



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

October 2009

Message from the President

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Message from the President
- Club auction
- Upcoming workshops
- October Bonsai Tips
- Link of the Month
- September in Review
- Calendar of Events

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October is just around the corner and cooler weather is on the way. It's time to start preparing your winter quarters to receive your bonsai. John's tips for October will help you keep the situation well in hand.

Last month Howard gave a wonderful lecture/workshop on wiring that members enjoyed very much. First-timers and veterans alike took up tools and improved their skills. Thank you Howard!

Next Saturday is our annual club auction. Do not forget that this year the auction will be held in the new room in the tropicals area. This room is much larger and should provide an excellent venue for the event. Check in starts at 8:30am, so get there early to register, check in what you are selling and make sure you have plenty of time to view the other materials on sale. **Volunteers are still needed for several positions.** If you would like to help out, contact Diane at diane_lowe@tx.rr.com or Sylvia Smith at (972) 754-9883 or slysmith@earthlink.net. It would be appreciated. We'll make sure volunteers still get a chance to bid on items.

In November, Andy Smith will be visiting from South Dakota for a multi-event weekend. Andy is well-known for his collecting expertise and will be presenting a program on successfully collecting conifers. His workshop has already filled up; however, Diane is keeping a short waiting list in case of cancellations. Check with her if you want to be on the list.

Last month three new members joined our club, Caroline, Hiram and Andrew. Welcome! We hope you enjoy a long stay with us.

And for those of you who can't get enough bonsai, Kathy Shaner is having another one of her annual lectures. Check page 5 in this newsletter for details.

Chuck



Howard demonstrates proper wiring technique.
Photo courtesy J. Bonney.

BSD Club Auction

October Program

It's Auction Time!!

Hopefully you've had time to look at your collection of books, tools, pottery and trees and have decided on what you would like to keep and what you would like to bring to the club auction. Yes, it's time for the much anticipated BSD Club Auction which allows all members a chance to refresh their collection and clear out those items that have worn your interest and need a new home. Remember that this is a club fundraiser so we are more than happy to take any and all bonsai related donations. And, we will have some really good member trees there so make sure to bring your checkbooks!!

Our auctioneer is excited that he will no longer have to bear the elements of heat or rain because we will be indoors in the new classroom building. He will even be supplied with a microphone so you don't miss a joke! Remember to stay on your toes as the auction moves quickly. To get there you must enter through the greenhouse and make your way through the double doors in the back of the room. You can register and take a seat and watch the auction items from the comfort of your chair until the table is available for viewing.

We could still use some helpers. This is a fun event for everyone and things run more smoothly when we have enough help so please consider helping out. Helpers can bid too. As much to the auctioneer's sadness, I have brought home some really nice trees!

Here are the auction rules:

1. Please bring your items between 8:30am – 9:30am. We would like to have all the auction items registered at this time. Anything brought after 9:30am may not make it to the auction block. We will be located in the new classroom so please enter through the greenhouse and head to the far back through the double doors.
 - a. Items brought for 20/80 split must indicate if they are to have a reserve price. These items must have a minimum value of \$50. If the item does not reach minimum, then the seller has the option to sell it at the current price or take it home.
 - b. PLEASE DO NOT SELL YOUR TREES PRIOR TO OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AUCTION. We ask this as a courtesy to our fundraising event. Auction donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible!
2. Everyone who participates in the auction needs to be registered and given a paddle number. Registration will be from 9:00am – 10:00am.
3. Items up for auction can be viewed from 9:30 – 9:59am. Please allow auction officials to register the items first. As tables are cleared for viewing they will be labeled with a sign.



Upcoming Events



- Sept. 26 – 27th
FWBS Club Show
Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens
[Map Link](#)
- October 3rd, 8:30AM to Noon
BSD Club Auction
North Haven Gardens
(see more info in this newsletter)
- November 6th, FWBS
Conifer styling demonstration
with Andy Smith
(Dallas club invited)
- November 7th, 9AM – Noon
How to Collect Conifers
with Andy Smith
North Haven Gardens
(see more info in this newsletter)
- November 7th, 1PM – 5PM
Bring-Your-Own Tree & Tools
workshop with Andy Smith
North Haven Gardens
(workshop currently full)
- December 5th, 9AM – Noon
Repotting and Pot Selection with
Sylvia Smith
North Haven Gardens

Link of the Month



Our friends at the Fort Worth Bonsai Society have recently moved their website and added a URL that is quite a bit easier to remember. Visit their new home for info on the club, upcoming shows and future information for the 2010 State convention.

www.fwbonsai.com

- Auction will begin promptly at 10:00am.
- Check out will begin at noon. Please note that early check out is very disruptive to the auction as we still have not gathered all of the information on each card. If you have a conflict please see the registration desk. Those who have not purchased or are not selling items may turn in their paddles and leave early if needed.
- All paddles must be returned at check out. You will then be given a receipt that you must show to pick up your auction items. Please be patient during this time. If we all take our turn, we will

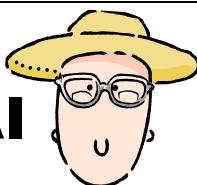
be able to get everyone out with their items in a timely matter. We will need to clear out by 1:00pm so we have to move fast.

- Payments will need to be made at the end of the auction with either cash or check.

Volunteers! We need your help!

If you can help out with the auction, contact Diane Lowe at diane_lowe@tx.r.com or Sylvia Smith at (972) 754-9883 or slysmith@earthlink.net.

OCTOBER BONSAI



Tips and advice by John Miller

How hot does your tree get? The following data was taken by Mark Bynum on a calm sunny day with the ambient temp at 95 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) with unglazed ceramic pots. For the full range of his measurements see the September newsletter (Ft. Worth or Dallas).

In the sun	123 °F
After watering	109 °F
Under shade cloth	105 °F
In dappled shade	98 °F
On ground, dapple shade	85-90 °F
Black plastic nursery pot	143 °F

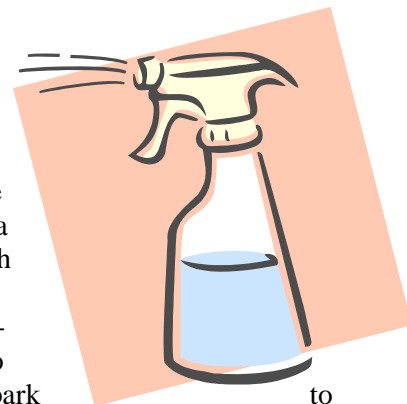
Use this information to plan your bonsai area for next year. Remember that most trees need full sun exposure except for the hottest time, so you need to cover the pots with something.

If you have not checked your wiring yet this fall, you had better look at it. The fall growth can make trees swell and get bad wire marks in a hurry. If the tree/limbs do not stay where you want, then rewire them, placing the new wire in a slightly different path or possibly wrap the wire in the opposite direction.

Watch your watering now that the temperature is a little lower. Cut back on the watering, but do not allow the trees to dry out. Trees require less water during the shorter days and lower temperatures. However, you need to remember that the wind can still stress the trees and

dry out the soil so you should water by checking the soil and not just on a given schedule.

Insects will continue to be present. Cooler (but not cold) days mean a resurgence of aphids. Mites and scale will still be around as well. Treat with a light horticultural oil, which will kill the adults and also wipe out the eggs and overwintering pupae. Be sure to cover all the cracks in the bark



to get to the eggs. The organic spray (one tablespoon each of liquid kelp, fish emulsion, apple cider vinegar and molasses in one gallon of water) will work on evergreens and will also give them some nutrients. The dead scale will probably have to be removed physically. A soft toothbrush works for me (I sometimes need to wet the branch to loosen the scale).

Feeding of deciduous trees should be discontinued for the winter. Evergreens and conifers will benefit from a low nitrogen feeding. Organic fertilizers are better as they will breakdown into nutrients more slowly as the season gets cooler and the trees' activity slows. Be sure to use one that supplies the 13 micronutrients needed. The organic spray given above can be used as a soil drench but dilute it a little more. Kelp is an excellent source of the essential minor elements needed by plants.

As the trees lose their foliage, you can study their trunk lines and branch structure. Any faulty styling and the general design features can be observed more easily and corrections planned. Look for crossing branches. Cut vertical growing twigs both growing up and those growing down. Reduce long internodes by cutting back and growing new extensions. Clean out heavy branch clusters that make the tree look too dense. Be particularly attentive to prevent the formation of heavy branches in the top part of the tree where faster growth often occurs. Work can be done now or later during the winter at your leisure but it is too easy to forget about it when the tree is in winter storage.

Some may repot in the fall, but I feel that it is counter-productive to do so. New roots are more prone to freeze damage if we get a bad winter. Repot at the proper time next spring when the buds swell and new growth is imminent.

Creating some shohin bonsai can lead to some winter enjoyment. Since they do not take much room you can find a space in the house or a small greenhouse. Let them



go dormant for a short period and you can take them in and have new growth in a very short time. Small elms are especially good for this. Then sit back and enjoy your little fellows in the house while the winter wears on.

Both Kathy Shaner and Sylvia recommend that you remove the top 1/4 to 1/2 inch of soil and replace it with fresh soil. This will help eliminate weed seed that has blown in and may make watering easier.

Winter quarters: Here in Texas more trees are lost in the winter due to drying out than to the cold. Of course, that doesn't mean for you to leave the tropics out or to let the roots freeze on southern trees like the crape myrtle. Even in a greenhouse or sunny window the soil can dry out amazingly fast. The wind in winter has amazing drying powers too. So while protecting the roots, be sure to give your trees a wind screen. Make sure that you can check the soil for watering needs. It helps here if you know which particular plants dry out faster and situate them together. Winter kill usually comes because the soil has frozen and the sun and/or wind is removing water from the tops. The roots cannot obtain water to replenish the loss and the top desiccates to the point of death. ✍

September in Review

Last month Howard Smith demonstrated why wiring is considered by many to be the most important development in bonsai in the last century. Wiring can drastically reduce the time required to create a pleasing shape with your bonsai. And it's a skill anyone can learn well with patience and practice.

Howard expressed that two of the most important elements of wiring are effectiveness and beauty; in other words, getting the most out of wiring using the least amount possible. He related the tale of an apprentice, who after spending many hours wiring a tree was told by his master that "your wire is meaningless." The master then placed the tree outside the apprentice's room as a reminder to learn his lessons well. A tough lesson indeed!

Most people know that there are two different kinds of wire traditionally used—aluminum and copper. But not everyone knows when to use which and why. Howard explained the qualities of the different wires. Aluminum

is soft and works well on deciduous trees because it is more forgiving and doesn't damage delicate bark as easily. Copper gets hard when worked, which gives it excellent holding power; ideal for conifers.

Another reason for using the two wires this way is that deciduous trees are traditionally shown at exhibitions without wire while conifers can be. Quite often, shows are in the early spring and it is easy to spot wire (especially the thicker aluminum) on a bare deciduous tree. Copper, being a harder metal, requires thinner gauge wire to hold and is therefore harder to spot on a conifer's darker bark. Copper also oxidizes over time, which means it can leave visible stains on lighter barked trees.

The second half of the program had us all wiring trees under Howard's watchful eye. And, thankfully, he didn't treat his students as harshly as the master in the story. It sure was fun working and talking together while we practiced what Howard preached. ✍



Copper and aluminum wire in various thicknesses.
Photo courtesy J. Bonney.



Howard explains various techniques, including the infamous "Figure 3". *Photo courtesy J. Bonney.*



Members get down to business in the hands-on portion of the program. *Photo courtesy J. Bonney.*



Howard assists Chuck with a challenging bend.
Photo courtesy J. Bonney.

Kathy Shaner Seminar in Buda, Texas

On the weekend of October 17-18th, Persimmon Hill Bonsai invites you to see Kathy Shaner, one of the most exciting, knowledgeable and personable bonsai masters, present a dual-themed seminar called *The Troublesome Trees and Grafting—The Why/When/How/Where* in Buda, Texas (south side of Austin). This marks the fourteenth year for Kathy's series of seminars. Kathy is known for her ability to involve and inspire attendees to her lectures. Club member Dave Schleser has commented that Kathy is one of the best teachers he has experienced.

The seminar involves participants bringing one or two "troublesome" trees from their collection for Kathy to discuss. The optional Sunday afternoon workshop is a

hands-on bring-a-tree event. Interested parties can contact James Bonney at amy.james@gte.net and request a PDF (email) flyer with registration form. Additional details and how to register are provided in the form. ✍

Update November Workshop with Andy Smith

The workshop portion of our November event with Andy Smith has filled up. However, Diane Lowe is keeping a short waiting list. Anyone still interested may ask on to the list. Contact Diane Lowe at (972) 679-8861 or diane_lowe@tx.rr.com. ✍

Inspiration from Nature

When we had Roberto Martinez Acosta here for his series of lectures his passionate plea to us was, “turn to nature for inspiration. Let nature be your guide.” This couldn’t be better illustrated than when another avid nature lover, Dave Schleser sent in the following story. His photos really illustrate the truth about finding inspiration in nature:

“As many of you know, I lead twice yearly eco-tours to the incredible Peruvian Amazon region. This year our club member and my great friend Garrett Larson joined me. Needless to say, we had a blast!! If you want to see amazing rootage this is the place to visit. Here is a sample that bonsai aficionados should find interesting. Wish we could develop such spectacular roots on our bonsai. Enjoy! Dave S.”



1. Numerous slender aerial roots of a species of Ficus tree (photo Garrett Larson).



2. Kayaking through the maze of roots in this seasonally flooded banyan tree forest. This species, *Coussapua trinerva*, is a close relative of the figs and can get enormous. During the dry season the waters will recede. The average seasonal change in water levels throughout most of the Amazon region is 25 - 40 feet!



3. The complex, wide-spreading, sinuous and anastomosing roots of a large *Erythrina*. This species is limited to floodplain forests. Its large orange flowers are a favorite of hummingbirds.



4. The thick root buttresses of a species of *Ficus*. Garrett peeking out from behind them gives you a sense of scale.



5. A truly giant *Ceiba* tree. This giant species of Amazon tree is typical of forest areas that do not flood during the high water season. The massive, tall root buttresses are typical of this species. This specimen is well over 150 feet tall and towers over the forest canopy.

Photos courtesy of D. Schleser (except where noted)



6. The fluted orange trunk and narrow root buttresses of the Ramo Caspi tree. The local natives make their canoe paddles from the thin buttresses since the wood doesn't split, rot or warp.




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- The Bonsai Smiths
- Pegasus Pottery
- Ray Hernandez's Bent Tree Bonsai
- 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 James Bonney at amy.james@gte.net.