creative use of wooden material to make your display stand out.



### Upcoming Events



Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> **3pm – 5pm**  
**Guest Artist Austin Heitzman on  
Bonsai Stand**

Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, **Owen Reich**  
**Bring Your Own Tree Workshop**  
– **Limited Spots, Registration  
Required**

Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, **Study Group  
with the Bonsai Smiths**

Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, **Guest Artist Ray  
Hernandez, Rock Planting  
Demonstration**

### Events Elsewhere



May 2-4, 2019, **Omiya Bonsai  
Festival**, Kita-ku, Saitama, Japan

May 17-20, 2019, **32nd AABC  
National Bonsai Convention**,  
Melbourne, Australia

May 18 – 26, 2019, **8th Satsuki  
Bonsai Festival**, Milan, Italy

June 1, 2019 **Las Vegas Bonsai  
Society Annual Bonsai Show**, Las  
Vegas, Nevada

June 15-16, 2019, **Bonsai West**,  
Delft, Netherlands

June 22 – 23, 2019, **9th Bonsai  
Triennale**, Wojslawice, Poland

June 28 – 30, 2019, **2nd US Shohin  
Bonsai Exhibition**, Kannapolis, NC

August 18, 2019 **Bristol Bonsai  
Society Annual Show**, Bristol, UK

# May Bonsai Tips and Advice

By John Miller



Bonsai Tonight has some great articles on the LSBF-ABS show and seminar held in Houston in April. Jonas spends some time expounding on the great diversity to be found in our Texas bonsai collections. Whatever your level of expertise is you all deserve a pat on the back for your work in learning how to grow them.

May is the time to continue work on most species of bonsai, do leaf pruning if necessary, debud azaleas if too many buds, start repotting tropicals, plan for summer protection, and treat for spider mites again.

In general, May is the time you do leaf pruning if you have to do it. If you have kept the new growth pinched properly, you have been getting the ramification usually attributed to leaf pruning. The only good reason for leaf pruning is to replace foliage that has been damaged by wind or insects. On some individual plants that have large foliage, the new foliage will sometimes be smaller. Leaf pruning should be done after the spring foliage has matured and supplied the tree with enough nutrients to produce a good crop of new foliage. It must be done well before the summer heat causes the plant growth to slow or stop. I consider the very latest time in this area to be Memorial Day. Leaf pruning is done only on very healthy trees and never on the atropurpeum type of Japanese maple (Bloodgood is one). The tree should be fertilized 7 - 10 days before the operation. Cut the stems of those leaves that have them (maples) or cut across the leaf about 1/16 inch from the twig if leaves are attached directly on the twig (elms). It will not need as much water until the new foliage has developed.

I like to remove extra buds on azaleas so that the flowers have room to open fully. When the azaleas finish bloom remove all seed pods and do any reshaping that is necessary. You have 2-2 1/2 months (that is until mid-July) to work on them. They will start setting buds for next year's flowers at that time.

When the nighttime temp stays above 60 degrees, it is time to start repotting the tropical material. Since there are so many different requirements for tropical, I will not try to cover their individual needs here. But in general, I like to put them in shade and mist them until the new growth starts.

Warm humid days are favorable for fungal growth. Watch for mildew, black leaf spot on elms and yaupons, among other. As an organic control you can use baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) or better use Potassium bicarbonate that you can get at a nursery. Hydrogen peroxide in a 1% solution (mix 1 part of the normal 3% commercial product with 2 parts water) can be used on mature foliage. It may burn tender foliage but its only by-product is water.

If you have insect problems, you will need to apply your control, whatever you use, several times. For example, spider mites may go thru the cycle from egg to adult to egg in as little as 5 days. Therefore you should spray 4 times 5 days apart. Other insects will have a different cycle but that schedule should take care of almost everything.

Aphids, spider mites, and scale continue to be the most prevalent insects. Chemical controls may be used if you desire. A systemic type will be best for scale. Always follow the label directions explicitly. Do not use an oil based spray on buttonwood.

I use the foliar spray of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar (1 tablespoon each per gallon of water). Scale is the most difficult because it is usually covered with a waxy coating. You may need to use a horticultural oil mixed as directed on the label. Be sure that the direction you read is for summer use as some have two dosages given, one for dormancy (usually the first and strongest) and one for summer. Always check to see if your plant is included on the label. Please note: the commercial organic spray sold as Garret Juice does not do the same as the above mixture. Use it as a fertilizer only.

If you see damage to the foliage or the plant is not doing well, look for other problems and if you don't recognize the culprit ask your favorite nurseryman for help.

Start checking your pots to see if the sun is heating them up. Our summer sun shining on dark pots can make the soil temperature soar and kill the roots. Try putting your hand on the pot. Roots are living organisms and cannot take high temperatures any more than you can. Heating also dries out the soil making you water more often. Any number of ways of keeping the pots cool will work, the requirement being to prevent the sun from getting to them. An inch or more of air space around the pot is desirable. I do not care for the aluminum foil methods because I don't care to have the light reflected into my eyes. A simple cloth with a slit to go around the trunk works fine, but weigh it down with a rock.

Remember all the work that you did in the spring? Keep the new growth trimmed so that you haven't wasted your time. While trimming or watering check the wiring periodically and remove it before it

damages the branch. If the branch springs back some rewire it.

If you are not on a regular organic foliar/drench feed schedule, be sure to use fertilizer cakes with supplemental feeding with a good liquid fertilizer, one that includes the minor elements. Most bonsai I see are malnourished. The liquid water soluble fertilizer gets washed out with the next watering and the tree starves until the next infrequent feeding. There are a number of fertilizers in pellet or cake form on the market or you can make your own.

At a convention I once watched two good artists working on black pine. One had the student cut all needles to 1/4 inch. The other had them pluck all old needles and left the 1 year needles full length. Both techniques will work if followed by the correct care for that technique. For this reason, I don't say much on conifers in this column. Whichever way you do it you should learn the complete method of your instructor and not mix them. Don't change methods unless you have a very good reason. Then it may take a full year to get everything on track.

## April Program in Review

### Take Professional Bonsai Pictures with you Phone by Chris S.

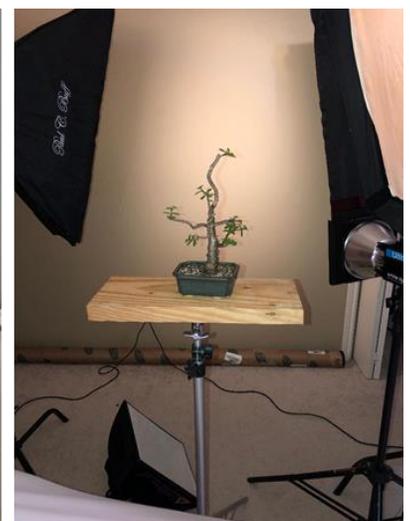
Our April meeting featured one of our own BSD members, Chris Scholz. Chris brought his experience working as a photographer at a number of positions including a staff photographer for the Daily Olympian, the official newspaper of the Olympic Committee at the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

The program began with everyone taking photos with their phones or cameras of the few trees that were present. Chris then gave a great talk with slides about the elements of good photography. He touched on equipment, what makes a good bonsai photo, the 5 golden rules of bonsai photography, and principles of lighting. A key takeaway from Chris' program are the 5 golden rules:

1. Viewpoint
2. Detail
3. Lighting
4. Composition
5. Does it tell a story?

Despite the thunderstorm that rolled through during the program Chris was able to setup his equipment and demonstrate how these golden rules come into play when taking photographs of bonsai.

A big thanks to Chris for leading this program!



## Beginner's Bulletin Board

There are no 'dumb' questions when you are a beginner at any new endeavor. However sometimes beginners are reluctant to ask a question in a monthly meeting. Got a question? Send it to Haiying at [haiying\\_huang@yahoo.com](mailto:haiying_huang@yahoo.com) for an individual response. Your question may also appear anonymously here in a future issue so that others can learn.

**Question:** How do you identify where the live veins are in a juniper?

**Answer by Diane:** The short answer is you must wait and let the tree reveal it to you. That is because over time, the live vein will continue to grow and thicken, while the dead vein does not.

In the photo shown to the right, you can see that at one time there was a large branch at the base of the tree that was *jinned*. For those new to bonsai, that means that as part of the initial styling, the branch was cut back to a stub, shaped to create a natural appearance, and the live vein that supported the branch gradually died back. You can see in a closer view in the photo below, that the live vein and dead vein look quite different. This trunk splits in two different directions, both of which are supporting a live vein and a dead vein. The live vein on the right has been peeled back to reveal a beautiful reddish color with rounded edges where it meets the dead portion which remains a flat mottled gray. The same is true for the trunk on the left although it has not been peeled back as much. The live vein also has more bulk and the demarcation between the live and dead side becomes more pronounced. This only happens over time; the more healthy and vigorous the growth, the sooner it is revealed.



Another technique that might be used when styling a juniper is to create a *shari* on the trunk. That is when an entire section of live vein is cut and peeled away, whether it be all the way to the base of the trunk or just a section. In that case you are choosing to create the dead portion of the trunk as part of the initial design. Once again over time, the live portion continues to grow and creates more bulk giving the tree a natural appearance of perhaps a tree struck by lightning many years ago that recovered but was left with dead wood. Nature can be so beautiful!

As part of routine annual maintenance on a mature juniper bonsai, it can be a good idea to carefully remove the outer bark on the live vein. It doesn't hurt the tree if done properly and reveals the beautiful red color. It also removes hiding places where bad bugs can enter, feed on soft tissue, and lay eggs that can harm or even kill the tree. If you wish to 'amp up' the aesthetics of the tree, gently sanding and treating the deadwood with a dilution of lime sulfur can enhance the appearance of the deadwood by creating a beautiful light contrast.

## May'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

- Watch and treat for pests and fungal problems
- Apply routine fertilization
- Remove wire if cutting into branches

### Deciduous

- Remove runners before they become too strong
- Cut back where internodes begin to elongate on branches that do not need to be thickened
- Maintain the structure of the branches
- Initial leaf pruning, if at the tertiary branch stage

### Evergreen/Conifer

- Continue pruning as necessary
- Wait to rewire junipers until mid-summer
- On junipers in refined stages, only remove the shoots that grow above the silhouette of the shape of the tree. DO NOT pinch the entire tree
- Continue to fertilize black pines heavily and let new buds grow freely

### Flowering/Fruit

- No more pruning until late June

### Tropical

- Begin repotting
- Leaf prune if desired

## Member News

Got news to share? Let us know...

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!

## Link of the Month

The link below is an interview conducted by the Bonsai Garden Podcast with Owen Reich, who will teach a workshop for us on May 11<sup>th</sup>. The interview explored Owen's bonsai experience before he went to Japan and his apprenticeship at Fujikawa Bonsai. The discussion on the lessons he learned about bonsai while living in Japan is quite interesting and informative.

<http://bonsaificusretusa.com/owen-reich-fujikawa-bonsai/>



## Tip of the Month

### How to do partial leaf pruning

Defoliation can be used to reduce growth and reduce leaf size of a deciduous tree. Full defoliation, however, can be demanding for a tree. As an alternative, you can do defoliation in small areas or only do a partial leaf pruning. To cut a portion of the leaf off, fold the leaf using one hand and cut the leaf at an angle using a pair of sharp scissors, as shown in the picture to the right. If you adjust the cut angle properly, the leaf will still have approximately the same shape but with a reduced length.





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For more details contact:

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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: \$30.00

Renewal Membership

Joint Membership: \$35.00

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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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Member Receipt

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

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