

SOUTHERN BONSAIST

A publication of the Azalea City Bonsai Society Mobile, Alabama

TROPICAL BONSAI-BY RUSSELL COKER THE ACBS AUGUST PROGRAM

Russell will present an informative Tropical Bonsai program for our ACBS monthly meeting.

The world of tropical bonsai has expanded fast during the past 20 years. It has moved from tropical bonsai finding it difficult to be accepted as bonsai to tropical bonsai being shown as masterpiece bonsai on the world bonsai stage.

Gulf coast bonsai artist can grow most tropical species. Certainly some species will not tolerated any temps below 60 degrees and are not suited for our area but the world of tropical plants include hundreds or thousands of species that love the hot weather but tolerate cool nights that stay above freezing. Our climate is will require protection during our short winter.

Russell always presents a fun, informative program. This is a subject that should be of interest to all our ACBS members.
Joe Day

**ACBS August 5th
Regular Meeting
7P.M. Mobile Botanical Gardens
Tropical Bonsai
By Russell Coker**

**Host: Craig & Doris Kunz
Tokanoma: Marguerite Dukes**

**ACBS September 2nd
Regular Meeting
Mobile Botanical Gardens
Program: Bonsai Stands
By: Leo Fortner
Host: The Schwartz
Tokanoma: The Kunz**

**ACBS October
Regular Meeting
Bonsai Back Yard
Learning Day
*The date and details to be set at the August ACBS Meeting***

OCTOBER CHANGE AND CHANGES

October is usually our first cool month after Summer. It's our month for the ACBS Fall Auction.
ACBS can not get a firm date from St Lukes until early in September for the Fall Auction. We will send out e-mail to everyone as soon as the

date is set .
The ACBS October meeting will not be held at the Mobile Botanical Gardens and it will meet on a new date. The botanical Gardens will be busy with fall election work. The October meeting will move to the yard of Joe Day and Joe

Kuhn on a Saturday to be set at the August meeting. This back yard meeting will be a educational forum. With a bit of luck with the weather this should be a fun and informative day.
Joe Day

BUY NOW FOR LATER

Spring bonsai work is usually more complex and takes more time than we expect. One way gain a bit more time with your bonsai is to try and buy all your bonsai supplies during the fall months. Most stores reduce prices on a wide range of garden items after August. We need soil items in January when most garden centers are either not open or not stocked.

Decide now the size, shape and color of the bonsai pots you will need

for Spring. Fall auctions, individual sales are great places to buy bonsai containers but you need to know the color, size and shape you need. Keep those notes in your purse or wallet. If you need a special bonsai container you might have to order it from a vendor. This can take time. Best to order and have it on hand when potting time comes around.

Do you need a roll of plastic film "poly" ? Buy it now. If we have a hurricane

here or near poly can be almost impossible to find. Poly is made from oil so prices continue to increase.

The only time it's fun to build, rebuild or repair the bonsai area is during Fall months. If you keep the same number of bonsai you will over time need to increase the bonsai bench area as the bonsai grow in size. Prices on building material usually decrease in the Fall and increase in the Spring. Buy now and save time and money.

Joe Day

FALL REPOTTING OF BONSAI

A often question is "can I re-pot my bonsai in the Fall after it cools off a bit"? The answer is yes.....but...I don't think it's a good idea. If you are home all day every day and can closely watch your trees it can work. The reason I don't like potting in the fall is the type of weather we have and the fact that trees are slowing

down and going into dormancy and renewal. The weather for September and October can be very dry with low humidity and some very hot days. If the newly repotted bonsai actually grow well they can get hit with a early cold snap. It's possible for Mobile to have freezing temps as early as October. If you

re-pot early Spring the bonsai are coming off a rest period, into warmer days and a normal period of strong growth with a declining chance of freezing weather. Buy your repotting material during the Fall, Sift soil, wash pots and set up in Winter. You will be ready to re-pot during our short Spring. Joe Day

THE DRYING CYCLE

Hot for most plant species is either helpful or not harmful. They have the ability to adapt. Drying in natural and normal. Water evaporating cools the soil and allows the plant to function. Problems arise when not enough moisture is available to let the process continue. Rain or watering replenishes the moisture. When it rains the water comes, the air cools off and the clouds block the sun. When you water the sun contin-

ues and it stays very hot. When the container is almost dry and you water the water moves deep into the soil cooling the soil and the container plus drawing fresh air into the soil. When you water too often and the soil is not dry the water does not go deep and cool the soil. This wet, hot soil with bad air is a breeding ground for all types of soil fungus and disease. As long as the leaves on a plant are not wilting the plant has adequate moisture.

When you water, water deep. Water until the water runs out the bottom of the bonsai container. Never water just to be kind to the plant. You know, the quick spray of water all over the plant and on the soil.

When a bonsai needs to be watered only one time a day in August the bonsai is correctly potted in the correct soil and the correct size of container. Water when the plant needs water but water correctly. Joe Day

BONSAI AUGUST

It's so hot even the bugs wait until you are out in the bonsai area before they fly out to bite. August can be wet so a routine check of every bonsai every day is necessary. You can have a fungus problem than moves at lightning speed. If it continues to be wet your bonsai will grow a soft root system. A sudden change to hot and dry can very quickly damage or kill your tree. You must not allow your bonsai to become almost completely dry after a long period of wet weather. Any dead wood during a period of wet and hot will quickly become fungus food. Any jin or shari should be kept free of

any moss or other green growing mass. Brush it off with a toothbrush, or brass brush. Apply a fresh application of lime sulphur as soon as you can.

September us usually a dry month with temps dropping from middle 90's to a average temp in the middle 80's. Most bonsai will start to grow. This growth will need fertilizer but not strong fertilizer. You want to use a low nitrogen or organic fertilizer. Organic fertilizer will need to be applied about middle August. Fall growth should not be "pushed" by the use of too much fertilizer. Many species do not like to be hard pruned

during the Fall months. Unless you know the growth habits of the species you are working with it's best to just do light pruning during the Fall months.

Trident Maple hate to have the apex trimmed during Fall but it's a good time to prune a large branch from the trunk. The pruning scar will be much smaller if you prune during Fall months.

Azalea and Camellia do not like to be pruned hard during Fall months. You must know the growth habits of all your bonsai before you begin to make a lot of cuts.

Joe Day

OUR WEATHER YEAR

What is normal weather for our area. This year has been a very normal year. Our last chance for a freeze is about February 15, we warm up about 10 degrees each month for average daily temps. 50's Feb, 60's March, 70,s April, 80,s May and 90,s June, July & August then we cool about 10 degrees each

month after August. Our Feb, March and April get rain about every 4 days. May is often dry with afternoon showers showing up frequently June, July and August. After August is can get dry if nothing is stirring in the gulf. Our first freeze is usually late November. The daily summer heat 90''s will prevent most

growth. If we have a lot of clouds and rain bonsai grow. When we don't they cease to grow. When the 80's come in September most bonsai grow until middle November. Some Juniper and Kingsville Boxwood grow best during the cool to cold months.

Joe Day

COMING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD FOR ACBS

New Orleans usually has a nice **bonsai Auction** during August, the date? ACBS will have a small **bonsai show** and lecture at the newly remodeled down town Mobile library on Government street September 20th. October ACBS will have the **back yard learning day** and the **ACBS Fall Auction**. December on our regular first Tuesday meeting date at the Mobile Botanical Gardens we will have our

Christmas Dinner Meeting. Members will bring a covered dish. Visiting **Master Ben Oki** will hold a workshop with ACBS late in January. We could have another visiting bonsai teacher later in the spring. ACBS will hold t he **09 Day of Bonsai** early in March of 09. **The Tri-Cities regional show** will be hosted by Ft Walton Beach on May 02 of 2009. **The ACBS Spring Show** Will be held late May or Early

June of 2009.

ACBS will have regular meetings at the Mobile Botanical Gardens September 08, November 08 , December 08.

This is a busy slate of events. Every member of ACBS will have an opportunity to enjoy these events. More details will be sent out in the coming days, weeks and months.

Joe Day

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Dedicated to the art of bonsai



Organization

Building a Better Rut

Months ago I wrote about how rising gas prices would affect our bonsai world. The cost of gas has and will continue to change what we do and how we do what we do. Already our member that live a long distance from our meeting location don't show up except for major events. Those jump into the car and drive around, just looking for a bonsai something don't happen any more. Driving across town to visit another bonsai artist without knowing if they are at home, don't happen any more. My desire to photograph trees for my "Southern Style" continuing study has morphed in mapping where the trees are, making a detailed plan of the shortest route and using the automobile that gets the best mileage. It's easy to find yourself in a rut. The high cost of leaving your yard keeps you at home doing what you always do. If you translate that time at home into more "quality" time with your bonsai you will find you have, over a bit of time, created a bonsai of much higher quality. Higher gas cost should not impact the creation of good bonsai. Only the cost to replace soil every couple of years is a necessity. Tools, chemicals last many years. Use that stay at home time effectively. **Joe Day**
