



# Alabama Bonsai Society Newsletter February 2011 Edition



## Inside This Issue

Presidents Notes	1
Meeting Agenda	2
Workshop details	2
February Care	3
Upcoming Workshops	4
February Calendar	5

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[AlabamaBonsaiSociety.org](http://AlabamaBonsaiSociety.org)

Alabama Bonsai Society

February 2011

## President's Notes for February

Bad weather interrupted our first meeting. In discussion with Brian and closely watching the weather on the computer we decided to cancel the meeting. Sandra and I managed to call or leave a message with almost everyone Sunday night so folks could plan. I don't believe anyone would have been able to get to the BBG even if they tried.

The Saturday workshop was a great success as over 30 members attended and we worked on all the Pavilion evergreens with the help of our mentors Gerry, Paul, Brian, Bill, Sandra and Oscar. We also managed to work on trees brought by members. A really productive workshop.

Our meetings will now have a different empha-

sis as I alluded to in the announcement for the January meeting. This month we will bring the half dozen deciduous Pavilion trees to the meeting. Mentors will select a tree to work on and the first hour of the meeting will involve small groups working with mentors on the club trees. At 7:00 we will have announcements, listing of upcoming events, a night show and then the small groups led by the mentors will discuss what they have done to the Pavilion trees. We hope that this kind of close up interaction with mentors and trees will be beneficial for everyone.

If this basic concept is productive we will do this at each meeting with Pavilion trees, members and mentors trees to actively work

on needed seasonally appropriate care throughout the year.

We work on our bonsai intensively throughout the growing season and in this manner folks can learn what to do with all varieties of trees throughout the season.

The Saturday workshop will be a followup of more intensive work on the trees used at the meeting. Of course it is important for members to bring trees to obtain help.

I look forward to seeing you all at the meetings and workshops.

Jack

**ABS Officers**

**Jack Pierce**  
*President*

**Brian Van Fleet**  
*Vice President*

**Belinda Waldo**  
*Treasurer*

**Marge Wirth**  
*Recording Secretary*

**Marty Bostick**  
*Corresponding Sec.*

**Directors:**

**John Walker**  
2011 – 2013

**Sandra Haynes**  
2009 – 2011

**Brian Van Fleet**  
2010—2012

**Upcoming Events**

**February 14th Meeting**

**Monthly Workshop**  
**February 19th**

**February Meeting—Feb. 14th**

- 6:00-7:00** Work on Pavillion trees and any trees members bring
- 7:00-7:10** President's announcements
- 7:10- 7:15** 2011 Calendar of events: Brian  
Soil availability/updates
- 7:16- 7:30** Evening Tree Show
- 7:30-8:00** Program: Pavilion tree Discussion and Critiques: break into groups to study and discuss a bonsai (provided), then share the study group's thoughts with the full club. We will continue the work on these trees at the Saturday workshop, including repotting.

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**Saturday Workshop—February 19th**

The Saturday workshop will consist of working on Pavilion trees. This will include group study and some repotting of the trees. The workshop will begin at 9am in the Potting Shed at the Botanical Gardens.

## February Bonsai Care

### Azalea time...Really?

Not exactly what the books and magazines state about seasonal care of azaleas, but I have had exceptional results with working on my Kurume azaleas this month. Here are my reasons:

Azaleas do lose leaves over the course of winter, usually holding on to only those surrounding the flower buds at the tips of branches. This makes wiring easier.

Since the buds are already set for the spring, wiring now allows us to position flower buds exactly where we want them; thinning out excess buds to direct energy to those we want to keep.

Wiring in winter reduces the risk of dislodging the buds; they are held tightly on the tips of branches now. Waiting until spring increases the chance of damaging the buds.

Branches can be somewhat brittle, especially where they fork and where they join with the trunk. In the winter, they are more forgiving.



It is cold out, and I'll admit that I've missed seeing the trees up on the benches, so I'll skip ahead a little and discuss the subsequent care of azaleas, following the winter wiring.

In early April, the Kurume azaleas' flower buds swell and reveal multiple flowers within each bud. Carefully select the strongest buds and remove others, leaving one bud at each terminal. Like balancing candles on pines, selecting the buds that are similarly-sized and advanced will assure a spectacular show in a couple weeks.



Once blooms begin to fade, carefully cut them off, including the ovary; flush with the top set of leaves. This is easily done with a sharp pair of scissors. Feed the tree heavily and let it gain some strength. It will begin to grow, and I allow free growth until early June.

In early June, I prune the trees back very hard, back to forked branches, nearly defoliating it. With few leaves on the tree to transpire, I remove the moss from the soil to facilitate the soil drying. Continue to feed the tree and let it grow freely for the rest of the year. Flower buds will set by mid-August, and that sets me up to repeat the process.

When I repot the azaleas every three years in March, I will also remove all flower buds and give it a year off to recover.

Now...back to the present. It's cold, the trees are sleeping...and I've got an azalea to wire!

*Brian Van Fleet*

## Upcoming Workshops

**By now, our theme is clear: It's all about the trees!**

Nothing helps us hone our bonsai skills better than working on trees... unless it's working on trees with the Pros! The ABS is proud to announce our two spring workshops with Joe Day and Peter Warren!

**Joe Day: March 26 and 27, 2011**



Joe Day is making an encore performance at the ABS. He's been working with bonsai for 30 years, and resides near Mobile, Alabama. A great bio written by Dale Cochoy is here. Some of Joe's expertise includes large trident maples, slab plantings, and some of his slabs are featured at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum.

Registration will be available at the February meeting.

Image source: <http://www.lcbsbonsai.org/Gallery.htm>

**Signup sheets  
for these  
workshops are  
available at the  
Club meeting**

**Peter Warren: April 9 and 10, 2011**

Peter is a well-traveled bonsai artist who studied under Master Kunio Kobayashi for 6 years in Japan. Peter is based in both Japan and the UK, and makes frequent visits to the US as well. This will be Peter's first appearance with the ABS. The workshops are full, but come by to see his styling demo on Saturday morning! Peter's bio is here.



Image source: <http://www.artofbonsai.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=1550>

# February 2011

Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 <i>Meeting</i>	15	16	17	18	19 <i>Workshop</i>
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

**We're on the web at:  
[alabamabonsaisociety.org](http://alabamabonsaisociety.org)**