



# Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

February 2016

## Message from the President

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It's repotting time! Some of us have already gotten a head start with our mild winter but most of us are waiting for the tell-tale signs of swelling buds on our deciduous trees and that beginning surge of growth in our evergreens. It's my favorite time of year, but a very busy time for the Smith household for sure!

So, what's new for the club? Well, I'm excited to report that Dave Schleser is heading a dig at Rio Vista this month!! (Please read your newsletter for details). He is currently scouting another place to dig next year, as am I. Please let us know if you have found any place to dig and we will scout as many areas as possible to find a new dig site next year for club members. Also, this month is our Study Group so please consider bringing your best trees to pot and prepare for the club exhibit in March. We are more than happy to help you evaluate your trees and you might be pleasantly surprised to find a diamond in the rough among your collection!

Remember to start thinking about our upcoming conventions. This year on October 13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> will be a great opportunity to head down to Corpus Christi for a fun bonsai convention getaway! We are also busy getting ready to host the LSBF convention next year. We are planning the first ever joint DFW Convention! This is a very exciting time for us as neighboring clubs and plans are coming together very nicely. This takes place April 6-9, 2017. Please remember that we need ideas for the name of the show and an appropriate logo. The entries for the contest are due by Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> so if you have not submitted one, be sure to bring it to the meeting. The lucky winners receive \$50 worth of raffle tickets at the convention. That might just win you one of the premier demo trees, so put your thinking caps on and enter to win.

And finally, our club spring show is rapidly approaching the second weekend in March. We need lots of helpers to assemble the show on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, monitor the room throughout the weekend, and tear-down on Sunday. Please mark your calendar, plan to help, and look for details in the next newsletter.

Happy Repotting!

*Sylvia*

### LSBF 2017 Convention Logo / Naming Contest

We need a name and a logo and are running a "Name" Contest and separately, a "Logo" Contest. Enter as many as you like.

#### **NAME CONTEST**

Come up with a catchy name for the convention. Typed or handwritten is fine.

#### **LOGO CONTEST**

Keep in mind that the logo will also become the pin for the convention. The logo must contain: BSD, FWBS, 2017 or '17, and LSBF somewhere in the design. A rough sketch with some color indicated is fine.

# February Program

## Study Group with Bonsai Smiths

9:00 AM to Noon, February 6<sup>th</sup>  
North Haven Gardens

This month's meeting will be our study group with the Bonsai Smiths focused on repotting. With the club show right around the corner, please consider bringing some of the better trees in your collection for repotting and branch placement. It would be smart to wire your trees ahead of time and try not to cut too much off. In addition to your trees and any new pots, here is a list of items you will want to bring:

- Bonsai soil
- Mesh
- Tools
- Wire
- Bamboo chopsticks
- Gloves

It's going to be a messy fun time! ✍

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## Club Dig – 2016

Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>  
Rio Vista, Texas

Get your tools ready; it's time for our club dig! Lore Devra Levin has invited us for one more dig at her ranch in Rio Vista on Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Arrival time is 9:00 a.m. so that should give us the entire day to find and dig a tree or two. Some outstanding cow-chomped hackberries and a few winged elms of various sizes have been collected there on previous digs. Soil varies from heavy black clay to black clay intermixed with rocks of various sizes. Above is a photo of one of the larger clumps Garrett and Dave dug there in the past .....not too shabby, eh? You can see what the soil is like plus several smaller trees growing near it.



If you have never been on a dig or just need a little refresher on what to bring, look at the January 2013 newsletter on our website for details. Also be sure to bring something to eat and drink as there aren't any restaurants nearby.

The map is on the last page of this newsletter for easy printing. From Dallas it's about an hour and a half drive. If you intend to participate and want to be notified if weather causes a postponement, send Dave an email ([ranchu39@yahoo.com](mailto:ranchu39@yahoo.com)) by Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. If needed, a cancellation notice will be emailed to all who RSVP. Hope to see you there! ✍

## Upcoming Events



February 6<sup>th</sup> – **Study Group with Bonsai Smiths**

February 21<sup>st</sup> – **Club Dig in Rio Vista**

March 5<sup>th</sup> – **Show Preparation / Companions**

March 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> – **Spring BSD Exhibit/Show**

April 2<sup>nd</sup> – **Finding the Bonsai Within**

April 30<sup>th</sup> – **LSBF Guest Artist Rodney Clemmons**

## Events Elsewhere



January 31<sup>st</sup> – February 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Kokufu Bonsai-ten's 90th Anniversary Show**  
Tokyo, Japan

February 20<sup>th</sup>  
**Shohin Society of Texas Meeting**  
Austin, TX

February 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>  
**GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: Auction**  
Oakland, CA

March 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>  
**BCI Regional Bonsai Convention**  
Nakita City, Philippines

April 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>  
**Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies Spring Festival**  
Cromwell, CT.

May 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>  
**Brussels Rendezvous Weekend**  
Olive Branch, MS

October 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>  
**LSBF 2016 Convention**  
Corpus Christi, TX

April 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
**8<sup>th</sup> World Bonsai Convention**  
Omiya, Japan



# February Bonsai

## Tips and Advice

By John Miller

Have you been enjoying the landscape this month? There is much styling info to learn if you look at the landscape while driving around. With all the leaves gone you can see the branch structure, what pleases you and what is not so good. Notice the different ramifications for the various species of trees. Also it is just plain beautiful (if you ignore the trash on the ground). The bark is not all gray. There are many shades of gray involved. Some trunks are even black. The exfoliating bark on the sycamores leave the limbs stark white, looking like bleached bones hanging in the forest. And the twigs have various hues; willows are red or golden, ash has a greenish hue. The evergreens give splashes of green and the possum haw decorates the landscape with its red berries. It is a great time of the year!

The timing of the spring functions, such as repotting, will depend on your microclimate in your backyard. If you have kept your trees from freezing they will want to start growing much earlier than those kept outside all winter. Repotting can be done at any time during the dormancy but new roots are susceptible to freezing so you must have some place to protect them after repotting. The 'best' time to repot the deciduous temperate zone trees is when the buds are just beginning to swell. Generally this will be before the last of the freezing weather. Trees that leaf out early, maples and elms, can withstand a few degrees of frost but if repotted you must protect the roots. Sometimes this just means setting them on the ground, possibly with some mulch covering the pot. Some species such as the oaks and willows are naturally programmed to wait much later so that there is very little chance to get nipped. Typically in my collection the elms will be first with foliage showing about the end of February, along with the earliest maples. Then during March the rest of the maples and most of the others will push out. The deciduous oaks will come out around April 1. The live oaks and the cork oaks usually drop their leaves and get their new foliage during March.

The newer wisdom on azaleas is that you also repot them at this time. The roots will be reestablished by blooming time. This is much easier on the tree than

waiting until after bloom when the temperature will be hot. (An aside note: later on before blooming starts you will be removing a lot of excess buds anyway which will reduce the stress on the tree at that time).

There are two kinds of pruning used on bonsai. When the tree is being styled you will be doing development pruning. Let the branches run wild to get thickness and then cut back severely and make angles and secondary branches.

After the branch is developed you will need to do ramification so you will have smaller leaves and tiny twigs. When new growth appears, keep it pinched so you keep the internodes short and develop a compact set of twigs on the branches. On alternate leaved species (i.e. elms) pinch when the shoot gets 4 or 5 leaves. Finger nails or shears can be used. If the twig gets too long it will be tough and you have to use shears. On opposite leaved trees (maples) pinch the central shoot as soon as it can be distinguished from the two leaves. To do this right you need to use pointed tweezers.

If you have not used horticultural oil, the time is fast running out. The oil would be used to kill scale and over-wintering mites and other boogers. When new growth starts, the problems to look for are the above mentioned mites but especially aphids and mealy bugs. These can be controlled as well as giving the plants the required fertilizer by using an organic spray (4 tablespoons each of liquid kelp, liquid fish emulsion, 5% apple cider vinegar, and liquid molasses in one gallon of water). All these ingredients are available in any organic nursery. If leaf spot, mildew or any other fungal problems appear, use a baking soda (Sodium bicarbonate), potassium bicarbonate, or a commercial fungicide spray.

Spring flowering plants will have their buds set on last year's growth so pruning them will remove some flowers. Those that bloom later in the year will generally bloom on this year's growth. Pruning them will reduce the amount of flowers. In some

*Continued on next page*



# February Bonsai

cases such as crape myrtle, tip pruning of the new growth will result in no flowers at all. In these cases you must decide which is most important, ramification or flowers. A compromise would be to prune the branch shorter than you normally would and then let it bloom on new growth which will at the proper length, at least for the first flowering of the season.

When the growth starts the tree will need fertilizer. However, use one that has a small amount of nitrogen (the first number). The tree is naturally programmed to grow rapidly at this time so you don't need to encourage it further. Feed lightly to maintain healthy green foliage. Trace minerals should be added to help with both the foliage color and the color of blooms.

Wire removal---Anytime you work on trees you should be noting if any wire is cutting into a branch. Repotting is a very good time to check all your trees for such damage. Sometimes you wire one or two branches to adjust them a bit and forget that you did. Start at the tip of the branch and completely remove that wire before going to the next so you don't inadvertently leave loops on the branch.

An important job which many neglect saying they are not going to show any trees is to detail their

trees. This makes them look their best and that helps give you incentive to follow other good practices. Start by checking the branches; prune any out of place or too long twigs. Remove any unnecessary wire - that is wire on limbs that have set in place. Treat any *jin* and *shari* that needs it. Then move down to the pot. Be sure it is clean and all lime deposits are removed. Steel wool works great to clean pots. A coating with a very light wax polish such as leaf shine will make the pot look good and help keep the mineral deposits from forming. Then check the soil. It should cover the outer roots. The surface of the soil must be clean of any fallen leaves or other debris.

What can you do on cold rainy days? Think about how to upgrade and improve your bonsai knowledge and your collection. Plan to register for the LSBF convention to be held in Corpus Christi in October this year. Do a workshop or two. You cannot learn bonsai out of a book; you need to get the whys as well as the where-to-cuts. Other possibilities would be the opportunities your local club offers and in many cases are ignored. An exhibition should be a learning event for you, not just a show. Each tree there has a problem or two that have been cleverly concealed or the artist has drawn your eye away to some good feature. ✍

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## Lone Star Bonsai Federation

Did you all know that just being a member of BSD automatically makes you a member of the Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF)? The LSBF is the organization that links all of our Texas and Louisiana clubs together to promote bonsai education. They are the group that provides our yearly "traveling artist" by paying airfare and refunding clubs for a portion of their programs. They were also responsible for organizing last year's seminar in Houston.

I'm proud to announce that Howard Smith is the incoming President, Jerry Riley is our voting BSD Delegate and Mark Bynum is the Editor of the newsletter and all social media! Congratulations and thanks to our club members for volunteering to promote education in bonsai and giving our club a voice during meetings.

# Show Prep – Repotting

By Sylvia Smith

Now that pot shopping has been done, it's time for repotting. Is there anything done differently when we repot for an upcoming show compared to when we repot for general bonsai care? The answer is, yes! Care needs to be taken when removing the bottom half of the soil so as to be able to secure the tree at the desired angle in the new pot.

See Figure 1 & 2 and note that the root ball has been turned on its side and then cut horizontally at the angle that the tree will sit in the new pot. This is a bit more difficult if you do not have such a dense root ball. If you do not find a dense root ball, now is the time to better understand why.



Fig 2 - Roots after bottom has been cut



Fig 1 - Roots after removing from pot

A lack of growth in the previous year(s) means it could be one or more factors. The primary reason is usually using poor soil medium, insufficient fertilization, or a combination of both. Keep that in mind as you work to repot your trees.

Placement into your new pot will be determined by the style

of your tree. If the overall movement of the tree is to the left it means the root base must be planted off center more to the right; the opposite if movement is to the right. *Literati*, cascade, and semi-cascade are all centered in their pots, which should be either round or square in shape. Also keep in mind that when you look at your bonsai from a side view it should always look centered in the pot.

Finally, all other regular rules of bonsai repotting still pertain. Add a small pumice drainage layer, secure your tree into the pot, make sure you do not leave any air pockets by using chopsticks to work in your soil, and protect your freshly repotted tree from a sudden freeze. ✍



This tree flows to the right so it is planted slightly to the left of center in the pot

## January Program in Review Successful Techniques for Collecting Trees

For those of you who attended the January program, hopefully you were inspired to collect a tree or two this year, or better yet, join the club dig this month. Mark Bynum took us through all the key points, specifically where the best places are to find trees, the proper equipment to be used, as well as the best technique to remove the tree with the root ball intact.

We also got to see some examples of trees that had previously been collected. It is obvious that Mother Nature can give us a good head start on achieving an interesting bonsai if we take the time to collect trees. Thanks Mark! ✍



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### Tip of the Month

#### Selecting a Hackberry to Dig **Is it Alive?**

The most important thing to check before starting to dig is whether the tree is alive. Sounds silly, but cow-chomped hackberries tend to have lots of dead branches; sometimes even the entire tree except for a couple of basal suckers has died. It is very frustrating to take the time to dig a tree, only to find out it is dead. Luckily there is an easy and fool proof technique to determine what is dead and what is alive. Just spray the entire tree with water from a spray bottle. The gray bark of hackberries is quite thin and when wet, living portions will appear green while dead areas will turn brown.



## Bonsai Smiths

### Upcoming Classes

Full Day Workshops - \$75



February 13, 2016 – Japanese Black Pine Session 1 (Spring Work)

February 27, 2016 – Deciduous/Maple Workshop Session 1 (Root Refinement & Grafting)  
and Rock Planting Workshop

We also offer soil mixes

Soil Prices (tax not included)

**APL Mix** - 5 gal. - \$75, 1 gal. - \$18

**Akadama** - \$40 per 20 liter bag, **Lava** - \$20 per 5 gal.

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For more details contact:

Jerry Riley

[jafa625@gmail.com](mailto:jafa625@gmail.com)



## February's To-Do List

This is a simple monthly checklist for those enthusiasts who have the knowledge and skill required to perform the tasks listed. It is intended to tell you 'what' to do, not 'how and why' to do it. Want to know more? Send in any questions you might have or come to any monthly program to discuss further.

### All Species

- Protect from late freezes after repotting
- Wait four to six weeks after repotting to fertilize or when you see your tree begin to push new growth
- Timing is important as different species are ready to repot at different times

### Deciduous

- Only repot trees whose leaf buds are beginning to swell; too late if leaf has emerged
- Watch closely as even same species may leaf at different time

### Evergreen/Conifer

- Repotting can be done anytime between now and when the new leaves/needles begin to emerge from the candles, and junipers through the spring season

### Flowering/Fruit

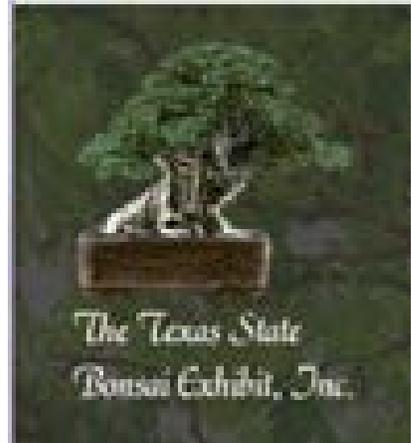
- These will usually be repotted now prior to flowering
- Flower buds can be carefully removed every other year when ramification is being done

### Tropical

- Repotting can begin on sub-tropicals; follow deciduous guidelines
- Winter precautions still in effect for true tropicals

## Link of the Month

Have you checked out The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit lately? Things are finally taking shape in the location they originally wanted, at Zilker Botanical Gardens in Austin. Check out the latest information and photographs on their website at <http://www.ttsbe.org/> as they began the placement of stands for the bonsai.



## Member News

Got news to share? Let us know....

We finished up the year with 78 members. A special welcome to our newest members who joined before year's end including Austin C., Bruce H., Eual D., Janel O., and Tim S.,

## Beginner's Bulletin Board

There are no 'dumb' questions when you are a beginner at any new endeavor. However sometimes beginners are reluctant to ask a question in a monthly meeting. Got a question? Send it to Diane at [diane\\_lowe@live.com](mailto:diane_lowe@live.com) for an individual response. Your question may also appear anonymously here in a future issue so that others can learn.

**Question:** I notice I'm getting a white buildup of residue on some of my pots. What is the best way to clean that off?

**Answer:** Those are typically mineral deposits (mostly calcium) as a result of watering. They vary by water type in your area but are quite common. One of the best ways to remove it is to soak the pot in household vinegar for several days, then rinse and clean with a soft abrasive cloth like a Scrubby. Many oils are marketed to take care of this problem, however most just cover it up temporarily. Prior to placing a bonsai into a show, we typically rub the pot with walnut oil to give the pot a nice sheen, however to remove the stain completely prior to repotting, vinegar is a good option. You could also use a chemical solution like the product CLR, but be sure to soak and rinse thoroughly before repotting, as residual chemicals may be too harsh for tender roots.



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www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com  
Membership Form

Please mail to:  
Bonsai Society of Dallas  
P.O. Box 836922  
Richardson, TX 75083-6922

Or bring to 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 Road  
Dallas, TX

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership     | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership: \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Membership: \$30.00      |

For the convenience of our membership a roster is published for **members only** in March of each year.  
Please check the appropriate box if you do not wish to be included

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Include me in the membership roster | <input type="checkbox"/> Exclude me from the membership roster |
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Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Received By: \_\_\_\_\_

## Rio Vista Dig – Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Ranch/Home of Lore Levin

Address for GPS: 9902 CR 1222, Rio Vista, TX 76093

Call Lore if you get lost: 817-517-3850. **Bring a lunch as no restaurants are nearby.**

### Directions from Dallas (approximately 80 – 90 minutes):

- Head south out of Dallas **on I-35E South**
- When the highway splits, stay in the right two lanes and take **RIGHT exit Hwy 67 South to Cleburne**
- You will go through Cedar Hill, Midlothian, Venus, Lillian, Alvarado (where you will go under I-35W) and then Keene.
- After Keene, take the **RIGHT exit for Business 67 into Cleburne.**
- When you go over the rail road bridge, you will be coming into downtown Cleburne.
- When you get to the third light from the bridge you will see the big Court House.
- Take your next **LEFT on South Main Street / Hwy174**

### Directions from Cleburne:

- It is 8 miles to Rio Vista. Go through **Rio Vista to FM 1106**, it is the **first RIGHT road after the Rio Vista Post Office**. Do not take any turns off this road until my drive way (road becomes 1222).
- **Go 3.8 miles**. You will see a road sign saying **PAVEMENT ENDS** and a tight **LEFT TURN** sign
- Pass the sign but only go 50 feet, small white sign directly in front of you shows **9902** and there are trash containers on the right. Turn **RIGHT onto Lore's private road**
- Go down the road, past the log cabin, up the hill, through the gate, to the end of the road.
- Park in front of the house. You will hear the dogs, but they will not be loose.

