

# SOUTHERN BONSAIST

A publication of the Azalea City Bonsai Society Mobile, Alabama

## HOW TO TRIM A BONSAI FOR BASIC DESIGN BY JOE KUHN

**IMPORTANT!!!!!!  
IMPORTANT\*\*\*\*\***

**ACBS  
Regular Monthly  
Meetings  
Will be held at  
THE GARDEN CENTER  
At the corner of Ziegler  
and Forest Hill Drive  
The same place we held  
the Ben Oki Workshop**

Bonsai like most thing is life don't end up great if they start out lousy. A good start is the initial styling. The initial styling gives the bonsai the starting or basic framework to build upon. If you are just starting in bonsai this is a must attend meeting. If you have been a bonsai artist for a while already this is a good time to go back to the beginning and see if there is something you missed. Joe will take full advantage of our computer projector and his knowledge of bonsai to make this a fun, interesting and educational night of bonsai. All this information comes at the perfect time to put it into use as our Spring growing season gets into full swing.

Check out our full schedule of programs for 2009. You will notice that it is a full beginning course in the art of bonsai. Every program for every month should be a great learning experience.

Joe Day

**ACBS March 3rd 7P.M.  
Regular Meeting  
At  
The Garden Center  
Program: *How to Trim a bonsai for basic design by Joe Kuhn***

**Host: John Lee**

**Tokenoma: Joe Day**

**April 7th  
ACBS Meeting  
Garden Center  
*How to Grow and Shape the Apex***

**May 5th  
ACBS Meeting  
Garden Center  
*Best Techniques for growing a healthy Bonsai***

## DAY OF BONSAI JUNIPER WORKSHOP

Great bonsai emerge from great material. The trick is to find great material. At the ACBS Day of Bonsai, March 14th we will have 10 great Juniper available for a workshop. The fee is \$75. We priced this material at other nurseries and all offered

similar material at 150 dollars or more . Large, good, healthy Juniper in nursery containers are becoming increasingly rare. This is an excellent chance to move your collection forward with a great piece of material. You can contact Joe Day or Joe

Kuhn to reserve a spot in the workshop. Joe Day e-mail, ACBSbonsai@aol.com. You reserve your spot and pay at the Day of Bonsai. Take advantage of this opportunity to improve your collection.  
Joe Day

## Programs for 2009

How to grow and shape  
the apex

Total techniques for  
growing healthy bonsai

How to bend all size  
branches

How to fine tune your  
bonsai design / ramifi-  
cation

Leaf reduction tech-  
niques

How to select material  
for bonsai

Thread graft-  
ing/approach grafting

Developing Nebari

# Day of Bonsai 09 for serious artist

St Lukes Church and School, March 12th, Presented by ACBS Mobile, Alabama

Creating a bonsai collection takes years of very hard work. It also takes a lot of knowledge. Unlike people who come in two flavors, male and female and much of the operating works are the same, plants come in many, many flavors and the differences are much more vast than the one would imagine. Not only are each species demanding of their own treatment, individual plants of the same species can demand different treatment. The best source of knowledge on

bonsai care comes from the individual artist who work with different species. That is what the "Day of Bonsai" presents. That is what every serious bonsai artist should seek. First hand knowledge from people who gain the knowledge by working daily with bonsai. Books and the internet are wonderful but they are not local. The internet is wonderful and a bit more local at time but you can't usually ask questions and get immediate answers from the source. The local artist

this 09 Day of bonsai will be Don Corley on Juniper. Russell Coker, Joe Day on Azalea, Patrick LaNasa on insect and disease control. This is just the main speakers. Many other local artist with many years of experience will be attending, asking and answering questions.

If you suddenly come into a lot of money, go out and buy a great bonsai collection you still need a lot of knowledge just to keep them alive. 09, Day of Bonsai for serious artist.

Joe Day

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## FEB-MARCH, NERVE RACKING WEEKS

Loose a engine on take off and the odds of a safe flight suddenly fade. Have a cold spell like the one we just endured after your trees have sprouted new growth and the odds of a good growing year fade. You can't stop bonsai from pushing new growth as they will this second week of February as the days push

into the 70's. You also can't stop another deep cold spell that can come as late as the second week of April. This is the reality of the next about 8 weeks. Be ready to move, bring inside, cover your bonsai as needed. If you are going on a trip look at long range weather forecast. After new growth pushes on bonsai

the roots are more sensitive to freezing soil. It will crush the new growth. Down to the middle 20's most garages or utility sheds with a small ceramic heater will keep the soil from freezing solid. An old sheet tossed over the trees will add a bit more protection by trapping the heat of the floor. Care, be aware.

Joe Day

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## SHOW PERFECT

It's many weeks from the time we have our Spring shows here and it's all the way to May before we have the Regional show but now is the time to pick some bonsai that you would like to place in the show. Prune, wire, replacing the container, cleaning up the jin and shari now will put the bonsai in good shape. It's always necessary to do some more "beauty" work just before the show but too much

work just before a show makes a bonsai look over-worked many times. One critical part of -show perfect- is a great potscape with beautiful moss of different variety. A combination of lichen, dark green moss and some light green moss placed to look natural is the great way to make a good bonsai look like a great bonsai. It's possible to just swap bonsai into a better pot that is the same

size as the old pot without doing any harm even in very hot weather. The trick is to find that better pot that is the same size. It's great to show bonsai on a beautiful stand but stands that look great with each bonsai are difficult to find and match up. A simple mat available in many specialty shops will often look great at a very small expense.

Joe Day

## BEN OKI REVIEW

Every Ben Oki workshop is exactly the same and totally different. Ben is, at every workshop, totally the same very dedicated and professional bonsai artist but every workshop is totally different. The material, the artist, the weather, make for a unique experience every year. I must admit that I have always admired Ben and his ability to find a design in every piece of material. Over the years that admiration has turned to a much deeper feeling that I find hard to describe. 80+, thirty days on the road, workshops every night and he walks into the last workshop on the tour as if it were his

first night, first workshop. The smiles, the dedication to give every piece of material the "full treatment". James Brown might be long remembered as the "hardest working man in show business". When someone with more time and talent than I have writes the history of bonsai in America Ben Oki will have to be remembered as the "hardest working bonsai artist". John Naka was a great artist and deserves his place but Ben Oki's place isn't below John Naka but just to his right side at the same level.

The coldest night of the winter is the night Ben holds his workshop in Mobile. The

first day of January or the fourth day of February, it doesn't matter. This year it was true in so many ways. Record cold, with a bit of wind. 20+ great dedicated bonsai artist filled the Garden Center building to drink hot coffee, work and view the Ben Oki workshop. The atmosphere was and building was warm and wonderful. Someone made the comment that the four bags of cookies as was lot to put out, they were for the most part consumed. Joe Kuhn and Barbara Britton laid out a spread of food and drinks that was welcomed and filling. Thanks to all.

Joe Day

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## WHEN DO I FERTILIZE MY BONSAI

No, one answer, ever fits the subject of bonsai but with most species as soon as the bonsai has pushed it's first set of true mature leaves it's a good time to fertilize. Bonsai that are in the same soil as last year will usually have fertilizer from last year still in the soil. Repotted bonsai have fertilizer in the root ball

that was not trimmed. Newly dug material and nursery stock has enough energy in the trunk and roots to push new roots and buds. Chemical fertilizer is a type of salt solution. It can and will dry and kill delicate new roots. Organic fertilizer is much safer but should not be applied too heavy. Except for newly dug

from the ground material you don't want a lot of strong growth on your bonsai. Healthy, yes but not long and heavy growth. I've been using the organic from Lowe's, Plant Tone, Holly Tone and Rose Tone. The results have been great. For a small bonsai collection it's a cheap and rewarding way to go.

Joe Day

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## IT WORKS V/S IT'S BEAUTIFUL

Years ago I threw together a small wood shell and covered it with poly just to be out of the elements. I expanded it twice with scrap material. Big, ugly and functional. Every year I say I will replace it with something better looking but that hasn't happen yet. Every year the "Big Ugly" serves well. The lessons I have learned by changing it every Summer to get ready for Winter are, Make it as big as you

can possibly fit into your available area. Make a door on two sides. Both doors need to be big, six foot opening if possible. Make shelves around the sides wide enough to hold the largest bonsai you would need to place on the shelves. Make the building tall so hot air has a place to be and the entrance doors can be tall so you won't need to bend double to bring a bonsai into the building. A dirt

floor can be dusty or muddy but it holds up to all the dirt and any other droppings. It just needs to be racked out at times. Shelves around the edges are all you need. Keep the inside space open. This will allow for unlimited ways to set up to protect bonsai or to work on bonsai. A empty 55 gallon plastic barrel makes a great table and 25 gallon plastic barrels are great stools.

Joe Day

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*Dedicated to the art of bonsai*

  
**Organization**

## The Stimulus

My stimulus arrived about middle February when I viewed both swelling buds on many bonsai and a weather man saying the weekend would be warm, sunny and free of any major events that I would want, need or be made to spend time with. Friday, Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, Sunday and Sunday night work on bonsai was certainly rewarding, stimulating and grueling. The continuing spells of cold nights have slowed the rapid emergence of new growth and given me time to do just that bit more to more trees that can make a difference over the long summer. Mother nature can certainly throw curves at any time , late cold spells, too much rain, too dry, tornadoes, hail storms. You can do your best but it's impossible to totally protect every bonsai all the time. The key to "what the artist can do" is keeping your bonsai as healthy as possible. Healthy bonsai can certainly be picked up in a tornado and blown miles away but a healthy bonsai can recover from cold, wet, dry, and hail storms that strip off all the leaves. Good health is the insurance that defends from the other nature ills, disease and insects. A large enough pot is first, good soil next, fertilizing , watering and watching complete the main care package.

Bonsai is the art of doing and enjoying bonsai. You get your reward every minute you spend with bonsai.

Joe Day

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