



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

January 2009

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Message from the President

By Dave Schleser

Well, it finally happened... After 30-plus years of membership in the BSD I have finally been brainwashed, harassed and shamed by Sylvia and Garrett (and I thought they were my friends) into accepting the nomination for president. Seriously though, I view my election with a combination of trepidation and honor and only hope that I can be half as effective and hard working as my predecessor, Sylvia Smith. She deserves a big thank you for all she has done for the betterment of our society.

I also want to remind all of you that for our bonsai society to prosper and grow we need input and suggestions from members pertaining to what they would like to see done. A few ideas that were mentioned at the board meeting after our great holiday party (hats off to Howard and Sylvia!!!) were a membership roster, name tags and possibly some sort of a mentoring program for new and inexperienced members. More of this at the January meeting.

I expect that you have all moved your trees to their winter shelters where they will be safe and snug until the warming days of spring. Don't forget to water them as needed. It is the opinion of many that more trees are lost from winter dryness than from cold.

It is hard to believe that it will not be much longer until the spring digging season begins. I know that those of us who participated in the Glenn Rose tagging trip are particularly excited about returning for the actual dig. Mark Bynum, of the Fort Worth group, will soon notify us about the date. Anyway, get your tools ready, and have containers and soil mixes on hand for the newly dug trees. Now is also a good time to think about which of your trees will need repotting this spring. Start sifting your soil mixes and shopping for pots and other needed supplies. Hopefully, we will be able to arrange a late winter shopping trip to various metroplex bonsai supply dealers, as last year's outing was such a huge success.

Please don't put off renewing your membership since only members may participate in digs and buying trips. And while at it you may want to consider also joining the Fort Worth group. They have regularly included us in the programs, including their digs. Their meetings are on the second Thursday of every month at 7 PM at the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens main building.

See ya'll at the January meeting. And let's hear some suggestions for things you would like to see happen this year.

Cheers!
Dave S.

The Perfect Companion (part 1)

January Program by Sylvia Smith & Sandi McFarland

Happy 2009! We're going to kick off the New Year with a double feature for January and February! Our guest, BSD club member and resident potter, Sandi McFarland (www.pegasuspottery.com and featured in the book "Bonsai Potters") will be working alongside Sylvia Smith from "BonsaiSmiths" (www.bonsaismiths.net) for a hands-on kusamono workshop. For those who do not know what a kusamono is; it is a companion or small planting that is displayed alongside a bonsai tree in most formal or semi-formal displays.



Photo courtesy of Carl Bergstrom

Sylvia will be educating us in the uses, and types of kusamono and how they should be displayed in bonsai. This lecture will then be followed by a workshop with Sandi on making your own pinch pottery. Please bring an old towel or something to work on as well as some rubber gloves. Sandi will be showing you how to create your own masterpiece to be planted in February's meeting. In February, we will be joined by Sheila Ward, from Persimmon Hill Bonsai in Austin, who will show us how to plant our new handmade pottery.



Photo courtesy of Carl Bergstrom

This workshop is free to current members so please bring your membership forms and checks and make sure that your 2009 membership is in order. Non-members can participate in making these pots at a nominal fee but will not have their pots fired as this will be reserved for members only. Don't miss our first free workshop for the year and keep an eye on the newsletter

as well as your E-mail for upcoming digs, buying trips and more!!



Photo courtesy of Glenn and Sandi McFarland

Events of Interest



- **BSD January Program – Sandi McFarland & Sylvia Smith on kusamono lecture and pottery workshop**
Saturday, Jan. 3rd at North Haven Gardens.
- **FWBS-BSD Glen Rose Winter Dig**
Saturday, Feb. 21st
Glen Rose, Texas
(Backup date is the fourth Sat. should we get rained out on the primary date.)
- **BSD February Program – Sheila Ward kusamono planting workshop**
Saturday, Feb. 7th at North Haven Gardens.
- **BSD Spring Show**
Date: March 2009
(actual day TBA)

Link of the Month



To whet your appetite for Sylvia's and Sandi's January program, this month's link comes to us from the National Bonsai Foundation. These pictures are of the spectacular Spring Kusamono Exhibit held earlier this year by the Foundation.

www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/exh-spring_08_kusamono.html

December Recap

By James Bonney

It was so nice to have Ron Smith in for our December meeting. Sylvia and John pegged it when they talked about how challenging it is to create beautiful bonsai in such a miniature scale. Ron has recently studied under Masters Nobuichi Urushibata, a well-known shohin bonsai artist in Japan and Boon Manakitivipart from California.

Ron brought in a bunch of shohin bonsai in various stages that he's been working on over the past couple of years. One of Ron's tricks to achieving such amazing detail is the practice of trunk and branch splitting. With this technique, you can bend thick branches, creating tight curves and achieving better placement, and even work the trunk to lower the overall height of a tree. Ron discussed the preparation and execution of the procedure, and showed us different types of methods used to protect the branch/trunk, from such tried and true materials as raffia to more recent innovations such as electrical tape wrapped inside-out (so it will slide on the bark; not grab). He also showed various techniques and instruments for holding the shape once the work was performed. Several of Ron's trees were mounted on boards. Ron explained that with the tree mounted in this way, one could transfer the strain of holding the shape to the board and not to the pot or other parts of the tree. Also it would allow the possibility of better "pulling" angles for branches that needed to be bent in directions not easily held by a pot rim.

Ron even donated one of his trees-in-training to the club! A raffle was quickly organized and Lowe-and-behold (go ahead and groan), Diane Lowe won the tree!

Ron also had great and funny stories to tell of his time in Japan. I hope we can have him back again sometime soon. Thank you Ron for being our guest, and the next time a Master is flagging you down on your only day off... pretend you didn't see him!

The holiday luncheon was very fun with plenty of food, drink and gift exchanging. I would have taken a few pictures, but I was having too good a time and forgot. Thank you to Sylvia and Howard for opening up your home for the event. ✍



GOT PHOTOS?

Have any bonsai that are displaying great fall colors or twiggy winter form this year? Send pictures to James at amy.james@gte.net and your photos could appear in the next bonsai society newsletter!



RENEWAL REMINDER

Don't forget folks, it's time to renew our yearly dues! Send in your renewal (attached at back of newsletter) to the club P.O. box or hand in at the next meeting! Only members are eligible to participate in club events.

TTSBE Dig in South Texas

The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit is pleased to sponsor a dig again this year at Red Bird Ranch in west San Antonio, TX. Two weekends are available—January 24th and 31st. The sponsorship has gone on for the past two years and we are pleased to offer it again. For those of you who have participated in the past know how successful this location has been. To participate it is necessary to give Donna your name and contact information so you can be placed on the list.

Species available: T. Persimmon, Cedar Elm, Oak, Sugar Hackberry, Mt. Laurel, and Candalia, and some other natives that both clubs in the region have been experimenting with.

To be included contact Donna at 210-326-0860 or two2views@yahoo.com with "dig" in the subject line.

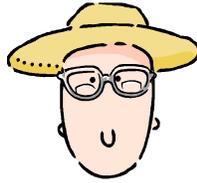
Pictures from the January Program



Photos courtesy of J. Bonney

January Bonsai

By John Miller



Mycorrhiza, or properly mycorrhizal fungi, was a discussion at one of the meetings last fall. Mycorrhiza aids in plant growth by making soil nutrients more readily available to a plant and in turn gets some of its needs from the trees also. The question was: is it really necessary to apply a powder that you can obtain at an organic nursery? Some thoughts were that they did not need it as their trees had a lot of the fuzzy structure on the roots of their trees. This may be true if you obtained plants from a longtime bonsai nursery and never used any fungicide in your soil. However, I have seen so many trees with no indications of mycorrhiza in their soil. In addition to the old time growers saying to make sure your trees have it, I have seen articles in the American Nurseryman magazine documenting the increase in root structure and top growth resulting from use of applying the mycorrhiza.

Therefore, I would recommend that you obtain some and use it when you repot. Use whatever brand lists the most types of fungi as the different types work on different trees.



Japanese maple in Fall colors. Photo courtesy of Dave.

The coldest nights usually come the last two weeks in January, but don't bet the farm on it. Just watch the forecasts and look at the lows (just ignore the highs; they are for people not plants).

Your primary job in cold weather is to be sure your trees are well watered before going into a deep freeze. They will be losing water to evaporation but will not be able to replenish it if the soil is frozen. Protection from high winds is also necessary so the tops will not dry out. Sunlight is not necessary on deciduous trees when they have lost their leaves. In fact, it can be bad for the tree because it will heat



Trident maple in Fall colors. Photo courtesy of J. Bonney

up the trunk and soil and that could make the tree come out of dormancy too early.

Because the ground holds a more even temperature, I advocate placing the hardy trees on a well drained ground bed in a protected shady area. Then cover the pots with a shallow layer of mulch. You should know which trees have a greater need for water. If you put these trees together it will be easier to check your need for watering while they are in the bed.

I would treat the evergreens in a similar manner but put them where they can get some sun. Evergreens can use a very light feeding during the winter—maybe 1/4 the summer rate.

Personally, I keep my hardy trees on the benches until the temp goes below 25°F. Then I set the deciduous and more tender evergreens on the ground below and between the benches until a temp in the teens is expected. At that point I will use old carpet and quilts to cover the benches. For the rest of the winter I leave them there and lift the sides around the deciduous trees for air circulation and uncover fully the evergreens when the temp rises. Sounds like a lot of work but I developed a routine that fits me and it isn't bad.

The tender and semi-tender trees need protection. The semi-tender (e.g., crape myrtle and pomegranate) get left out for some frost but no freezing. When freezing is expected they get put in a cool area. If they show growth again they go to the greenhouse. It's not a big greenhouse and doesn't give optimum growing conditions but keeps things from freezing.

Tender or tropical trees that are kept indoors will be using more water to offset the lower humidity. Soil will also be losing water faster through its surface. Be sure to watch the indoor trees for insect problems. Most plant insects love a controlled atmosphere like the indoors. Spider mites seem to get the most attention here because they do great in a low humidity and the lack of foliage spraying. Scale can be an easily overlooked source of trouble. The flat green kind can be hard to spot on the underside of leaves or tight against the stem. Indoor trees need to be fertilized regularly and will require periodic trimming as they continue to grow through the winter.

Greenhouses are much the same as indoors. However, most greenhouses are kept more humid. The higher humidity is to the liking of aphids and fungal diseases. It may also

result in your keeping the soil too moist with associated root problems. Use your standard insect controls that you used last summer. I use my organic foliar spray all winter.

Back to the outdoor trees. Any long warm spells during the month could activate some of the insect problems but as a rule there are no special needs to look for in January. Spraying with a dormant oil spray will kill adults, nymphs and eggs of any trying to over-winter on your trees. Some dormant sprays can be used on new growth but better results overall will be obtained if you do it before Valentine's Day. A weak lime sulphur dormant spray will also get fungal spores and should be done before Feb. 1 and not at all if any green is showing. Just be careful with the lime sulfur to follow label directions closely. ☺



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

- The Bonsai Smiths
- Ray Hernandez's Bent Tree Bonsai
- Pegasus Pottery
- Sanderson Creek Bonsai

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 GSTR@AOL.COM or James Bonney at amy.james@gte.net.

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 turn in at 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
Dallas, TX

Name(s): _____

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