



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly newsletter

August 2010

Message from the President

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I hope everyone had a great July 4th holiday weekend and that you enjoyed the July program on pot making. Special thanks to Bill Weber and Sandi McFarland for putting together the workshop. We had good turnout for a holiday weekend and over 20 people got to experience making pots under Sandi's talented direction. They should be ready for pick-up at the August meeting.

Summer is definitely here so be sure to read John Miller's August bonsai care tips. I am looking forward to our August program where we will have a double feature: a lesson on air layering followed by a hands-on air layering workshop. Last summer after we had a demonstration on air layering, I went home tried it and it didn't take. I am looking forward to another bite at the apple this month. The program will be led by Timothy Phan, club member and owner of Bonsai Ware (<http://www.bonsaiware.com>). Tim has a fabulous collection and has studied under Boon. Be sure to bring your own tree to practice on, preferably a tropical or semi-tropical tree. If you don't have one, consider buying one at a nursery or at North Haven Gardens that morning. Starting at 11:00 AM we have the 4th in our series of Bonsai 101 sessions, this time it will be led by Tim and Diane Lowe. Bonsai 101 is receiving good feedback from North Haven Gardens. They have even asked our club to teach an off-cycle session on starting bonsai to their patronage.

September's program will feature Roy Nagatoshi performing a demonstration on a juniper. Roy was selected by Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF) as this year's traveling artist. Roy has been practicing the art of bonsai for many years in Southern California along with some of the greats. You won't want to miss his visit. After the September program we will be hosting a bring-your-own tree workshop where Roy will give members styling and refining advice. Keep an eye out for more details on this and other upcoming programs. It's also not too early to start thinking about our annual auction coming up in October. Now is the time to look at your collection and decide what you want to bring to either donate or split with the club.

Stay cool, keep the pictures of your gardens coming, keep your trees watered and I hope to see you at our August program!

Chuck



Buckets, brushes, sponges, newsprint... oh yeah, we got dirty last month. *Photo J. Bonney*

Air Layering to Create Bonsai

August Program with
Timothy Phan
9 AM to 12 Noon, August 7th

Join us for our regular monthly meeting to learn the propagation technique of air layering. Its purpose is to create bonsai from relatively large trunks or branches, which is a different approach than what many of us may be used to.



Air layer. Photo courtesy Joey McCoy

Timothy Phan will be leading this month's program. He is a Dallas club member, owner of BonsaiWare (see his advert in the back of this newsletter), and a current SOB (Student of Boon). His teacher, Boon Manakitivipart, teaches "Intensives" at his nursery in California. He's trained many of the up-and-comers in American bonsai.

We encourage you to bring your own tree or buy something at the nursery before the program begins. Board members will pick out some plants beforehand to have on hand for those who may not have anything of their own to work on, and wish to buy a plant to work on. Any tropical or semi tropical tree—such as a ficus, pomegranate, or crape myrtle—is a good candidate. Deciduous trees are also OK, as long as you are prepared to give them the extra protection required over the winter months. Once we learn how this technique is done, we'll break into workshop groups and you'll be guided through an air layer on your tree. All are welcome to participate or just observe. A utility or small Exacto knife will come in handy, along with a small plastic bag.

Bonsai 101 – The Art of Bonsai, Part 1

At 11 A.M., Diane Lowe and Timothy will continue the Bonsai 101 series with *The Art of Bonsai, Part 1*. This time we begin to explore the artistic side of bonsai. We'll touch on some of the fundamentals of artistic design and talk about some of the specific techniques we use when creating or maintaining the artistic form of our trees.

"Play in the Clay" Pots Return

At the August program, Sandi McFarland will be returning with the freshly fired pots we made during the July program. Everyone who made pots in July please come in to pick up your beautiful creations.

Upcoming Events



Saturday, August 7th,
9–11 AM: Air layering workshop
11–12 Noon: Bonsai 101

Saturday, September 4th, 9–12 Noon
LSBF Traveling Artist: Roy Nagatoshi
Styling Demo & workshop
(workshop details on Pg. 3)

Saturday, October 2nd, 9–12 Noon
Club Auction

Saturday, Nov 6th, 9–12 Noon
Ground Growing with John Kirby &
Bonsai 101: Care of Bonsai, Part 2

Saturday, Dec. 4th, 9–12 Noon
Members' Virtual Garden Tour &
Bonsai 101

Link of the Month



June 12–13th saw Rochester, New York play host to the second ever U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition. The event was put together by the International Bonsai Arboretum and held at the Monroe Community Hospital. Plans are in the works for a commemorative exhibition album. Until that is published, we'll have to content ourselves with this short video review, posted by Bill Valavanis over on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDHALrvp2CI>

LSBF Traveling Artist: Roy Nagatoshi Coming in September

The schedule for the LSBF traveling artist is set and I thought I'd drop a plug for it now because, like Chuck says, you're not going to want to miss this one. This year the LSBF is bringing Roy Nagatoshi to Texas. Roy is a prominent West coast artist and comes from a bonsai family. He's been fortunate to work with such greats as the late John Naka. His visit will include a demonstration and a workshop. Mark September 4th as a must-attend event.

The workshop spaces are limited, so sign up early to be guaranteed a spot.

September program:

Roy Nagatoshi demonstration on Juniper
Free to all
9AM until 11:30 AM

September workshop (following program):

What: Bring Your Own Tree Workshop
Who: Roy Nagatoshi
When: Saturday, September 4th; 1PM – 4PM
Where: North Haven Gardens, Dallas, Texas
Details:

- Bring your own tree, tools, etc. Any species of tree welcome.
- RSVP to Diane Lowe. Space limited to first 12 participants (6 Dallas / 6 Fort Worth)
- Cost per participant \$45. Open to Members only. Silent observation fee is \$20.

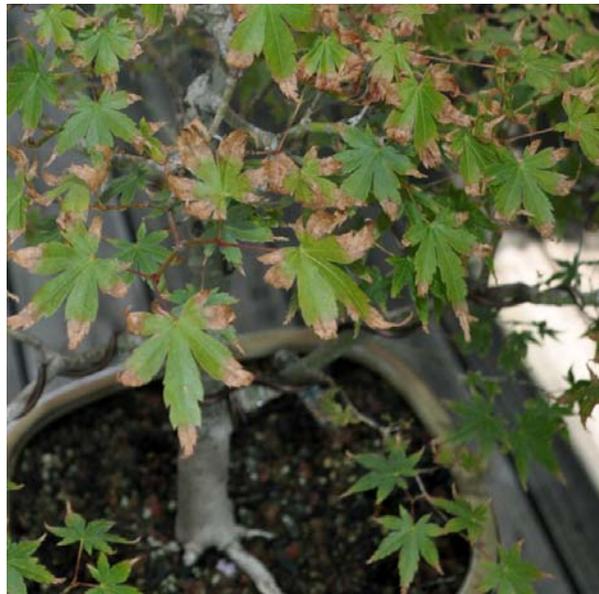
August Bonsai

Tips and advice by John Miller



You have only two main jobs in August: (1) keep your bonsai alive, and (2) keep them healthy. Regardless of where you live in Texas you can expect 90+ temperatures and the direct sun will be merciless. Direct sun on the pots can easily raise the temperature of the soil high enough to kill the roots. The intense heat also speeds up the drying of the soil. Many pests (e.g., spider mites) and pathogens thrive in these higher temperatures and the stressed plants cannot cope with added problems.

Two things can be done to help with handling the sun. You can supply partial shade and you may provide a cover over the pots. The shade, whether from a natural source (tree cover) or a shade cloth material, should provide greater protection from the afternoon sun. Late afternoon sun can be a problem



Maple leaves damaged from too much sun. Photo J. Bonney

because the temperature is at its highest and the soil is usually drier at that time. A cover over the pot should not touch the pot. A non-porous cover may create an oven-like effect, so be careful with what you use. There should always be good air flow around the pot for cooling. Ideally watering should be done around 2 p.m. or so. That will lower the soil temperature to around 70 and would provide for some evaporative cooling the rest of the afternoon.

Keeping the plants healthy means taking care of insects and diseases promptly, keeping them out of water stress, and feeding properly. A good many species can take full sun (on the tops) *if* they are healthy; but a 30% shade cloth over them during this time is better. Japanese maples and others

with thin leaves need more shade.

During these extremely hot periods, take care when using chemicals. This is true whether you are using organic chemicals or the other kind. I do not use my organic spray unless it can have a few hours before it gets to 90. Heat makes chemicals more active and they can damage your plants. Be sure to read the fine print on the label regarding temperature use. You may need to use them early in the morning or late in the evening. Most commercial chemicals are sold in an oil-based mixture which can damage some trees (like buttonwood) at any temperature, so be aware.

When checking the results on your plants after spraying pesticides, remember that the spray usually will not remove any 'evidence' of problems. The webs will still be there after the mites are killed; the shells of the scale will still be attached to the leaf or stem. These will have to be removed either by hand, by a jet of water, or some other way. A soft toothbrush works well on the scale shells.

Good fertilizer techniques will help you maintain healthy bonsai. The best technique is to use organic fertilizer balls on the surface. They supply a very low dose of nutrients every time you water. Time release fertilizer will work, but you do not have much control; it releases a lot when you first put it on and you do not know when it peters out. Water soluble fertilizers are concentrated chemicals that may be too active for high temperature use. They also quickly wash out of the soil as you water and you are doing that more often now. Check to see that your fertilizer supplies the many micronutrients that plants need.

Azaleas set their buds in July. Other spring flowering plants also set buds in the fall. They should not be pruned after bud set if you desire the blooms. If you are in a developmental stage you can still prune them. Other flowering plants should have the dead blooms and seed pods removed. That may encourage more flowering. Some tropicals like the bougainvillea flower after a dry period which is their natural dormancy. Check growth habits for your species.

Check your trees for moss growing on trunks. Bark seems to hold moisture pretty well and the extra watering may cause moss to grow. Kill it with 90% isopropyl

alcohol. Let it die before picking off gently with tweezers. Also, too much moss on the soil interferes with proper watering.

More on watering 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 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 or other sensitive species. 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 the top and bottom of leaves.

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. [*John is right on target with this one. After those rains from a few weeks ago, I noticed a big increase in my garden. — Editor*] Foliage spraying in the morning will usually not be a problem because it dries pretty quickly. Treat problems with potassium carbonate which you can find at any nursery with a decent organic section. There are several chemical sprays available too. ✍



Two participants work their clay into pleasing crescent-shaped containers. *Photo J. Bonney*

July in Review

by James Bonney

To start our meeting, Bill Webber talked about the current conditions our trees are enduring, and included a quick discussion on insect control.

Mark Bynum talked about the recent state bonsai convention. It went well, and he announced that Howard's "signature" tree (the one used for the 2007 convention logo) won best-of-show.



Some finished examples were brought in for the July program. *Photo J. Bonney*

John M. announced that the TTSBE is having a fund drive to raise funds to have a pond installed on the grounds. See the TTSBE's announcement on the last page of this newsletter.

The "Play in the Clay" pot program went splendidly. Several new people showed up, having heard about it in the local newspaper. A few people even brought their children who really seemed to enjoy getting messy. Sandi asked Bill to bring some of the fine pots he's made while taking her class as examples of a finished product.

Sandi brought absolutely everything anyone needed for this workshop: clay, handouts with examples, water pots, sponges, and tools. For working the clay, Sandi provided a multitude of cool tools including carvers, texturing objects, balloons and even balled up newsprint (for shaping).

Sandi first showed us how to work the clay so as not to introduce bubbles. If any of us were unfortunate enough to add *that* to the clay, Sandi would be rewarded with a spectacular explosion in the kiln on firing day!

She shaped an example or two so everyone could get a feel for how the work was done, then moved about the room helping people with their creations. Finished pieces were placed outside in the sun to dry for a few minutes while people either went back to create a second pot or mixed socially. The atmosphere was light and everyone had a great time. Thanks Sandi! ✍



Lots of participants showed up for our "Play in the Clay" workshop. *Photo J. Bonney*



A few samples of pots that Bill has been making in Sandi's pottery class. For more info, Sandi McFarland can be contacted through her website at www.pegasuspottery.com. *Photo J. Bonney*



Both the young and the young-at-heart really seemed to enjoy the program. *Photo J. Bonney*



The pots head outside to dry a little. *Photo J. Bonney*



Lois always seems to really get into the programs. Look at those gloves! *Photo J. Bonney*



Carefully packing up the pots for transport to Sandi's studio. They will be fired and returned at the August program. *Photo J. Bonney*



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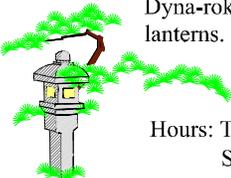
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