

SOUTHERN BONSAIST

ENRIQUE CASTANO WORKSHOP JULY 6TH AT THE GARDEN CENTER

The list of good bonsai teachers isn't long but the list of bonsai teachers who can bring a depth of knowledge of tropical bonsai is very short. He is not just a tropical teacher. He understands a broad range of bonsai species so if you plan to work with Enrique bring the species you need help with.

Why work with a teacher. In short the level of bonsai in every country is rising quickly. The ability to put almost anything in a bonsai pot and put it into a local show and not look bad because the viewer probably won't know what they are looking atis behind us. In short, most people should get help because they need help. Bonsai is like any, any, any other art. You become a better artist using the knowledge and help of other artist who are kind enough to spend their time making other artist..better artist.

ACBS can only offer the help. You have to accept it.

Joe Day

The Enrique workshop

6 P.M. open doors

At the Garden Center

“ This will be the only ACBS meeting
For July”

\$20. to work in the workshop

\$3. to view

Refreshment furnished by

ACBS

Contact Pres: Joe Kuhn to sign up for the
work shop

August 02

ACBS Regular Meeting

“Bonsai-Bonsai Artist”

By Joe Day

Host: ????

Tokanoma: Leo Fortner

NEW ORLEANS FALL AUCTION AUGUST 13TH

The New Orleans Bonsai Society will hold their Fall Auction at the Audubon Zoo entrance building, 6500 Magazine St. on August 13th. Viewing starts at 4 P.M. with the actual auction starting at 6 until the last item moves off the auction tables. Always a fun

event that allows bonsai artist a chance to bring home some great bonsai, bonsai material and supplies. Food and drink are always on hand. The zoo has plenty of parking and is easy to find. If you want to find some good food before the action starts it's just a

couple streets over or a 5 minute drive. The auction moves along quickly and the New Orleans crew checks you out with max efficiency. A fun and productive way to spend a Saturday evening.

Joe Day

SUMMER HEAT AND BONSAI

Bonsai are just like people, hot is both a time of activity and a time to slow down. Heat is not a big problem if enough water is available. The restrictions of growing in a container make the "grower"you...the rain maker when it doesn't come naturally.

Most species of plants can make do with less or more than the perfect amount of sunlight. The ability will allow the grower to shift the bonsai that is drying too quickly to a less stressful area without the sunlight restriction being a big growth limiting factor. The heating of the soil to about

the temp of the air will make the roots slow their growth. This slow down of the roots also limits the top growth. You don't want a lot of new growth that is lush, soft and makes demands of the roots that the roots are unable to provide.

Never let the soil level in the container drop. Daily watering, hard rain, the normal drawing down of the soil by the action of water pulling particles downward as the water settles can cause this. A small amount of soil can hold a lot of moisture. The loss of a cup full of soil can influence the drying profile causing the soil to become

dry quicker than it should for the size of container that you have.

A top dressing of just bark can make a huge difference in the length of time a container can hold moisture. I use this technique on my large forest and Maples . I usually add this top dress around July just before the hottest part of summer. When bonsai are root bound this is a excellent way to get them past the demands of the peak summer weeks.

You the grower are the modifying factor for the bonsai. They can't do it for themselves. Joe Day

DON'T BELIVE IT

You often see a lot of don't water during the peak of the day, don't let water drops sit on the leaves during sunlight. Water deep and don't water again until the bonsai soil is almost dry. Ok...when you can afford a "water boy" to walk your collection all day, every day you can buy into all this but.....when it's just you

an you are busy you water when and how you can. Trust me in Mobile we get naturally all types of watering. A quick shower from a small cloud as the sun shines bright as it rains. A sweeping quick rain that just washes over the foliage. A lot of small, quick rains....rains that last for days and days. It is best to water

early in the morning so the soil is peak moist as the day heats. When you water, water until water pours from the bottom of the pot. This way the soil pulls down clean air that fights the ability of fungus to take hold. Visit you bonsai as often as possible. Water pots that need it as often as needed. Joe Day

WHEN SOIL GOES BAD

The factors that make soil break down, pack down and become a mass that drain very slow or not at all are many. In short , the main problem is the organic matter in the soil breaks down as it is suppose to do when bacterial activity does what it should do. The level of heat, water, fertilizer and root activity can speed this process. The removal of all organics in the soil mix can solve this prob-

lem butin our very hot climate this also changes the drying profile. Our Pine or Fir bark is a excellent medium to hold moisture inside where it dries slowly and does not promote fungus.

If you start the growing year with a soil that is draining slow you will probably have soil problems by mid-summer. The very worst time to have that problem. Soil management is a term you have

probably never seen. It simply means you keep tabs on every bonsai in your collection as to the condition of the soil. You schedule soil work around this time of the year for the winter potting season. Soil management is ...life management...for a bonsai. The correct amount of soil and type of soil makes more difference in the development of a bonsai than any other factor.

Joe Day

FEEDING BONSAI NOW

Ok, 8 to 10 weeks of dry weather in Mobile isn't our typical way to start our summer but it happens. That dry makes for daily watering often more than once. That's a lot of water pouring through the soil. Add the rains that can and will come and you wash fertilizer and some times the soil out of the pot. I repeat this often in newsletters because it is so....critical. Plants do not grow if they do not feed. It's that simple.

I read in books and on the net about bonsai artist who feed their bonsai a small amount in the early Spring and again a small amount in

the Fall. That might be correct for their growing area and their climate but not for us. We have about a 300 day growing season. More or less depending on yearly changes but that's about average. Organic fertilizer put into the soil in small amounts about every 6 weeks will do the job for almost every species in our area.

I watch every bonsai in my collection during the peak growing months, March, April, May and June. I adjust the amount of extra fertilizer that is added to the container. Some species need a boost of acid fertilizer or higher nitrogen but for individual bonsai

for exact reasons. Every bonsai is unique so treat them that way. Read the visual signs that the individual bonsai show you with their foliage color, size and density.

If you are a starting bonsai artist you need to spend time just looking at your bonsai. Get a deep mental picture of your bonsai as they grow each month. As each bonsai is unique it's the individual changes that tell you what you need to know. Five Trident Maple bonsai side by side on a bench will each grow in individual unique way.

Joe Day

PLANNING WINTER WORK.....NOW

The article on soil talks about scheduling soil replacement now when you see it isn't functioning as it should. When you know what you need to do you also can buy what is needed, soil components, pots, pot screen, string or any thing else. Remember you need these things before most outlets have them avail-

able for the warm weather lawn crowd. Retail outlets often have end of season price reduction sales around September. If you know what you need you could save a lot of money. Our winters can be hot, cold, wet, dry or very stormy so don't plan to have every weekend as a good time to work. Root work, top work,

carving are the top 3 jobs You can get a lot of top work done inside a nice area but root work and carving are dirty work that works best outside of in a dirt floor shed. Know what you need to do then shift and adjust as the winter weather does the same thing. Joe Day

BONSAI POTS-PLAIN AND SIMPLE

A bonsai container should provide a healthy growing environment for the plant. That is the most important consideration. You always consider the way you want the bonsai to look in a show container but you develop the bonsai in a growing container.

When the bonsai has developed into a show bonsai you match it with a container that will enhance the bonsai. Remember this: a bonsai pot

can enhance and create a beautiful composition when the bonsai is already beautiful. A bonsai pot can not make a bad bonsai look good.but....a bad choice can make a great bonsai look bad.

A growing pot also called a developing pot should have a simple design and ample room for the roots.

When it comes to finding a container for a show class

bonsai asking the advice of someone who has a good eye for selecting pots is a very good idea. Russell Coker our ACBS club member has the ability to talk you through the process of what to consider and why. You are the artist so you decide but make that decision as an informed and knowledgeable artist. The wrong pot will cost you the same for more than the correct pot.

Joe Day

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The Invisible Sign Post

No sign post exist that says half way for the bonsai year. We live in a climate zone that allows many of our bonsai species to start root growth in January with buds and leaves shortly after. Our 60 golden day of growth in spring are behind us. Most species have finished all strong growth for the year. Some fall growth will show on some species but the prime growth for 2011 is behind us. The prime goal of the next few months is bonsai health. The next 12 weeks will test your love for bonsai. Bugs, sweat, storms, heat and humidity are not prime conditions of either humans or plants in containers but...you have to work hard to set your bonsai up for the fall growth period and not loose the development you have currently on your bonsai. On day of a –too dry condition– can destroy years of work. If you have your bonsai area set up it shouldn't take but a few minutes to check the soil level and moisture then water deeply. If a bonsai looks weak find the reason why and set a course of action. If you are uncertain of what to do, ask someone who understands that species for suggestion. Plan now your course of action for the final 6 months of the year. You are the Captain of your ship so plot a good course.

Joe Day
