



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

July 2008

Message from the President

By Sylvia Smith

It's been a busy bonsai month for us with the bonsai convention, our personal workshop, working on client trees and the many personal trees in our back yard. Poor James is always having to bang me on the head to get these president's messages out, but I guess not much has changed since George was newsletter editor! ☺

The convention was both fun and slow. I suppose the recent surge in gas prices and the unsteady economy had a lot to do with this. There were very few people walking through the convention, especially for a national show. The vendors all agreed that this had been the slowest convention ever with sales barely cutting the costs even for those who attended.

Nonetheless the venue was nice and the entertainment was surprising. Thursday evening we had "Cocktails with the Vendors" where registrants were given a first glimpse at vendors while enjoying a drink and a great live band. Raffle sales were done in the large vendor room daily where the New Talent trees were displayed for judging by the registrants. Friday there were "Mariachis and Foklorico Dancers" in the veranda near the pool and Saturday we were entertained by the local "Tiako" players who prominently set up right in front of our vendor table. We saw several of our bonsai friends from Dallas and Ft. Worth there and caught up with some old friends at the vendor area. Other's enjoyed some the great workshop offered which were slow in Thursday but picked up a bit the next day. We hope to see more people at the next convention in Houston where one of the headliners will be our friend and teacher, Boon Manakitivipart.

Sylvia



2009 LSBF/ABS Convention - Photos courtesy of M. Bynum

BSD CALENDAR:

Saturday, July 5th

July Program
by John Miller
North Haven Gardens

Saturday, Aug. 1st

August Program in Ft. Worth
"Choosing Shohin Bonsai Material"
by Suthin Sukosolvisit
(Dallas Club invited)

Saturday, Aug. 2nd

August Program
"Styling Shohin Bonsai"
by Suthin Sukosolvisit
North Haven Gardens
(Ft. Worth club invited)

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Sylvia Smith, *President*
slysmith@earthlink

Ted Colomina, *Treasurer*
tedco2230@msn.com

James Bonney, *Secretary*
amy.james@gte.net

John Miller, *President Emeritus*
bonsaimiller@aol.com

July Program

Show-N-Tell, Non-Traditional Materials and Q&A

Since Sylvia will be out of town July 5, the program will be coordinated by John Miller and James Bonney. The program will be a show-and-tell of unusual material for bonsai or an unusual usage of standard material. For example, John will be bringing a mimosa. Maybe a rose will show up. Unusual usage could be a “weird” container à la Nick Lenz or a style not normally used for that species (a formal upright wisteria?). **Everybody bring something.**



We would also like to encourage those who attended the Bill Valavanis workshop in June to bring your workshop trees. Everyone should be interested in seeing these little shohin bonsai and hear your impressions of them now that you’ve had a month with them.

If there is a shortage of the above, we will be prepared to show some techniques such as improving poor pots and making mineral deposits less of a hassle. If you have a particular bugger, ask about it.

As always, after the meeting, there will be opportunity for you to ask styling and/or cultural questions. Usually the room is not used by North Haven in the afternoon so we could stay a little longer if needed.

June Program Recap



What an incredible three days this was. My head is just crammed full of information and stories. I hope I can retain most of it. Bill Valavanis’s knowledge and experience wowed us all. And it also felt good to get out and see some different environments along with some familiar and not so familiar faces.

Thursday kicked off with an outing to Dos Gringos restaurant to fill up before the lecture at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden. That evening Bill discussed the “Aspects of Bonsai Design.” He is heavily influenced by traditional or “classical” Japanese bonsai design, preferring what he describes as “quiet” bonsai. This is very different from the trends in bonsai today that feature loads of deadwood, outlandish designs or extreme displays. Bill showed photos of many great and beautiful specimens from his travels as well as some of the more wild ideas coming out of Europe as of late. (Cont. on page 3)

Events of Interest



- **BSD July Program**
Saturday, July 5th
July Program by John Miller
North Haven Gardens
- **Ft. Worth Bonsai Society - August Program in Ft. Worth**
Saturday, Aug. 1st
“Choosing Shohin Bonsai Material”
by Suthin Sukosolvisit
(Dallas Club invited)
- **BSD August Program**
Saturday, Aug. 2nd
“Styling Shohin Bonsai”
by Suthin Sukosolvisit
North Haven Gardens
(Ft. Worth club invited)
- **Cool Thursdays Summer Concert Series**
May 1 – July 31, 2008
Dallas Arboretum
www.dallasarboretum.org
- **Organic in the City**
First Tuesdays (March – September) 6pm-8pm
Enjoy a summer evening in the Gardens with music, guided tours and presentations on organic and environmental topics.
www.texasdiscoverygardens.org

WE WANT YOUR STORIES!

Been to an exhibit lately? Had an interesting experience worth sharing? Send in an article to the BSD and maybe YOU will appear in the next Society newsletter!

Would you like to get this newsletter via e-mail? Has your address changed? Comments? E-mail amy.james@gte.net.

On Friday, a couple of us took Bill out to lunch. In keeping with the spirit, we had...what else but sushi! At 7 PM, we gathered at the Smiths' house for a workshop on shohin bonsai using the crape myrtle var. 'Chickasaw'. Shohin bonsai in Japan is a plant under 20 centimeters (a little under 8 inches) as measured from the root base (not the soil line!) to the top of the tree. These little trees offer a great variety for styling options. We had members designing in exposed root style, informal upright, clump, and semi-cascade. Bill was all over the tables with advice and a helpful prune or two. Several of us snapped up some lovely pots that Bill had available for the workshop as well. It will be interesting to see how these trees fare in the often oppressive heat of a Texas summer. [Mine had new growth after only one week! – Ed.]

Saturday morning at North Haven Gardens Bill gave his highly popular "History and Influence of Japanese Classical Bonsai." Bill has amassed an incredible amount of information and photos gleaned from his impressive collection of Japanese texts, manuals and albums. With many "then-and-now" comparisons, Bill showed how bonsai has changed over the years and revealed incredible stories of the pioneers who brought bonsai to the West.

Thank you Bill for coming to Texas, and thanks to Sylvia, Howard, Mark and all the people who helped make this happen! ☺

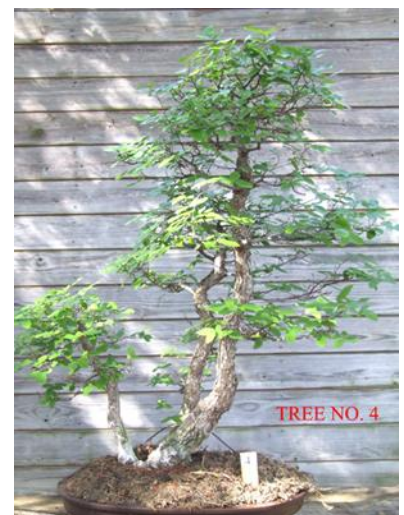


FOSTER CARE A TREE PROGRAM

By Alisan Clarke
The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit

The collected cedar elms, *Ulmus crassifolia*, in the photographs are part of an exciting new hands-on program from TTSBE. These trees, along with others, are available for foster care! To see photographs of more trees in the program contact your clubs TTSBE Representative.

Foster care is a program where an individual can pick a tree — ranging from rough material to styled bonsai — and become its *foster parent* at the TTSBE development site. Trees are available for bonsai skill levels ranging from basic through advanced. Skilled bonsai artists will consult with each foster parent about their tree and help design a development program. Foster parents are responsible for the maintenance and development of their tree for a renewable one-year commitment. This includes pruning, pinching, weeding, spotting and addressing any problems with the tree and, as needed, wiring, repotting and styling. Watering, insect/fungal control and feeding are taken care of by other volunteers.



(Cont. on page 4)

July Bonsai

By John Miller

July and August are the two most stressful months for bonsai in our neck of the woods. Most healthy trees can take the full sun on their foliage. But the high ambient temperatures and the heating effect of the sun on the pots and soil create temperatures on the roots that they are not designed to cope with. Trees with thin leaves like the Japanese maple, Acer Palmatum, will probably scorch in full sun. They can also suffer from chemical burn from some fertilizers and insecticides.



I cannot give you a precise to-do list since your backyard is different from mine but you should be sure that the sun does not hit the pots directly. If you use a cover of any kind be sure that the side of the pot is protected also. A loose weave cover (Howard and Sylvia use some cheap bar towels) that allows air flow is preferable to solid paper or foil. An article by Dr. Bill Cody suggests that his experiments show that an afternoon watering at 2PM will go a long way to keep the soil temperature in a desirable range while a box close around the pot does little to protect it. My opinion that the reason for this is that the sun still heats the soil and there is no air flow to cool it. A solid cover over the pot and box would create an oven type enclosure. A 30% shade cloth over pines, elms, junipers and maybe 50% over maples would be ideal. And don't forget to provide protection on the west side from the mean afternoon sun.

Check your water practices. I prefer to water heavily in the evening (in normal weather). That gives the plant all night to renew itself without losing most of its water to evaporation. Then in the early morning, they get a quick foliage spray and wetting the surface of the soil which may have dried out overnight. Very porous soil may need more morning water. This was what I did while working since the morning task only took 10 minutes or so. Now I still prefer to water heavily in the evening but the morning watering is more done more slowly and trees given a little more individual attention as some of them will not need water in the soil. Be sure to do the double watering bit—water thoroughly and then after a few minutes water again so that the dry soil particles will get moistened.

Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. Preventative medicine is best. By the time you see signs, the damage is already done, especially spider mites. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and 5% apple cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully. Do not apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods. A hose end sprayer does not work very well, its droplets are too large and you have little control over where it goes. Use a pump sprayer with a fine spray and cover both top and bottom of leaves.

When checking the results on your plants after spraying, remember that the spray usually will not remove the 'evidence' of problems.

(Foster – Cont'd from page 3)

Becoming a foster parent requires dedication and a commitment of time. Bonsai enthusiasts who live outside the greater Austin area can work with TTSBE to set up their schedule. Schedules must include a minimum of three to five timely, hands-on sessions per year with the tree. Foster parents must adjust their time to meet the plants needs throughout the year. A co-foster parent will look after the tree at other times.

Becoming a foster parent is a large responsibility. However, the rewards make it well worth it... pride in developing your foster tree, advancing your skills, learning new techniques, the camaraderie in sharing with other foster parents plus some special perks.

If you are interested in joining our foster care program or have questions, please contact your local bonsai clubs TTSBE Representative or Elaine White at ewbonsai@austin.rr.com or 512-266-2655.

CLUB REPRESENTAIVES

John Miller – Bonsai Society of Dallas
Gail Williams - Ft. Worth Bonsai Society



The webs will still be there after the mites are killed; the shells of the scale will be attached to the leaf or stem. These will have to be removed by hand, by a jet of water, or some other way. A soft toothbrush works well on the scale shells.

The humidity in summer varies quite a bit but when it sticks around for a few days look for fungal problems to appear, mildew being the most prevalent. Foliage spraying in the morning will usually not be a problem because it dries pretty quickly. Treat with potassium carbonate which you can find at any nursery with a decent organic section. There are several chemical sprays available too.

As a rule we do not feed our trees enough. Since the mix we use has very little nutrient value, we must make up with our fertilizer practice. The best “rule” I have heard was given by Matt Ouwinga who primarily grows trident maples.

Matt’s rule:

- Apply organic fertilizer balls each 6 weeks. Discard old balls.
- Apply fish emulsion every two weeks.
- Apply liquid plant food on alternate weeks.

Many spring flowering plants will be setting buds for next year’s flowers. Azaleas will set their buds toward the end of July. If you prune tips after that you remove the new buds.

Now that night temperatures are staying above 60 degrees you should think about repotting some of the tropicals. Most tropicals do well with an annual repotting. I would emphasize to check the wires on your trees and also see that the drains are not blocked in any way. Especially check them after a rain to be sure that your pots have drained properly. Keep the tropicals trimmed as they will be growing like crazy. However, if you want flowers on those that produce on the end of the twigs—like bougainvillea, pomegranate and crape myrtle— you will have to forgo the bonsai shape to let them flower. These species should be pruned more drastically before the growing season starts so they can still be in a pretty good shape.

Some more words on protecting from the sun. Dappled shade would do nicely because the sun will not shine on one spot very long but partial shade (such as morning sun and afternoon shade) will not suffice when the morning sun is as hot as it is here in Texas. When you put some kind of sun screen on remember to shade the sides of the pot as well as the soil. A light mulch on top of the soil will work great. Covering the pot with foil or putting it in a box made to fit is of doubtful help but if used there should be room for air to flow around it. Old rags work fine also if they do not blow off. Try to find a cover that will let you monitor your watering easily.



2009 LSBF/ABS Convention - Photo courtesy of M. Bynum



2009 LSBF/ABS Convention - Photo courtesy of S. Smith




2009 LSBF/ABS Convention - Photo courtesy of S. Smith




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For more information, visit
www.worldbonsaiconvention2009.com



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