



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

September 2011

Message from the President

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Before you know it we will be talking about this heat in the past tense. Not soon enough though, so even though we are heading into September stay with your summer routine and protect your pots from the intense direct sun.

As fall approaches it is a great time to think about your backyard setting to both protect and also enjoy the beauty of your trees. Do you have the right structures in place to enjoy looking at your trees? Does it also provide protection from the weather and give you a good way to systematically water your trees. Be sure to come to this month's meeting to learn more about some of the options that might work for you.

It will be a busy fall as you will read further in the newsletter. We've got a really good line-up of programs to finish out the year as well as the club auction coming up. It is always a fun morning and it is also our major fund raising event for the year so please plan to join us and bring a friend. We are promoting the auction to members and non-members alike so we hope to have a good turnout with lots of interesting material. Your donations are very much appreciated especially since we have the convention coming up early next year and already have lots of expenses associated with that event.

October also holds an extra opportunity for us to get together. One week after the auction, we have a guest artist coming in for an interesting demonstration followed by an afternoon workshop. Every year the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF) brings a guest artist to the state to visit all the clubs. Plan to join us that morning, grab a quick lunch, and then stay for the workshop in the afternoon. You will go home with a new tree to add to your collection and a lot more knowledge. There are only 10 spots for the workshop so sign up early.

Hoping for cooler temperatures soon!

Chuck

NOTE: This issue is a bit out of the ordinary as our newsletter editor Hiram Quinones is currently in the hospital. Please join us in wishing him a speedy recovery and also bear with us if there are errors in formatting.

September Program

Backyard Bonsai – Benches, Watering, and Weather

9 AM to Noon, North Haven Gardens

As your collection grows, the inevitable question comes up of where to put your bonsai. Every back yard is different so there is no one single solution that fits all. Join John Miller and Diane Lowe for a discussion of some bench designs that might work for you.

We need to protect our bonsai from the elements, but still give them the right conditions in which to thrive. We will talk about bench design, seasonal weather protection, watering systems, and even the water retention properties of some soils.

Whether you are just getting started or have an established backyard set-up, please come and join in on this important topic. Bring some ideas or challenges to share so we all benefit from our collective experiences. There are sure to be some tips and tricks you may not have thought of.

Plan to pick up your pot(s) from our program last month and be sure to bring a tree or two for Show 'N Tell. ☞

LSBF Guest Artist

Erik Wigert

by Sylvia Smith



Mark your calendars to join us for an extra event in October. Each year the LSBF sponsors a guest artist to visit each of the member clubs. This year we have Erik Wigert from Florida joining us on October 8th at our usual place and time.

Erik opened his bonsai nursery in 2003 focusing on bonsai cultivation and production. Since then, Wigert's Bonsai has become one of the leading wholesale suppliers of tropical pre-bonsai in Florida. Additionally he has won several awards including: 2nd place winner of BCI Bonsai magazine photo contest 2011, Best Tropical Bonsai at the 1st US National Bonsai Exhibit 2008, Second Place winner of Florida Bonsai Societies Scholarship competition in 2007, Second place ABS Joshua Roth New Talent Competition 2006, as well as having his trees on display at Epcot Center, Walt Disney World from 2005 -2011.

The workshop is \$49 and begins at 1:30 p.m. in the small conference room. There will be a signup sheet at the upcoming meeting or contact Diane Lowe at diane_lowe@live.com to sign up. There are only 10 spots so sign up early. Silent observation is available to club members only. ☞

Upcoming Events



Saturday, Sept. 3rd, 9–12 Noon
Backyard Bonsai – Benches,
Watering, and Weather

Saturday, Oct. 1st, 9–12 Noon
Annual Club Auction

Saturday, Oct. 8th, 9–12 Noon
LSBF Guest Artist Erik Wigert –
Lecture and Demonstration

Saturday, Oct. 8th, 1:30 – 4 pm
Erik Wigert Workshop (small room)

Saturday, Nov. 5th, 9–12 Noon
Study Group – Howard and Sylvia
Smith

Saturday, Dec. 3rd, 9-12 Noon
Collecting Trees and Aftercare –
Mark Bynum + Xmas Party

Help Wanted



We are in need of a volunteer to fill an open position on the board. Jennifer Sin and Alvaro Arciniegas have done a great job as program chairs but a new baby on the way and busy work/family schedules has forced them to resign the position. We sincerely thank them for their service to the club.

Would you consider serving the rest of their term through 2012? Most of our programs are set for the first half of the year so it is a great way to give back to the club and learn more about bonsai without too much 'heavy lifting'.

Nominations will be taken at the November meeting.

Annual Club Auction

It is that time of year again; time to look at your collection and decide what trees you aren't really in love with. Why keep it around if it really isn't what you want or doesn't really fit into your collection? Or maybe you just need to make room for some new material you will be digging this winter. Whatever the reason, bring it in for the auction on October 1st and pass it along to someone else who is ready to give it a good home. That goes for pots, supplies, tools, publications.....anything related to bonsai is up for grabs.

This is our club's annual fundraiser in the year before our convention so let's all participate and make it the best ever. We never know what we are going to get until the morning of the sale, but that is part of the fun of it. Items will begin arriving between 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. and the auction, conducted by the renowned Howard Smith of Bonsai Smiths, starts at 9:45 a.m. If you are coming to buy, please be aware that we take cash, checks, or credit cards (no checks from non-members). Everyone must register and get an auction paddle so come early to browse and give yourself extra time to get checked in. Also please allow extra time at the end to settle with the cashier. You must have a receipt before you can claim your item(s).

We welcome your trees or other bonsai related items for sale. Here is how it works:

- You may either donate items for sale with all the proceeds going to the club, or you may split a portion of the proceeds with the club for any items valued over \$50.
- Items worth more than \$50 are sold on an 80/20 split. This means the seller gets 80% of the bid price, the club gets 20%. These items must have a minimum reserve price of at least \$50; you decide your reserve price.
- If you wish to split proceeds of a sale greater than \$50, you must be a club member. If your membership has lapsed, you can easily join the club that morning for \$25, which allows you to sell at the auction and also enjoy the benefits of membership through the end of 2012.

- All items to be auctioned should be delivered between 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. at North Haven Gardens in the large meeting room inside the greenhouse. Items will be checked in at this time and no item will be accepted after 9:30 a.m.
- Items under \$50 value are considered donations to the club - no splits.
- No items may be sold prior to or after the auction unless you have worked out an arrangement with the auctioneer.
- If you are owed money after the auction, we will mail you a check within 7-10 days after the auction. We appreciate your patience as it takes time to coordinate schedules among volunteers to reconcile our totals.

We will be promoting the auction to the public so we may have many guests there as well. We always need extra volunteers from the club to help with registration, material handling, and auction support. Please let Diane Lowe (diane_lowe@live.com) or Sylvia Smith (slysmith@earthlink.net) know if you can volunteer to help that morning. Even if you volunteer you can still bid on items so don't feel you have to miss any of the fun.

Hope to see you at the auction! ☺

2012 Convention Board Members

Chuck Talley – Convention Chair
 Sylvia Smith – Convention Co-Chair
 Diane Lowe – Registration Chair
 John Miller – Workshop Chair
 Bill Weber – Vendor Chair
 Mark Bynum – Raffle Chair
 Howard Smith – Exhibit Chair

We are working as a team to bring together the best convention ever but we need your help before, during, and after the convention. Please plan to volunteer.



September Bonsai

Tips and advice by John Miller

This has been a horrific summer for bonsai. I have not lost anything but some really look bad. This year I was forced to really take care of them and consequently I proved to myself something I had surmised, but that does not agree with popular opinion. **Trees do not go into summer dormancy.** All my trees have continued to grow throughout the heat (100+ in daytime and above 80 at night). The elms – Chinese, Catlin, and Cedar, as well as the oaks – Live, Shumard, and Post, seem to relish the added watering. The only bad thing is that the Japanese maples continue to grow but their new tips get scorched.

The forecasts are indicating some relief soon but there should still be some days with pretty hot temperatures. Keep after the extra care and as the sun changes its angle, make sure that the pots do not get too much afternoon sun.

A strange item to be talking about with the temp outside now at 103^o but the situation may change in a hurry so be ready. Help your trees go into dormancy. Withhold fertilizers from those outdoor trees in mid September. They need less water as they quit active growth but on warm days trees with green foliage will still transpire and need that water. Most tropicals have a dormant season also but it is caused by dry conditions rather than cold. These types need to be hardened also by cutting the fertilizer to halt active growth and lighter watering. This will enable them to withstand the transfer to the greenhouse better.

Check the trees you still have wire on. When the cooler days get here some trees will expand their branches and get wire cuts rather quickly. You need to check them periodically over the winter also. Winter growth will usually be pretty slow but can occur, especially on the evergreens. Cut the wire off. You can easily break the branches trying to unwrap the wire and it is just not worth trying to save the wire. If you need to reapply some wire take care and apply it in a slightly different path.

Two other things you can do now. You should prepare your winter quarters and you should study your evergreen trees to determine if you need to do any restyling later on this fall.

Check the place you expect to winter your bonsai.

(1) Make sure that it is clean. Debris harbors insects and other plant pathogens. A strong lime-sulfur spray can be used to disinfect the area as well as your growing area after the trees are removed.

(2) Be sure that you will be able to check the water needs of the trees.

(3) It should be somewhat protected from winds but should have some air movement to help prevent molds from developing.

(4) Having it in a location where you can see the trees will allow you to enjoy the winter silhouette, i.e. the branch structure and twiginess that is a great part of deciduous bonsai.

There is not too much to be done on deciduous trees at this time. Bugs and other problems are usually not a matter of concern since the foliage will be dropping soon. Scale on the stems must be taken care of. Evergreens and tropicals will still need to be watched for their insect problems, especially the spider mite which will be active into fall. Use the organic spray formula to control them. If we should have a stretch of damp weather you should be watching for fungal problems, leaf spot, mildew, etc. Treat fungal with potassium bicarbonate, (baking soda-sodium bicarbonate- will work about as well). I would be okay with using a 1% hydrogen peroxide solution at this time of the year for fungal control.

The organic spray formula is one tablespoon each of liquid seaweed, fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and molasses in one gallon of water. This can be used as a foliar feed but I only consider it an insecticide.

Pruning and trimming 'can' be done any time that there is not a lot of sap flowing but is usually advisable to do it during dormancy. Sap flow is indicated by the foliar activity of the plant like in the spring. If your tree went into summer dormancy which occurs during hot weather then the cooler weather might result in a larger sap flow in late summer or early fall. If your plant gets a flush of new growth it would be advisable to postpone large pruning cuts for a while. Basically let your tree tell you when it is ok to operate.

Check nurseries for possible bonsai material. When the season is over they usually put everything on sale to clear it out so they can fill up with Christmas trees.

[John Miller provides monthly care tips and advice. If you have any questions about what has been discussed here or a specific issue you're having, contact John or any other experienced member at one of our meetings.] ✍

August Program Recap Kusamono Pots Galore!

By Bronson Havard

The Bonsai Society of Dallas' biennial treat is to have distinguished local potter and BSD member Sandi McFarland visit us and give a Saturday morning lesson in making Kusamono pots for future bonsai exhibits.

Members tried their artistic skills at the August meeting and made more than 90 pots, including many extras so that some finished pots can be used as part of our centerpieces at the dinners during the upcoming LSBF Convention on April 27-29, 2012.

Ms. McFarland will kiln-dry the moist dark clay to a high temperature and bring members' creations back to our September meeting for cooking and awing by all.



The Art of Kusamono

The companion art to the art of bonsai (*pronounced "bone sigh"*) — namely, the art of kusamono. Kusamono (*pronounced "kusa-mono"*) are potted arrangements of wild grasses and flowers in unique pots or trays. The name is composed of two Japanese characters — “grass” and “thing”— which together suggest humble, everyday plants or even weeds. Originally, this name

referred to the small, potted grasses displayed next to bonsai as accent plants. — The U.S. National Arboretum



Top: Don and Pat Edwards of Denton getting their hands dirty.
Below: Joshua Murphree of Irving enjoying the process. *Photos by B. Havard*



Above: Bronson Havard of Dallas overlooking pot creations
Left: Instructor Sandi McFarland of Irving, with Todd Hang and his daughter looking on. *Photos by B. Havard*

Study Group Series

By Hiram Quinones

Over the last couple of years BSD has been covering subjects to meet the club member's suggestions and requests for more bonsai specific information. Topics like seasonal care of bonsai, advice on how to advance or improve your trees, and general feeding and watering schedules have been well received by all. But wouldn't it be nice to have someone guide you when you are cutting off that seemingly important branch that the recent guest artist told you to get rid of in order to make a better tree? What if you wired a branch and were not sure if it moves in the direction that our experienced panel members all agreed on? And now that it's been two months since you defoliated your maple and ficus trees, what's next on the To Do list? Just imagine having show ready trees in your backyard at any given point in time.

We are lucky to have club members Howard and Sylvia Smith of Bonsai Smiths available to teach us. They have completed extensive training under the direction of Boon Manakitipivart, who has trained with one of the most famous bonsai masters in Japan. Since then they have developed a beautiful collection of bonsai and have provided both private and group lessons. Starting with our November meeting they will begin a new program series just for us that will be given in early spring, mid-summer and late fall. These sessions are designed to instruct and guide participants on the "how to" of styling and refining their personal collection of bonsai. The workshops will be open to all club members free of charge and limited to two trees per person per session. It is a program that will help guide you in turning your trees from backyard beauties into refined show ready bonsai.

All members are asked to bring their own tools, wire, and turn tables as well as one or two trees to work on. Be thinking about what two trees you want to bring or better yet, perhaps buy a tree or two at our auction in October and begin with something new. Bring your camera and take pictures of your trees before and after each session so you can keep a record of the transformations over the year(s). This will be a fun way to apply all that you have been learning and put it to use specifically on your own trees. Don't miss the first session on November 5th! ✍

Convention Update: Understanding Bonsai Training in Japan

By Sylvia Smith

So how does bonsai training differ in Japan than anywhere else in the world? Those of you familiar with Japanese culture are well aware of how it is deeply rooted in tradition. Bonsai as well as other artistic trades are passed down through a hierarchical ladder in which those at the bottom of the totem pole must prove themselves worthy of training. Those at the top of the ladder are always considered your superiors and therefore are respected as such.

As a Japanese "student of bonsai" one (usually in their teens) is given up to a bonsai master and left to live modestly with him, eventually to be taught the trade. A sort of verbal adoption takes place and the student is only allowed a few days a year to visit family or go out socially. For about the first three years, the student is allowed to pick weeds, water trees, sweep and clean the studios, greet guests, serve tea..... you get the idea. Much of what is taught happens through observation, which takes many years to develop. Thankfully those traditions have loosened up over the years and Japan has opened its doors to non-Japanese students to enter this arena. Some have opened up quick schools of bonsai that have students visit anywhere from a week to several months to learn the art of bonsai. But serious schools of bonsai are much harder to get into and still follow the strict guidelines of old in a somewhat faster pace (usually three years or more for serious training).

These schools of bonsai are very traditional and very serious. A student must still be trained up to be a good nursery care taker before they are allowed to touch a bonsai. And if you are a woman, you can add a little laundry and food prep to that list. If by the time your three years are up and you have been asked to submit a tree that you have worked on (on your own) to the prestigious KoKufu show, you know you've met the approval of your teacher. In Japan your teacher is considered your "boss" but you respect him as you would your father. Therefore your teacher is not your "Sensei", he is your "Oyacata".



Convention Update (continued)

Lots of hard work and time are put into this type of training. If you listen closely to our headliners this coming convention, note the similar teaching in the core of what is "Bonsai". Just as three sketch artists sketch the same landscape, only their artistic styles will differ. The basic concepts of depth and balance will still be the same. So enjoy the art, but absorb the

core of what they will teach us, as these will be the same tried and true teachings of their teachers and their teachers before them.

Here is a breakdown of where our guest artists' training originated, or as they say, who their "school of bonsai" is:

- Toshinori Suzuki of Daijyu-en, trained Yasuo Mitsuya who then trained Kathy Shaner



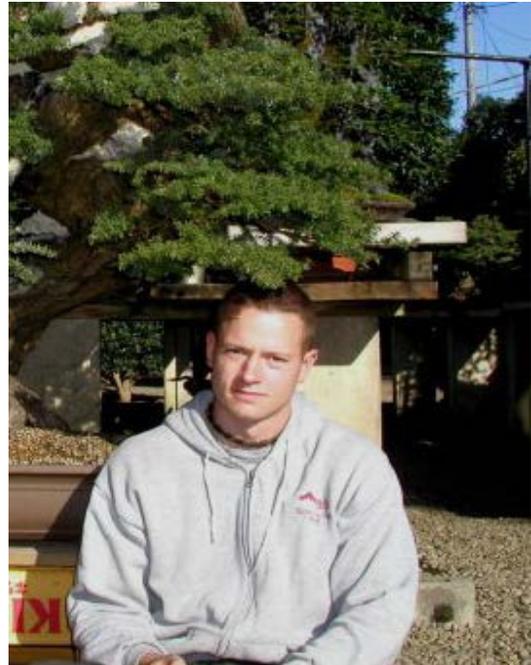
Kathy Shaner

- Hamano of Toju-en trained Shinji Suzuki who trained Michael Hagedorn



Mike
Hagedorn

- Motosuke Hamano of Toju-en trained Masahiko Kimura who trained Ryan Neil



Ryan Neil



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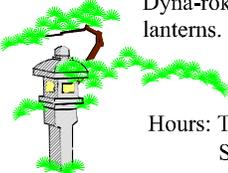
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☀ You are welcomed! ☀

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to BSD Members**

Identify yourself as a BSD member at the following participating businesses for a 10% discount on merchandise:

- The Bonsai Smiths
- Sanderson Creek Bonsai
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- Dallas Bonsai Garden

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 Hiram Quinones at hiramaquinones@yahoo.com.