

THE BONSAI Wire

October 2022

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

FROM THE President

I We had a great weekend at the Fall Garden show in City Park. One purpose of having a bonsai club is to show trees to the public, to share the art of bonsai. We had a lot of visitors that loved seeing our trees out there. We had folks from Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Texas, New York and even Norway come enjoy our trees. It's always satisfying to see the public come out and appreciate our members trees. We had many questions posed especially when Kathy, Randy and Felix were working on styling trees. I would like to thank Melissa Leblanc, Byron Carr, Randy Bennett, Kathy Barbazon, Julie Trigg for showing trees and volunteering their time to answer visitor questions. Thanks to Mark Fisher for volunteering to help Saturday. I would like to thank Byron, Melissa, Randy, Gerald, Kathy, Cheryl, Felix for helping set up and or break down our display. The spring 2023 garden show is April 1 & 2. Now is a good time to start thinking about which trees you would like to get ready for that show. I'm looking forward to watching what Guy does with the Podocarpus we have for him to work on Tuesday night. Thank you Randy for sourcing the Podocarpus!

Dennis Burke
GNOBS President



MEETINGS & Events

Reminder - our new home for meetings is:

**American Legion Hall
1225 Hickory Ave, Harahan, LA 70123**

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Program: Randy Bennett will discuss upcoming study groups 6:30

Program: Podocarpus (Japanese Yew) Demo by Guy Guidry 7:00pm

For new members unfamiliar with Guy, he is a long time member of GNOBS originally studying with John Naka, Vaughn Banting and many others. Guy has been a headliner at national and international conventions and has performed lectures and demonstrations all over the world, including such places as Africa, India, the United Kingdom, Wales, Panama and Columbia.

Friday, November 4, 2022

Program: Lecture/demo on scrolls, displaying bonsai by Kristy Majeske 7:00pm

Kristy Majeske, an expert on Asian art specializing in Japanese scrolls will do an informative presentation on Japanese scrolls, their history and meanings and their appropriate use in bonsai displays. She has participated in Japanese cultural events and bonsai conferences throughout the USA.

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Program: Create your own scroll workshop with Kristy Majeske 9:00am

Cost for the workshop is \$40 and includes all materials. For those who doubt their own artistic ability, Kristy has said she has successfully conducted and taught this scroll making program to children - so I'm sure we can handle it!

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Program: Annual Christmas Party 7:00pm

Bring your spouse or plus one and your favorite covered dish (side dishes, entrées, desserts) for our annual potluck Christmas party. A sign up sheet will be available at the meetings. The club will supply a ham, beverages and plates/utensils. Everyone

Meetings cont. pg 5

GNOBS Joins Lone Star Bonsai Federation

By Randy Bennett

This past April, several members of GNOBS attended the annual Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF) Convention hosted by the San Antonio Bonsai Society. I was invited to attend their Board Meeting on the first night of the convention. I spoke to the Board and answered questions about our club. I was then asked to excuse myself from their meeting and by the end of the convention, I was informed by the President of the LSBF, that our club was being invited to join the Texas federation.

There are numerous advantages to joining a federation like this, like enabling our club to participate in their visiting masters circuit and the possibility of hosting a large convention. We will share all the advantages in the months to come.

There are four other bonsai clubs in Louisiana and each of them are already members of the LSBF. So, the GNOBS Board of Directors has voted to accept the invitation to also join. This decision has prompted numerous discussions and has given rise to some new goals for GNOBS not the least of which is to begin preparing our members for the possibility of hosting a large, multi-day convention at a hotel here in New Orleans.

To that end, we are planning several programs and activities in the months ahead. They include:

1. Plans for a program on selecting the proper pot for bonsai
2. Plans for a program on selecting the proper stand for bonsai display
3. Plans for a Kusamono program and workshop
4. Plans for a Suiseki program
5. Plans for beginning multiple in-depth study groups conducted by our most experienced members

Lecture/Demo and Workshop on Japanese Scrolls

The November meeting will feature a lecture by Kristy Majeske on Japanese Scrolls, with a workshop the following day. Now some of you may be asking, "What do Japanese scrolls have to do with bonsai?" It comes from their use in a Tokonoma. The Tokonoma is a

recessed area in traditional Japanese homes for displays of this type. They will not only display bonsai, but also Ikebana. When a bonsai is displayed in a Tokonoma, it is always displayed with a scroll and an accent plant or viewing stone. This method of displaying bonsai in the home has carried over to their display in formal exhibits.



When a bonsai tree is displayed in a formal exhibit at a convention or show, they are ALWAYS displayed on a stand. They are ALWAYS displayed with a Kusamono, or accent planting and sometimes with an appropriate Japanese scroll. In addition, they are sometimes displayed with a Suiseki or viewing stone.

Therefore, we feel it essential that our members become familiar with these types of displays and how they are used. The program on Japanese scrolls and how they can be used in bonsai displays is the first in an effort to better prepare our members for professional shows and exhibits.

In addition to her lecture, Kristy will be conducting a Saturday workshop on creating your own sumi-e, or Japanese scroll. Ms. Majeske will provide the paper, sumi ink and sumi brushes. The sumi-e subject for the workshop will be koi. Ms. Majeske has taught this workshop to children, and she assures me that painting koi is the easiest subject matter to teach.

She will also bring antique scrolls for sale to members. While we do not expect every member who displays a tree in an exhibit to do so with a Japanese scroll, it is our hope that some of you will choose to do so. Our purpose in providing programs such as this is to educate and inspire. It is our goal, during the next few years, to help our members who are serious about bonsai be the best that they can possibly be.

Study Groups Available Soon

The mission of the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society is to teach bonsai and increase public awareness of the art and we do that through lecture/demos at local garden clubs, annual exhibits at City Park, styling programs at local nurseries and through the various programs offered at our monthly meetings. But your Board wants to do more.

While you can learn about different species and techniques by attending our programs and workshops with visiting artists, your growth in the art of bonsai will be slow and is limited to what is being offered by our programs.

To help our members develop their skills faster and improve the quality of their bonsai, we will begin offering various study groups led by our most experienced members. We are in the process of lining up our instructors for these study groups and plans are to begin monthly meetings right after New Years'. These study groups will be for members of GNOBS only.

One of the goals with these study groups will be to help members develop three to four trees over the next few years to show quality. If we are going to host a large, multi-day convention with a bonsai exhibit, we want our members' trees to be able to hold their own with other clubs. Texas has 9 clubs not counting those from Louisiana and their members have some outstanding bonsai.

We will announce all the information regarding study groups (who, when and where) by the December meeting.



Lime-sulphur and Ash for Bonsai

By Harry Harrington
www.bonsai4me.com

The use of lime-sulphur on bonsai to whiten the deadwood is well-known. The lime-sulphur is applied to the wood with a paint-brush and after a few hours to a few days, depending on the condition of the wood itself as well as ambient temperatures, the wood turns white.

There are drawbacks with the use of lime-sulphur though. Recently created deadwood that is still sappy absorbs the lime-sulphur poorly and doesn't whiten well. The tone of the 'white' colour achieved will frequently be a creamy-white that although adequate, is not a more desirable grey/silver white. Lime-sulphur also tends to produce a very oblique colour with little or no variation. Finally, the white that lime-sulphur produces is more often than not, unsuitable for deciduous or broadleaf bonsai that will demand softer, greyer tones.



Newly-styled-yamadori Juniper sabina bonsai with lime-sulphur and ash applied to the deadwood to produce a grey-white rather than a creamy-white colour.

Lime-sulphur and Ash

In the past I have used black ink or paint or indeed ash, mixed into the lime-sulphur itself before application. This has achieved a greyer tone in the deadwood, but looked unnatural as the grey colour is uniform across the deadwood, there is no natural variation that you would expect to see in natural deadwood.

However, this past year I have started experimenting with more natural tones by rubbing slightly-damp ash into the deadwood before applying the lime-sulphur, and I am very pleased with the results!



Newly-carved deadwood on a large Elm bonsai after rubbing in ash and applying lime-sulphur. Notice not only the more natural grey colour of the lime-sulphur, but the variation in greys produced by the ash.

On dry wood I moisten some ash, I use cigarette-ash but burnt newspaper with plenty of newsprint on it works well, and use a tooth-brush to rub it into the wood. You need the ash to be just wet enough to moisten the wood but not so much it is truly wet. This way the ash takes in some places and not others. Do not use too much water in the ash or it will produce too uniform a grey. If you rub the ash across the grain, it darkens the grain better.

Then apply lime sulphur, preferably before the ash dries. The damp ash seems to act as a carrier and fixes the lime sulphur really well and lightens the wood lightens very quickly. I have found that this is a really effective way of getting lime sulphur to take on newly created, sappy deadwood.

For darker-grey tones on deciduous or broad-leaf bonsai, apply extra ash and just one application of lime-sulphur. For lighter tones, use a smaller amount of ash and several applications of lime-sulphur.



The freshly exposed wood of a newly carved Olive trunk, typically this wouldn't lime-sulphur white very well and would produce a yellow/cream white.



However, by rubbing ash into the wood first (after carving had been completed), the wood turned a grey-white immediately after applying the lime-sulphur. Note that the deeper areas of the deadwood have been stained with a water-based black paint to produce an even darker colour and contrast.



The freshly carved deadwood of this Crab Apple bonsai was stained using the ash and lime-sulphur technique. What cannot be replicated though is natural weathering and ageing of the wood that comes with time.



The same Crab Apple (Malus sylvestris) in 2017, after a year of being exposed to rain, sun and frosts. The wood, and the stain that was applied to it, has begun to age and weather and has taken on an entirely natural appearance. However the wood-hardeners that were applied to the deadwood have ensures that there is no rot and decay.



Embracing the Art and Science of Bonsai

Underhill Bonsai is a full service bonsai nursery focused on horticultural science and the timeless traditions of bonsai. We offer products and services for everybody at every level of interest.

We support you in your bonsai journey.

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attending gets a free raffle ticket for door prizes.

January 2023

Program: Jennifer Price Demo and Workshop Dates and Details to be announced

One of the new rising stars in bonsai, Jennifer Price discovered bonsai after retiring from the stage as a professional ballerina. For the last several years she has been involved in an intensive study program with Walter Pall from Germany and Jim Doyle from Pennsylvania. She has taught workshops and given demonstrations worldwide and last year was in Germany to be a part of Generation Bonsai and went on to represent America at an international bonsai convention in Shanghai, China. Jennifer did a demo and workshop for us last year. Not only is she talented - but she is an excellent teacher and everyone that participated benefited from the workshop.



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BONSAI Techniques

The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society Regional / Area Bonsai Work Calendar

By Randy Bennett & Dawn Koetting

Editors Note: The following article and chart were developed by Randy Bennett and Dawn Koetting for one of our regular meetings. As many of you know, the timing of various tasks – like repotting varies drastically by region. Local information, especially by very experienced bonsai artists like Dawn and Randy, is invaluable. It is also available under “Articles” on the GNOBS website.

We have developed an Excel chart to provide guidelines based on our climate here and with the beginner or less experienced club member in mind. The resulting calendar is an attempt give you the best information for the most success, but like all things there are exceptions !

1. – yes, there will be others who take exception - Repotting Tropicals is listed in June, July and August. Some may choose to start in May, or if they have a greenhouse repot through September. But most of what is listed has been tailored “for the beginner and for best results”. So there will be times when you will see someone doing a procedure outside of the window shown. Is it a healthy tree, are they good at wiring without doing damage, is it a minimal repot, etc. etc. – these are some of the questions that may answer why it might work FOR THAT TREE AND ARTIST AT THAT TIME, but might not be the best when taken as an all encompassing statement to all trees and all people
2. - Every year is different. Just because the calendar says “repot deciduous trees in Feb and early March” doesn’t mean that an especially late, cold winter can’t set that back. Or an especially warm winter may move it into January. Or that you do the task regardless of the state of the tree.
3. – Ask the questions – it may be time to repot something, but does THAT tree need to be repotted. It may be a time that you can wire a tree, but if it is not growing well, or just got repotted, its not time FOR THAT TREE until it is stable. Does this branch need pruning? It may be time to prune, but I need more girth on that branch, so the answer is “no”. The exception is staying on top of organic fertilization and spraying for pests and diseases. Few reasons not to do those on a schedule.

The thing to remember is don’t just do for the sake of doing. Ask the questions. What is my purpose, where am I going with this tree, what is my design, what do I need to get

there, where is this tree in health or in development

Answers will change depending on whether you are

- a) growing a trunk out
- b) developing taper
- c) developing main branches
- d) developing an apex/canopy or tertiary twigging

So use the calendar as a tool, but know that exceptions will be made, and that not every tree needs every thing every year just because it is time. Always feel free to ask other more experienced club members about what has worked for them, but remember that things like watering schedules, soil, etc may be areas where they differ and it may affect whether their method works for YOU.

Repotting Schedule by species:

Many of us have a collection that consists of several species, and getting them all worked on in a short repotting window can be a challenge. Using the calendar suggestions should help, but repotting time can be especially problematic if you have many to do. Pine could be done in early February, but it is handy to do them in January and get them “out of the way”. Some species, like Juniper and many broadleaf evergreens, can be repotted earlier than this list, but their ability to be repotted later allows for more time sensitive trees to be done on time/early (cypress, trident maples).

The following is a list of commonly kept species and the approximate order in which they are ready to repot, taking the above into consideration: Pine, early budding deciduous, Azaleas, later budding deciduous, other broadleaf evergreens, earlier tropicals, heat/warm night requiring tropicals.

Pine
Chinese Elm, Bald Cypress, Trident Maple
Japanese Maples
Azaleas and camellias
Native elms and hornbeam, hawthorn
Most other broadleaf evergreens (boxwood, Yaupon, silverberry/eleagnus)

Junipers
Crepe Myrtles

As it warms – May - Jaboticaba,
June- Ficus
Bouganvillea
Nea
Heat loving – July - Buttonwood
Bahama Black Olive

Thoughts for Fall

What’s next level? Fall is a great time to make plans for next year. Not as crazy busy as spring so you are able to sit and ponder a bit. . .

What’s the “right” pot?

Michael Hagadorn recently posted about choosing a pot for a tree he had. He mentioned fall being a good time to do this work, as you can make decisions now and decide if you need to go pot shopping or not before February sneaks up on you. There are general pot selection rules.

1. - Unglazed especially for junipers and pines, but they are correct and can be used with any species including deciduous and tropical. Is the “Never Wrong” answer.
2. - Glazed are typically used for deciduous, flowering, and tropical type trees
3. - Harder edged, rectangle pots for “strong” or more masculine trees
4. - Softer edged, oval pots for more feminine curvy or “soft” trees.
5. - Shallow Rounds are normally used for Bunjin/Literati, but can be used for trees that have substantially round or large bases.
6. - Semi-cascade and cascade pots – pretty self explanatory!
7. - Color – to get attention we can use the complimentary color (opposite on the color wheel so gives contrast) of the thing that makes the tree special (blue pot with orange berries or leaves, green pot with red, purple hues with yellow, red or rust pot for tree with lots of green) or . . . for a quiet, subdued feeling, we may match trunk color, play off of the greens in the leaves, use earth tones to “ground” the composition or , use cream or blue to suggest coolness with a leafed out deciduous tree uh oh. . . we’re starting to use “or”

Like everything, its not always black and white. There are so many shades of gray. What happens when you have a very old, gnarly, flowering tree? Part of the answer is “what is the aspect of the tree that is most important, or that you want to highlight ?”

Also not every pot is simply masculine or feminine. There are stout, strong, simple rectangles, and there are ornate rectangles with cloud feet and indented corners that make them a bit more “feminine”. Maybe for that gnarly old flowering tree.

There are very simple, straight sided oval pots with flat

feet. Contrast that with an oval pot with a pronounced lip, maybe a lotus shape, and maybe biscuit, twisted or cloud feet.

So the entire pot needs to be assessed to determine its suitability to the tree, and any one tree can be displayed successfully in a number of pots. There are few absolute answers, but “better” or “different” answers. “Different” would include either complementing a component of the tree (like matching bark color to help it stand out) or contrasting the leaf or flower color for “pow”. An ornate oval may compliment a curvy tree, but a strong, simple rectangle can emphasize the complexity of a gnarly, deadwood filled trunk through contrast. So one of the best exercises you can do is take out a variety of pots – different shapes, glazed and unglazed, different colors of both, and set them in front of your tree to evaluate. Even if the size isn’t quite right, you can get an idea of style and color and if you don’t have the right size, go pot shopping! Realize during this exercise that there may be a couple possibilities that would work, but one may highlight one aspect of the tree differently than the other. Then it is personal preference as to what you want to really show off. One tree may benefit from 2 different color pots depending on the season it is shown.

Lastly, shohin trees require a little bit of a special pot selection. Shohin and mame, because of their tiny size, have trouble competing with larger trees in a show. For this reason they tend to be shown together in groups on a specially designed stand. Also, because of their size, we tend to pot them in showier, more colorful, more playful pots than many large trees. So when showing several trees together on a stand, we not only try to vary the species and style of each tree, but we strive to have each pot different in shape, glaze/unglazed, and color.

So, in the end, just like bonsai, you can never have enough pots. . . and each tree can actually be slipped into different pots depending on time of year and the attribute you want to show off.

Next Level

Every tree has a “next level”. No tree, as we say, is “finished” unless it is dead. So if we get a tree to a spot we like, and our goal is to keep it there, we are doomed. We may succeed for a while, but eventually we have to replace tops, remove branches, and find the better front that developed over the years while we weren’t looking! So there is always a next level.

One way to think of it is where the tree is physically. Lets start with trunk and nebari development. In the ground or large pot for trunk, move to flat grow trays or large bonsai pots for nebari and early branch development, into smaller bonsai pots for secondary and tertiary ramification and leaf reduction.

In other trees, it’s where the tree is aesthetically. Is it saying what you want it to say? Is it fighting to say what IT wants to say? Can you let go for a second and with a soft eye and in a quiet moment, see the best tree that this tree has to offer? Ryan Neil says look at 3 things. The best nebari, the best base, and the best trunk line. If they don’t all come from one viewing and trunk angle, what is the angle that gives you the best combination of the 3. Sacrifice a bit of line and nebari for a better flaring base. Then style the tree with that front and you will be producing the best tree that the material has to

offer. This works on nursery or bonsai stock as well as more developed trees that you feel may be lacking something. Grab a beer and think on it, spin the turntable, get some wedges, play with removing sections by covering with a towel. You may find that the tree is fine, it just needs more development with the present design – more ramification. Maybe removing redundant branches that have been held on to do a job but are not longer needed (simplify your statement). Or maybe, just maybe, you see something totally unexpected and need to make plans for a future style change (front change, angle change, pot change, etc.)

We constantly re-evaluate our trees every time we work on them, but seriously re-evaluate your individual trees every 1-2 years. We caution hobbyists not to overwork trees - let them grow and develop (get “hairy”). So once you’ve allowed that growth, use it to develop the tree you have, or look at what it gives you and don’t be afraid to use that growth to push in a different but better direction. Change is inevitable!

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec				
1																
2	Repotting - full															
3	Deciduous (as buds swell)	x	XX	X early	c. myrtle											X = yes XX = YES!
4	Broadleaf Evergreen	X	X - azalea	X- azalea	X											x = yes, but with care ! = special care
5	Pine	XX	X													
6	Juniper (not w/ hard prune)	X	X	X								x-lite	x - lite			
7	Tropical					x	XX	XX	XX							
8																
9	Pruning															
10	Deciduous	XX	XX	X	x trim hardened	x						x - late Sept/early Oct - lite.	New growth must harden before winter			
11	Broadleaf Evergreen	X	XX	XX	X					X	X					
12	Pine						Candles					X - branch	X - branch			
13	Juniper (not with repot)	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X			
14	Tropicals					X	XX	XX	X							
15																
16	Wiring (structural/hard)															
17	Deciduous	x!	x!	x!	w/ defol	w/ defol	x	x	x	X	X	XX	XX			
18	Warning - while it is nice (and OK) to wire in spring, rapid growth at this time means frequent checks for removal -															
19	wiring when the growth is slower helps with "cut in" and scarred branches															
20	Broadleaf Evergreen	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X			
21	Pine	X									X	XX	XX			
22	Juniper	X	! Avoid serious bends !			X	X			X	X	XX	XX			
23	! - Ryan Neil suggests checking juniper branches - if the bark strips easily (check on a pruned branch), you may lose branches if bent too much. Wait past spring, generally May for us															
24	Tropicals (! = Watch cut in due to rapid growth)				X! w/def	X! w/def	X! w/def	X! w/def	X	X	X					
25																
26	Wiring (fine/minor) - can be done virtually all year as long as you can see what you are doing, being careful not to damage branches or foliage, and can include guy wires.															
27																
28		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec			
29	Air Layer Decid/broadleaf EG	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	x	take off before fall or protect from freeze						
30	Tropical					X	X	X	x							
31																
32	Thread Graft Decid/BLEG	X	X	X	X	X	X									
33	Tropical					X	X	X	X							
34																
35	Defoliate Deciduous (healthy)															
36	can be partial - 1/2 leaves or take off large and outer leaves to allow light to inside.															
37	Defoliate Tropicals (esp. to wire)															
38	Prune tips of branches as well to encourage back budding															
39																
40	Fertilize - Organics preferred due to healthier tree, disease resistance, stronger growth with smaller internodes, better for the soil microbes, doesn't acidify the soil															
41	Deciduous/Broadleaf EG		X	XX	XX	XX	X	x	x	X	X	x				
42										Lower nitrogen fert. In fall						
43	Pine/Juniper	x	X	XX	XX	XX	X	x	x	X	X	x	x			
44	Tropicals	?	x	X	X	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	x	x	?			
45										If greenhoused, you can con't light feed						
46																
47	Spray - Year Round every 1-2 mo															
48	Decid Insects / fungus	3 in 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
49	Elms - fungus single systemic or 3 ir	3 in 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
50	Cypress - root aphids			acephate	drench	X	X	X	X							
51	Azaleas - thrips	3 in 1	X	X	XX	XX	XX	X	X	X	X	X	X			
52	Pine - needle cast fungus	3 in 1	copper	3 in 1	copper	3 in 1	copper	3 in 1	copper	3 in 1	copper	3 in 1	copper			
53	Juniper - spider mites systemic gran or 3/1			X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X					
54																
55	can/should alternate 3-1 with spinosad (organic) and neem oil, especially with elms - Bayer 3-1 can abnormally reduce leaf size															
56																

