



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

April 2008

## Message from the President

By Sylvia Smith

### BSD CALENDAR:

- **Learning How to Choose a Good Bonsai**

*April program by Howard Smith  
9:00 AM Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>  
at North Haven Gardens*

- **BSD Bonsai Buying Trip**

*Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>  
(Members Only)*

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- Message from the President
- Spring Show Recap
- April Program
- April in Bonsai
- Events of Interest

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*Would you like to get this newsletter via e-mail? Has your address changed? Comments? E-mail [amy.james@gte.net](mailto:amy.james@gte.net).*

Spring time is almost over and Howard and I barely survived the repotting season. It is a busy time for us, and a rewarding time as well. It's good to see your trees grow and mature and watch them change when you pot them up at a new angle or see the difference a new pot can make. It's great fun to teach our workshops, go digging with friends, share ideas and watch others enjoy their trees too. Yet, I'm also ready for a break! But, with no end in sight, I figure we might as well have fun and justify this exhaustion.

This month our much awaited bonsai buying trip will take place. Although I was going to give you a lecture on what to look for in a bonsai, I found out a few weeks ago that I was also booked to take my Girl Scout Troop camping on the same weekend. With that said, I leave you in the capable hands of my favorite bonsai partner, best friend, husband, and my 'Sempai'; Howard. I will postpone the buying trip to Saturday, April 12th. (PLEASE NOTE THE DATE CHANGE). We will visit places in Dallas and Ft. Worth, so make sure you don't miss out and bring your checks, credit cards and cash. We will E-mail all members with the details, so please make sure that we have your correct E-mail information.

As far as new news is concerned, I want to thank all of the members that sent in their feedback. Although I would love to make changes to accommodate everyone's suggestions and needs, the majority rules and we will stay on the current meeting day and schedule. We will also continue to make the newsletter available to everyone on the Internet, including non-members. One thing we will go back to doing is wearing name tags — one for current members and another for guests. It was pointed out that we have a lot of new members and it would be nice for everyone to get to know each other. This will also help us identify new members and make them feel welcome without embarrassing them by pointing them out during a meeting. We will be making a few adjustments to our website including adding PayPal so that you can renew your membership online! This might take a little longer but we will keep you posted on this new feature. Also, the winner of our survey and the \$50 gift certificate to Joshua Roth was Ron Kerley. Congratulations Ron!

Sylvia



Photo courtesy of H. Smith

## Bonsai Society of Dallas 2008 Spring Show Recap

By Sylvia Smith

Wow, what a great show! I say this because in all the years that I have been doing this, we have finally started to come together as a group a lot like Boon's show in California. We had more stands than we needed, we had to make extra room for trees (thankfully, nothing was sent home), there were plenty of companions to choose from, we had a record number of volunteers (28!), and for the first time, we had members who wanted to learn how to set-up the trees at the show! I was very happy to see everyone giving feedback and asking questions.



The winner of our 'People's Choice Award' was Dave Schleser's Alberta Spruce Forest. Second Place was Howard Smith's Ashe Juniper with third place going (of course) to the Flowering Crabapple. This year we added the 'Member's Choice Award', with that prize going to John Miller's Catlin Elm Rock Planting. Congratulations John!!

I want to thank everyone who volunteered and brought trees. Remember that this is not only a good way to draw attention to our hobby, but also a learning experience, a way to share information, talk about new techniques and ideas, watch our trees grow and become better bonsai enthusiasts!

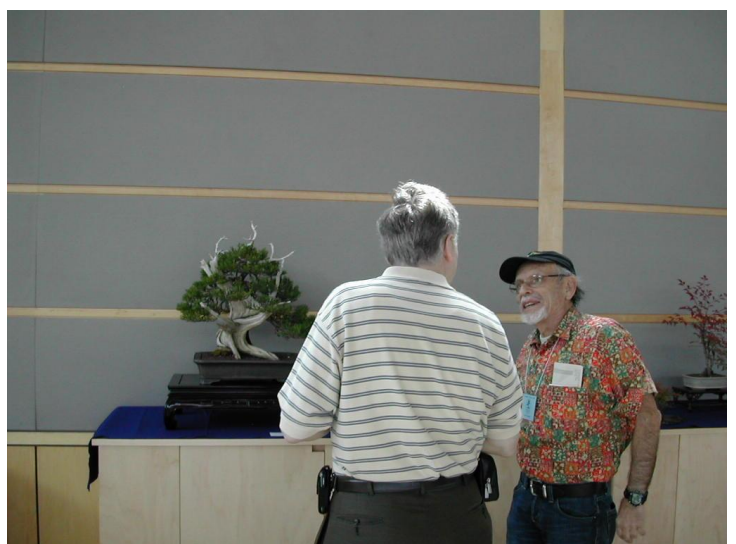


Photos courtesy of H. Smith

## Events of Interest



- **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Dallas Blooms**  
March 8 – April 13, 2008  
Dallas Arboretum  
[www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org)
- **BSD April meeting**  
Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>  
"How to Buy a Better Bonsai"  
North Haven Gardens
- **BSD Buying Trip**  
Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>  
Details to be E-mailed.
- **Spring Festival in the Japanese Garden**  
April 5-6, 2008  
Ft. Worth Botanic Garden  
Enjoy traditional Japanese dance, music, martial arts demonstrations, papermaking, Bonsai, Ikebana, and tea ceremonies with the elegant backdrop of the Japanese Garden.  
Admission: Adults \$4.00, Children (4-12yrs.) \$2.00, under 4 free.  
[www.fwb.org](http://www.fwb.org)



Photos courtesy of J. Bonney

## APRIL BONSAI

By John Miller

We have had more rain this year and not as cold as usual. This is favorable for having more problems from the insects and fungal diseases. Aphids especially are showing up. Mildew usually won't be seen until it warms up more, but with our Texas weather that could be here before this article gets in print. Leaf spot could be a problem.

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 publications. A 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide (dilute the standard 3% store bought stuff 2 parts water to each part peroxide) is also recommended but it can injure very new foliage.

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. Use a hand or pump up sprayer to get a fine spray to cover all. A hose end sprayer does not cover well enough. This is also true if you want to use commercial chemical sprays.



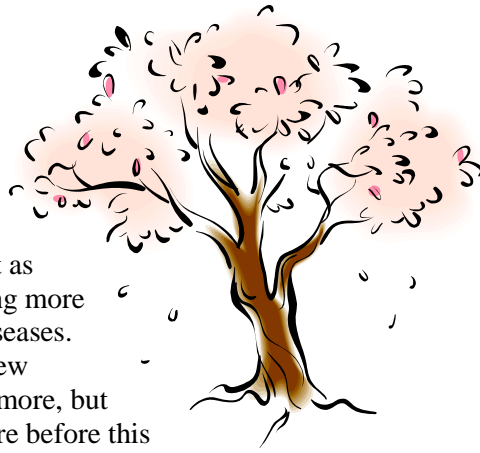
I recommend the organic mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. I use the mixture both as a foliar feed spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray, for me anyhow, it keeps aphids, mites, loopers, bagworms and other insects under control. I try to drench twice a month partly because I don't think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs thru 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. Commercial water soluble fertilizers wash out with the next watering and result in poorly fed pale bonsai.

They are intended for use in soil that retains water for a long period such as commercial house plant mixes. (A commercial product called Garret Juice, which is to be used the same way, is composed of compost tea, dried seaweed, water, molasses and vinegar. As a fertilizer this should act the same but it does not seem to work as good as an insecticide.)

Late March or early April is when I repot things like Dwarf Yaupon Holly and Boxwood. They do well when kept in light shade and out of the wind. Repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it's still too early for the tropics. Depending on temperature some tropics may be done by the end of April.

If you have early blooming azaleas, you should remove some of the excess buds. Most azaleas will have way too many buds for the tree to look nice if all are left and are too crowded to open fully.

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 but is vital to keep it from growing out of that desired state. This is not pruning (cutting of branches), which should not be done while there is a strong sap flow, which starts when the tree breaks dormancy and continues until after the leaves harden or later.



## April Program

How to Buy a Better Bonsai

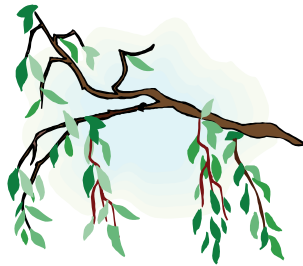
Conducted by: Howard Smith  
Place: North Haven Gardens  
Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Date: Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

We've all gone out to the nearest garden nursery to scout out for new bonsai. Some of us got a feel for scouting out trees in nature, but how does one know what to look for? This month, Howard Smith will be teaching us what to look for and how to choose better bonsai. It is more than just looking for good roots around your tree and checking for that informal upright curving. Howard will review what to look for in different species of trees and what makes a tree valuable.

Howard will be bringing different examples of trees and others are also welcome to bring trees to share in the discussion.

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 5 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.

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 will 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 also cause the bark to rot.) An automatic watering system will be an aid but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Best use might be to use it for a shot of watering in the morning and again at noon, then do hand watering in the evening. 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 and lets you see that the pot is draining properly. A clogged drainage hole can drown some trees in less than a week.



Most trees will do well in the full sun at this time of year. However, if you have had them in partial shade be careful about moving them directly to full sun. They probably should be acclimated gradually. Too much wind will cause the leaves to burn. Some damage may not show up until hot weather. ✍



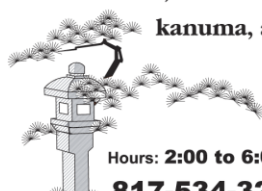
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