

SOUTHERN BONSAIST

AZALEA BONSAI-PROGRAM 2 FOR MAY- BY RUSSELL COKER

The attendance and feedback from the March ACBS Azalea Bonsai program by Russell was very positive. The second program will allow Russell to give us more information about Azalea bonsai plus take a look at your Azalea bonsai.

As I write this various Azalea both bonsai and landscape and various species are blooming all over my bonsai benches and yard. Any Azalea bonsai in bloom immediately attracts any viewer of a bonsai collection or bonsai show. The Regional Show has some Azalea Bonsai in bloom adding a wonderful color to the show.

The first Russell Azalea program should have set you up to now ask all those questions you need to ask and further entice you to add some Azalea bonsai to your collection or seriously work on the Azalea you already have in your collection. The blooming period of Azalea might be short buton what a pleasure it brings to your bonsai collection viewing. Joe Day

**ACBS Monthly Meeting
May 3rd 7 P.M.**

**Russell Coker will present
Part-2
Azalea Bonsai**

Host: Buck Lawrence

Tokanoma: Becky Guthrie

The Azalea programs end our planned series of programs. What programs do you want to see presented? Let our President know.

ACBS SPRING SHOW AT THE REGIONAL LIBRARY

Great show! The weather was clear, the viewers wonderful and the tables full of beautiful bonsai. We filled the tables so next year we will probably need to increase the size of the show. We were set up quickly as the Library staff let us into the storage area early.

We broke down at 4:30 and were on the road by 4.45 P.M. We had a constant stream of viewers some with questions most just complimented us on the beautiful display of bonsai. The bonsai ranged from large to small bonsai. We had a great variety of species on

the show so very few species were duplicated. This made for a nice viewing show for the public. We had some people take handout and say they would attend a meeting....time will tell if that is true. Joe Day

THE FIRST 60 DAYS

You get with most species 90 percent of your growth in the first 60 days after your first new growth. Those are the golden 60 days when your wired bonsai grows and takes on a new shape. Those are the 60 days when with proper pruning you can greatly increase your ramification. Those strong growing days make scar healing progress quickly. Those are the days when the root system rebuilds after root pruning and potting into new soil.

Why 60 days. Actually it can be more than 60 days or a bit less than 60 days depending on just how the weather ex-

tremes of hot and cold come about. If we move smoothly from cold days and nights into ever warming days and nights you get smooth even growth. If the weather swings from cold to hot and back again you will get less growth. Plants slow when it gets below 40 and slow when it gets above 90 degrees. When a plant is growing in a container the low volume of soil, compared to a plant growing in the ground, makes the soil heat and cool quickly to the temperature of the air outside. Roots almost come to a stop when they are in 90 + degree soil. How do nursery grown plants continue to grow

during the summer? They are placed close together so the pots shade each other and they are watered often. The water evaporating from the foliage, on the ground, from the soil inside the container lowers the temp. The water gets repeated just often enough to do the job. It doesn't hurt that the frequent watering can also contain just enough fertilizer to keep the plant happy and growing.

Too wet or too dry can will also slow growth but the correct healthy soil mix takes a long time to get too dry and will not get too wet....ever.

Joe Day

EXTENDING THE 60 GOLDEN DAYS

Some years we move from the weather we call Spring, days in the 80's and nights in the 60's and into a period of rain and clouds every few days. The combination of clouds and rain moderate the temps, keep the humidity high. Bonsai love this unless.....they are crammed together in dank and dark place where the air

doesn't move very much. This becomes a fungus factory and kills bonsai quickly. Sunlight is the fuel of the plant factory. Like all fuel too much too quick burns a plant. Too little slows the plant and produces a unhealthy condition. It is easier to give a plant too little sun than too much. Making shade is easier and cheaper

than making sunlight. That's why nurseries put plants in full sun and if needed under shade cloth that controls the amount of sunlight that reaches the plant.

Avoid dark and dank, moderate sunlight only as needed by each bonsai.

Joe Day

FEEDING ALL SUMMER INTO THE FALL

Most bonsai books and Articles on the internet and in magazines talk about feeding your bonsai twice, early in the Spring and again in the Fall. Universal advice on bonsai care, one size fits all.. Usually does not fit ...us. We have more rainfall than any city in the continental USA , we use a very loose soil mix and we have about a 300 day growing season. Our bonsai need to feed steady for as long as

they are growing. I use the organic fertilizer sold at Lowe's..Plant Tone series. I use a small amount about every 6 weeks March until October. I also use "Black Cow" composted cow dung on my Boxwood. They stay green, growing strong all growing season. Feel free to use the fertilizer that you feel does best for your bonsai.

The Mobile climate, wet and hot for about 9 months, com-

bined with a soil that does not hold fertilizer for a long period makes bonsai growing in our area unlike bonsai anywhere else.

Number 1 priority for bonsai is good health. Why, because you should not wire, heavy prune or repot (except in the case of total soil breakdown) any weak bonsai. In short you only develop healthy bonsai.

Joe Day

A CHILD'S MIND

It's easier to teach someone about a subject if they know absolutely nothing about the subject before you start teaching them. Adults are not easy teaching subjects. It's easier to teach if you don't have to "un-teach" a person. I say "un-teach" but un-teaching is difficult if not impossible. It involves being willing to change your knowledge base...ever do that?

Moving forward in bonsai you need to have a child's mind. The mind of a child between 3 and 5 or 6 before school days ruin the mind. The type of mind that thinks everything is interesting, no-

tices everything and ask questions about everything. Not that you believe everything you just accept it "limited" to the next better explanation. When you have enough actual experience to know what is true you clear out all that "accepted" information. If you believe bonsai has only 5 styles, a bonsai pot can be selected by a graph from a magazine, you use glazed pots only with flowering trees or that "natural" is a actual color you may be beyond hope.

Bonsai is wonderful because it unfolds forever. The "I know that" changes endlessly to "I thought I knew

that, guess I was a bit wrong". You need to give your bonsai water, food and sunlight all the rest seems to be subject to a zillion minor to major -different this year-exceptions. Some of my bonsai are now 30+ years old. 30+ different years and different growth each year. You must understand each species growth habits and limits. As each year unfolds you have to adjust your care with both the health of the tree and the type weather the tree has to endure. The weather is daily so bonsai care is daily.

Joe Day

ENRIQUE CASTANO

OUR LAST BSF TOUR TEACHER FOR 2011

Enrique will also be at the ABS/BSF Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky teaching , growing bonsai from cuttings and seed, Botany for Bonsai, Treating wood and bark, and other things. This teacher teaches it all. Enrique will work with ACBS July 6th. We will have a workshop at the Garden Center starting at 7

P.M. although we will try to be at the Garden Center by 6 P.M.

Enrique comes from a largely tropical growing area so his talent and knowledge is strong in this area. We do not have a chance very often to get a tropical plant focused artist to come to ACBS and teach. I urge ACBS members

to attend this workshop and take part in the opportunity to increase your knowledge in the area of bonsai art. Mobile is fortunate that we can use a large range of both tropical and non-tropical species to build a bonsai collection. You can sign up now to work in this workshop.

Joe Day

PENSACOLA GULF COAST BONSAI SOCIETY

HOST THE TRI-CITIES SHOW..A REVIEW

Absolutely the best bonsai show in Pensacola...ever. Great location, a room full of bonsai, viewing stones, Japanese dolls and wonderful bonsai artist and 200 plus visitors viewing the show. The Garden Center was as perfect as it gets as a location. Close in parking, large doors, big room, clean restrooms and a kitchen. All but the largest bonsai were shown with individual foam board backed

space. Mobile, Ft Walton, Mississippi Gulf Coast and Pensacola bonsai were included in the show. As soon as the show opened at 10 A.M. the room filled with viewers and stayed full all day. The show ended at 5 P.M. and with close in parking and large doors the exit was quick and easy. The visitor sheets that most visitors signed had almost 200 names. Some visitors came in the side and

back doors so that was not a complete total. Lots and lots of visitors were taking photo's. Some of the larger bonsai were photographed with people like you would a movie star.

As bonsai shows go..this one was as good as a local show gets. Art shown on nice displays, in good lighting and in a comfortable setting with friendly people to answer any and all questions. **Joe Day**

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ACBS Web Site

Show Time

As the guy who writes the newsletter I could have spent time listing all the bonsai at the show, who they belong to, the species, size, pots and all that but I didn't. I helped set up the show then enjoyed the day. Leo and I stayed at the show all day without even a lunch break. I enjoyed watching the people look at the bonsai on display, ask good questions and just be amazed at what they were seeing. It gave me a chance to talk with other members. It has been a non-stop Spring. Our quick turn from freezing nights and cold day to warm nights and warmer days didn't leave us bonsai artist any options. We had to get to work doing every thing that needed to be done before hot weather close the door on the ability to do root work. Repotting and trimming has been intense. The weather from middle February to now middle March has been near perfect. Not too cold, not too hot.

Pensacola's bonsai society host the regional show this coming weekend then for the summer the shows are behind us. The bonsai show we will see now is the daily bonsai show of our own bonsai collections. I know most of our ACBS members have spent time this winter improving our bonsai collection areas. A good set up certainly makes the daily care routine both easier and enjoyable.

It's never too early to think about the next events. Our auction, our fall shows will both need items from your collections. Fall shows can be a bit of a challenge. After a long, long hot summer what bonsai will you have that can be "show ready". Species that "show" in the fall might need some major work to make them ready. If you start now you have months and months to get the "new" look ready for a fall show. Now is a good time to sort out bonsai that you don't intend to hold in your collection. Keep these bonsai healthy and donate them to the fall ACBS auction. Joe Day
