



Bonsai Society of Dallas

May 2006



Message from the President:

By John Miller, filling in for George Straw

Since George is on a vacation in deepest Africa studying the bonsai aspects and styling of the elusive baobab tree, I will attempt to write a column to fill his space. George will be back for the meeting as he does not trust Mike or me to conduct it properly.

I urge all of you to strongly consider attending the LSBF convention in Corpus Christi on July 14-16. It will be held at the Holiday Inn Airport, 5549 Leopard St,

Ph 361-289-5100 (conv. Rate: \$89). Especially beginners benefit from being exposed to and working with different artists. The only way to learn bonsai and develop the ability to find the best tree in a piece of material is by hands on effort in a workshop. Reading books and listening to lectures just doesn't do it. If I were to do a workshop I would probably pick one from the following: Natal Plum, Texas Ebony, Brazilian Rain-tree, or the Texas native. Those strike my

fancy, although the others would work just as good. Full information can be had at the meeting, on the internet (www.corpuschristibonsaiclub.com), or by calling me (231-776-2910).

See you at the meeting.

John Miller, Past president, past V-P, past secretary, editor emeritus, yada yada yada



May Program by Mike Smoller

Date: May 4, 2006
Time: 6:30 PM
Place: North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven
Dallas, TX

The program for the regular meeting on May 4, 2006 will be a hands-on styling workshop for all members using Juniper trees originally purchased by the club as workshop material for the 2007 Bonsai Convention. Each member who

attends the May meeting and desires to style a tree should wear appropriate clothing and bring his or her tools and supplies. The club will have its supply of wire on hand as well. The idea is that each member will get valuable lessons in styling guided by our more experienced members. At the end of the meeting each tree will then be taken home to be nurtured and cared for until the 2007 Convention next April.

Then the trees will be auctioned to generate income for the Club at the 2007 Convention. We will have a follow-up program in December repotting these trees and checking on their progress.

Looking forward to seeing you at the May meeting!

Don't forget your tools and supplies!

BSD Calendar

- May 4 - All Club Pros - Juniper Styling
- June 1 - Andy Rutledge - Bonsai Artistry, Evaluation & Critique
- July 6 - Ray Hernandez - Collected Tree Care
- Aug. 3 - David Quisenberry - Bonsai on a Budget
- Sept. 7 - Club Auction
- Oct. 5 - David Schleser - Lesser Known Natives for Collecting
- Nov. 2 - Shane Cary - TBA
- Dec. 7 - Progress critique on the trees from the May program



Other Dates of Interest

- June 17, SSOT - Austin tropical shohin refinement and air layering.
- July 14- 16 - State Bonsai Convention, Corpus Christi
- Sept. 16, SSOT - Austin Panel critique. Workshop, Japanese style scroll.

May Bonsai by John Miller

In the Dallas area, May is the time you do the leaf pruning job 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 usually 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 to be Memorial Day. Leaf pruning is done only on very healthy trees. The tree should be fertilized 7 - 10 days before the operation. Cut the stems of those leaves that have them (maples) or cutting across the leaf about 1/16 inch from the twig if leaves are attached direction on the twig (elms). It will not need as much water until the new foliage has developed.



When the azaleas finish blooming, remove all seed pods and do any reshaping that is necessary. You have 2-2½ months (that is mid-July) to work on them. They will start setting buds for next year's growth at that time.

When the nighttime temperature stays above 60 degrees, it is time to start repotting the tropical material. Since there are so many different requirements for tropicals, 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 others. As an organic control you can use baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) or better 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 through 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. The foliar feeding of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses, and apple cider vinegar (1 tablespoon each per gallon of water) is all the control I use for them. Scale is the most difficult because it is usually covered with a waxy coating (the scale). 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. Do not use oil on buttonwood or any other plant not included on the label. Please note: the commercial variation sold as Garrett Juice does not do the same as the above mixture. 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. 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.

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.

Time to consider becoming more proficient at your hobby. You can learn all the rules but without practice you will not be able to perform. You need practice to learn to recognize the line of the raw material you are starting with. You get this practice and experience by taking part in your clubs various study groups, beginners classes, and workshops. If you are not a beginner, try teaching some beginners. The teacher always learns as much as his students by trying to verbalize what he is attempting to teach. Visit conventions, especially the local state convention and discuss trees with others who share your like for a particular style or species.

Soil components---For those who asked about the source of the bark in my soil mix. The Calloway's mix that I used last year has been completely reformulated and is no longer a good thing. I did not find anything at Calloway's to use this year. After trying three different mixes, Home Depot finally got some Scotchman's Choice Landscaper Mix. I had used this once before. I bought two bags and sifted it out. It all went through the half inch screen. 24% stayed on the 1/4 screen, 41% stayed on the 1/8 screen, 17% stayed on the 1/16 screen, and 17% was fine. Not too bad for \$3 per bag.

LONE STAR BONSAI FEDERATION CONVENTION

The 2006 LSBF convention will be held in Corpus Christi on July 14-16. Guest artists include Johnny Uchida of California, Bruce Baker of Michigan, and Ed Trout of Florida. It will be at the Holiday Inn, 5549 Leopard St, Corpus Christi. Reserve that date on your calendar, details and reservation sheets are now available on the Corpus Christi Bonsai Club website at www.corpuschristibonsaiclub.com. Some of the material for workshops will be Brazilian Raintree, Natal Plum, Water Jasmine (Wrightii Religiosa), Dwarf Yaupon Holly Fiddlewood, Surinam Cherry, Kidneywood, Texas Ebony, and a mixed group of other Texas Natives.

We Need Items for the Raffle! By Sandi McFarland

As the chairperson for the raffle at the 2007 Convention, I would like to ask you to donate one or more quality items for the raffle! I'd really like items to be bonsai, plant, or oriental art related. If you have something that you would like to donate, or if you have a question about the raffle, please contact me at 972-438-9782 or at potter@pegasuspottery.com. This raffle is one of the ways that BSD gains much needed funds for operations, so please help us out! Thank you in advance for all your help!

I am also looking for a couple of folks who would be willing to help me run the raffle. If you are interested, please let me know! Thanks!

Generous Businesses Give Discount to BSG Members

Present your BSD membership card at the following participating businesses for a 10% discount on merchandise:


- The Bonsai Smiths
- Dream Gardens
- Ray Hernandez's Bent Tree Bonsai
- Pegasus Pottery

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 George Straw at GSTRA@aol.com or Sandi McFarland potter@pegasuspottery.com.



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