

# SOUTHERN BONSAIST

A publication of the Azalea City Bonsai Society Mobile, Alabama

No January first Tuesday meeting for ACBS. The Ben Oki Workshop will be our only meeting for the month of January

## BEN OKI WORKSHOP JAN19

Once again for more than 20 years we will welcome Ben Oki to Mobile. The January 19th workshop will be held at the Garden Center at the intersection of Zeigler Blvd, Springhill Avenue and Forest Hill Drive. See the map next door. This year instead of Mobile being the first place on the tour we are the last and we will have our first ever Saturday Morning workshop. We will start the workshop at 9:30 A. M. and finish up by 12 Noon so Ben can catch a early afternoon flight back to LA. \$20.00 to work with Ben, \$3.00 to watch. Darn cheap to work with a world known master in any art form. We will have a big pot of hot coffee and tasty snacks to kick off this event.

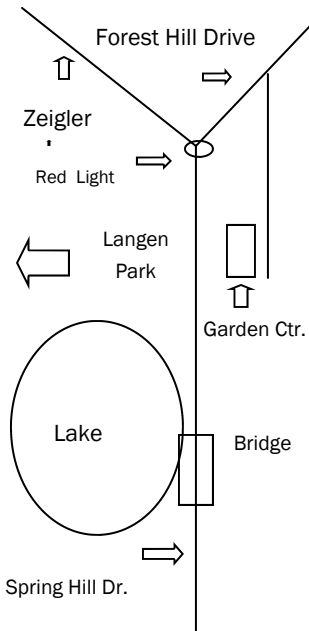
Please e-mail Joe Kuhn and let him know if you are going to work in this workshop. Ben will be our only BSF tour teacher for 08. Make the best use of this opportunity to work with a world class bonsai teacher. Joe Day



My Princess Persimmon fruiting for the first time-Joe Day

The Princess Persimmon in the photo above was my winning bid item at the New Orleans bonsai auction two years ago. I got a male and female. They told me I would have to hand pollinate. I just placed them side my side on the growing bench and tried to keep them healthy. After the leaves fell this year I

must have passed them a dozen times and saw nothing. Kenny Nguyen was over helping me when he brought my attention to what you see in the picture. Three nice little fruit. Princess Persimmon don't make the traditional big trunk bonsai but the fruit make up for that. Joe Day



## THE ACBS CHRISTMAS DINNER REVIEW YUM, YUM, YUM

The food was wonderful as usual. Every dish was great. I know that is a fact because very quickly it was all gone, none to take home. Like Santa on the roof, Haga beans were gone in a flash. The Christmas raffle table was filled with special items.

Lots of tickets sold, many winners took home bonsai goodies. Thanks to wonderful help by all members the set up and clean up was pure clockwork quick. Being a work night and a next morning work day it had to be over quicker than we all wanted.

We had some great members who could not be at the dinner. We wish them a wonderful holiday season. The later than normal Ben Oki workshop will give us a bit of time to clear the fog of holiday haste before our first ACBS event. Joe Day

## I REPOTTED MY BONSAI AND IT DIED.

If you are saying this, welcome to the a huge band of brothers. Even very experienced bonsai artist have this happen. Death is a rude awaking to the fact that you probably did something wrong and it had permanent results. What did you do wrong? He is a list of common "wrongs".

1. You cut too much root off when you repotted.
2. You let the roots dry out while you were in the process of repotting.
3. You didn't settle the new soil into and around the roots leaving air pockets that let roots dry out.
4. You didn't wire or tie the root ball tightly into the pot allowing the roots to shift and shake in the soil mix.
5. You forgot to water the tree after repotting.
6. You put the newly repotted tree outside on the bench when the humidity was low and the wind was high.
7. The bonsai was potted in a much higher position this year so those beautiful roots would show up better. The former underground roots now exposed sunburned, dried out and died.
8. Thinking the bonsai needs more fertilizer because the soil is new you give it a extra strong dose of fertilizer. A great way to burn up all those new roots.
9. You allow your soil to freeze after the buds begin to open.
10. You didn't take time to sift out your soil because it didn't look that bad and someone said the small stuff helps the new roots get started.
11. You reused some soil from a tree that died for some reason but the soil still looked good.

Or you could have had some very bad luck with a nasty fungus or blight. That's possible but you still will get the blame. Joe Day

## HOW TO WORK WITH A BONSAI TEACHER IN A WORKSHOP

Be at the workshop on time. Clean up your workshop material, removing weeds, insects, dead leaves, twigs before you get to the workshop. Bring your own tools and your own wire if you have it. Understand the teacher will suggest a style you have the option to take the advice or

suggest another option. Keep your focus. It's all about the teacher, the material and you. If you have a reason that you must leave the workshop early let the Joe Kuhn know so you can work early in the line up. Clean up after yourself. Other

members will always help clean up after the workshop is over but you can keep the mess down . Pay when you enter the workshop. Thank the teacher when you finish your session. Try to stay to the end and assist in the clean up. Joe Day

## SAND PINE

This Sand Pine came from Art Kersten's collection. Art has had this Pine for many years. I repotted it without disturbing the roots to give it a bit more room and to correct the way it was leaning in it's old pot. I couldn't place it in the exact position it should be in the new container without a hard root pruning. It needs to be wired but that's the dead of winter project. Sand Pine are fickle. Very, very fickle. I very

much want to continue Art's fine work and develop this Pine. This is truly a unique tree. I e-mailed Larry and Jean Jongewaard asking their advice about Sand Pine. They have the most experience with this species. The Sand Pine in their collection go back many years. I will follow their advice and treat this beautiful and fickle tree with the best of care that I can give it.



## HOW TO AVOID KILLING YOUR BONSAI

1. Understand each species you have in your collection. Some can take a lot of root pruning and some can't.
2. Repot quickly with a bucket of water and spray bottle of water handy.
3. Take your time working the soil into the roots. Only work on one bonsai at a time.
4. Work the soil into the root ball then tie or wire the root ball tightly then resettle the soil again.
5. As soon as you finish settling the soil water the bonsai until you see clean water coming out the drain holes.
6. Repotted trees must be out of the wind or direct sunlight.
7. Never expose more than the top 1/3 of the root. If newly exposed cover with chopped up sphagnum moss.
8. All newly repotted trees need is water. Some organic fertilizer can be added at potting time. Chemical fertilizer 1/2 strength only after the first true leaves are on the tree and only fertilize moist soil.
9. Newly repotted trees don't mind cold weather but allowing the root ball to freeze can kill all the new roots, finished bonsai.
10. The small dusty particles in the soil will settle to the bottom of the soil mix and form a soggy wet mush at the bottom of the pot. A perfect place for soil fungus to find a home.
11. That old soil could hold fungus, small insects or a type of disease that would be fatal to the newly potted bonsai.

Not in any way a complete list but something to consider.

Joe Day

## IT'S NEVER THE SAME

When January 01 roll around we can have 6 weeks of cold weather or 12 weeks of cold weather. The last average below freezing weather is February 15th. The last chance of freezing is actually about April 15th. Most years we get down to about freezing a couple of times March but almost never in April. Some

years Elms leaf out about mid January, Maples mid February, most other species by mid March. This make the repotting window small.

Some years after late February it never gets colder than 45 degrees at night and the days are hot. Some years the nights drop to the low 30's lots of nights after February. If

you have a big collection and lots of winter work you want it to remain cool at night all the way to April giving you time to do lots of winter work. The best bet is to try and get most of your winter work completed by the end of February. Work hard, work smart.

Joe Day

## THE DAY OF BONSAI EVENT FOR 2008

The date for this is event is March 15th. The event will be held at St Lukes Church and School on Azalea Road.

A flyer with all the information will be sent out to all ACBS members and the bonsai societies along the Gulf Coast Crescent. The focus is always teaching. The main subject will be how to style material like you see in our southern area. We will show how to better grow our native

material. We will show how to use the computer to style the material before you make any cuts. Make a computer blue print so you make fewer mistakes. We will have a workshop with a fantastic species of dwarf Live Oak. We will have vendors with bonsai supplies, coffee and sweets when you arrive, lunch served and a wonderful chance to meet bonsai artist from many clubs in our area. The artist

that bring you these programs and this event work hard for more than a year.

This has been a wonderful event for many years. We hope we can find local teachers willing to teach at the 09 event and years to come.

The fee will be \$30 single or \$40. for family. Workshop fee will be an additional \$40. and well worth it for this quality material. Joe Day

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*Dedicated to the art of bonsai*



**Organization**

## Getting “There”

*Non artist probably never have this problem. Artist in any form have a goal. The goal usually involves reaching a point when whatever they are creating has a certain look. Mentally they say to themselves quietly, “one day mine will look like that”. Looking like that is a way of saying they have finally gotten “there”. There— is usually the thing that is popular at a certain time. With art something becomes popular usually after the artist has worked on perfecting it over many years. Artist and the public are fickle. The thing that is popular now almost always has a short public life. A short life but long enough to inspire others to create the same thing or something close to the same thing. A great movie this year becomes a rash of copy cat movies next year. The same thing with television. A bonsai artist work that is different or original took many years to create before it becomes a popular item. If you set out to create the same thing or something similar after the many years something else is the popular thing. “There” is not static. If you start with a unique or original concept when it gets “there” it will be the real “there” not a copy of anything else. Our “Southern Style concepts” offer totally new and unique ways to create bonsai. A chance to truly have a artistic concept that could inspire others to what to “go there”. Joe Day*

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