



TRIANGLE BONSAI SOCIETY

May 2007 Newsletter

www.trianglebonsai.com

From the President

Were you ready?

You never know here in North Carolina when winter is really over. By March, I had my trees outside since we had temperatures in the mid 80's, and many were showing lots of new growth. Then the Easter Bunny brought us a surprise with temperatures in the mid 20's; thank goodness I was able to bring all my trees inside. But then we got a funny smell in the house after a couple of days! It turns out it was the organic fertilizer Steve Zeisel made for us in the beginning of the year. Not only do the trees love it, but our dog Kuki seems to like the taste of it too.

Many thanks to everyone who signed the petition for the bonsai postage stamp at our last meeting.

One of our major fund raiser is coming up May 6th which is our annual picnic—see specific information from Harold later in this newsletter. As far as all the newcomers and beginners, this is a wonderful chance to pick up some very inexpensive material where you can practice some techniques, and do not have to be so concerned with making a mistake. I truly believe that a majority of my own bonsai skills have come from material I bought for a few dollars at TBS auctions and then have transformed them into something completely different over a couple of years. As I have been told, the most experience and reward comes from trees that “cannot” be made in to a bonsai, so you have to be extra creative to find the bonsai within.

I personally had a wonderful experience a few weeks ago with our "head start" program where I had a chance to share some of my bonsai knowledge with a new member. It takes just a little effort to be rewarded with seeing a young beginner become excited with our art. I hope that many of our newcomers will take full advantage of this program.

Ed Lauer

March 11 Meeting

Ed Lauer led the meeting. New members Steve Thomas and Frank Grillo were introduced. Approximately 20 people were in attendance.

May 19th at the NC Botanical Gardens in Chapel Hill, TBS will have bonsai on display. All members are welcome and encouraged to display their bonsai at this show.

October 12-21 NC State Fair exhibit: TBS will have at least 7 bonsai on display.

October 13-14 Carolinas Bonsai Expo at the NC Arboretum in Asheville. The five bonsai selected for this exhibit will be the best bonsai in the club. The best of these five bonsai (as judged by the guest artist) will win the President's Award for 2007!

Several members brought bonsai to be considered for the three exhibits this year. There were maples, pines, junipers and elms. These bonsai were critiqued by Ed Lauer, Tom Waldo, and Helen Davis. There were a few very nice bonsai and some with potential in a year or two.

After the critique, there was a BYO tree workshop.

Ted Matson Weekend

Ted Matson visited TBS on March 31st and April 1st. Ted taught two workshops on March 31st and held a lecture/demo on April 1st. The morning workshop was a "bring your own tree" followed in the afternoon by a Stewartia group planting.

During the first workshop, Ted shared a homemade recipe for insecticidal soap, which works well for eliminating pests, including scale and spider mites:

- 1 gallon water
- 1 Tablespoon dishwashing liquid (Ted prefers Dawn)
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil

Mix these three ingredients together. Fill a one pint spray bottle with the mixture. Then add 1 teaspoon rubbing alcohol to the spray bottle. The alcohol needs to be added immediately before use; it cannot be stored since it will evaporate. Spray the mix onto affected plants. Be sure to repeat this two more times at 7 day intervals, in order to kill any eggs that may continue to hatch.

In the second workshop, Ted discussed the growth characteristics of Stewartia and basics of group planting design.

- Stewartia likes acidic soil and humidity.
- They develop smooth reddish-cinnamon silky trunks, similar to Crape Myrtles.
- The branches tend to grow upright in a "candle flame" shape.
- Stewartia have soft, gentle curves with an ascending trunkline.
- Be careful wiring the branches, as they grow more vertically than horizontally.
- Do not put Stewartia in the full sun.
- Stewartia have a "Camellia-like" flower.

And information about group plantings:

- The #1 tree (the tallest tree with the thickest trunk) usually is placed where a single tree would be (slightly off-center and slightly forward or back in the pot). The placement of the others can be either in clumps or individually. Smaller trees placed to the outside of the #1 tree, and the smallest tree in front of or behind the other trees.
- Thickness of the trunk should correspond to the height of the tree. The tallest tree should have the thickest trunk, and the smallest tree should have the thinnest trunk.
- It is better to wire trees (if necessary) before placing the trees in the pot. Wiring

after the trees have been planted is difficult to do without disturbing the other trees.

- Harmony and consistency of trunklines is important in group plantings. Trunks should have similar movement.
- Spacing should be irregular and uneven, creating asymmetry in the design. No three trunks should be in a straight line. When the number of trees increases, it is more difficult to follow this rule. Spacing of trees helps create depth. Make sure that the distance between any two trees is not duplicated elsewhere.
- Placing the trees into one tight group on one side of the pot (or slab) with open space on the other side creates a much stronger, powerful composition.
- Looking down from the top, a triangular pattern is formed with either the base of the triangle in the front (Ted Matson's preference) or in the back (something Warren Hill has done, but Ted feels is more difficult).
- Placing the smallest tree in the front of the planting creates a near view forest planting. Placing the smallest tree in the back behind the other trees creates a far view planting.

On Sunday, Ed Lauer opened the meeting, and talked about the upcoming club picnic on May 6th. He encouraged members to bring any bonsai material to sell or donate to the club auction. Three bonsai styled by Bill Valavanis, Colin Lewis, and Warren Hill will be for sale or auction. Bring a covered dish to share, and your checkbook!

Ed Lauer donated a carving tool set, and David Keller donated a trident maple and Korean hornbeam, which were auctioned off at the March meeting. Thanks, Ed and David, for your donations!

Harold Johnson talked about TBS' upcoming display at the NC Botanical Gardens (www.ncbg.unc.edu) in Chapel Hill on May 19th. Anyone may display their bonsai, and we are all encouraged to participate.

Following, Ted Matson held a lecture/demo featuring a *Juniper procumbens nana*. As Ted worked on the juniper, he shared information about the species and about creating a bonsai:

- When removing the tree from a nursery container, lift the tree by the trunk and tap the container until it loosens and falls off. Don't pull the container off as this may damage the roots.
- Ascendancy of the trunkline - the trunkline should go progressively upwards (not horizontal), unless you are creating a cascade. Some sections of a juniper's trunk may become horizontal at some point before becoming vertical again. This can be corrected by changing the planting angle to keep the trunk from appearing horizontal.
- Define the trunkline and branch structure. Then simplify the trunkline by removing unnecessary branches and deadwood. Remove coarse growth of foliage.
- Removing bark to create jin should be done before the bark dries, while the cambium is still green. Dried bark is very difficult to remove. Jin should complement the live branches, creating harmony in the bonsai. All branches should look old or young, not both.
- A consistent rhythmic pattern of branches can be achieved through design of the bonsai and pruning. When pruning junipers, scale-like foliage growth is pinched with the fingers. Needle-like foliage is cut with scissors.

- Use a coarse, free-draining soil mix. An efficient soil has good water and air exchange, yet still retains nutrients for the roots.

Merritt Barnett

May is a BIG month for TBS

Sunday, May 6th will be the annual TBS picnic, member sale and club auction at Lake Crabtree Park. In addition to the great food, there will also be pre-bonsai, bonsai, pots, and you-never-know-what-else for sale. Following lunch, items donated by members as well as some club items will be auctioned. There will be bonsai books and a very special Japanese painting donated by Fred and Lorie Smith. And remember those exquisite demo trees: the juniper styled by Warren Hill, the formal upright cryptomeria by Bill Valavanis, and the yew by Colin Lewis.

Here is how it all works:

- If you plan to sell things, arrive between 12 and 12:30 to set out your for-sale items.
- Bring something to eat that goes well at a picnic.
- If you are coming to buy, arrive about 12:30 so you'll have time to shop and set out your food dish.
- The club will furnish hot dogs, hamburgers, condiments, buns, drinks, ice, and paper products.
- Celebrity chef, Sonny Poché has again agreed to honor us with his culinary skills.
- Lunch will be ready about 1:00.
- In this part of the world you can expect it to be a warm day, but your never know, so dress accordingly. The shelter is large enough that a little rain won't cause the picnic to be cancelled.
- Following lunch the auction will begin.

Oh yes, bring lots of cash or a blank check, plastic won't work.

Directions:

Lake Crabtree Park is located just off Interstate 40 between Raleigh/Cary and Durham. The exit is #285, Aviation Parkway. Coming from Raleigh/Cary, turn left onto Aviation Parkway. Coming from Durham/Chapel Hill, turn right onto Aviation Parkway. The entrance to the park is on the left and clearly marked. TBS has reserved the Beech shelter which will be on your right as you drive along the main park road.

You are guaranteed to have a fun time and have plenty to eat! See you at the picnic!

Saturday, May 19th: Please join us for the Triangle Bonsai Society Display at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill. All members are encouraged to bring one or more of their bonsai to display for the public.

The objective of the club display is to acquaint more of the public with bonsai as an art form based on design principles and sound horticultural practices. Trees that have been in training as bonsai for less than a year are just as welcome as trees that have been in training for many years. Many of our audience could be intimidated by some of the larger, more developed bonsai but would believe that they could enjoy the hobby once they see how a bonsai starts.

The NC Botanical Garden staff will set up tables outside the Totten Center or inside if it is raining. In order to answer many of the common questions of the public, we will prepare place cards for each tree on display with the following information provided by the TBS member before the event:

- Common name
- Botanical name
- Time in training
- Width of container or spread of tree (helps determine number of tables needed)

The display will be manned at all times by several club members to answer questions. There also will be handouts with basic information about bonsai, the TBS website and when and where we meet.

Please consider which of your trees you would like to display and begin preparing them with the May 19th date in mind. Tidy wiring is fine. A littered soil surface and weeds are not so good. If you have a stand and a companion plant to place beside your tree, please bring those. You will also want to provide the name for each companion plant.

This will be an outstanding opportunity to show many in our community what we love so much, our bonsai.

Just in case we have more trees offered for display than the garden can accommodate, please list the trees in priority order. I must request that each member make arrangements for the trees to be delivered to the garden in time to be put on display and for their return. I will provide information as to who is displaying trees ahead of time so you can network with others to deliver trees in the morning and return trees in the afternoon.

Trees can arrive as early as 8:45 but no later than 9:00 Saturday morning. They may be picked up as early as 4:00 that afternoon but must be removed 4:30.

If you have an interest in being a “bonsai interpreter” at the garden, please indicate which of the times below you can be on hand to answer questions and remind the public to observe the trees from a distance but not touch. We need a number of members for each time slot so don’t hesitate to volunteer.

8:45 – 11:00 - Help set up the display as well as serve as interpreters

11:00 – 1:00 - Interpreters

1:00 – 3:00 - Interpreters

3:00 – 4:30 - Help take down the display and serve as interpreters

If you would like to volunteer to give a 30 minute talk and demonstration at 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM or 3:00 PM, please indicate which time.

Of course directions to the garden and the special parking area for our members will be provided.

Harold Johnson

Points of Interest

- The 2007 ABS meeting will be held in Virginia Beach June 21-24, 2007. Start making plans now for what will be a premiere event. Visit the ABS website, or click on <http://freeplone2.openia.com/abs/abs-seminars>
- Check out Randy Clark's web site for numerous classes being held throughout 2007 at the Bonsai Learning Center in Charlotte. There's plenty going on for beginners and advanced bonsai students. And be sure to notice the summertime workshop, picnic, and open house featuring Jim Doyle June 15-17!: <http://www.bonsailearningcenter.com>

Member Update!

For details, see e-mail attachment; personal information not posted on the web

New Members:

Frank Grillo
Steven Thomas

Renewing members:

Reggie Venable
Martin & Patti Kopecky

Changes: Fred and Lorrie Smith's e-mail address
Martin Evans home phone

2007 Upcoming TBS Events

May 19	TBS Display at NC Botanical Gardens
Jun 2	Workshops with Jim VanLandingham
Jun 3	Lecture/Demo with Jim VanLandingham
Jul 8	Novice Focus
Aug 5	Final selection of Expo trees
Sep 9	Expo display setup
Oct 7	BYOT and new talent
Oct 13-14	2007 Asheville bonsai expo
Nov 4	Workshop followed by lecture/demo with Arthur Joura
Dec 2	Holiday Party and auction

Jim Easterbrook