



# BONSAI SOCIETY



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## Upcoming Events

- Monthly Meeting at 6pm on 04/12—Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Saturday Workshop at 9:00am on 04/17—BBG Potting Shed
- 04/16—04/17—BBG Plant Sale

Visit us on the Web at:  
**[Alabamabonsaisociety.org](http://Alabamabonsaisociety.org)**  
(Be sure to register on the website to stay informed of updates and events)

## Presidents Notes

Old man winter is showing signs of giving way to the youth of spring. I have small leaves on several types of trees and many buds swelling on others. This activity spurs us on as bonsai artist to start preparing for the coming days. Be preparing your soil mixture, scrubbing pots and evaluating if the time is right for a plant to join your collection as a bonsai. With all this said this month is going to be very busy for our society. The activities that will be happening are the Botanical Gardens Spring Plant sale, our Saturday workshop and the final preparation for our May Bonsai Show. *(The Saturday Workshop and some of the BBG plant sale occur on the same day)*

I wish to thank those that chose to assist in the Cherry Blossom Festival. Those that helped were Bill and Suzanne Gabert, Jack Pierce, Doug Unken-

holz, Jane McKenzie, Karen and Fred Rock and my lovely wife Charlotte. We had a wonderful time and the gardens were beautiful. There was a large turn out and we all talked to a lot of people. We had so much fun talking Bonsai and showing the visitors the art of Bonsai.

I hope you are planning to go to Rendezvous at Brussels Bonsai. This is a good time for all attending.

Our Bonsai show is fast approaching and the time necessary to prepare trees is becoming shorter. I will be asking each of you to submit at least one tree for the show. Our show is a group effort and I hope that everyone will plan to be very active in the entire process. If you are asked to help please do so gracefully.

**Our Show is May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, Please plan to be there.**

The Saturday workshop in March was very successful. We had twenty members working on the trees that we plan to sell. This is a good time to learn from others and see the same plant from different mentor's views. If you have never attended this you are doing yourself a disservice. The Saturday workshops are where the information from the lecture meetings can be put into the practice of the art of Bonsai.

I wish to **Thank** each of you for your support in the ongoing adventure that we call Bonsai. For our Society to be strong the bonds between us must also be strong.

See you at the  
Meeting,

*Oscar*

**ABS Officers****Oscar Ethridge**  
*President***Jack Pierce**  
*Vice President***Belinda Waldo**  
*Treasurer***Charlotte Ethridge**  
*Recording Secretary***Marty Bostick**  
*Corresponding Sec.***Directors:****Brian Van Fleet**  
2009 – 2010**Sandra Haynes**  
2009 – 2011**Bill Gabert**  
2008 - 2010*April Program Agenda***6:00-7:00** All Members: Tree consultation with mentors....bring some trees to work on.**7:00-7:10** Presidents announcements**7:10-7:30** Night tree show...emphasis maples**7:30** Main program presented by Brian Van Fleet**A POWER POINT PRESENTATION ON RAMIFICATION**

Primary trees will be maples but others will also be discussed.

Importance of ramification to bonsai

Examples of good ramification

Creating ramification

Pinching

Defoliating

Pruning

Maintaining Ramification

*Jack Pierce*

**Be sure to bring any trees that you would like to be critiqued by one of the mentors.**

*Saturday Workshop*

During our Saturday Workshop following our Monday meeting, we will be working on Club trees that will be sold in the Spring Show.

Also, if you have a tree that you need assistance with, please bring it to the workshop. There are always mentors available at the workshops that are willing to assist

others with the design of your tree(s).

By participating in these workshops members of all levels are able to have hands-on time with their trees.

## April Bonsai Care

*Spring has sprung...*

April is a beautiful month in Birmingham; redbuds, dogwoods, wisteria, and azaleas all sweet in bloom! Just like the local flora, bonsai trees are pushing growth now too. Repotting is mostly complete and our attention turns to pinching, feeding, and getting back into the watering routine. Some things to keep in mind this month:

1. Newly-repotted trees aren't consistent in their watering needs yet. I have noticed that trees which were pruned hard at repotting may seem to be dry, although the soil isn't. Until the roots colonize the pot, not everything in the pot is available to the tree. I keep a piece of bamboo skewer inserted into the root pad and check it for moisture until the tree seems to be taking up water regularly...usually by the end of this month.
2. Watering is an art by itself. Newcomers to bonsai read that overwatering can kill a tree. This is true, but it's not the quantity that hurts, it's the frequency. Water until it drains *freely* through the bottom of the pot. I water three trees at a time, and three times per tree... getting each pot wet first to break the surface tension, going back again to penetrate the soil, and a third time to really get the water flowing through the drain holes. In addition to adding water to the soil, overhead watering also pulls fresh air into the pot, keeping the soil healthy.
3. Trees are growing strongly now, so this is a make-or-break month for improving ramification. We'll talk about creating good ramification at this month's club meeting. Mostly, this is done right at the bench during the growing season. I keep an old pair of scissors and tweezers next to the trees that need daily attention; beeches and Japanese Maples can require twice-daily attention during this month to build the Best ramification.
4. Feeding is definitely a personal matter. I use an inorganic soil, so my feeding program is organic. The key is to feed *in response* to growth, rather than to stimulate growth. Feeding should be viewed as replenishing nutrients taken up by the tree, not a defibrillator to jump-start growth. It's also important to remember that trees do create their own energy through photosynthesis, so err on the conservative side. Chemical fertilizers can burn the roots, and are like junk food for trees; a quick wash of nutrients, which are rinsed out by the next watering. Organics feed the soil, or the bacteria in the soil, which in turn ensure needed macro- and micronutrients are always available to some degree in the soil.



*Brian Van Fleet*

## *Preparing Your Entries For The Spring Show*

The following schedule may help you to prepare your trees for the show:

### **EVENT TIMING**

**35 days before show** 28 days before show: Prepare for pre-show fertilizing. Fertilize. Perform fine wiring and detailed grooming. Prepare another supply of fertilizer. Fertilize. "Pot" accent pieces. Prepare another batch of fertilizer.

**21 days before SHOW:** Fertilize. Prepare another batch of fertilize.

**14 days before show:** Fertilize.

**7 - 2 days before show** 1 day before show: Perform final detailed grooming Water thoroughly. Clean pots and stands.

**PRE-SHOW FERTILIZATION.** For your entries that need improvement in color, plan to feed them on a weekly basis for four weeks prior to the show, using the following information and the above tabulated data, Thirty-five days before the show, put two tablespoons of blood meal in a quart container and add one pint of water. Seal the container and shake vigorously daily for seven days. Twenty eight days before the show, strain the liquid. Add water to the strained liquid to make a gallon of the mix and fertilize your entries. Repeat this process weekly until show time. This process should make your trees look very lush and green and will not harm your moss . To improve moss, use one tablespoon of fish emulsion fertilizer to a gal Ion of water and spray the moss thoroughly at 28 days and again at 21 days prior to show.

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## *Joe Day Workshop Was A Huge Success*

The Joe Day workshop on March 27th—28th was a huge success. Joe was very instrumental in helping others with their tree development.

There were a variety of trees that were worked on with Joe. He also created sketches for our members that requested one that reflected Joe's vision of what the tree would look like in a future state after he worked on it.

Lunch was provided to our club members as part of their workshop fee. For those that missed the event, they truly missed a great opportunity and some good food.



# April 2010

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Monthly Meeting	13	14	15	16 BBG Plant Sale	17 Workshop BBG Plant Sale
18 BBG Plant Sale	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

# May 2010

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Monthly Meeting	11	12	13	14	15 Spring Show
16 Spring Show	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					