



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

November 2008

## Message from the President

By Sylvia Smith

Hurriedly I scampered to get in my article for the newsletter as the editor cracks the whip one more time to keep me on task! My goodness, has it been another President term already? What else can we fit in before it's over? Oh yeah, it's also election month, don't forget to show up if you've accepted your nomination to the 2009-2010 BSD Board. Anyone who would like to be a part of this can still get their name on the ballot. Yes, elections. I guess the club will have a new President before the country does!

Anyone interested in another buying trip? We will be visiting Dallas Bonsai again, so get ready to stock up on pottery for next spring. Also, this is a good time to get some wire and pick up some Holiday gifts. We will also be stopping at an antique shop with a nice section of bonsai stands. A great stop for those of you who need stands for the next Bonsai Show at the Dallas Arboretum. We will keep you posted on these outings via E-mail as we are currently waiting to confirm a date.

The Ft. Worth club has invited us back to dig at Glen Rose once again. There will be a 'scouting day' this month where you can come out and tag trees (three per household please) to be collected early next year. This, along with our annual dig at George Straw's Farm, will surely yield some nice new trees for your collection. Also at the first of the year, we plan on having more Bonsai Vendors in the newsletter with links to their nurseries. There will be more "Ask the Panel" hands on lectures which should work towards my goal to get every member of the club showing at least one tree at the spring Bonsai Show!

So much to do, so little time!

Sylvia

### **BSD CALENDAR:**

#### **Saturday, Nov. 1st, 9 A.M.**

Nov. Program  
Preparing Your Bonsai for Winter

#### **Saturday, Nov. 15th, 10 A.M.**

FWBS/BSD Joint Tagging  
Expedition in Glen Rose

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# Preparing Your Bonsai for Winter

## November Program

November is now here and before you know it, winter. What does it mean when we say "it's time for winter maintenance?" For years I didn't even know there was such a thing. Usually winter maintenance consisted of covering the greenhouse or mulching around the trees in the ground and waiting around until winter was over to start repotting again.

Did you know that there's specific care that is done on deciduous trees this time of year? This is also the right time to wire and prune conifers, but how much pruning and what kind of wiring? What about treating for insects during the season when none are present? Would you like to learn to graft? Did I just say *graft*? ...in November??

These and other questions will be answered at this month's meeting. Please come with more questions and bring trees that you would like to talk about. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to learn something new!

## Auction Recap

by James Bonney

The morning of the auction was beautiful, sunny and warm. There were more trees in relation to tools or pots this year, but that suited me just fine. Howard reprised his role as auctioneer and did a superb job.

This year we did things a little differently and staged the items outside, which made it much easier for the pre-bidding viewing.

The assortment was quite varied with tropicals like Brazilian rain trees and Fukien teas; deciduous beeches, tridents and Japanese maples; coniferous junipers and pines, and even a few succulents. There was something for everyone from specimen trees to beginner-specials.

Auction-goers got some fantastic deals.

Thanks to everyone who donated materials and/or their time. The auction couldn't be such a success without all of you. ☺



Some of the gorgeous trees.



Early-goers check out the items before the auction.



Howard about to open the auction.

## Events of Interest



- **BSD November Program  
Preparing for Winter**  
Saturday, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> at North Haven Gardens.
- **FWBS Show and Sale**  
Nov. 1-2, 2008  
Ft. Worth Botanic Garden  
<http://www.fwbg.org/>
- **FWBS/BSD Tagging  
Expedition**  
Saturday, Nov. 15, 2008  
in Glen Rose, Texas  
(see details and directions elsewhere in this newsletter).

## Tagging Field Trip to Glen Rose

by Mark Bynum

The Fort Worth Bonsai Society is inviting the Bonsai Society of Dallas to a tagging trip out to Glen Rose, Texas. This is the same spot that we have been to for the last two years for Ashe juniper. Many of us have dug some really nice junipers here. Several members from the dig earlier this year had spectacular results in survivability, like 66% to 100%! Live Oaks and Cedar Elms are also available at this site.

After the dig in March, several of us got to chatting about how busy we get in digging the trees that we do not take the time to "smell the roses" and enjoy the beauty of the land. For this reason and the fact that there are several undisturbed areas at the site, this tagging expedition has been organized.

The plan is to meet at the gate on site at 10 am, Saturday, November 15 (see directions below). Each household will be given 3 official tags (do not bring your own tags, I will know!). Use these tags to reserve your trees for the dig in February of 2009. This does not mean you are limited to 3 trees when the dig date comes, but you will have at least 3 good ones to work on for sure.

At about noon, after we tag some trees and tromp around enjoying the scenery, we will regroup at the gate and head over to the Fossil Rim Wildlife Park and eat lunch at the Overlook Restaurant. It is not too far away and will be an exhilarating continuance of our enjoyment of the Glen Rose area. You may wish to tour the Fossil Rim Wildlife Park after lunch. Another attraction, just west of Glen Rose, is the Dinosaur Valley State Park. If you have not been there, it is a very interesting 2-3 hour experience, from an indoor information building to dinosaur tracks in the Paluxy River. There is not much walking and many features are easily accessible by car.

Even if you do not want to tag any trees, you are welcome to come on out spend an enjoyable day in the country.

**Note: This is a tagging trip only. Do not bring digging tools. Wear proper shoes and bring a water bottle. A hat is wise.**

**Directions:** The easiest route to follow is to get to Glen Rose any way you wish. From the Glen Rose Court House travel south on Hwy 144 six miles to the intersections of county roads 2007, 2008 and 2004. Turning left at their juncture with 144, take CR 2004 southeast 3 miles to CR 2730. Turn left and proceed 1.3 miles. On a rise on the right will be two houses. Look for the first rock mailbox and take the first driveway up to the barns and the gate. Some "FWBS" markers with arrows will be posted at key turns. **Mark Bynum is the contact, cell # 817-980-4304.** Cell phones do not always work at this site. ☞

WELCOME!

Welcome to new member Curtis Chastain and returning member Les Porter!

## Vaughn Banting passes away

Vaughn Banting, one of the Bonsai Greats, passed away after a short illness. Mr. Banting lived most of his 61 years in New Orleans and was a well-known horticulturist. His company, Nicholas and Banting, designed and maintained several of the finest gardens in the city. He was also one of the founding members of the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society.

"Vaughn was one of the early artists to teach at BSD," John Miller said. "Three of his students, Guy Guidry, Gary Marchal, and David DeGroot—all excellent artists—have been here one or more times. He was the originator of the flat-top style as being the proper style for old bald cypress bonsai."

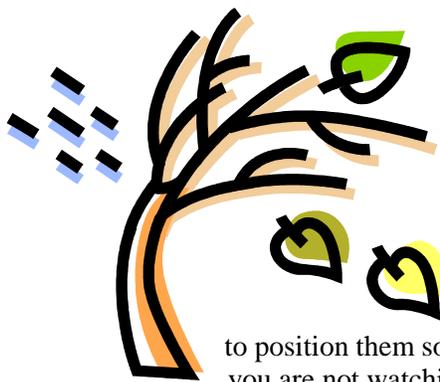
Several of Mr. Banting's bonsai, including his signature flat-top bald cypress, can be found at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum, part of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

## Link of the Month

In tribute to long-time bonsai enthusiast Vaughn Banting, our Link of the Month is his personal website, *Comprising a Life: The Bonsai, Travels and Haiku of Vaughn Banting* (<http://www.vlbanting.com/>). A man of many talents and interests, he shares some fascinating stories and poignant moments. Be warned, not all of his experiences are pleasant topics, but he injects a little humor into most. For those mainly interested in the bonsai portion of his life, he has plenty of wonderful stories and photos.

## November Bonsai

By John Miller



If you have doubts on how and why to use raffia or other branch protecting materials, be sure to read this fall's issue of Texas Bonsai. You can get it online or your LSBF representative has a few copies for those without internet capability. This is the only article I have seen in this depth.

Fall and 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 in summer. Other conifers may also be worked on.

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 can condense 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 the 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 a loose mulch for insulation. Do not cover the ground with plastic; it will hold puddles of water.

After moving your bonsai, it would be a good idea to spray your benches with lime-sulfur to kill insect eggs and mold spores. If you will be putting the trees under them for the winter, **move the trees away from the area before spraying the benches**. It would be good to have enough cold to stop the insect activity on the trees so you will not re-infest the area when the trees go back to wait for the cold weather.

Most important during winter is to keep the soil moisture at a proper level. This is sometimes hard to do since the trees do not use as much water as when they are growing. The cold winds can and will dry out the tops quickly. I believe that most winter damage in Texas is due to lack of water rather than low temperatures. Mulch helps keep the roots warm and retards evaporation but it makes for difficulty in seeing if the soil is damp enough. But remember, 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 plus cold means root rot. Try to position them so you can check the soil. If you are not watching the soil in their pots you may either get root rot fungus or it dries 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.

When trees go dormant (which indicates a reduced sap flow) they may be pruned; that is, they may have major limbs removed. Trimming may also be done while the leaves are off the trees and you can see what you are doing. Evergreen types will probably still be active. Pruning them should be held until later.

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 (e.g., pines, junipers, yaupons and live oaks) however 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. It will also get any overwinter insects or eggs that may be trying to get thru the winter on your plant. This purpose is what lime-sulfur was first used for, and some Japanese still use it, but the oil is safer on bonsai and may be used on evergreens where the lime-sulfur should not be used. Again, do not use oil-based sprays on buttonwoods.

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

The 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. These I set down on the ground and mulch for light freezes and then bring into a protected area for

the colder winter. Sometimes I will let them go dormant for a month and then take into the greenhouse to start early and I can enjoy their new foliage in January.

Take advantage of the slowdown in bonsai care to determine your repotting needs. Do you need a different

pot? Do you need to get more soil components? How about mixing some potting soils for your needs? (Be sure to label the use of each type of mix so you won't forget what is what.) ✍



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- 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.



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Please mail to:  
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P.O. Box 836922  
Richardson, TX 75083-6922  
Or turn in at any Club Meeting

Bonsai Society of Dallas meets on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Saturday of each month.

Time: 9:00 AM  
Place: North Haven Garden Center  
7700 Northaven  
Dallas, TX

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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