

THE BONSAI Wire

February 2020

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

FROM THE President

I hope our members that attended the January meeting found it helpful on some level.

The purpose of a 'Silhouette Show' is to allow members to bring a deciduous tree so that other members can appreciate the hard work that goes into properly developing a deciduous tree relative to proper primary, secondary and tertiary branching, along fine twigging.

The goal behind critiquing the trees is to hopefully provide some ideas on possible ways to bring the tree to the next level. In addition, we want to offer alternative design perspectives in order to get members to realize that there are multiple possibilities when it comes to designing a tree and getting the most out of it.

I would like to thank Robert Reed for assisting in the critiques, along with other members who offered suggestions. No one person has all the answers and there is certainly more than one way to design a specific piece of material. Our goal is simply to



President cont. pg 7

MEETINGS & Events

REMINDER: GNOBS Club dues are due in January.
(**\$30 Individual or \$35 Family**)

Friday, February 7, 2020

Intermediate Study Group - Wound Care 6:00pm-7:15pm

Program: Bald Cypress Presentation by Arthur Joura 7:30pm

Join us for a special presentation (FREE to all members) as we welcome Arthur Joura, curator of the North Carolina Arboretum. For 20 years, Arboretum, Bonsai Curator Arthur Joura has developed the bonsai program to be one of The North Carolina Arboretum's most stunning collections. Arthur has combined the art of bonsai with a Southern Appalachian interpretation to produce this unique and aesthetic display. Arthur will be doing a lecture and powerpoint presentation on Bald Cypress bonsai.

Saturday, February 8, 2020

Bring Your Own Tree Workshop by Arthur Joura 9:00am

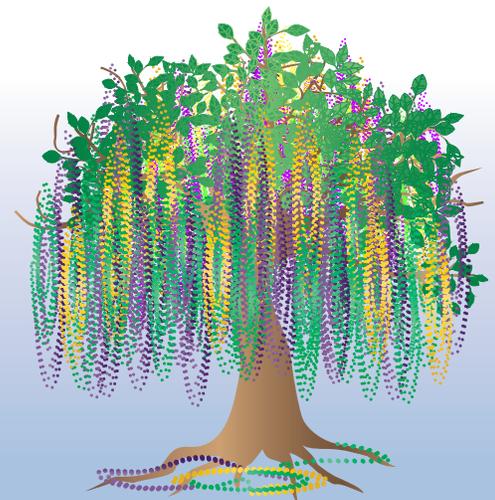
Arthur Joura, curator of the North Carolina Arboretum and a proponent of "natural style bonsai" will be conducting a Bring Your Own Tree Workshop. Cost of the workshop is a very reasonable \$50. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meetings. I would encourage beginners to sign up. Arthur is an excellent teacher.

Friday, March 13, 2020

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

Program: Brussel Martin Juniper Demo 7:30pm

Brussel Martin, owner of Brussel's Bonsai, will be doing a demo on a large upright juniper.



Meetings cont. pg 4

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

facebook.com/NewOrleansBonsai gnobs.org

Star Magnolia Bonsai

by Randy Bennett

I Star Magnolia Bonsai
By Randy Bennett

The Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*) is a compact shrub or small tree. It is a slow-growing native of Japan, closely related to the Kobushi Magnolia (*Magnolia kobus*) and is considered by many to be a variety or cultivar of the Kobushi. However, *Magnolia stellata* was accepted as a distinct species in 1998. It is a deciduous tree that has multiple trunks, much like a crepe myrtle, and puts on a beautiful show of white flowers in late winter in our area. It blooms before putting out any leaves.



The species *Magnolia stellata* may be found growing wild in certain parts of the Ise Bay area of central Honshu, Japan's largest island, at elevations between 150 and 2,000 feet above sea level. It grows by streams and in moist, boggy areas. It has a climate range that extends to zone 9 and there are many excellent examples in the landscape around New Orleans.

The trees prefer an acid soil with a lot of organic matter that drains well. They do very well in full sun, but will tolerate some shade as long as it is mixed with several hours of full sun. Star Magnolias have thick, fleshy roots which are found fairly close to the surface and do not tolerate much disturbance. It is therefore, critical to conduct repotting at the optimum time of

year and to be judicious when pruning and reducing the roots, much like you would do with Black Pine.

In the New Orleans area, we are more familiar with the Japanese Saucer Magnolia, which puts out brilliant pink to purple, saucer-shaped flowers in profusion before leafing out. The Japanese Star Magnolia flowers are much smaller than the Saucer Magnolia and are primarily white with what can best be described as spidery petals. However, there is a natural variation of flower color among Star magnolias, ranging from white to rich pink; the hue of pink in this species of magnolia also changes from year to year, depending on day and night air temperatures prior to and during flowering. The flowers are star-shaped, with at least 12 thin, delicate petal-like tepals—some cultivars, like the Royal Star Magnolia have more than 30 petals.



Star magnolia in the landscape

The leaves are bronze color as they emerge and turn dark green as they harden-off. They are oblong shaped and average about 4 inches long and 1 1/2 inches wide on trees planted in the ground.

In Japan, the Kobus Magnolia is the preferred species of magnolia used in bonsai. There are many excellent examples to be seen. I was interested in developing a Kobus Magnolia for a number of years, but was unable to locate any in Louisiana. After a little research, I started reading about the Star Magnolia and finally found a nursery that had a few larger specimens.



Slanting style Star Magnolia bonsai near the end of flowering



Clump style Star Magnolia bonsai

I purchased the tree (picture following) in December of 2018. It was potted in a 30 gallon nursery container and was about 8 feet in height. I had to cut about 4 feet off the top of the tree before leaving the nursery so I could lay it down in the bed of my truck for transport back to New Orleans. Once I got it home I made a few more cuts and then began to study the tree for a possible design.



December 2018

I knew I wanted to design it the way they grow in nature, namely, with multiple trunks. Initially, there were 16 shoots of various thickness growing from the base of the larger central trunk. After locating what I decided would be the front of the tree, I removed seven of the basal shoots and kept (at least for the time being) a total of nine, including the central trunk. The plan was to remove two more the following year for a total of seven trunks. But, since I had never worked with this species before, I wanted to see how it responded to pruning, how the wounds healed and make sure that the tree had time to re-route vascular tissue and not remove too much at one time in the same area.

In late January of 2019, after flowering was complete, I pruned the tree back to a line and wired some of the trunks. I also used corks to help separate smaller trunks from the main trunk without using wire, which would cut into the trunks long before they had built up enough tissue to hold their positions. The photo below and on the right shows the tree after pruning, wiring and sealing the cuts. The overall height after pruning was 27 inches and the overall width was 30 inches.

Star cont. pg 4



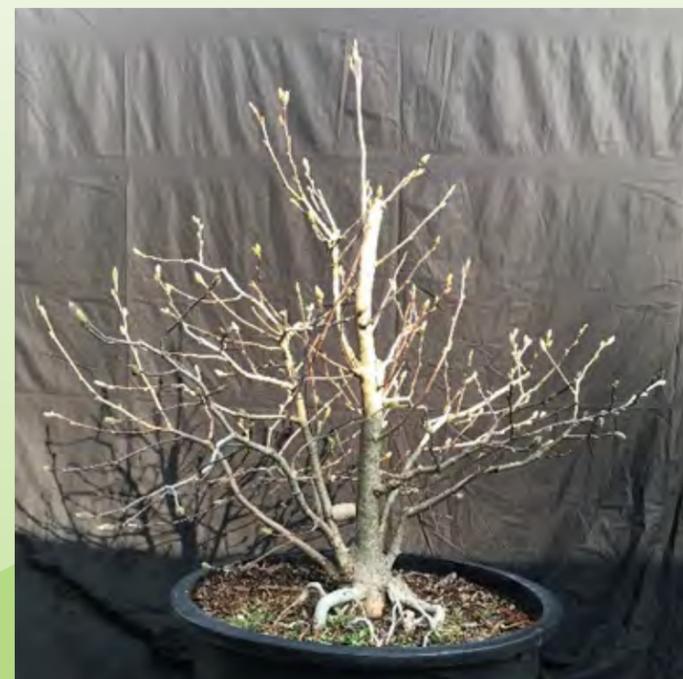


January 2019

The magnolia was allowed to grow all during 2019 with no pruning done. At the end of the 2019 growing season, the overall height was 39 inches. The overall width was 44 inches. The new shoots that sprouted grew about 12 to 14 inches during the year.

The best time to conduct pruning is immediately after

flowering and prior to the emergence of leaves. The new leaves emerge immediately after most of the flowers have bloomed, so you cannot wait too long. There will undoubtedly be flowers that remain and possibly a few that have not emerged by the time leaves begin pushing out. Remove all remaining flowers and flower buds before pruning.



January 2020

The photo at above was taken in January of 2020. All of the large buds that can be seen in the photo are flower buds. The photo below shows the base of the tree. The red arrows show the locations of two of the seven shoots that were removed. The lower one was fairly small, as were three of the other shoots that were removed. There were three larger shoots that were removed. All three were about a half inch in

diameter. You cannot remove multiple shoots of any significant size that are located in close proximity without the danger of incurring dieback below that area. So it is important to take your time and not remove too much vascular tissue on the trunk at one time.



January 2020

At the writing of this article, the tree has begun to flower. As you examine the photo below, you will notice the fuzzy, protective covering that encapsulates the

flower buds and protects them until they begin to emerge. All of the buds had a bright pink coloration this year.



Emerging Flower Bud

As the flowers begin to open, the pink coloration begins to fade. The flowers average about 3 inches across, about the size of a large azalea flower. All of the various species of Japanese magnolias are incredibly beautiful, with

their profusion of flowers in January that provide a brilliant color display in the dead of winter. Unfortunately, their show is short lived.

Once the tree has finished flowering, I will prune back last year's growth rather heavily and repot the tree into a container about half as deep as the 30 gallon nursery pot, removing no more than half of the roots. After the new leaves have hardened-off, which will probably be in mid-March, I will begin fertilizing with an organic fertilizer mix.

I will provide a follow-up report in a couple of months, so that you can observe how the tree is progressing.

Appearance after the bud opened



Pedro Morales' Tropical Bonsai School Begins in 2020!



Hosted by the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

Instructor: The course will be taught by the internationally known bonsai artist from Puerto Rico, Mr. Pedro Morales.

Students: Members of the GNOBS will be given first preference during registration. We will make registration available to other clubs if space allows. However, participants must already be proficient in wiring and have a good foundation in bonsai techniques. This is not a course for beginners.

Number of Students Accepted: A minimum of 8 students will be required to start a school in this area and the school will accept a maximum of 15 students.



Course Description: There are 3 levels that students will work through during the course of the 3-year school. All enrolled students will begin at **Level 1**, regardless of prior experience. The Tropical Bonsai School will require a three year commitment from each student enrolled. The school will be held for three consecutive days each year; a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Classes will start at 9 AM each day with a break for lunch. Classes will resume after lunch and conclude between 4 and 5 PM. The school will, of course, teach you all about tropicals, with the morning hours consisting of lecture and discussions on various tropical species with a focus on horticultural information, pests, diseases, training and pruning methods required for the various species, design and care. The afternoon hours will be spent working on trees under the guidance and direction of Pedro Morales. Students will be asked to bring the same material to the classes over the three-year period so they can be guided on how to develop raw tropical stock to refined bonsai. The techniques taught and the skills acquired will help students to become proficient tropical bonsai artists. The progression and development of each tree will be discussed, evaluated and documented with photographs. At the end of the course, students will be required to enter at least one of their trees into a bonsai exhibit.

Course Material: Students will be responsible for providing their own tropical stock for the school. Mr. Morales can provide hand-picked tropical stock, which he will bring from Puerto Rico to sell to students at their request. Each student is urged to bring at least two (2) tropicals each day to develop over the three year course. Students would then bring the same trees back each year to build upon the work of the previous year(s). Bringing material to work on is not required and there are participants in his other schools around the world that bring no trees, but are content to take notes, listen and watch others work on their trees. However, the best way to learn is by actually doing the work.

Cost for Enrollment in the School: The cost will be \$395 per person, per year. There will be an additional cost for the use of the Marine Corps League Hall. The Marine Corps League Hall charges \$100 per day for its use. So the additional annual \$300 fee for the use of the hall would be equally split among participants. For example, if there are 10 participants, then each participant would pay \$30 for the use of the facilities over the 3-day period, which would bring the total cost to \$425 for each three day session. Naturally the cost for securing the hall would increase or decrease slightly depending on the number of participants.

Course Dates for Classes: June 12,13 and 14

Enrollment: Registration for enrollment will open on Friday, February 7, 2020 at 6:00 PM, at the regularly scheduled GNOBS Club Meeting. A \$200, non-refundable deposit will be required to reserve your seat in the course. Students will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. The balance will be due at the first meeting of the Tropical Bonsai School. If we have 20 or more students wanting to participate, Mr. Morales has agreed to establish a second Tropical Bonsai School that would meet on different days.

Location: Marine Corps League Hall
2708 Delaware Ave.
Kenner LA 70062

President cont. from pg 1

get you to think about design possibilities.

Thanks to all of you who brought trees. Our only regret is that we did not have time to discuss all of the trees that were brought.

February Program

Our program for February will feature Arthur Joura. Arthur is currently the curator of the bonsai collection at the North Carolina Arboretum. He has been caring for and creating bonsai for the arboretum for 20 over years. He is an outstanding bonsai artist and his knowledge of North American trees is unsurpassed.

Our program will not be held on the usual night, but will be held on Friday night, February 7th at 7:30. Saturday, he will conduct a “Bring Your Own Tree Workshop”. That will be held on Saturday morning, February 8th at 9:00 am. The cost of the workshop is \$50. You can contact Jim Osborne or Cheryl Mechler to find out if there is space available.

Bonsai Tips for February

Generally speaking, the same rules apply for February that applied to January. The weather conditions are very similar.

1. I have a few trees that have already started to leaf out and I’m sure that most of you are in the same situation. It is important to remember that, if you have trees under benches or in the shade and they begin to leaf out, place them in full sun. Keeping trees that you normally keep in full sun in the shade as growth emerges will cause the growth to become long, spindly and weak.
2. Do no fertilizing at this time. However, it is certainly appropriate to treat alkaline soil with ironite, Sulphur and crystal gypsite. If the soil is too sour, use wood ash or gypsum lime, to ‘sweeten’ it.
3. This is a great month to prune and rewire trees. Some people wait until March or April to wire, but I find it more difficult when all the leaves are on the shoots and actively growing. You are apt to knock tender growth completely off young shoots.
4. February through May is the best time to start cuttings if you want to propagate.
5. This is the month to thread-graft deciduous trees.
6. Finally, we will start having some warm spells this month and you should begin inspecting your trees for aphids. They are one of the first pests to make themselves known this time of year. If you are smart, you will not wait until they are already feeding on your new growth, but rather start spraying insecticides now.

Randy Bennett
GNOBS President

REMINDER:
GNOBS Club dues are due in January.
(\$30 Individual or \$35 Family)

Meetings cont. from pg 1

Saturday, March 14, 2020

Upright Green Mound Juniper Workshop with Brussel Martin 8:00am

Cost of the workshop is \$120. Sign up sheets will be available at the meetings.

Saturday-Sunday, April 4&5, 2020

Spring Garden Show - City Park
Saturday 9am - 5pm; Sunday 10 am - 4pm

GNOBS will be doing a bonsai exhibit similar to last year. Think now about a tree you would like to exhibit so it can be prepared in advance.

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Intermediate Study Group 6:00pm-7:15pm
Program: Open Workshop 7:30pm

Bring your own tree to work on. Club will provide wire. (Bring your own tools). Take advantage of the time to catch up on styling and maintenance or seek the advice and opinions of other experienced members.

Saturday, April 25, 2020

Bonsai Class - City Park



Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

PO Box 381 Kenner, LA 70062

President: Randy Bennett 504-402-3646 (cell) 504-888-7994 (home) ourproperty4u@gmail.com	Recording Secretary Peggy Howard 504-715-7228 peggylh@cox.net	Hall Manager Cheryl Mechler 504-452-1222 mechler465@att.net
Vice-President: Dennis Burke 504-224-0038 (cell) dpbbonsai@yahoo.com	Newsletter/Website Editor Kathy Barbazon 504-470-8134 (cell) 504-737-6747 (home) kbarbazon@me.com	Past President: Peggy Howard
Treasurer: Dawn Koetting 985-859-3400 (cell) dkoetting@msn.com	Masters Program Director: Jim Osborne 504-458-6956 (cell) wevoodoo@cox.net	