

# THE BONSAI Wire

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

April 2018

## FROM THE President

# A

April is upon us and all your trees have leafed out and, hopefully, are growing strong. If you

have not already begun to fertilize your trees, you are already a month behind. Many trees began leafing out in February. If you are working on developing a tree(s) from raw stock and are at the point where you are working on basic structure, it is fine to use chemical fertilizers. Chemical fertilizers are “pre-digested” and are already broken down so that plants can absorb the nutrients immediately through the foliage and roots. Their action is fast-acting but short-lived.

If you have already developed the basic structure and location of main branches and are starting to develop secondary or tertiary branches, you need to shift to organic fertilizers such as cottonseed meal, bone meal and blood meal. Organic fertilizers must be broken down by the tree before they can be utilized. They are slow-acting but long-lasting. They are typically lower in their concentration of essential nutrients when compared to

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## MEETINGS & Events

*Note: Study Groups are for signed up participants. Programs are open to ALL members.*

### 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.

### Friday, June 22, 2018

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

**Program: Byron Myrick Designing and Creating Bonsai Pot demo 7:30pm**

Byron Myrick has been a potter and teacher of pottery for many years, and a bonsai enthusiast for the past ten. His style for these vessels is traditional; in trying to keep with the tradition of bonsai pottery.

### Saturday, June 23, 2018

**Program: Byron Myrick Workshop Create Your Own Bonsai Pot 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 of the workshop is \$60.

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](http://www.gnobs.org)

# Bunjin

By Vaughn Banting  
(Reprinted from a newsletter article by our founder)



QUESTION: What is Bunjin  
ANSWER: Read pages 247-253 in Bonsai Techniques I by John Y. Naka

Q: Is Bunjin a style?

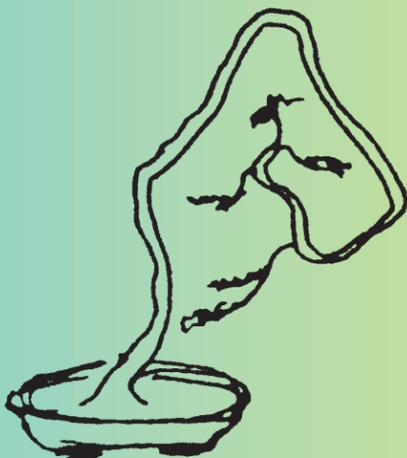
A: Not really. Bunjin can be said to be an abstraction of any of six classical Bonsai styles. Bunjin is to classical Bonsai what modern dance is to ballet.

Q: Should Bunjin be delicate in appearance or strong and vital?

A: Both of the above. Perhaps graceful is a better word than delicate.

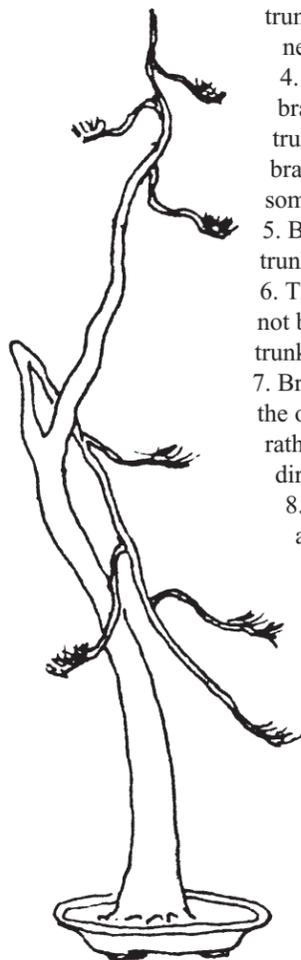
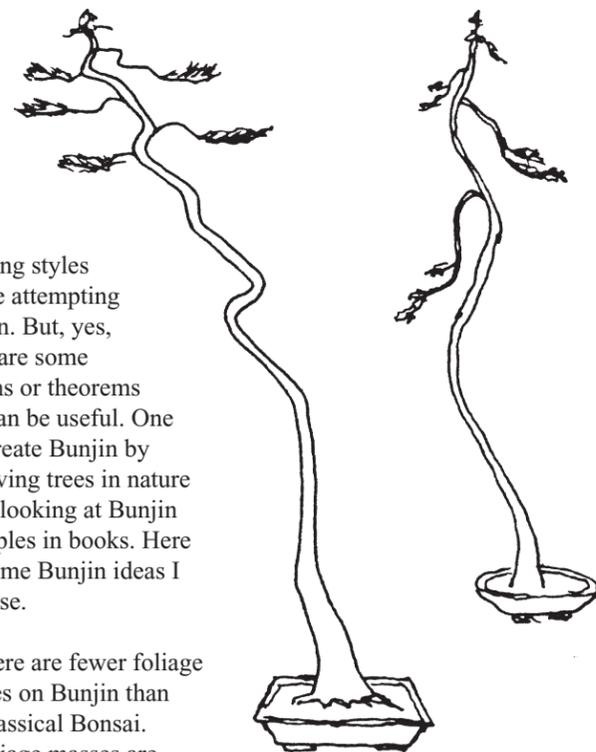
Bunjin should not be delicate in the sense of being vulnerable, but there should be an element of grace in the composition. There should also be strength—not in terms of a Bunjin's massiveness but rather in its freedom. A solitary tree with contrasting elements of tension and relaxation, imbalance and stability, soft curves and strong directional changes are all important to Bunjin.

Q: Can one learn to create Bunjin through fixed rules of proportion as one can with the Formal Upright or other Classical Bonsai styles?  
A: Not as easily. That is, it is best to master the Formal Upright, the Informal Upright, and the



Slanting styles before attempting Bunjin. But, yes, there are some axioms or theorems that can be useful. One can create Bunjin by observing trees in nature or by looking at Bunjin examples in books. Here are some Bunjin ideas I propose.

1. There are fewer foliage masses on Bunjin than on Classical Bonsai.
2. Foliage masses are generally trained close to the trunk.
3. Often, there is an absence of taper; that is, there is less difference between the diameter of the Bunjin's base and its apex than in Classical Bonsai. The ratio of 1 to 6 between trunk diameter and height does not necessarily apply.
4. There is an obvious absence of branches on the lower trunk. Thicker trunks hardly ever develop lower branches. Bunjin with thin trunks may sometimes have a low branch.
5. Branches may cross each other or the trunk.
6. The highest part of the tree may not be foliage but rather a curve in the trunk.
7. Branches are not always placed on the outside of curves in the trunk but rather may be placed on the inside of a directional change (inside of curve).
8. A directional change may serve as a substitute for a branch.
9. The emphasis is on the trunk line, not the foliage masses.
10. The trunk's movement may create depth.
11. One branch from the upper portion of the tree may be swept down near the trunk to compensate for otherwise branch less areas of the trunk.
12. There may be radical directional changes in the trunk line.



## BEGINNER Basics

### Hard Pruning Nursery Stock for Bonsai

By Harry Harrington (bonsai4me.com)

For many years I have been using 'Progression Series' containing images of the same tree over a number of years to illustrate the effect of bonsai techniques over time. This short progression series is intended to show the importance of pruning back nursery stock/garden center material hard if it is to be used for bonsai.

**Many beginners enjoy purchasing and then styling nursery stock into bonsai. However, very often the enthusiast will find it difficult to prune a newly acquired plant sufficiently hard enough, resulting in a spindly looking bonsai with a weak-looking trunk.**

This short progression series is intended to show the importance of pruning back nursery stock/garden center material hard if it is to be used for bonsai.

Most people will have the basic tools in their sheds to carry out this initial bonsai shaping, so ideally you will need a pruning tool of some description. Those that don't have access to tool sheds can pick up a pair of Secateurs from any garden center.

December 2006: This *Euonymus alatus*/Winged Spindle or Burning Bush was purchased at a local Garden Centre Sale for a couple of pounds. This is quite a typical purchase that one can make from Nurseries and is often made by enthusiasts with the intention of using the stock to make a bonsai.

Here the tree can be seen just after purchase; it is approximately 24"/59cm tall having already been reduced in height by half at the Garden Centre.

The trunk base is approximately 1.5"/3.5cm thick and looks very thin when compared to the rest of the tree. Ideally to make the trunk look appropriate for a bonsai, I will need to aim for a finished tree height of between 6 and 10 times the diameter of the trunk. As *Euonymus* is naturally quite a thin-trunked tree in the wild, I



## NEWS & Events

### Study Groups and Classes

#### Beginner Classes

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

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)

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)

Contact Randy for Date - 9:00am-Noon

1816 Fairfax Ave, Metairie, LA 70003

(Randy's house)

### Workshops

**Note: Spots are still available for the Dale Cochoy and Byron Myrick workshops. Both are reasonably priced with excellent teachers. I would encourage interested members to sign up quickly before the spots are gone!**

#### 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!

### Hard Pruning cont. from pg 3

will aim for a height 10 times the diameter of the trunk; in this case 15" or 37cm.

By the time I have reduced the tree's height down to 12"/29cm there is not much left. Notice that I have also chosen trunk lines that taper as much as possible so that the trunk lines are as thin near the top.



A composite of the before and after images: now it is time to simply wait for the tree to react in Spring by popping new buds all over the trunk and growing out new branches from the resulting shoots

August 2006: After strong growth in Spring and Summer, the tree is pruned back hard again. This process of allowing the tree to grow strongly and then to be pruned back hard is repeated to help build up ramification and density of the branches.



January 2008: 18 months later and the tree has had the growth of 2007 pruned back and styled. Notice that I have also pruned back the trunks as new buds and shoots became available for me to prune to.



July 2008: As each month of growth passes, the tree slowly but steadily fills out.



April 2009: The tree has been repotted into a simple round mica pot and has opened its fresh green Spring leaves.

As can be seen in these last images, despite its relatively thin diameter, the trunk now looks powerful and in proportion with the new branches. This could only be achieved by properly pruning the tree when it was originally purchased and regrowing new branches.

The current height of the tree (slightly taller than originally intended): 16"/39cm



### President cont. from pg 1

chemical fertilizers. Using organic fertilizers will aid in developing shorter internodes, while still ensuring the health and vigor of your tree.

April also means that insects and diseases are making their presence known. Start applying insecticides such as Safer's Insecticidal Soap, Volck Oil Spray or Neem Oil. These products are safe for almost all species, but read directions before applying. Neem Oil is used primarily to keep insects away as opposed to killing them. Safer's Soap and Volck Oil Spray will kill a variety of insects which will typically attack trees and shrubs. A lot of people think that oil sprays are only to be applied during the dormant season, but such is not the case. Volck Oil Spray can be applied during the growing season as long as it is not applied in full sun during the hotter months. Just follow the directions.

Above all, do not wait until you have a problem and the damage is done. Insects are much harder to eradicate once they have taken hold. Being proactive and killing them before they have a chance to do damage is a much better habit to get into. And remember to spray the underside of leaves as well as the top. The underside is where they hide during the day.

Randy Bennett  
GNOBS President

## SPECIES Spotlight

If you are new to bonsai, below is a short list of trees suitable for bonsai in our area. It is by no means comprehensive but should help if you wish to try some other species. (Tropicals on the list do require some protection in colder temperatures)

Azalea  
Bahama Berry  
Bald Cypress  
Black Olive  
Bougainvillea  
Boxwood (garden variety and miniature)  
Brazilian Rain Tree  
Buttonwood  
Cedar Elm  
Chinese Banyan  
(Ficus Microcarpa)  
Chinese Witch Hazel  
Crape Myrtle (Dwarf and regular)  
Elm (Chinese, Cork Bark, American, Winged)  
Fukien Tea  
Jaboticaba  
Juniper (Green Mound, Parsons, Shimpaku)

Maple (Trident, Red, Japanese)  
Narrow Leaf ficus  
Neea Buxifolia  
Privet  
Podocarpus  
Schefflera  
Silverberry  
Snow Rose  
Texas Ebony  
Yaupon Holly



# QUICK Tips

## Bark Stripping Tool

By Kathy Barbazon

Gerald Nolan recently introduced me to my favorite new bonsai tool. Brussel's Bonsai gave a version of these out at Rendevous last year to participants. Though NOT a bonsai tool (these are actually for trimming horse hooves), it works exceptionally well for removing bark for deadwood. Just draw the thinner sharp side along the branch. One note of caution – I found out the hard way (no stitches - but a nice size cut) that they are sharper than they appear! I purchased the one below at Amazon for \$12.99. There are multiple other versions available at Amazon and horse supply stores - some cheaper and some more expensive.

Horse Farrier Tool SS Polished Wood Handle Equine Grooming Loop Hoof Knife 98485



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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