



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

## Message from the President:

By George Straw

What a great month March was for the Bonsai club. Michael Smoller did a wonderful job explaining the ins and outs of creating a forest. Michael not only showed us how to plant, but went into the planning of a forest. It made me want to go home and start doing forests and then, many years from now, I could have one that looks like Michael's big cedar elm forest or Dave's Spruce forest. What great examples we had at the show.

I will not get to much into the show as I do not want to be repeating myself too much and I have written an article about the show and who the People's Choice Award went to. Please read

that article on page 4 to find out more. Sylvia is already talking with the people at the Arboretum about doing a fall show! That will give the members a chance to show some additional trees or the same tree with leaves. We will keep you informed about this as we hear more.

I do want to say again how much I appreciate all of the help from the members. It was the best member turnout that we have had at one of the shows. It was a lot of fun and so if you did not help out, start thinking about the fall show if we are able to arrange it.

I am looking forward to the Ft. Worth Convention! Be

sure to get your registration in and if you want to do one of the workshops, you should hurry up and get that sent in as they will be or may already be filled up.

I guess I had better get out in the backyard again. I am having a hard time keeping up with the new growth on my Chinese Elm! I think they also grow with the moon light.



### From the Editor:

Happy Spring everyone! Thank you so much to those of you who have submitted articles for the newsletter!

Anyone like to draw or have access to copyright free graphics? I would love to have more bonsai related art to spice up the newsletter! Please email them to me in jpeg format to [potter@pegasuspottery.com](mailto:potter@pegasuspottery.com)

### BSD Calendar

- Apr 7 - Ray Hernandez, Trident Maples
- May 5 - Sylvia Smith, Kusamono
- May 13-15 - LSBF Convention in Fort Worth
- Jun 2 - TBA
- Jul 7 - Club Barbeque
- Aug 4 - TBA
- Sep 1 - TBA
- Oct 6 - TBA
- Nov 3 - TBA

## April Program By Daryl Le

Date: April 7, 2005  
Time: 6:30 PM  
Place: North Haven Gardens  
7700 Northaven  
Dallas, TX

Please join us on Thursday, April 7 for another great demo by Ray Hernandez, a long time member with the Bonsai Society of Dallas.

Trident maples are a favorite among many bonsai enthusiasts. Ray will be styling a tree and will give us practical information on the care of these beautiful trees.

Ray is also the owner of Bent Tree Bonsai. For more information on their inventory, contact Ray at 972-296-1637.



### Other Dates of Interest:

- Apr 16 - Shohin Society, 10am, Persimmon Hill Bonsai, Austin
- May 28-31 - 5th World Bonsai Convention, Washington, DC
- Jun 11 LSBF meeting 1PM Zilker Park, Austin
- Jun 18 Shohin Society, 10am, Persimmon Hill Bonsai, Austin
- Sep 17 Shohin Society, 10am, Persimmon Hill Bonsai, Austin
- Oct 22 LSBF meeting 1PM Zilker Park, Austin

## April Bonsai By John Miller

Repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it's still too early for the tropics. So, what is left to do? Just trimming, feeding, trimming, check for insects, trimming, shows, trimming. You get the idea. Trimming, that is the pinching, plucking or whatever of new growth, is the process that both develops refinement on your tree and is vital to keep it from growing out of that desired state. This is not pruning, which is cutting of branches that should not be done when there is a strong sap flow, starting when the tree breaks dormancy and continues until after the leaves harden or later.

At the risk of repeating the process too much, I repeat it for the beginners. On elms and other trees with leaves appearing alternately down the shoot, do not let more than five new leaves appear. Cut back to 2 or 3 leaves, leaving the last leaf on the side that you want the new growth to appear. On maples and others with leaves coming in pairs on opposite sides of the twig, cut the center shoot as soon as you can determine it. Tweezers work best for this operation. Since the shoots do not all open at the same time this could be a daily chore for the best results.



A good organic program takes care of both the feeding and the insect problems. The trick is to be sure to thoroughly cover the plant including all the leaf axils. I recommend the original Howard Garret mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. (A commercial product called Garret Juice, which is to be used the same way, uses compost tea, dried seaweed, water, molasses and vinegar. As a fertilizer this should act the same, but doesn't seem as good as an insecticide.) I use the mixture both as a foliar spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray it keeps aphids and mites under control. I also use it on cuttings but can't vouch as to whether the results are from supplying nutrients that cannot be supplied due to the lack of roots or if it is from keeping insects away. I try to drench twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs through the foliage. It is a good practice to also use fertilizer cakes on the surface of the soil which feeds a bit every time you water.

Fungal diseases can show up with damp weather. Leaf spot can be serious on Catlin and Chinese elms and on hollies. There are organic fungicides available, baking soda is one. Check an organics nursery or publication. A 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide (dilute the standard 3% store bought stuff with 2 parts water to each part peroxide) is also recommended but can injure very new foliage.

Be sure to check your soils each day for proper water content. It is easy to assume that the soil has plenty of water when the days are cool or there has been some rain. A tree with full leaves may shed rain water outside of the pot or a good sun and low humidity after a front to dry the soil. I suggest that you remove some of the moss so that you can see and feel the soil in order to determine how dry it is. (Moss growing on the trunk or roots will cause the bark to rot also) An automatic watering system will be an aid, but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Most automatic systems just water a spot or two in the pot. Hand watering covers the entire pot and allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually.

### **Need a Membership Form?**

Please contact Sandi McFarland by phone at 972-438-9782 or by email at [potter@pegasuspottery.com](mailto:potter@pegasuspottery.com).

# CEDAR ELM FOREST DEMONSTATION

By Mike Smoller

From the BSD Meeting on Thursday March 3, 2005

The content of this demonstration is based upon my experience in bonsai, and is intended only as an introduction to the subject of forest plantings. I hope it will encourage beginners to try their hand at forest plantings, and remove some of the mystery surrounding their creation.

**WHAT IS A FOREST?** A forest is any grouping of five or more individual trees planted together in a single container (usually a shallow tray or slab of stone).

**WHY PLANT A FOREST?** The advantage of a forest planting is that each individual tree can have flaws that would prevent its use as bonsai material if used as an individual bonsai. It's these very flaws that prevent its use as an individual tree that make it a prime candidate for use in a forest. For example:

- Damage to one side of trunk.
- Limbs missing on one (or more) sides
- Lack of taper to trunk
- Poor surface rootage

## SOURCES OF FOREST MATERIAL

- Nursery stock
- Propagation by cutting, growing from seed or air layer
- Collected specimens – preferable because only nature can produce the rugged natural look in the source material so desirable in bonsai.

**SELECTION AND NUMBER OF TREES** - Any type of tree that can be used as an individual bonsai can be used in a forest planting. When out collecting material for a new forest, don't have a "shopping list" (i.e. don't looking for a specific individual tree or trees). Collect what is available and make the forest according to the material. Nor is there a correct number of trees for a forest planting, there can be as few as 5 or as many as 50 (or more!). However it is traditional in bonsai to use an odd number of trees up to about eleven. After eleven trees there are so many trees that it is hard to tell how many trees there are in the forest!

It is also a good idea not to mix trunk styles in a forest. If your trees mostly have relatively straight trunks, you should not include a tree (or trees) with an unusual or curvy trunk (it won't look "natural" and seem to be a part of the forest). The trees should all have a "family" resemblance.

**KINDS OF FORESTS** – There are 2 basic kinds of forests:

- **Mixed species** – not used very often in bonsai.
- **Single species** – nearly every bonsai forest is a single species forest.

**STYLE OF FOREST** – 2 types of forests

- **Uniform forest:** all trees about the same size and shape. Not seen very often in bonsai.
- **Graded forest:** This is the most common type of forest used in bonsai. There is always a largest tree (called the #1 tree), a second largest (#2), third largest (#3), and so on, up to the total number of trees in the forest. The #1 tree will have the largest trunk diameter, and be the tallest tree in the forest. The #2 tree will/should have the second largest trunk diameter, and be the second tallest; et cetera for the #3, #4 and #5 trees. However for all of the trees after the #5 tree, the actual tree trunk diameter does not have to be "noticeably" smaller with each succeeding tree, but the heights of these trees (#6 through whatever) should not exceed the height of the #5 tree.

**PLACEMENT OF TREES** – The single most important aspect of creating a forest planting in bonsai is the placement of the trees. Remember that the object of bonsai is to simulate the appearance of a full sized tree seen at a great distance. The same is true for a forest planting. Therefore, it is very important that the placement of the trees in the forest seem "natural". Even spacing and any perceptible pattern of the trees is bad. The forest should/must look "natural" (i.e. random). This is not as easy to accomplish as it might seem because the human brain craves order and always attempts to make a pattern. Even if you think that you can avoid an identifiable pattern and/or even spacing, you may (and probably will) unconsciously be making a pattern anyway.

One way to avoid this dilemma is to use a "Random Pattern Generator" as a guide. Anyone can quickly make one by simply taking a group of pebbles equal to the number of trees in your forest (graded in size if making a graded forest) and drop them into a flat bottom container slightly smaller than the tray or slab that will ultimately house the forest. Each time the pebbles are dropped they make a random, unique pattern that can be quickly sketched on a sheet of paper. In a matter of a few minutes many possible "random" patterns can be generated to use as templates for the placement of trees in the forest. However, this is only a rough guide for placement. The template you select must fit the material you will be using because, as with all bonsai, the trees suggest where they ought to go. And additionally, it is desirable that the trunks do not obscure or cross one another when viewed from the front.

**SOIL** – I use 2 basic kinds of soil:

- Regular bonsai mix: whatever you would normally use for the species you are making into a forest planting. If the forest is on a slab or the tray has a very low lip, it is usually necessary to make a "muck" dam around the edge of the planting area to prevent the soil new, loose soil from washing out from under the forest while the roots become established. There are as many formulas for making this muck, as there are bonsai enthusiasts, but the only necessity is that it be a mixture of fine organic and inorganic components which can be molded like modeling clay to hold back the regular bonsai mix.

- Warren Hill sponge mix: if you are planting on a slab with no way to contain the dry soil normally used in bonsai and you don't want to use a muck dam, a special mix substituting sphagnum moss for the "organic" component of the soil is used. This gives the soil the consistency of a sponge and will stay in place while the roots of the trees in the forest knit into a base.

## Dallas Arboretum Show and People's Choice Awards By George Straw

What a great show! If you did not get to attend, you missed some great trees and a wonderful exhibit. We had 22 trees on exhibit that had all of the visitors amazed.

It all started out with Sylvia Smith doing lots of legwork getting everything together. Unfortunately, the afternoon of the show, she fell and sprained her ankle and was unable to make it to the set up of the show on Friday night. Everyone went into instant panic as to how to set up a show! Then comes Shane Cary to the rescue. He stepped in and got things organized and each display looking like we had just flown the room in from Japan. On Saturday, Dave Schleser stepped in to replace Sylvia and, with the help of Howard Smith, conducted the Catlin Elm workshop.

It was decided that we would have a "Peoples Choice." Visitors were given a slip of paper to vote on their favorite tree. The interesting thing about this was that the trees were being judged by personal preference and very few of these people knew about proper styling, etc. They were voting on the tree that to them stood out in the show.



We had over 500 people come through the exhibit and after the votes were counted, the number one choice of the visitors was the grafted shimpaku (above) that has been in training for 50 years. This tree is now being worked on by Shane Cary and belongs to one of his customers.



Dave Schleser's Dwarf Alberta Spruce forest (left) came in second. This beautiful forest has been in training for 26 years. Looking into this forest makes you think that you have been transported up north to a Spruce forest.

The number three tree was a wisteria (right) in full bloom, belonging to Young Diep. It was a showstopper with its beautiful blooms and enlightening smell.

The show would not have been such a success without the help of so many members. We had an outstanding turn out for the set up and breakdown. These are the two hardest times for the show, but that is not to say that those who helped run the show did not work as hard. It was a great effort on everyone's part. A special thanks to Sylvia for making the show happen!



## The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit is having a Garage Sale this Fall!

Elaine White of the Texas State Bonsai Exhibit (the group that is trying to develop a bonsai garden in Austin for the state of Texas) has contacted us for donations of items for their garage sale. They are legally independent of any other bonsai organization and are incorporated and qualify as a nonprofit charitable organization and donations may be tax deductible. This is a public garage sale so non-bonsai items are needed, too.

If you would like to donate something, please bring it to the LSBF conference in Fort Worth in May. Elaine will welcome your donations at their table at the near the Raffle area. If you cannot take your donation to the conference, John Miller has kindly offered to gather items brought to him at the April or May BSD meetings and take them to Elaine.

### Business Closing and Moving Sale!

Prices as low as \$15 and up to \$500!

#### BIG Sale on Orchids!

*Fukien Teas*

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*Shimpakus*

Young Diep  
214-208-0134  
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Plano, TX 75025

*Juniper &  
Maple Forests*

*Chinese Elms*

**Ginkos**

*Desert Roses*

*Mexican  
Huckleberrys*

*Junipers*

**Hawthornes**

Please call to set up an appointment to see this wonderful inventory!

#### BSD Board of Directors

President—George Straw, [GSTRA@aol.com](mailto:GSTRA@aol.com), (214) 357-3048

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Secretary—Sandi McFarland, [potter@pegasuspottery.com](mailto:potter@pegasuspottery.com), (972) 438-9782

## Texas LSBF 2005 Bonsai Convention

May 13-15, 2005

Holiday Inn North, 2540 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76106, (817) 625-9911  
Sponsored by: The Fort Worth Bonsai Society and the Lone Star Bonsai Federation

### Featured Artists:

Walter Pall, Germany; Mary Madison, Corpus Christi; John Miller, Dallas/Fort Worth;  
Estella Flather, Fort Worth; and Ray Hernandez, Dallas/Fort Worth

### Workshops:

Trident Maple, "Pokomoke" Crepe Myrtle, Root-Over-Rock Tridents, Piñon Pine, Chinese Elm Shohin,  
Bald Cypress Forest, Casuarina, and "Bring Your Own"

Lecture/Demonstrations; Tree Critique; Bonsai Exhibit, Slideshow, Vendors, Raffle

For more information visit the Fort Worth Bonsai Society website at

[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/3647/](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/3647/)

Registration Contact: Steven Hendricks - [stevenhendricks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevenhendricks@sbcglobal.net)

Vendor Contact: Estella Flather - (817) 295-0802

### Some Notes on the Convention by our President Emeritus, John Miller:

The headliners are Walter Pall from Germany and Mary Madison of Florida. Mr. Pall comes with a glowing endorsement from no less a personage than Kathy Shaner. Ms. Madison is the renowned "Buttonwood Queen" and will be bringing the casuarina trees for her workshop.

The casuarina has been featured in several magazine articles lately. Ernie Kuo developed his casuarina from a stick to a very nice pine looking bonsai in only four years. Michael Hagedorn, a well-known bonsai potter as well as artist who is currently interning in Japan, has been published in Bonsai Today on collecting styling and care of the Pinon Pine which will do well here contrary to some opinions. Other workshops with tridents, elms, crape myrtle, and a bald cypress forest are pitched to cover from beginners to advanced bonsaists.

If you need any other information, please call me at 903-776-2910.



### Pegasus Pottery

By Sandi McFarland

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### 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](mailto:GSTRA@aol.com) or Sandi McFarland [potter@pegasuspottery.com](mailto:potter@pegasuspottery.com).

### Calloway's Nursery has a Great Offer for You!

Donna Harris, the store manager of Calloway's Nursery on Greenville Ave. in Dallas, has invited the members of the Bonsai Society of Dallas to come by their location and pick up two free soil sample kits. Return the kits with your soil and they will send them to the Texas Plant and Soil Lab to test and call you when the results come in.

These soil tests are a \$20 value for free and when you drop off your sample of soil, you will receive coupons and special discounts good for Calloway's quality products.

Please contact Donna with any questions:

Donna Harris, Store Manager

Calloway's Nursery,

7410 N. Greenville Ave., Dallas, TX 75231

214-363-0525

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Full page—\$35 per month

For more information, contact Sandi McFarland at  
972-438-9782 or [potter@pegasuspottery.com](mailto:potter@pegasuspottery.com)