

THE BONSAI Wire

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

March 2018

FROM THE President

Were you caught by surprise like I was? Our unseasonably warm weather has caused everything (and I mean everything) to leaf out early. We had record setting high temperatures in February. The situation has caught many by surprise and anything that did not get potted before leafing out will have to wait for another couple of months, until this fall, or until next year.

The very best time to repot deciduous trees is just when the buds begin to swell. This is a sign that the tree is coming out of dormancy and sugars stored in the roots, trunk and branches are moving upward and outward, pushing out the new spring growth. This process will not be halted by repotting.

Another brief window to repot is after the tree has leafed out. But you must first wait for the leaves to "harden off" and begin to replenish the sugars that the tree used in producing the new spring growth. This usually takes six to eight weeks after the tree has fully leafed

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MEETINGS & Events

Friday, March 16, 2018

Intermediate Study Group (for signed up participants) 6:00pm-7:15pm

Program: Brussel Martin Kingsville Boxwood Rock planting demo 7:30pm

Brussel Martin, bonsai artist and owner of Brussel's Bonsai, will do a demo of multiple Kingsville boxwoods on a lace rock.

Saturday, March 17, 2018

Program: Brussel Martin Kingsville Boxwood Rock planting workshop 8:00am (Note: time now 8:00am)

Brussel Martin will conduct a workshop with a single larger scale Kingsville boxwood on a lacerock. Cost of the workshop is \$100 and includes soil, muck, moss and Kingsville. Sign up sheets will be available at the meetings.

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Intermediate Study Group (for signed up participants) 6:00pm-7:15pm

Program: Threadgrafting 7:30pm

Dennis Burke and Randy Bennett will demonstrate and explain the threadgrafting technique to improve the branch structure of bonsai.

Friday, May 18, 2018

Intermediate Study Group (for signed up participants) 6:00pm-7:15pm

Program: Dale Cochoy Tropical Demo 7:30pm

Dale Cochoy has been doing bonsai since 1978. He is both an accomplished bonsai artist and an award winning bonsai potter.

Saturday, May 19, 2018

Program: Dale Cochoy Bring Your Own Tree workshop 9:00am

This will be an intermediate to advanced workshop. NO raw or pre-bonsai trees. Trees for workshop should be either trees from a previous workshop or another quality tree in a fairly advanced stage. The point of the workshop will be to bring the tree to the next level. Cost of the workshop is \$40. Sign up sheets will be available at the meetings. Full payment must be made at least one month before the workshop.

Meetings take place at the **Marine Corps League Hall, 2708 Delaware St., Kenner, LA**. For more information, articles and everything bonsai, check us out on our website at www.gnobs.org

Study Groups and Classes

Beginner Classes

(for signed up participants) Please bring your check to first meeting if you have not already paid.

March 8, 15, 22, April 5, 12, 19 - 7:00pm-9:00pm

Cleary Playground 3700 Civic St. Metairie, LA 70001

(Located between Cleary and Causeway) *Note: this is correct location - location description at meeting was in error.*

Advanced Study Group Azaleas

(for signed up participants)

March 5, April 9, May 7 - 7:00pm-9:00pm

Old Metairie Library

2350 Metairie Rd., Metairie, LA 70001

Advanced Study Group Black Pine

(for signed up participants)

March 31 - 9:00am-Noon

1816 Fairfax Ave, Metairie, LA 70003

(Randy's house)

Workshops

Byron Myrick Create Your Own Bonsai Pot

June 23 - 9:00am

Byron will assist workshop participants in creating their own custom bonsai pot. He will take the finished raw pots back with him to his studio and then ship the fired pots back to participants. Sign up sheets will be available at the meetings. Full payment must be made at least one month before the workshop. Cost \$60

Adam Lavigne Bring Your Own Tree

July 14 - 9:00am

Cost to be announced.

Save the date!

GNOBS Annual Auction is scheduled for August 11.

As you work on your spring repotting, consider items you can donate to the auction - so you can buy even better trees!

Bonsai as Art

by Randy Bennett



Visual art in any form seeks to convey a mood or feeling to the viewer. The artist imparts this power in his or her creation. This power is constant, the creation is constant—a moment captured and held by time. Depending on the medium and style the artist employs, the creation may be defined by any of the three dimensions; height, width, and/or depth.

Bonsai, however, is a most unique form of visual art due to the element of change. Like other visual arts, bonsai convey mood and feeling, but this power to convey mood and feeling is not constant because the creation is not constant. A bonsai is not captured or held by time, but rather punctuates moments in time whenever it is viewed.

A bonsai is not constant. It changes with the seasons and with the years. Indeed the mood that is conveyed intensifies with time as the creation itself ages and grows. Herein lies the uniqueness and power of bonsai, for while it is defined by the three dimensions of height, width and depth, it is the bonsai itself which defines the fourth dimension—time.

A bonsai defines time by the spread of its roots, the texture of its bark, the taper of its trunk, the ramification of branches and twigs, the angles of its branches and the overall proportion and shape. Our experience defines these parameters and this is one of the goals of bonsai—to return us to some experience, a woodland clearing, a copse of trees in a meadow or an isolated tree on some mountain peak. When one strives to become a visual artist one studies all the mechanics of that art and the various methods of its application. In oil painting for example, one studies the rudiments of basic design, how objects are created in perspective, how balance is achieved and how to use space.

One learns the various styles of painting and practices their application, such as impressionistic, realistic and cubistic. The oil painter learns to use a variety of tools, such as brushes and palette knives (each with a special function) in addition to mediums, glazes



and canvas preparations. One learns about color and how analogous and complementary hues are used to create certain effects and moods, and how to mix tones, tints and shades. One learns the mechanics, methods of application and how to apply these principles so that one may then develop a style that is uniquely one's own. Becoming an artist in any visual art is a process of growth and once the artist is developed, the rules and forms which molded the artist are then molded to form the art.

It is the same in bonsai. We study the mechanics of working with trees and the various methods of applying horticultural techniques. We study basic design and how perspective is achieved with trunk movement and branch placement. We learn about visual balance and the use of space. We learn the many styles of bonsai and practice their application. We learn the use of, and become proficient with, our tools. We learn about color and texture and the effects of style and container upon mood. And we learn how to express time through the structure of our creations. We learn so that we may grow; that we may become artists with a style uniquely our own and more importantly with creations uniquely our own. A part of that learning process is being molded by the rules and structure of bonsai. But we need to be careful that the rules and structure, the mechanics and principles do not become our end, but are simply the means to begin. We need to be careful that we do not conform our creativity and expression to rules and models lest all our creations look the same. If we are to become artists of a living medium with nature as our guide and inspiration, we must remember that living things are not rigid and we have but to look around us to see that nature creates magnificent beauty and works of art in trees that oftentimes break the "rules". Lastly, we must be careful not simply to be imitators of nature, for there is little "art" in recreating what has already been created.

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out. This time is more stressful on trees and care must be taken to maintain a balance between what is removed above the soil line with what is removed below.

A third window occurs in the fall, after the tree has lost its leaves and has gone dormant. If you repot in the fall, you must make sure to protect the tree from any freezing temperatures. All pruning of branch growth must be limited to smaller shoots. No major branches should be removed at this time.

A fourth window is in late winter, before bud movement begins. For us, that would be in mid to late January. This is also the prime time to collect trees from the wild. This is the best time for major branch removal and for doing any removing or pruning of major roots.

No matter which window you decide to use, you need to know species-specific information in terms of which trees will best tolerate a particular window. You must also know the overall health and vigor of the tree you are working on and at what stage of development your tree is at. Some people will suggest that you can safely repot at any time, as long as you know what you are doing. But why take chances? Always strive to do what gives you and your tree the best opportunity for success.

One final note.... You should never repot a tree that is in stress. But if it is a choice between repotting or losing the tree, then you should certainly repot. If this must be done in late spring or summer, you can improve your chances of success by spraying the leaves (both top and underneath) with Wilt-Pruf. This product will prevent transpiration in the leaves for about four weeks and give you the best chance of success.

Randy Bennett
GNOBS President

Ben Oki Remembered

There may be a few members who remember Ben Oki. Ben was a student of John Naka and lived in Huntington, California. Ben was a frequent guest of the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society for many years. He was one of my mentors. I learned a great deal from him and he was an outstanding bonsai artist. He was a soft-spoken and kind man with a dry wit and sense of humor. I just learned that Ben passed away on February 23, 2018 of a heart attack. Losing John Naka in 2008 was a monumental loss to the bonsai community. And now to lose Ben is yet another huge loss. Most of you never met Ben Oki, but he was recognized around the world for his knowledge and artistry in bonsai. He is the one who introduced Ryan Neal to Kimura. He will be sorely missed by myself and everyone else who knew him.

Randy Bennett

Marking Potential Yamadori In the Wild

by Harry Harrington (bonsai4me.com)

When considering collecting trees from the wild, one of the more important jobs is to spend some time during the Summer walking potential sites (with permission) and discovering trees that have the qualities needed to become good bonsai. The purpose of this article is not to discuss what makes good yamadori or indeed the process



of collection (this is discussed elsewhere on Bonsai4me.com) but rather, how to remember where all of these potential bonsai are when you return in the Winter and Spring to collect them!

It is of course possible to remember where individual trees are located and return to them. However, in recent years, the number of potential

yamadori that I have discovered has meant that it has become almost impossible to remember them all!

Having searched around and asked fellow collectors for software or GPS systems that would enable me to mark the spot where a tree is located, came to little. One of the main problems was finding a system that had sufficient accuracy to take me back to the exact spot, within a few metres if necessary, without buying an expensive GPS system such as a Garmin.

Given that most of us now carry a smart phone with GPS on us at all times, it made sense that somewhere there would be an app that would work. Finally, I stumbled across this excellent piece of freeware, an app simply called 'Marker'

"Marker" app by Jeff Harden is a simple, straightforward app for your Iphone/Ipad that allows you to drop a pin (or mark) where you are standing, name it and save it. Super-imposing your marks onto what appears to be an up-to-date satellite image, makes locating a precise tree or bush very easy! It is available for Apple and Android.

I've found the app extremely useful, not only has it stopped me wasting

time wandering around trying to find a tree (particularly useful if it avoids a fruitless half hour spent walking up and down the side of a hill), but it has also enabled me to plan out a collecting trip beforehand.

Because the app uses GPS it works well even in areas with poor or non-existent mobile signal.



Members are always encouraged to bring any tree to meetings that they wish to discuss or about which they need advice.



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