

THE BONSAI Wire

January 2020

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

Happy New Year!

FROM THE President

The Board of the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society wishes you the best in the coming New Year! We want to thank each of you for your support of the club and hope that we can bring you outstanding informative and educational programs this year. I wish to thank everyone who came to the Christmas party. We had a great crowd and a lot of fabulous food. A special thanks goes out to Felix Famularo for providing the slide show on the bonsai collection at the National Arboretum in Washington D. C. It was most enjoyable seeing how the trees have developed over the years.

January Program – Silhouette Show!

Don't forget to bring one or two of your deciduous trees to the Silhouette Show. The object is to display deciduous trees when they are without leaves. It is only then that one can appreciate the



President cont. pg 2

MEETINGS & Events

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

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

Program: Silhouette Show 7:30pm

The Silhouette Program is a study of branch ramification and evaluation of plans for further development of our deciduous bonsai. Bring in a deciduous tree for display and discussion. If you don't have a deciduous tree, you are welcome to bring in any tree. Advanced members will make suggestions to further refine your trees.

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

Friday, February 7, 2020

Intermediate Study Group 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

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

Please note
NEW DATES
for March
Programs

SPECIES Spotlight

Water Elm : Year Two

by Randy Bennett

In August of 2018, Jim Osborne, Dennis Burke and I drove to Catahoula Lake to collect a few bald cypress and water elm. I collected one water elm and wrote an article about Catahoula Lake and our collecting trip. In the article, published in the February 2019 issue of the

GNOBS Newsletter, I presented a plan for the development of that water elm. If you are unfamiliar with the article, it is posted under the “Resources” tab on the club website. Scroll down and click on “Newletters”. You will find it there.

We collect trees on the bed of Catahoula Lake in July, August and early September because that’s when most of the water has been drained from the lake each year. Once we find a tree worthy of collecting, we cut it back to a stump. The foliage that remains is sprayed with Wilt-Pruf to prevent water transpiration. The Wilt-Pruf is applied to both sides of the leaves and seals them for about four weeks – long enough for the plant to overcome transplant shock and begin putting out new growth.

In the article, I discussed how I bare-rooted the tree after getting it home and potted it in Miracle-Grow Potting Mix. I avoid bonsai soil with water elms for the same reason I avoid it with bald cypress. Both species are at home in the water and thrive with their roots staying wet all the time. And bonsai soil dries out too quickly for both these species. More than one water elm has been lost due to bonsai soil. They’re not called water elms for nothing!

My collected water elm the day after collecting

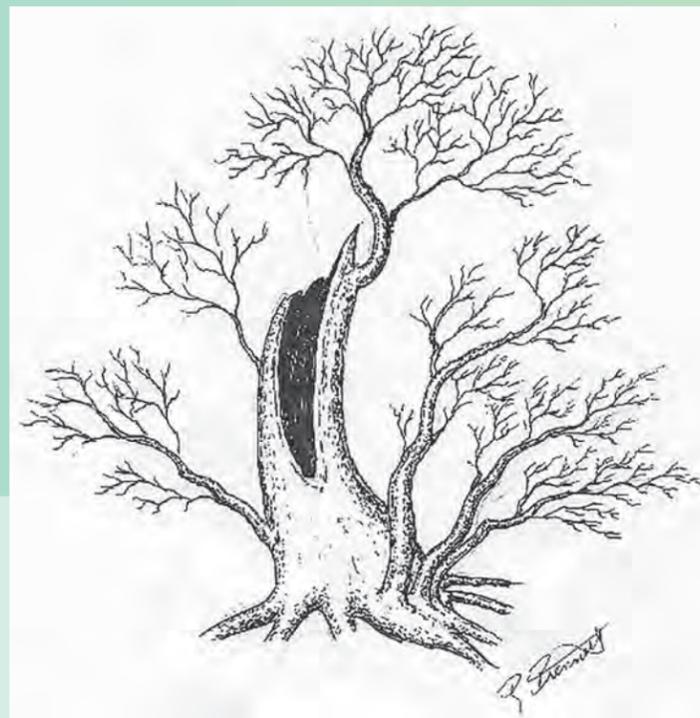


The tree started putting out new growth and new shoots in September. As you can see from the photo on the right in the pictures above, there were too many shoots emanating from the base to yield a good design. So the plan was that in January of 2019, when the tree had grown dormant, some of the basal shoots were pruned away, leaving only three, not counting the main trunk. At the time, I planned to use a low-growing branch on the

left side of the main trunk to serve as another trunk. The basal shoots were all about the same size. So during the ‘Growth for Size Stage’, the original plan was to allow the three small shoots that remained to grow during the next two growing seasons to develop differentiation in trunk size by pruning and restraining growth on two of the shoots and allowing the other to grow freely.

While that process was going on, I would begin developing the shoots on the main trunk and selecting new shoots on the three smaller trunks to begin developing options for future branch structure.

Below is my rendering of how the tree would look after about five years of development.



However, when January 2019 rolled around and I began to more closely examine the growth that had occurred during the previous three months, my design changed slightly. I decided that keeping the low-growing branch on the left side of the main trunk and treating it as another trunk would not work. It did not emanate from the base and was too high up on the trunk. It looked artificial as a separate trunk and so I decided to treat it as a primary branch. That meant eliminating one of the smaller trunks and create a three-trunk design.



The photo at left was taken in January of 2019, after the tree had gone completely dormant.



Photos were taken January 2019

The photo above and on the left shows the new front with all but two of the basal shoots removed. Note that the two shoots are almost exactly the same size. you can also see what I mean about the branch on the left really being too high to serve as a separate trunk.

The photo on the right shows the tree after reducing the trunk. If you look closely, you will notice the dead area in the middle of the trunk where it was cut. You may also notice that there is another area that is dead a couple of inches above the two trunks on the right.

The plan is to carve the deadwood at the point of the stump-cut to make it look natural and then completely hollow out the trunk in order to connect the two dead areas.

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Photos taken in December of 2019. Notice the amount of growth that has occurred.



The only pruning done was a single cut in June of 2019 on the middle trunk. The purpose was to slow down the growth on that trunk and begin to develop variation in the trunk diameters. By allowing unrestrained growth for three months after collecting and virtually unrestrained growth all during 2019, the tree has increased significantly at the base. The trunk diameter above the two trunks on the right and below the branch on the left of the main trunk has increased from just over 2 inches to 3 inches. The nebari has increased from just over 5 inches to over 6 inches. Moreover, it is vital, on newly collected stock, that you allow unrestrained growth for the next two years so that the collected material regain its’ strength before carrying out extensive styling.



Photo taken in late December of 2019.

You can see that the base has significantly increased in size from over a year ago. You can also clearly see the notch of deadwood near the apex and the portion of the main trunk that has died as a result of some

previous trauma it sustained. The area between the two areas of deadwood is very much alive.



The photos above show the tree after pruning on December 18, 2019.

The photo on the left looks odd because the lower part of the tree was in shadow and the upper part in full sun and in my haste, I neglected to take a better picture. The photo on the right was taken after a little more pruning. It also shows that some of the branches were wired and pulled down for the 2020 growing season.

The tree will be allowed to grow freely until May of 2020. At that time, it will be pruned back and rewired. At that time, I will consider the tree to clearly be in the "Growth for Design Stage." Depending on how things develop, I may leave the tree in the grow box for the 2021 growing season before moving it into a bonsai container.

I will give you an update on this tree's development in the June 2020 GNOBS Newsletter and again at about this time next year so you can see the ongoing progress.

TECHNIQUE Tips

Bending Trunks or Large Branches by Harry Harrington (bonsai4me.com)



The trunk itself is wrapped with elasticated black cloth. Available for sale on the Bonsai4me.com shop, this is a product known as "VetWrap" and can also be found at veterinary supplies.

After a layer of elasticated cloth, two 4-5mm lengths of wire are laid along the trunk (or branch) before a second layer of cloth is used to secure them into position



The trunk with the 2 lengths of wire wrapped in a layer of elasticated cloth.



Finally, two further lengths of heavy wire are coiled around the trunk. This combination of tightly wrapped cloth and heavy gauge wire not only secures the trunk into its new position, it protects the trunk from snapping and getting damaged.

The trunk after bending. Make heavy bends slowly. If necessary, wait a few weeks before completing a bend. Spread your fingers along the outside of the bend, and gently 'squeeze' with your thumbs. By squeezing the trunk or branch slowly, you remain in control of the process and are ready to stop applying pressure the moment you hear any cracks (of the wood breaking). If this happens, do not bend the branch or trunk any further for fear of opening the wound so far that the branch or trunk is lost.



work that has been done by the artist. When spring arrives, you can no longer see the branch ramification and fine twigging of deciduous trees.



See what I mean? While this hackberry looks fabulous leafed out, it is even more stunning in its' winter silhouette. Only then can you truly appreciate the fine twigging and years of detailed work that has been done. This magnificent specimen was created by Ben Oki, one of my mentors and a dear friend. We miss you Ben!



January Tips

1. If you haven't started your repotting, now is the time. You will never get all the chores done that need doing if you wait for the optimum time. Now is a great time to repot deciduous trees especially.
2. If we have periods with a lot of rain, it's a good idea to treat the soil with Captan or Daconil. Applying these fungicides as a soil treatment will help prevent root-rot.
3. I cannot overemphasize how damaging the wind can be. Protect your broadleaved evergreens like azaleas, silverberry, privet, holly, etc.
4. Do not water too much during these dormant weeks (notice I didn't say months), but do not neglect watering either. Check on moisture in the soil daily and water if the soil gets too dry. And especially remember to check on moisture in the soil after a windy day or days.
5. Now is a good time of year to brush off the loose bark from junipers.
6. This is also a good month to begin rewiring trees, especially bald cypress. Bald cypress put out such a profusion of buds in

February that if you wait until buds begin to swell, you will knock half of them off!

7. This is the best month to do some serious collecting or removing trees from the ground that you have been growing in beds.

Randy Bennett
GNOBS PRESIDENT

Meetings cont. from pg 1

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

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, March 14, 2020

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

Saturday-Sunday, April 4&5, 2020

Spring Garden Show - City Park

Saturday, April 25, 2020

Bonsai Class - City Park

April Meeting to be announced

Please note
NEW DATES
for March
Program

Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

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