

SOUTHERN BONSAIST

A publication of the Azalea City Bonsai Society Mobile, Alabama

MID-SUMMER WORKSHOP THE JULY ACBS REGULAR MEETING

The ACBS July 7th regular meeting will be a workshop. The members replying to Joe Kuhn's e-mail offering either a lecture or workshop program showed a definite preference for the workshop. The doors of the Garden Center will open at 6 P.M. for this meeting. This will give us a bit more time to work on bonsai. What we can actually accomplish will depend on the number of bonsai on hand and the time we have. Please bring any bonsai in any stage of development that you would like either some work to be accomplished, some information about what you need to done, or just a design to be work out . Every species can either be worked on or a design plan worked out .

Workshops for members are always a show and tell. If you have something interesting to show the membership, not to work on or get advice about, please bring your tree and share with us all.

Joe Day

**July 7th ACBS
Regular Meeting**
The Garden Center
Doors open at 6 P.M. for this meeting
Mid-Summer Workshop

Host: Mike and Christina

Tokanoma: Margaret

Our August ACBS newsletter will contain a new schedule of programs, host and Tokanoma for each month. We will always remain flexable as life itself demands we shift to accommodate what ever comes down the pike. The memberships needs and wishes drives the events we present so let your need, wishes and desires be know to Joe Kuhn.

1ST NATIONAL BONSAI EXHIBIT BOOK

The fact that the National Exhibit happen was great. The fact that it also produced a excellent book that will allow any bonsai artist to see the exhibit is wonderful. The photographs are excellent and the layout flows very good. The text sets this book apart.

A short history of each tree lets the viewer better understand how the bonsai came to this point in it's life. Past artist who either collected, owned or styled the tree tell a very important story if you are reading this book as a fellow artist. The quality of the

Bonsai is impressive. The fact that most of the bonsai were created from collected or stock material by American artist is also impressive.

If you are wondering where American bonsai is at this time, this book tell much of the story. Joe Day

ROAD TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS AND BCI-09

BCI editor Donna Banting came to Mobile during the Spring of 2008 and pick out some large bonsai from My , Joe Day, collection and the collection of Russel Coker. These large bonsai were selected to be in the 2009 BCI convention in New Orleans City Park. For security reasons only big bonsai were displayed. Events held in the display area Thursday night prevented bonsai from being placed any earlier than 8 A.M. on Friday. Thursday Russel and I loaded the van with 5 display trees. Not one inch of space remained in the van. The lack of traffic on the interstate at 4:40 A.M. Friday

was nice plus going west when the sun in rising in the east is good. Thanks to good directions we were at the unloading location in the park in about a bit over 2hours. Bonsai from as far as deep south Florida were included in the display. Not a lot of bonsai , about 20 were on display. It was nice and at 7 A.M. cool as we unloaded bonsai and talked with almost all the other displaying artist. Russel and I were back on I-10 and west bound by a bit after 8 A.M. Traffic wasn't bad but no space was long enough to use cruise control. The trip back Sunday to pick up the bonsai was different-

Traffic was bumper to bumper all the way. A lot like NASCAR race drafting the car in front of you. Russel and I arrived just after most of the display bonsai had been loaded and on their way home. This gave us space to park and helping hands to load back the bonsai. The display trees were impressive showing years of high quality dedicated work. Russel and I made a quick walk around to shake hands with everyone we knew from the New Orleans group and tell them we appreciated the chance to display our bonsai. Pit stop and on the road home. We made a smooth, quick trip back to Mobile. Another event is history.

SUN OR SHADE

Any species we grow as bonsai along the coast could grow in full , all day, sun.....if it were growing in the ground. We grow bonsai in containers that have exposed sides and not enough soil to buffer the heat, good air circulation that dries the soil quickly . The Pine bark in the soil is the moisture holder, the lava rock or tur-

face promotes air circulation. The air circulation is very important to the health of the tree. It cools the soil as moisture evaporates and it prevents fungus growth in the soil. The same channels that allow the air to flow from the drain holes to the top of the soil also allow water to flow deep into the container. When

you water during the summer and the soil is almost dry you can often smell the old air that is flushed out of the soil as the water pushes it out of the air channels. This flushing and replacing of the air is a major factor in soil health. Place your bonsai where they don't look stressed at the end of the day and they will be ok.

Joe Day

MID-SUMMER BONSAI FEEDING

Except for tropical bonsai the short answer is....you don't fertilize. As a grower, and anyone who has a bonsai is a grower, Spring is any time after the chance of a freeze has past, Summer is any time the temps stay above 60 degrees at night , Fall is when daytime temps stay in the 80's and Winter is any time after the first Fall freeze. Plants go on natures cycle not any calendar. We are now in

a Summer pattern of weather. Our plants react to the temps above 90 degrees by slowing down growth. We call this time Summer dormancy. Plants in containers do not like to push tender roots into over heated soil. The slow down of growth changes the demand for food. If you have fertilized with a organic all Spring the soil in the container will have a fertilizer reserve. This reserve should

be enough to feed during the Summer dormancy. If you see the leaves or needles of a plant going off color , and inspection does not show any spider mites or fungus, you might need to add a bit of organic fertilizer. Too much organic fertilizer in a soil can attract soil insects and clog up the soil slowing both water and air movement. It's all a bit of art and science with no hard rules.

Joe Day

THE UN-THINKABLE

Yes stuff happens. Our season for stuff-Hurricane stuff is now. Some things to think about. A bonsai on the ground that does not get hit by a falling something will most likely be just fine. Salt spray can be a problem if we are near the eye of a storm. The salt water gets into the air and is blow inland a good distance. After the storm passes and they all pass slow or fast, you need to flush out the soil by watering until you see water flowing out the drain holes of the container, do this flushing wash a couple times a day if we do not have rain. It's a good idea to have some container of rain water

on hand in case your water supply doesn't function for a couple of days. The rain water will have some salt in it but it much better than no water at all. The days after a hurricane can be very dry, hot and windy. Don't be in hurry to put you bonsai back on a bench. Leave then low and out of the wind. After a hurricane you might have lots of strangers in your yard. Power line workers, Insurance, police, fire, FEMA. Your bonsai need to be together so you can keep up with them, out of the way of storm workers. A plastic bottle filled with water with a hole or two punched in the bottom will slowly water a

bonsai. The larger the bottle the longer the time period. Tape a chop stick to side of the bottle so the stick will stick into the soil and hold the bottle upright. Large bottle, two chopsticks on either side. You might be very busy so this self watering can save a bonsai. If you have to cut trees or branches from trees remember where you bonsai are and where the trees and branches will fall. Most of us in a hurricane situation will have wind problems not water problems. Only some area's are flood prone. That is a more difficult problem to solve if you have bonsai.

Joe Day

SUPPOSE

I often here the complaint that bonsai takes a long time to ...well...become a bonsai. If someone offered you a meal that would cure your hunger for a year would you eat the meal? Full and happy for a full year, no need to eat. Eating is the reward event of most people's day and the social center for most people.

So give it up, I think not. Same way with bonsai. Bonsai is doing bonsai. The reward is the progress you make. A bonsai that needs almost no work gives up no rewards. The true joy of bonsai is working on bonsai and moving them forward. Bonsai artist that have been around for a while don't look at a

bonsai to see how complete the tree is, they look at it to see how well the work has been applied to the tree. A tree that has not been in bonsai training for a long time that is styled nicely, potted correctly and sporting a correct trimming is a impressive bonsai.

Joe Day

A BONSAI COLLECTION

If you have a bonsai then you have a bonsai. If you have two bonsai you have a bonsai collection. Bonsai is a lifestyle so what's in the collection and how big it is depends on your lifestyle. Better to have a small collection that is well maintained than a large collection of trees that all need lots of TLC. Some species need almost daily work to look good. Some species only need short work sessions

spaced out over many months to stay looking very good. Don't make the mistake of wanting a lots of species that grow quickly so you can have a lot of finished bonsai quickly. You will end up with a benches full of bonsai that always look as if they need to be trimmed. If you are a retired person who stays at home a lot and wants or needs to stay out of the house those benches of fast

growing bonsai might just suit you fine. The best way to handle bonsai is to start slow, understand your species, expand your bonsai area as you expand your bonsai collection. Study the art daily from any and every source, take notes about the species you grow, ask for advice often but be your own artist. Bonsai is a lifestyle and a journey.

Joe Day

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Dedicated to the art of bonsai

The Good Bad Ugly

Yes July has it all. The good, tropical bonsai grow like weeds, garden ripe tomatoes, the bad , bugs and fungus of all know types and the ugly. The ugly is the yard, the bonsai and everything else if you are not out there every day fighting the progress of mother nature. With rain and we have had enough the new growth, fungus and weeds are all on high speed development. Bonsai growth for non tropical bonsai will slow down in July and August. Most species have enough brains to not push tender growth if the heat is high enough to drain the moisture before the new growth can harden off. Roots don't grow for the same reason. The heat in the container is too high. If you just keep all your bonsai healthy and alive during July and August you have done enough.

The lost wire problem comes along about this time. If you wire your bonsai when they have no foliage or thin foliage you can keep an eye on the situation. By this time of the year the foliage is often too thick to see any wire. Except for very slow growing species you probably have wire cutting in now and possibly you can't see the problem. Look into every bonsai you wired and check for this problem.....now.

Joe Day
