



Bonsai Society of Dallas

Monthly Member Newsletter

June 2019

Message from the Vice President

In This Issue

- **Message from the Vice President**
- **June program**
- **June Bonsai – Tips and Advice**
- **Beginner Bulletin Board**
- **May Program Review**
- **Upcoming Events**
- **Tip of the Month**
- **June To Do List**

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June is here and that means that there is plenty of bonsai work we can be doing. We are heading into the hot summer months so do the tough chores now to make sure you and your trees don't get stressed in the hot summer sun. Be sure to check out the June To Do List on and stay on top of all that needs to get done.

Although it seems early to start looking at the month of November, I would like all of you to start thinking about our club board elections in November. Our current board members will have served their two-year term in their current positions and it is time to bring in some fresh new faces and ideas to our club. Plus, we have been operating without a true President for the past year-and-a-half! The board positions are filled either by nominations from the general membership of people who they think would be good leaders or members individually volunteering for a specific position. Please think about helping with your time and creative input. We typically hold board meetings four times a year, so the time commitment is not huge.

Please think of running for one of these positions or nominating another you think would be good. Our club was started over 50 years ago and has been governed by a board from the beginning. Please help continue our tradition!

The June meeting will be our study group and a perfect time to work on just about anything! Check out the description for this month's meeting on the next page

Emily White

June Program

Study Group with the Bonsai Smiths

9 am to 12 noon, June 1st
North Haven Gardens

June is a great time of year to work on so many things. Deciduous trees need trimming, junipers can be wired out, Japanese black pine can be decandled at the end of the month and tropicals can be repotted. So, join us for our June meeting and plan to get your hands dirty.

In case you are new to the club, this is a program where you bring one or two trees in for work, under the guidance of Howard and Sylvia Smith. Bring your tools, wire, and up to two trees. These programs are held three times a year and ideally you should bring the same tree(s) each time so they can assist you in the development of that tree. Before and after photos are a good idea too, so bring your phone or camera and be sure to get a picture before work begins. If you don't yet have a tree to work on, come and observe. Listening to advice given to each person is also a great way to learn.

Look through your collection and see what you'd really like to work on. If you bring a deciduous tree, this is a good time for pruning and refinement work. Make sure you bring scissors, pruners, cut paste, aluminum wire and bonsai wire cutters. Planning on bringing a juniper to work on? Setting and branch wiring are on your list of to do's but remember, no heavy bending till mid-summer. Make sure you bring scissors, pruners, cut paste, copper wire and bonsai wire cutters. Japanese black pine can be brought in for consultation as work on these will take place at the end of the month or first part of July depending on your tree size. All tropical bonsai can be repotted now. Make sure you bring bonsai pot(s), mesh to cover drainage holes, aluminum wire, bonsai wire cutters, pliers, bent nose tweezer, root shears and bonsai soil. Remember that there is no soil sifting allowed at North Haven Gardens so please take care of your bonsai soil needs prior to the meeting.

We look forward to see you there!

Upcoming Events



Saturday, June 1, **Study Group with the Bonsai Smiths**

Saturday, July 6, **Rock Planting Demo with Guest Artist Ray Hernandez**

Saturday, Aug 3, **TBD**

Events Elsewhere



June 1, 2019 **Las Vegas Bonsai Society: Annual Bonsai Show**, Las Vegas, NV

June 1 – 2, 2019 **36th Annual Sei Boku Bonsai Kai**, San Mateo, CA

June 15 – 16, 2019, **Bonsai van het Westen**, Delft, Netherlands

June 22 – 23, 2019, **9th Bonsai Triennale**, Wojslawice, Poland

June 28 – 30, 2019, **2nd US Shohin Bonsai Exhibition**, Kannapolis, NC

July 19 – 21, 2019, **46th Annual Columbus Bonsai Society Show**, Columbus, OH

August 16 – 18, 2019 **42nd Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit**, Chicago, IL

August 18, 2019 **Bristol Bonsai Society Annual Show**, Bristol, UK

September 21, 2019, **9th International Alps-Adria & National Austrian Exhibition**, St. Veit, Austria

October 12 – 13, 2019 **European Bonsai-San Show**, Saulieu, France

June Bonsai

Tips and Advice

By John Miller



Since I have been somewhat feeling my age (and under the weather a bit also) I have been fortunate to have had more rain than usual. Haven't ignored them but my local weather kept them warm enough and watered. They did well enough but any pruning was left until this last month.

You may still have time to leaf prune if you need to but be careful, it could turn hot in a hurry. Remember do it only on healthy vigorous trees. Put the tree in a semi-shaded location out of the wind until new foliage appears. Again, never leaf prune the atropurpeum varieties of Japanese maples, they don't want to rebud.

When night temperatures stay above 60 degrees, you can think about repotting some of the tropicals. I would wait another month though for the buttonwood.

It is important to continue the twig pruning of your trees on a regular basis. While doing this chore, look at the tree to see if there is a need to do some refinement pruning. Refinement pruning is a deeper pruning to replace a branch that has grown too long or too big with a smaller one. This is usually done with the secondary or tertiary branches not the primary branch coming from the trunk. I prefer to do this refinement pruning on deciduous trees in the winter when I can see the branch structure. But on bonsai like the yaupon hollies I like to do it at this time when the tree is actively growing so that any winter dieback is apparent. Trees that weep a lot from cuts such as maples or pines should not be done at this time.

Even if the days are relatively cool, the sun can still get pot pretty hot. Not only does this dry out the soil very fast but the tree roots don't like a hot soil. A temperature I have heard given is 120 degrees that will kill roots on most plants. I cannot give you a precise to-do list since your backyard is different from mine but you should be sure that the sun does not hit the pots directly. If you use a cover of any kind

be sure that the side of the pot is protected also. A loose weave cover is preferable to solid paper or foil.

Get to know you trees like your children; which ones use more water and which ones stay moist between waterings. If some are difficult to keep happy you can try moving those to a cooler location (but be sure they get their sunlight). Another trick is to group these together so that you can hit them with a shot of water twice a day and not have to spend the time going thru all your trees.

The extended cool and damp weather is good for fungal diseases like black leaf spot. Treat with potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). If the foliage is hardened a bit you can treat with 1% hydrogen peroxide (1 part peroxide to 2 parts water) weekly. Warm damp weather will bring its own fungal problems like mildew. Same treatment.

Also watch for signs of insect problems. The spider mite will always be near. Others to look for are scale of various forms, aphids, and mealy bugs. I use the organic foliar feed (1 Tablespoon each fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and cider vinegar per gallon water) to control all these. You can use some of the other organic controls or a chemical according to label directions. Read the label directions carefully and don't apply oil based chemicals to buttonwoods.

All pathogen controls must be sprayed with a sprayer that has a nozzle which produces a fine spray in order to cover the entire leaf surface. You got to get all them bugs or they come right back. And you got to spray on a regular basis. Any hiding in cracks will repeat the infestation.

Even with the temp below 90, the sun is getting quite intense. Most plants in pots will not enjoy a full day of this. Partial shade should be provided. A shade cloth awning is the best as it will protect in the middle of the day. Late afternoon sun will also hurt by shining under the shade cloth or branches and heating the roots to the point where they will suffer.

June Bonsai (Cont')

Consider that here are two aspects to bonsai: the artistry in creating the bonsai and the gardening in keeping it healthy. The artistry you learn at the club, from demonstrations, or from books. The gardening aspect is no less important but is sometimes put on a back burner or ignored. You know that not watering will result in a 'finished' bonsai so that gets taken care of in some form or other. However, many do not try to learn how plants grow, what their needs are, or how they are all made unique by nature in some way.

To be really successful in bonsai you need to study this aspect of our hobby also. One of the first places to start is by learning about the planting medium. What makes a good planting mix? How does the size of particles affect the plant? How do the various species require their own particular type of mix? Try finding some of these answer in the gardening section of your local library and watch your trees show their appreciation by being easier to care for.

Tip of the Month

Keep a bonsai calendar

The monthly to-do list in the newsletter gives you a pretty good idea on what you need to do for different species in each month. However, you also need to take the micro-environment in your own back yard into consideration. Keeping a calendar for each bonsai tree will help you track the maintenance tasks that you will need to do at different times of the year. Below is a bonsai calendar for black and red pine bonsais, as suggested by Jonas Dupuich. You can create similar calendars for other species. Make sure that you identify the conditions that indicate the best time to perform these tasks.

- **Plant pine seeds:** later winter or early spring when daytime temperature hit 50-60°F.
- **Create seedling cuttings:** one or two months after germination.
- **Grafting:** when the tree is dormant, typically from late December until just before buds begin to swell in February. Protect from freeze after grafting.
- **Repotting:** just before buds begin to swell in spring when the roots become active.
- **Fertilizing:** fertilize every month except periods of excessive cold or excessive heat.
- **Pinching candles:** shortening candles in March or April to reduce vigor in refined pines.
- **Removing cones:** remove cones when they're big enough to twist off with your fingers.
- **Decandling:** late May through mid-July. To identify the best time to decandle, record the date on which you decandle and note how the tree responds. Adjust the dates accordingly the following year.
- **Cutback:** in fall after summer growth hardens off up until one month before freezing. When winter temperatures are mild, continue pruning through fall and winter up until shoots begin to grow in spring.
- **Needle thinning:** after summer growth hardens off in fall. If need be, continue thinning needles through winter up until the candles start to elongate in spring.
- **Wiring:** October and November, from the time summer growth hardens off in fall through bud growth in spring. Protect wired pines from freezing.
- **Winter protection:** Protect black pines when temperatures regularly drop below 28°F.



Beginner's Bulletin Board

There are no 'dumb' questions when you are a beginner at any new endeavor. However sometimes beginners are reluctant to ask a question in a monthly meeting. Got a question? Send it to Haiying at haiying_huang@yahoo.com for an individual response. Your question may also appear anonymously here in a future issue so that others can learn.

Question: When I remove the top soil from nursery plants, I noticed that the trunk under the soil line has a reverse taper. Anything I can do to correct this?

Answer by Diane: This is not uncommon when buying nursery stock. In the future it is a good idea to bring work gloves when shopping and take some time to pull back as much of the top soil that you can from the base of the tree to identify where the roots begin and any reverse taper. It also helps to identify if there is the presence of only one or two large roots which is not desirable. Since you already have the material then the next best thing is to plan to apply a technique known as layering. Many of us have heard the term 'air layering' which means to select a particularly good branch, get it to grow roots, then ultimately separate it from the original tree so that it can be developed into a bonsai. You don't mention the species of your tree so let's assume it is conducive to layering. Similar techniques for air layering can be used to address your issue of reverse taper where the trunk is actually thicker well above the soil line. A much more aesthetically pleasing bonsai tree base or *nebari* is always the widest part of the trunk, ideally with roots emerging evenly all around where it meets the soil line. To achieve this you need to work to create new roots at the widest point. This is sometimes referred to as a 'ground layer' and the concept is very similar. However since it is at ground level, you may have a few more options.

Determine at what point you want the roots to grow. Draw a line around the trunk at that point. Since you are growing all new roots the line doesn't have to be level. In other words based on the shape of the trunk, you may choose to create a slanting style rather than an upright style. Once that is determined, select one of the methods below that is best suited to your tree, the season, and/or your environment.



- **Remove ring of cambial layer** - Draw a second line around the trunk below the first. The distance between the two lines should be the approximate width of the trunk. The reason we need this distance is so the tissue doesn't quickly grow back together. Using a sharp utility knife, score the two lines horizontally down through the cambial layer creating a band. Score the band vertically and remove it completely. Next it needs to be buried deep enough to cover the band so that it can begin to grow new roots. One way of doing is to bury it in the ground at the new desired depth. Another way it is to create a new ground level by surrounding it with a new pot and filling it with soil. Using a small plastic pot that can sit on top of the existing soil, slit the side and remove the bottom. Place it upside down around the trunk, secure it with wire, and fill it with new soil. By using this technique you are severing the tree's sap flow and its ability to draw nutrients from the roots so be sure to only use this technique in late winter before spring growth has begun.
- **Tourniquet with wire** - This method is similar but instead of cutting directly into the cambial layer, you apply a large gauge of wire tightly around the base where you want the new roots to form. Bury the tree deeper into the ground/large pot or apply a secondary pot to cover the tourniquet. Over the years as the trunk grows, the wire will naturally cut into the trunk as it expands, severing the cambial layer. The tree should then put out new roots radially at that spot. An added benefit to this method is it causes the area to swell, enhancing the future *nebari*. This technique can be done at any time as long as you are not disturbing the existing roots.
- **Tourniquet with ceramic tile or metal washer** - Very similar to the method above only in this case you use another object to create the tourniquet. Bury the tree deeper into the ground/large pot or apply a secondary pot to cover the tourniquet. A thick wide tile will keep it from growing back together and can be broken away once the tree has achieved the desired growth. This is best used when starting with a small seedling that will allow the tile or washer to be slipped over the flexible branches or under the existing roots.

Be patient; this is not a quick process. Starting with a healthy tree that has been growing freely and not recently pruned is important. It is also important to provide it with ideal growing conditions (proper soil, water, light, fertilizer, etc.) to encourage rapid growth. If the tree is maintained in a pot, be sure to rotate it periodically so that all sides are exposed to sunlight. This will help ensure roots grow evenly on all sides, not just the one facing the sun most often. When successful the lower portion of tree with its original roots is removed by cutting through the trunk. This creates a nice flat bottom making its placement in a shallow bonsai pot much easier. Good luck!

May Program in Review

Guest Artist Austin Heitzman on Bonsai Stands

Our May program featured furniture maker, Austin Heitzman. As part of his program Austin started by discussing the subtleties of bonsai display and how the arrangement should help the viewer create a landscape in his or her mind. The stand should echo or compliment the tree. Austin also discussed the process of cutting and drying a slab of wood to take it into a final piece of furniture. He taught us that the wood is constantly moving - expanding and contracting - and this needs to be taken into account when building a stand.



Austin presented slides to illustrate some dos and don'ts of bonsai stands. He also discussed *jitas*, the small, often irregular slabs of wood on which accents are placed. Finally, he showed us some newer stands that he has made that break with convention.

Overall, it was a very interesting and lively discussion covering bonsai display and gave us a better appreciation of bonsai stands and the role they play in the presentation of the tree. To learn more about some of what Austin Heitzman is up to with the Pacific Bonsai Museum check out the following link:

<https://pacificbonsaimuseum.org/lab/>

Many thanks to Austin for sharing his knowledge!



June's To-Do List

This is a simple monthly checklist for those enthusiasts who have the knowledge and skill required to perform the tasks listed. It is intended to tell you 'what' to do, not 'how and why' to do it. Want to know more? Send in any questions you might have or come to any monthly program to discuss further.

All Species

- Fertilize trees dependent on species' needs
- Protect from extreme heat
- Check wire requirements
- Treat for insects as needed

Deciduous

- Cut back shoots and re-wire branches
- Feed moderately throughout summer months
- Do not let shoots become too strong, unless you are thickening a branch

Evergreen/Conifer

- Decandling begins at the end of the month for medium to large Japanese Black Pine only. Other pines are treated according to species and cork bark black pines are decandled every other year. Wiring can be done within one week after decandling.
- Junipers can be thinned and wired as needed, "pinching" on refined trees to maintain shape

Flowering/Fruit

- Cut long shoots and wire trees at the end of the month to set flowers for the following year
- Azaleas should be thinned to two leaf buds on strong areas and three leaf buds otherwise; whips should be trimmed to two side branches.
- No more pruning until late June

Tropical

- Continue repotting through first week in June

Member News

Got news to share? Let us know...

Planning any fun summer trip that involves Bonsai? How about writing a travel article for the newsletter. Articles of any length are welcome. Email your article to Haiying (email: haiying_huang@yahoo.com) and you will relive the memory in print, digitally, that is. Thanks in advance for your support.

Are you a Facebook user? Please consider posting pictures, comments, and questions at the club's *Facebook*. Let's get active and let more people know about our great organization.

Link of the Month

Bonsai Empire: *To build a great community where people can learn about growing Bonsai trees.*

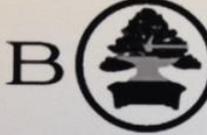
Bonsai Empire was founded in 2000 and claims to have one million visitors per year. The website is available in 12 languages. Bonsai Empire sells online bonsai courses by well-known bonsai artists such as Bjorn Bjorholm, Michael Hagedorn or Morten Albek.

Bonsai Empire also has an extensive collection of free content including how-to guides and reference guides about specific tree species.

Bonsai Empire features an active discussion forum including sections on bonsai care, styling/shaping and a monthly competition.

You can find Bonsai Empire at <https://www.bonsaiempire.com/>





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For more details contact:

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Bonsai Society of Dallas

www.bonsaisocietyofdallas.com

Membership Form

Please mail to:

Bonsai Society of Dallas
P.O. Box 836922
Richardson, TX 75083-6922

Or bring to any club meeting

Bonsai Society of Dallas meets on the first (1st) Saturday of each month.

Time: 9:00 AM

Place: North Haven Garden Center
7700 Northaven Road
Dallas, TX

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date: _____

New Membership

Individual Membership: \$30.00

Renewal Membership

Joint Membership: \$35.00

For the convenience of our membership a roster is published for **members only** in March of each year.
Please check the appropriate box if you do not wish to be included

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Do Not Cut: For Treasurer Use

Member Receipt

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