

# THE BONSAI Wire

June 2019

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

## FROM THE President



April and May were a big months. First, there was the American Bonsai Society's

National Convention that was held in Houston, Texas. We had a number of our members go and participate. But most notable, was Dawn Koetting. She entered a bald cypress in the exhibit and won the award for 'Best Texas Native'. Now isn't that special? A "good-ole-girl" from Louisiana wins the award for Best Texas Native!



But... as if that wasn't enough, her entry also received the John Naka Award! For those of you who may be unfamiliar with John Naka, he is considered to be the father of bonsai in America. He made immeasurable contributions to the art of bonsai in this country and for

President cont.  
pg 6



## MEETINGS & Events

### Friday, June 21, 2019

**Intermediate Study Group 6:00pm-7:15pm**

**Program: Pedro Morales Demo/Lecture 7:30pm**

Pedro Morales is an internationally renowned Bonsai Artist based in Puerto Rico with 30 years experience. Though adept at other species, he specializes in all species of tropical bonsai. GNOBS has been interested in having Pedro visit us for a long time and we were lucky enough to acquire his services right after he visits the Texas clubs. From his visit with GNOBS, he is flying to India to present lecture/demos and workshops to bonsai clubs in that country. Don't miss this opportunity to observe a tropicals master!

### Saturday, June 22, 2019

**Workshop: Pedro Morales 9:00am**

Pedro Morales will conduct a Bring Your Own Tree workshop. Cost \$50

### Sunday, June 23, 2019

**Black Pine Study Group 9:00am - 12:00Noon**

1816 Fairfax Ave, Metairie, LA 70003 (Randy's house)

Discussion and hands-on activity will be candle-pruning

### Tuesday, July 9, 2019

**Intermediate Study Group 6:00pm-7:15pm**

**Program: Johnny Martinez Competition 7:30pm**

All members (including beginners) are asked to bring in their best trees (limit 2) for a friendly competition. All members present will get 3 votes for their favorite trees. The 3 trees with the most votes will be displayed at the Auction. Auction attendees will vote for their favorite tree from the 3 for the Johnny Martinez award. We ask that you not bring in a tree from a workshop done in the past year. Some of our most experienced members will provide a constructive critique.

### Saturday, July 20, 2019

**Louisiana Bonsai Society of Baton Rouge will host the Louisiana Bonsai Societies**

**(LABS) Day of Bonsai** at the Baton Rouge Garden Center,

Meetings cont. pg 7

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

[facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai](https://facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai) [gnoobs.org](http://gnoobs.org)

# SPECIES Spotlight

## Bald Cypress as Bonsai (Part 3)

### (A Study of the Branch Structure in Mature flat-Topped Cypress)

by Randy Bennett

The following is the third in a series of articles on bald cypress as bonsai

In Part 2 of this series of articles on bald cypress, we identified five general design patterns for creating bonsai using bald cypress and pond cypress. All of these variations lie within the Formal Upright and/or Flat-Topped styles. Within the general parameters discussed for those five designs are an even wider range of creative possibilities – namely the various developmental stages of growth as immature cypress transition into mature flat-tops.



Immature Formal Upright Gradually Tapered (Typical)



Immature Formal Upright Blunt and Fluted (Variant)



Mature Flat-Top Static and Stately (Typical)



Mature Flat-Top Graceful and Fluid (Variant)



Mature Flat-Top Blunt and Fluted (Variant)

Designing any of the immature, or juvenile styles is a relatively straight-forward process. One can simply follow any of the various design parameters for branch placement in the Chokkan or Formal Upright Style that is so familiar to all bonsai stylists.

It is not necessary to imitate the manner in which branches grow in nature among the juvenile styles. However, if one wishes to follow nature's example, the branches of a cypress should initially extend at an upward angle from the trunk and then either arch downward in a series of graceful curves, using the branches to form layers of descending foliage, or, as seen among the ancient monarchs of the swamp, the outermost secondary and tertiary branches die back, leaving a series of short, angular branches which are few in number.

Since a great deal has already been written about determining branch placement in the formal upright style, I will not dedicate more space to it here. For the purpose of this article, I will devote the bulk of discussion on the more complex branch structure found in the flat-top style for bald cypress. It is critical to understand how the flat-top apex is formed in nature if one is to create a believable flat-top cypress bonsai.

As Vaughn Banting first noted in his article, "Bald cypress: The Flat-Topped Style", the main trunk line in a flat-top cypress plays no major role in the formation of the apex.\* In most cases, the apex of a juvenile cypress will begin curving to one side or another as it begins to reach maturity. This process will continue for many, many years. We have yet to determine what triggers this change in the growth pattern to occur. But when the transition is complete, there will, in fact, be several apices which create the relatively flat canopy. The multiple apices are formed from primary, secondary and tertiary branches emanating from the curved portion of the main trunk line.

I photographed the tree pictured below growing beside I-59, near Manchac, Louisiana. Notice how the trunk line arches over as it nears the apex.

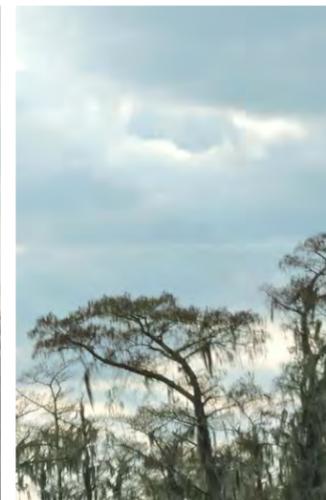


In this closer view of the flat-top canopy, you can easily identify the arching line of the main trunk as it extends to the left at about a 70



degree angle. You should also be able to easily identify three different apices that jointly create the crown.

Below are several more photos of flat-top cypress, taken along the same stretch of interstate. Take a moment to identify the main trunk lines and angles at which the primary and secondary branches grow to form the flat-top. Also note the multiple apices. You should also pay attention to the fact that the highest point of the crown is offset from the centerline of the trunk



As you examine the photos above, several patterns of growth begin to emerge and become evident: First, the highest point of the multiple apices is almost always off to one side and not directly over the center of the main trunk line. Second, you begin to notice a zig-zag pattern of alternating line as the primary and secondary branches develop to create the flat-top canopy. Third, you will note that only a few branches remain below the crown of the tree and those that linger tend to be much shorter versions of the original branch structure. In the immature or juvenile stage, all of the branches grow along the trunk line beneath the apex. As the tree matures and the flat-top canopy develops, most of the lower branch structures are sacrificed by the tree.



Occasionally, one can see where the original juvenile apex is still present, but beneath a diffused crown of primary, secondary and tertiary branches. On a few occasions, I have observed where the original trunk line apex has died –perhaps due to a lightning strike or hurricane damage. What often occurs in these cases, is that a primary branch takes over and the old trunk is replaced with a new arching trunk line and the typical flat-top is still created as in the above photo.

What becomes evident as one studies the canopy structures is that, just like the trunk forms, there are typical growth patterns and there are atypical growth patterns. I have photographed hundreds of cypress in south Louisiana

and Mississippi and there is no strict pattern of growth. However, the typical form is that the juvenile or immature apex is lost as the trunk begins to grow to one side or the other.

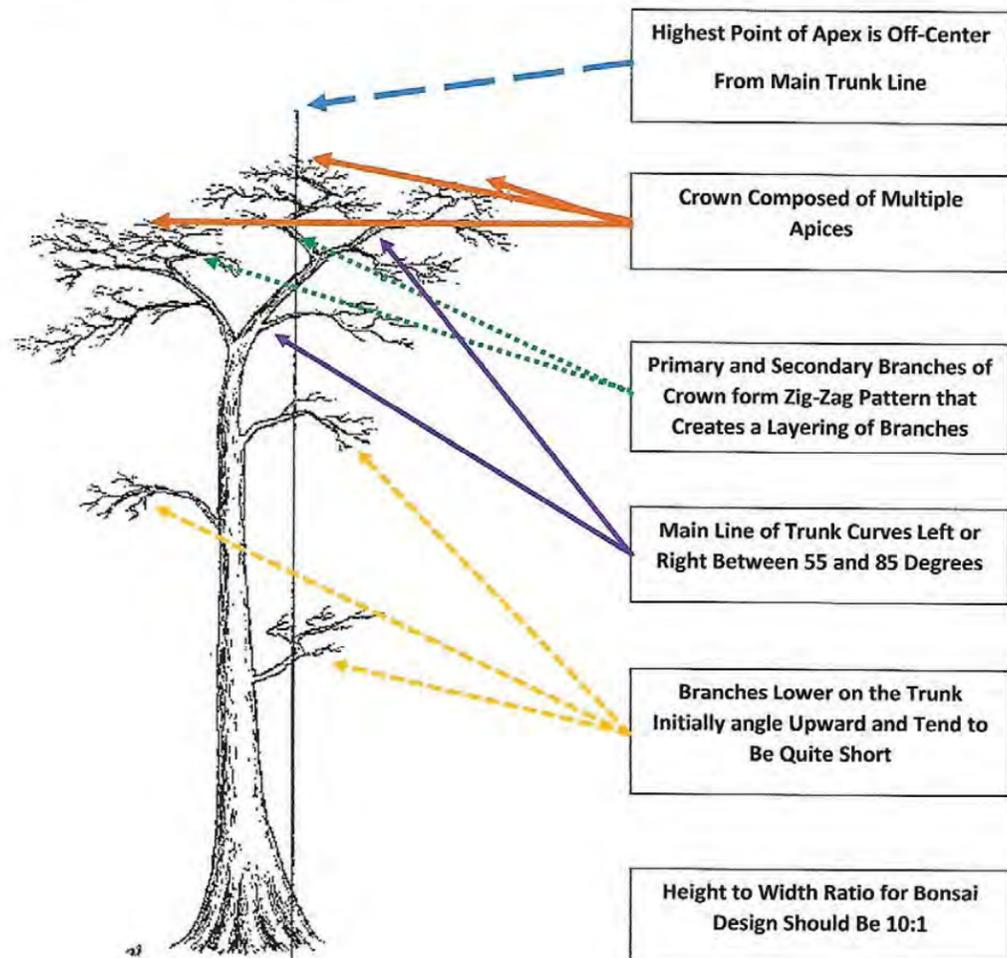
What follows is that primary branches grow back in the opposite direction from the arching, main trunk line. From there, tertiary branches grow in the opposite direction of the primary branch to follow the main trunk line, forming, what can best be described as a “zig-zag” pattern.

Sometimes this change in direction is immediate and other times there is a sharp curve to mark the directional change. One can often follow this distinct directional change three, four or even five times beginning at the point where the primary branches grow from the sharply curving main trunk line.

I hope that this installment of the article provides a source for discussion and analysis regarding the branch structures possible in mature flat-top cypress. And that as you develop insight and understanding of how flat-top cypress grow, you can translate that knowledge into good bonsai design.

Vaughn Banting, ‘Bald cypress: The Flat-Topped Style, “Bonsai Journal”, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1978.

### Typical Characteristics of Flat-Top Bald Cypress for Bonsai Design



The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

*Annual*

# Bonsai Auction

(Free and Open to the Public)

**August 17, 2019**

Viewing of trees prior to auction: 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Auction 6:00pm – 9:00pm



**Marine Corps League Hall**  
**2708 Delaware St, Kenner LA 70062**  
 (near Williams Blvd & Veterans Blvd)

- Quality, developed bonsai
- Featured bonsai designed by nationally known bonsai masters (Dave De Groot, Brussel Martin, Pedro Morales)
- Starter material
- Pots and supplies
- Bonsai for every budget from the novice to the dedicated enthusiast
- Bargain table

Light Refreshments

Join us for great bonsai and a great time!

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

[facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai](https://facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai)

President cont. from pg 1

one of our own to receive the award bearing his name is something very special indeed. Congratulations Dawn, you deserve it and you make us proud!



May brought us the 2019 Spring Rendezvous at Brussel's Bonsai Nursery. We had about 8 GNOBS members in attendance and a good time was had by all.



Byron Carr and Robert Reed in a Shimpaku workshop with Rodney Clemmons



Prostrata juniper styled by Bjorn Bjorholm in one of the many demos

I hope that all the participants in the 6 Week Beginner Bonsai Course found the classes beneficial. Thanks again to Byron Carr for building the wooden dowel "trees" to help teach the wiring portion of the class. They were extremely helpful. Below are a couple of photos from that group.

Thanks to all those members who came to



the last class to assist with the styling of the participants' trees. With such a large group, it was incredibly helpful to have so many show up to assist. I could not have done it without you!

However, June is also a big month. About 6 GNOBS members conducted a bonsai workshop at the City Park Botanical Gardens. There were 16 participants with some very nice procumbens nana junipers for them to work on. We want to thank City Park for inviting us to conduct the workshop for them. It was great fun for us and a real learning experience for the participants.



Randy Bennett  
GNOBS President

# Tips for June

by Randy Bennett

The heat is on! We are now rolling into the hot months and your trees deserve extra monitoring. Here are a few things to be mindful of as things heat up:

1. Discontinue fertilizing at this time. If you use organic cakes or pellets, removing them is not necessary. When temperatures get high, roots stop absorbing nutrients. Continuing to fertilize will cause a build-up of salts in the soil and will actually burn the roots.
2. Monitor your trees daily. Check them in the mornings and evenings at a minimum to determine how quickly and to what extent they are drying out. Making sure they have enough water is critical.
3. This is a good time of year to prune back Japanese maples that are in the "Growth for Development Stage". Just make sure your maples are being protected from full sun. early morning sun is fine but do everything you can to protect them from 12 noon and after.
4. Continue to monitor and spray for insects. Aphids are at their worst this time of year. And I am still finding various caterpillars chewing away on several of my trees.
5. Avoid overhead watering in direct sunlight. Water droplets on leaves can actually act like tiny magnifying glasses and burn foliage.
6. Check your wire. This is a good time to remove wire since there will be little active growth during the next few months (except for tropicals).
7. If you leaf-prune any of your trees, remember to cut back on watering for that tree(s) and move it to an area that is slightly shaded or only gets morning sun. New leaves that emerge after leaf-pruning are too delicate to withstand the full onslaught of the sun in south Louisiana at this time.
8. It is still a good time to perform air-layers and take soft-wood cuttings.
9. This is the month to candle-prune Japanese Black Pine. Mine are scheduled to be candle- pruned on June 23rd. Individual differences abound with the exact timing of it in our climate zone, but somewhere near the end of the month will be good. The exact timing of it will depend, in large part, to what actions you took prior and when you took those actions.
10. This is usually the time you will prune azaleas back to two shoots and two leaves on the new growth that occurred after flowering. If the apex of your azalea is a little weak, then prune it first and two weeks later, prune the rest of the tree. Since azaleas are bottom dominant, pruning the bottom later will force more energy to the crown.
11. Remember to rotate your trees at least twice a month to ensure that the back branches as well as the front are receiving adequate light.
12. Foliar feed your cascades as follows: the apex (lowest branches on your cascade) 3 times this month. Once a week during the first three weeks of June / the middle branches twice this month (once during the first week

and once during the third week / the branches above the rim of the pot once during the first week of June. The lowest branches of a cascade are always the weakest. This practice will help balance the strength of each growth zone of the tree.

meetings cont. from pg 1

7950 Independence Blvd, Baton Rouge. Everyone is invited for a day bonsai fun with lecture/demonstration by Brussel Martin, bonsai vendors, bonsai show, raffle prizes, good food, and more. For more information contact Lowell Tilley, lowelltilley@gmail.com

## Saturday, August 17, 2019 Annual GNOBS Auction

Auction Setup and Donations Accepted – 12 Noon – 4:00pm

Viewing of trees and other auction items – 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Auction – 6:00pm – 9:00pm

**Get your donations ready!** Now is the time to go through that overcrowded bench and decide which of your trees should go to the auction for a new home. All donations contribute to the operating budget of the club. You'll need the space for the fabulous new bonsai that you just can't live without and bring home from the auction. The club accepts bonsai, pre-bonsai, nursery stock and rooted cuttings (for the bargain table), bonsai pots, books and tools and anything else bonsai related. Huge selection of bonsai, starter material and pots for every budget from the novice to dedicated enthusiast. FREE and open to the public.



Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society  
PO Box 381 Kenner, LA 70062

### Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society Board

President:  
Randy Bennett  
504-402-3646 (cell)  
504-888-7994 (home)  
ourproperty4u@gmail.com

Newsletter/Website Editor  
Kathy Barbazon  
504-470-8134 (cell)  
504-737-6747 (home)  
kbarbazon@me.com

Vice-President:  
Dennis Burke  
504-224-0038 (cell)  
dpbonsai@yahoo.com

Masters Program Director:  
Jim Osborne  
504-458-6956 (cell)  
wevoodoo@cox.net

Treasurer:  
Dawn Koetting  
985-859-3400 (cell)  
dkoetting@msn.com

Hall Manager  
Cheryl Mechler  
504-452-1222  
mechler465@att.net

Recording Secretary  
Peggy Howard  
504-715-7228  
peggylh@cox.net

Past President:  
Peggy Howard