



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

November 2010

Message from the President

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Hooray for a successful auction in October! Your generous donations and bidding added \$1,200 to our treasury to use for future club events and guest artists. Special thanks go out to everyone who donated material, to club members who coordinated and set up, and to facilitators James Bonney, Sylvia Smith, Jerry Riley, Diane Lowe, Mary Polk, Ivan Dole, and Vincent Buss. Thank you to all of the other runners and volunteers who filled other roles to make things run smoothly. Howard Smith did another excellent job in his 9th year of being an auctioneer. For those of you who were not there, he really did sell a bag of Bill Weber's "poo" (homemade fertilizer cakes) for 30 bucks.

We will be busy at November's meeting since we have three important topics. First, it is election time—our Board serves two year terms and our current term ends December 31, 2010. We will vote on 2011-2012 Board members at our November meeting. We will solicit nominations and the club will vote (if more than one person volunteers for a position). These are unpaid volunteer positions necessary to promote the bonsai hobby, direct activities of the club, fulfill fiduciary responsibilities, and set strategy over the next couple of years. We still need volunteers for some positions. Please contact me or any board member to discuss questions about roles, expectations, requirements, positions, etc. If a vote is needed, results will be tabulated by previous Board members John Miller and Sylvia Smith. The new Board will be announced in the December newsletter.

Second, our November program on "jin and shari" (artificial aging techniques) will be led by Dave Schleser and Garrett Larson. I can't wait to see those techniques demonstrated. Dave always gives an energetic and passionate program. Third, we will round out the November program with Bonsai 101, "Care of Bonsai, Part 2" led by Dave and Diane Lowe. Bonsai 101 continues to successfully draw interest from members and potential members alike.

Speaking of members, we have grown at a rapid pace to 77 members. Houston has the largest club in Texas with a membership of 97. I would love to break the century mark in 2011-2012 and together we can do it! Club dues cover membership through December 31, 2010 so please start thinking and planning for your renewals. We need each of your renewals and we will continue to offer a mix of programs geared toward all ranges of experience in bonsai. Your input on programs, input on the club, participation in club events (workshops, digs, Bonsai 101, monthly programs, etc.) and drawing new members will get us over that mark. I love your feedback about our club's direction and programs; keep it coming.

The Fort Worth club has invited us to participate in the fall "tagging" trip to Glen Rose in December. This is a great way to spend a day in nature, admiring Ashe Junipers and other species. Finally, I am the proud father of a new seedling (baby)! Mitchell Dunne (Mitch) Talley was born October 22nd. He and momma and his big sister are all doing great! See you next meeting.

The Good and Bad of Deadwood in Bonsai, 9 AM to Noon, North Haven Gardens *Nov. program by David Schleser and Garrett Larson*

As we all know, aesthetically pleasing deadwood can greatly enhance the beauty of suitable species of bonsai. But poorly thought out jins and shari are nothing more than ugly distractions. Similarly, bad pruning scars can greatly detract from the overall appearance of an otherwise wonderful tree, and untreated wood rot can eventually cause a prize tree's demise. This presentation will give a basic introduction to the handling, creation and maintenance of deadwood in bonsai.

Subjects will include:

- Creation and managing of large pruning cuts so as to encourage aesthetically pleasing healing
- Improving old, poor and/or punky pruning cuts
- Creation of natural appearing hollows from a large pruning cut
- Creating natural appearing jins and shari
- Preservation of deadwood
- Repair of rotted deadwood

Dave and Garrett will bring several trees from their collections that demonstrate the principles discussed as well as some that will actually be worked on. Use of a variety of both hand and motor-driven tools will be demonstrated.

Bonsai 101

At 11:00 a.m. Bonsai 101, The Care of Bonsai, Part 2 will be presented. Dave Schleser will be joining Diane Lowe to present some of the advanced care techniques including re-potting and pruning. Please join us!



Dave and Garrett like to get medieval on their deadwood art. *Photo J. Bonney.*

Upcoming Events



Saturday, Nov 6th, 9–12 Noon
Jin & Shari – carving & maintenance,
& Bonsai 101: Care of Bonsai, Part 2

Saturday, Dec. 4th, 9–12 Noon
Members' Virtual Garden Tour &
Bonsai 101: Artistics, Part 2

Saturday, Dec. 11th
FWBS/BSD Glen Rose Tagging
Expedition (details in next month's
newsletter)

Saturday, Jan. 1st – No program due
to New Year's holiday

January – Club dig and bonsai
buying trip; dates and places TBD

Saturday, Feb. 5th, 9–12 Noon
Repotting demo & workshop

Link of the Month



Chris Scholz, whose photos often grace our newsletter, caught some wonderful photos back at the September program/workshop with Roy Nagatoshi. I meant to show them back in October, but somehow missed it. I would feel remiss if members didn't get an opportunity to see them.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/cscholz/DallasPensaiSocietySeptMeeting?feat=directlink>



November Bonsai

Tips and advice by John Miller

One of my favorite quips is if your trees are not growing **smaller**, you are not doing something right. Generally when we start bonsai, we are afraid to cut a lot off and thus we have not realized the full possibilities of the material. Now that our trees are going into their slow period we can step back and take some critical second looks and see if we can improve them a bit. This is especially true for deciduous trees, as you can really see what you have while they are bare.

BIG NOTE: *If you have a tree that is weak and unhealthy, you should not attempt to style it in any way; just get it happy by adjusting its soil, feeding, and getting rid of any parasites. Styling just adds to its stress and problems.*

Fall through winter is the proper time to do wiring, styling and plucking work on pines. Repotting is saved until growth starts in the spring and candle pruning begins in the summertime. Other conifers may also be worked on at this time.

Watch the weather so you can protect tender and semi-hardy plants. I prefer to keep them outside as long as

possible, but you should remember that frost—which can damage tender leaves—can occur at temps in the upper thirties. I watch the dew point temp which is when the moisture condenses out of the air. Also, clear nights with no wind along with that low dew point really spell trouble.

Have your winter quarters clean and ready so that you can put your trees there quickly in the event a freeze is forecast. But don't put them there too soon as they are easier to care for up on your bench. Some use an unheated garage. I prefer to set the pots on a gravel area on the ground. This utilizes the ground heat to keep the roots from freezing as hard. The pots can then be covered with loose mulch for insulation. Do not cover the ground with plastic; it will hold puddles of water.

One of the things I consider most important during winter is to keep the soil moisture at a proper level. This sometimes is hard to judge because the trees do not use as much water

as when they are growing. However, the cold winds will dry out the tops quickly. I believe that most winter damage in Texas is due to lack of water rather than to low temperatures. Mulch helps keep the roots warm and retards evaporation, but it makes it more difficult to see if the soil is damp enough. Most soils with enough organic material to keep the tree happy in the summer will be too wet if watered daily in the winter; and wet combined with cold means root rot. To avoid these issues, try to position them so you can check the soil more easily. If you are not watching the soil in their pots you may either get root rot fungus (too wet) or it may dry out; either way, you have a “finished” (for you beginners that reads dead) bonsai. They are easier to care for if you have them under roof. That way you know you need to tend to watering.



Howard prepares for his auctioneer duties. Sadly, this cutie was not for sale. Photo J. Bonney

The general wisdom is that dormant trees need no fertilizer. However, as long as the soil is not frozen there will be some root activity. I do not add any fertilizer to dormant trees but I will leave the organic fertilizer cakes on until spring in case they happen to get some good out of them. The organics will not break down much in cold weather anyway. Evergreen types—pines, junipers, yaupons and live oaks to name a few—continue some

activity and therefore can use a small amount of low nitrogen fertilizer.

A horticultural oil spray should be applied during the winter to control scale (but not on buttonwoods!). It will also kill any overwintering insects or eggs that may be trying to get through the winter on your plant. This purpose is what lime-sulphur was first used for (and some Japanese practitioners still use it). However, an oil-based spray is safer on bonsai and may be used on evergreens where lime-sulphur should not be used. Again, do not use an oil-based spray on buttonwoods.

By this time, any tropicals you have should be under cover. Most do not like the temp below 50°F. All tropicals should be checked and treated for insect problems since any insects will multiply quickly when they get into warmer quarters. Spider mites and scale can be especially damaging if a plant is moved into the house where the humidity is low.

Semi-tropical plants like crape myrtle, pomegranate and pyracantha need to go dormant to stay healthy over a long time but they cannot take much cold on the roots. They will be killed by temps somewhere between 25 and 30 degrees. I set these down on the ground and mulch for light freezes and then bring them into a protected area for the colder winter. Sometimes I will let them go dormant for a month and then take them into the greenhouse to start spring growth early and I can enjoy their new foliage in January.

[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.] ✍



Some really nice mid-sized and smaller trees traded hands this year.
Photo J. Bonney

November Board Elections

The nominations and elections for the 2011/12 Board will be made at this month's program. Please plan on attending if you can. ✍

October in Review

by James Bonney

I managed to do it this year. I finally kept my pocketbook closed and avoided having to explain to my wife why I've brought home yet another tree that I have too little time to work on. However, that didn't stop everyone else! The auction was a big success and everyone had a great time.

We saw a few more non-member bidders show up this year than in years past, and that's a good thing. Obviously, club announcements in places like the local paper and in North Haven Garden's newsletter, plus word-of-mouth seem to be paying dividends for our club.

The lots seemed evenly split between plant material and supplies. The bidding was spread over much of the audience and very few items went unsold this year. Several items received some pretty intense bidding; a result, I think, of members recognizing quality when they see it. (There's probably some room for another joke about Bill's "poo" fertilizer here, but I'll resist.)

The only hitch was that NHG originally told us they'd have to move us out earlier than expected, but that was ironed out and everything ran smoothly from there. Thanks to everyone who helped pull off this event and congratulations to those who won items. ✍



There was a good mix of deciduous and coniferous trees.
Photo J. Bonney



A super ficus and complimentary pot. Note that this one already has several nice aerial roots typical of this species. Photo J. Bonney



Interested bidders flock around the trees, examining them closely before making up their minds which to bid on. *Photo J. Bonney*



There was something for everyone. There was a lot of good starter material as well as the more mature offerings. *Photo J. Bonney*



A few early arrivals. *Photo J. Bonney*



Many trees were collected material. *Photo J. Bonney*



That's a pretty nice nebari (root base) on that tree. It will only improve with time. *Photo J. Bonney*



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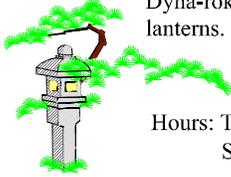
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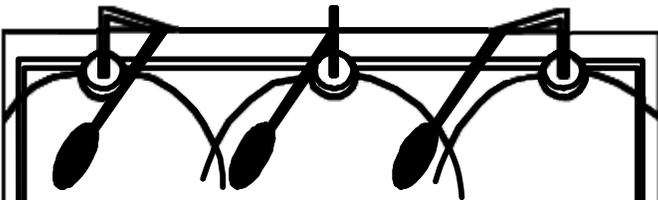
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