

THE BONSAI Wire

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

September 2022

FROM THE President

I must say that I am impressed! We had a very successful auction. Every year the GNOBS leadership gets a little nervous around auction time, we never know how it will go. Will we have enough donations? Will we have a nice crowd bidding? Well, for the third year in a row we broke another record! We brought in over \$17,000, the most we have ever raised for our club. Another record broken was that we had over 100 bidder cards signed out. This success will allow us to have another great year of artists and workshops. The dues we charge members just covers the hall rental for our regular meetings. The auction allows us to fly in (or pay mileage), house artist, pay for visiting artists to conduct meeting demos and material for the demo. The workshop fee that members pay to attend only covers the hall rental, plant material and wire used. The board, especially Kathy (the Auction Queen!) and volunteers do a lot to get the auction running smoothly. I would like to thank Dawn, Donald, Liz, Bill, Clem, Cash, Jorge, Jim, Randy, Teresa, Cheryl, Harold, Peggy, Robert, Gerald, Felix and Mark for bringing a delicious brisket. I would like to thank everyone

President cont. pg 5

MEETINGS & Events

Reminder - our new home for meetings is:

American Legion Hall

1225 Hickory Ave, Harahan, LA 70123

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

Intermediate Study Group: Boxwood Care and Info by Dennis Burke

6:00pm

Program: Boxwood Giveaway and Open Workshop 7:00pm

The first 40 presently PAID members attending the meeting will receive a free collected boxwood. The rest of the meeting will be devoted to an open workshop for styling the boxwoods (with experienced members available for help). Bring your tools. Wire will be provided.

Saturday & Sunday October 8 & 9, 2022 (9am-4pm) (Friday October 7 - Set Up)

Fall Garden Show (Botanical Garden City Park)

LSU Ag Center will be hosting. We will be there at our usual spot. If you have a tree you would like to display, you'll need to be able to get it to the Botanical Garden in City Park on Friday 10/7 and pick it up on Sunday afternoon at 4 (displays are not to be dismantled till 4pm). If you know how many trees you want to display let us know so we can have enough tables. We will also need the species, age, years in training and source of material (so we can have label cards printed). We will need volunteers to occupy our display area and interact with the public. Even if you can only be there for a couple of hours that will be a big help. This is one of our opportunities to engage with the public and potentially increase our membership. Sign up sheets will be at the next meeting.

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Program: Demo by Guy Guidry (species to be determined) 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

Meetings cont. pg 5

Winged Elm Development

by Evan Pardue of Underhill Bonsai

I am writing about a species I very often bring up in circles amongst other bonsai enthusiasts. I may bring them up too often sometimes but considering that the winged elm, *Ulmus alata*, is my favorite species for bonsai, I just can't help myself. A lot of people that stop by the nursery will ask what the best tree for a beginner is, and I usually have a few straight forward answers. For a true beginner that expects the classic look I will recommend the green mound juniper, *Juniperus procumbens*, and for the people wanting a good native tree I recommend the bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*. There are times when someone says the magic words "But, what species do you like the most?" and I always respond with winged elm 100%.

It's a no brainer for me as to why I enjoy this species so much. Let me fill you in on why I believe so dearly in these little "throw away" elms. For one, it's readily available just like the bald cypress is in my range. So it's easy to find a colony of them in a local wood line that takes almost no effort to walk to. Where there is this a hand full of them found growing, they have a tendency to be spread out over many square miles in heavily wooded areas. Another reason I love these tree so much is part of why I even got into growing stock into bonsai. It is that they are first and foremost an elm. Elms are sometimes over looked in favor of more popular species such as junipers, pines, maples, hornbeams, etc. Elms are probably on the bottom of the list of preferred species for a few reasons they really can't help.



There are several pros and cons to elms but I think the winged elm gracefully overcomes the worse qualities.

Pros of elms for bonsai:

- Alternating buds that give them an interesting growth pattern for cut and grow styles
- Grows very fast given plenty of space to root fresh new roots and really stretch their "legs"
- Nice leaf shape with good color and textures
- Depending on the variety, the bark can be from rough and platted to soft and elegant
- Most species of elm have a high Code-X, or ability to heal medium to large wounds
- One of the best species to learn how to repot and learn good root work practices
- Not a lot of pests and easy to recover from an attack or disease
- Works in almost any style such as classic Japanese broom to clumpy tortoise back to full cascade styles
- This list could go on and on but these are highlights

Cons of elms for bonsai:

- Some species of elm have large leaves that are a little tricky to reduce
- The heart wood is punky and large wounds take a long time to completely heal
- Collecting elms in nature can be tricky especially if the area is hilly or rocky
- Another add on to collecting them from nature is that they're trunks are predominantly straight and lack taper
- Nebari takes time to build and can have large gaps (this can be fixed with grafts)
- Wire scarring is much more obvious on younger developing branches
- It's hard for me to think of more but these stand out to me as common issues I run into with elms

So what does the winged elms have over others varieties such as Chinese elms or zelkova? Their branches have "wings" that add more visual interest, their leaf reduces very well, and they build dense, twiggly branch structure with little effort. Another thing I've found with winged elm is that they are much more draught tolerant than their relatives, where as the Chinese elm will drop nearly all its leaves if allowed to dry too much.

With the abundance of winged elm in our range I've been able to do a lot of experimenting with them. I have a good handful in my own collection and I've found I enjoy two particular styles: Tall informal broom styles and short fat sumo styles.



An example of a future tall and elegant broom style tree. The gentle curves in the trunk make way for setting up the viewer for a pleasing line up to the apex. Just needs a clean out and to establish the main branching.



This tree will take a good amount of time to blow out the main branches for the properly proportioned sizes. It won't take a life time but building this tree can take around ten years to get the best results.



Also, there is a decent sized wound on this tree. Allowing the tree to grow freely will heal this wound in 3-5 years and then branches can be scion grafted on the scar's location to further hide it. This tree will be developed using the good old cut and grow style. For example, let a branch grow for size and then cut it back to a good directional change and let the next set of branches grow. Repeat the process for taper. Also allowing branches to blow out in a long period of time with the approach will heal that wound.



This is one of my many sumo trees I'm developing with winged elm. Why? Because I gotta.

The real reason is because winged elm has a feminine quality when they are tall and slender but when you start compressing them down

SPECIES Spotlight

Winged Elm cont. from pg 3

they take on gnarly masculine qualities. As the bark develops on older winged elms they become plated and rough. The branches will be allowed to grow out extra thick for that kind of big arms on a comically small cartoon character look. I'm also imagining this tree much more developed down the road with super dense branching. There is a pretty large wound on the backside of this tree as well, which will take much longer to heal. I'll be applying wound care paste to this site and checking for punky wood often. In the first sign of soft heart wood I will be removing it and replacing it with plumb-ers epoxy. If there isn't a hard surface for the cambium to roll over then the wood will begin to push under the rotted wood and never truly heal correctly.



BONSAI Basics

Ground Layering

by Harry Harrington bonsai4.me.com

Layering is a straightforward method of propagation that although relatively unused in the West, has been tried and tested in China and Japan for centuries. For some species such as Acer Palmatum and Azaleas, layering is the most reliable way of creating new stock vegetively.

The principal of layering in all its forms is to injure the wood of the parent tree, so that the flow of nutrients from the parent trees' roots to the layering's leaves is kept intact, whilst the flow back from the layering's leaves to the parent trees' roots is interrupted.

The injured part of the bark slowly heals, forming a callus from which adventitious buds are able to form new roots into the growing media. The layering continues to be supported by the parent tree, however, the food energy its leaves produce go into building its own new roots. When the layering has sufficient roots of its own, it can be separated from the parent and is then able to support itself.

Layering should always be carried out in Spring when the first flush of leaves has hardened on the parent tree and the parent tree is putting on a great deal of root growth of its own. This timing allows enough time for a layer of many tree species to become established on their own new roots before the onset of the following Winter.

Ground Layering

This form of layering mimics the process by which some species propagate themselves naturally. Low branches on some plants come into contact with the ground as they lengthen and become weighed down by their foliage; from these points, adventitious buds produce roots into the ground and the root system eventually becomes established enough to support the branch as a plant in its own right.

Suitable species for ground-layering include Acer, Azaleas, Berberis, Buxus, Chaenomeles, Chamaecyparis, Cotoneasters, Euonymus, Forsythia, Hedera and Wisteria. It is always worth investigating around the base of all of these species when found growing in the garden or field to see if there are any naturally occurring ground-layers that can already be removed.

To create ground-layers artificially, try to find fairly young growth that will touch the ground; make an upward slit in the underside of the bark where roots are required. Dust with rooting hormone and wrap the wound with long-stranded sphagnum moss. The section of the branch to be rooted now needs to be shallowly buried in the soil and pegged in place with a piece of U-shaped wire.

This process should be carried out in Spring and should be left for at least three months ensuring that the area is kept damp. If the layer has failed to root after 3 months, re-cover it and leave until late-summer. If it has still failed to root by this time it is still worth leaving it in position until the following Spring. When successfully rooted, the new plant can be removed and planted up.

Don't be too eager to separate the layering, it is better to leave it intact until there is enough rootsystem to support the layering, rather than remove it too early and watch it slowly die. If there are not sufficient roots on the layering by September, it is better to leave detaching it until the following Spring as a new immature layering may not survive on its own through the Winter cold, however hardy the parent plant is.

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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 and sign up sheets will be available at the meetings. 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!



**UNDERHILL
BONSAI**

Embracing the Art and Science of Bonsai

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President cont. from pg 1

who donated material to the auction. I would also like to thank all the patrons that came to the auction to bid, without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do for the club without that revenue. If I forgot anyone, you can let me know at the next meeting.

Mark your calendar, October 8 & 9th is the fall garden show. LSU Ag Center will be hosting. We will be there at our usual spot. If you have a tree you would like to display, you'll need to be able to get it to the Botanical Garden in City Park on Friday 10/7 and pick it up on Sunday afternoon at 4 (displays are not to be dismantled till 4pm). If you know how many trees you want to display let us know so we can have enough tables. We will also need the species, age, years in training and source of material (so we can have label cards printed). We will need volunteers to occupy our display area and interact with the public. Even if you can only be there for a couple of hours that will be a big help. This is one of our opportunities to engage with the public and potentially increase our membership. Sign up sheets will be at the next meeting. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Dennis Burke
GNOBS President**



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