

SOUTHERN BONSAIST

A publication of the Azalea City Bonsai Society Mobile, Alabama

HOW TO GROW / SHAPE THE APEX OF YOUR BONAI BY JOE KUHN

The apex of a bonsai is top 1/3 or 1/4 or for a very tall design the top 1/5 of a bonsai. It can be live growth, or a portion of dead wood or a combination of dead wood and live growth. It's is with most designs one of the most visible elements of the bonsai. In short, getting this part of the tree correct is very important. Joe Kuhn will give a computer projected program showing the development and design of the apex.

Many species used for bonsai are apex dominant. This means the species will have it's strongest growth in the upper 1/3 of the tree. Knowing how to design the apex and develop the growth is critical when you first start the development process. These programs are critical to anyone who want to have success at bonsai.

It's a lot of work to put together a program. They only help you if you are there to listen and ask questions.

Joe Day

ACBS May 5th
Regular Meeting
At The Garden Center 7 P.M.

Program: Growing and Shaping the Apex

By: Joe Kuhn

Host: Craig Kunz

Tokanoma: Joe Kuhn

ACBS
June 2nd Regular Meeting

How to bend big branches

By Joe Day

Host: Margarete

Tokanoma: Craig Kunz

ACBS

July 7th Regular Meeting
How to Fine Tune a bonsai Design

This meeting is the Tuesday after the 4th of July Weekend so everyone should be rested.

THE APRIL ACBS MEETING REVIEW

It's a busy month and the meeting was the latest it could be , on the 7th. The program by Brenda Litchfield was packed with important information about Grafting. Breanda's demonstration was straight forward and not difficult but the old hand tips of

Preventing fungus problems, keeping the graft moist and protected from the elements were golden. When you attend a demonstration and go home with practical information that can be immediately put to use, that's time well spent. Brenda is not only a

great source of growing information she is an excellent speaker. Bonsai combines the best of pure art and horticulture. Speakers from almost every art form bring useful information to the bonsai community. Joe Day

REVIEW ACBS SPRING SHOW

Fancy it wasn't, fun it was. This is the show that is just fun to stay with. I hated to leave for lunch. Always some people viewing the bonsai and talking. Good talk about the bonsai and the art of bonsai. Quick to set up and fast to take down leaves you enough energy enjoy the show. Never have we had good weather at this show but it has never mattered. We are set up under the deep overhand, outdoors but inside shelter. The flow of people is constant. With the every year wind situation we just sit the bonsai on the tables. All the bonsai were very nice and most were old and very devel-

oped so the lack of fancy display didn't seem to bother anyone. Every bonsai was nicely set up for display with beautiful moss in the containers and the public took notice. I talked with a lot of people about moss. Two of the moss watchers were moss collectors. Two women said they had moss gardens in their yards. My thanks go out to Don Corley who brings me moss every Spring. Don Corley, Joe Day, Joe Kuhn and Becky Guthrie worked on bonsai as we talked with the public. It makes the day go by and seems to encourage questions from the public. Thanks go out to the ACBS

members who couldn't actually be at the show all day but showed up for a while.

2010 we will host the Tri-Cities Regional show at this location. The Tri-Cities show will be held in the large meeting room. Can't risk bad weather and 50 to 75 bonsai that could have to moved in a hurry. Plans on just how we will set up this show, direct the public to the show and do any bonsai talks and or demo's is proceeding. We are also planning a small show to be held at the downtown library some time in the Fall. Russell, Joe Day, Joe Kuhn, Don Corley, Leo Fortner, Becky Guthrie, thanks for sharing the day. Joe Day

REALITY BITES

Standing back from the mirror in the bathroom, glasses off so the image is just fuzzy enough to smooth the wrinkles and blur the skin color I think I look pretty good. Film me in living color, 10 million dots, blow me up on a good computer monitor and damn. It's important to take photographs of your bonsai so you

can see progress or the problems blown up on your computer screen. Take a bit of time to try and take the best picture you can under the conditions. You might need them for a publications at a later date. It's better to get low quality pictures than it is to get no pictures but do your best. Early morning is best.

Middle of the day under bright sunlight usually gives bad pictures. If possible find a decent neutral color backdrop. I don't have one now but I have plans and a start at creating a photo location. A good photograph of a good bonsai and the internet can make you a world known bonsai artist. Joe Day

THE FIRST 60

We are about in the first 30 with 30 to go. You get 90 percent of your yearly development during the 60 days after the leaves open or candles grow or juniper starts to push. These are the golden days for bonsai artist. Pruning, watering, fertilizing, checking all bonsai with wire. You have to stay on top of all your bonsai work or all the positives that could happen could turn into negatives. Depending on the

weather we could actually get up to 75 or 80 golden days. 80 days out from the first growing spurt our weather is beginning to get too hot for non-tropical to push a lot of new growth. The heat of the soil in our bonsai containers makes new root growth difficult, it makes tender new root growth difficult. If we have a wet Summer with lots of cloudy days we get and extension of growth days. If it get

hot, dry and very sunny we get a shortened growing period. Long or short growing season it's your chance to make the most of what you are given. It can take 5, 10 or 15 years to create a 5 year bonsai. It depends on how you use each season of opportunity. Life never makes it easy to find enough time to get it all done. Some times you have to search out those given moments.

Joe Day

SUMMER BUMMER PROBLEMS

Summer is when you most enjoy your bonsai but it is a time of intense care and quick developing problems. Heat brings out the best and the worst of things. It's not actually the heat that kills bonsai it's the fast loss of moisture that does not get replaced. All the following is repeat info but very important information that needs repeating. You can: sit a small bonsai in a larger bonsai pot, pot and all and put Pine back in the empty space. Water the whole thing. This double wall of bark will keep the small pot cool. Place smaller bonsai under the shade of a larger bonsai during the day. Sink a

small accent plant and pot into the soil of a large bonsai. The shade of the larger tree helps and you water both at the same time. As the summer temps get into the 90's don't fertilize your non-tropical. You don't need to push soft growth that would need more and more moisture to grow. This soft tissue combined with high humidity and heat just draws insects and fungus problems. If you have trees that you got show ready with lots of moss on the soil you need to be certain the moss isn't shedding water off the pot preventing the soil from adsorbing moisture or preventing air movement in

the soil. Stale air, heat and dampness breeds soil fungus. Usually the first indication you have a soil fungus is , your bonsai is dead.

Morning watering is best as you start the day with a soil that is high in moisture. The loss of moisture in the soil pulls in new air that keeps the soil fresh. If the soil still holds moisture at days end it's best to water early the next morning. Rain days keep the soil wet but the rain bring the air temps down and with clouds the shade cools the pots down. Rainy days change the environment is ways that you and a hose can never duplicate.

Joe Day

MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST BONSAI SHOW

Very nice bonsai with very nice backdrops on black covered tables. The bonsai were large, small, old, new just what a public bonsai show needs to show the public what the true nature of bonsai is all about. MGCBS had bonsai and other items for sale. A nice young couple bought a pretty Kingsville

boxwood while I was talking to the MGCBS members. He just might become a new member for their club. The mall was full of people so I know they got good exposure. I know I enjoyed a chance to see some bonsai that were new to me. You can easily see MGCBS has a nice core of talented artist. Every bonsai

in the show was nicely presented.

What makes bonsai societies grow? Dedicated artist who take the time to show bonsai, talk with the public and educate bit by bit all those people that have a question that deserves a good and honest answer.

Joe Day

KEEPING AN EYE ON THE SITUATION

Out of sight, out of mind. Life's most used management technique. Works for bonsai also. If you don't like to water just put your bonsai in a place where you don't see them when you go out any of the doors of your house. If you don't pass by your bonsai on a regular basis you won't notice how dry they are and have to water when they need water. You just water when you want to wa-

ter. The downside to this is you will have to continue to get new bonsai. They just have a hard time living without water.

The busier your life the closer your bonsai need to be to the back door or side door. Water should be very close by. The time from almost dry to too dry can be very fast. Watering should be a shared experience. Anyone in the family can spray a bit of water on a

bonsai. Let your family know how much your trees mean to you. Let them help you be successful.

Actual heat of the day does not bother well potted bonsai that are watered. As the water evaporates from the container it cools the soil and the container. Having enough water to maintain the cooling cycle is the critical area. Last point:: never think a passing rain shower was enough to keep you from daily watering. Joe Day

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Dedicated to the art of bonsai



Organization

The Conversation

What is your hobby? I do bonsai. Bonsai? Those little trees. Yes, I grow them and do some teaching. Teaching? What's there to teach? You just buy one, take it home and watch it die. You have to teach that?.....That was a morning conversation with someone I talked with briefly at a local non- bonsai event. To continue that conversation would have been a bit like trying to push a straw through a brick wall. I just said "it's turned out to be a beautiful day" and eased on down the path I was on.

Bonsai will never be the hobby of the masses. If you are a bonsai artist you can feel a bit lonely at times as talking about your hobby to non- bonsai artist is a bit like explaining how the universe was created to your dog. At best you might get the universal, your boring the hell out of me, answer, you know, they say, "That's fascinating."

This brings me back to the recent library show. Nice people, who were either coming out of a place of learning, or going in to learn more about something or to get a third rate video of a recent movie that couldn't draw an audience at the theater at the cost of \$1. for 7 days. But almost every conversation was filled with good questions and many with follow up questions that were fun to answer. Bless all those good people. Seems a shame to find after 30 years of hard study about an art form that the best answer of a conversation would be "it's turning out to be a nice day".

Joe Day
