



# BONSAI SOCIETY



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## Upcoming Events

- Monthly Meeting at 6pm on 03/08—Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Saturday Workshop at 9:00am on 03/13—BBG Potting Shed

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*

I can hardly wait for spring. I have noted swelling of buds on my maples. I hope your trees have survived this strange winter. We are about to start our busiest season with all the repotting and pruning. With this idea in mind our program this meeting is to be a power point on transplanting. I think this is a timely addition to our knowledge. I hope everyone enjoyed our last meeting presentation as much as I did. I wish to thank Brian with his presentation and the excellent information that was presented.

**Reminder: Bring trees for the Night Show!**

The Saturday workshop will be the final preparation of the trees for the plant sale for the BBG spring sale April 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and

18<sup>th</sup>. If you have not signed up for the BBG plant sale as a volunteer, Jane will have the list at the meeting. We will also be bringing the trees in the pavilion out of winter storage for the

**Cherry Blossom Festival on March 20<sup>th</sup>.**

A reminder the Preview at Brussels Bonsai is the 6<sup>th</sup> of March.

Bring your sifters to the Saturday Workshop so we can prepare planting soil for the new trees that we need to transplant.

**We need the mentors** to help in the transplanting process. Members please bring trees that you have questions about, but our primary focus is the transplanting process.

If you have suggestion about our meeting topics please let Jack

or myself know so we can find a person to present.

We have a very limited number of spaces left for the **Joe Day Workshop** on March 27 and 28<sup>th</sup>: We have one slot left in each workshop for a total of four slots. The list will be at the meeting for you to sign up.

Remember our meet and greet is 6-7 pm and our meeting starts at 7pm.

*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

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

## *February Program Agenda*

**6:00 to 7:00** - is reserved for members to consult about and work on their trees. Make good use of this time.

**Program 7:00**

Brief announcements by the president, Oscar Etheridge.

The night show will include regular trees and trees for which there is a seasonal appropriate activity that can be quickly demonstrated.

Main presentation by Jim McLane: Repotting: a seasonal appropriate activity. Jim has a DVD on repotting made by 4 Japanese artists. The DVD will be a power point presentation on the large screen so everyone can see the details. The Japanese sound will be turned off and Jim will make comments regarding the procedures. Many people in bonsai think that repotting is a simple technique of soil removal, root pruning and soil replacement. Several of us have sat in on an 8 hour Kathy Shaner workshop on repotting which was barely enough time to cover the basics. She continues to add to her repotting program during her other workshops. The variables involved include the tree, the species, size, age, health, rootball and tree style as well as the size and style of the pot. Aggregate size and percentage relative to organic soil components need to be modified for each tree depending on the above variables.

Proper potting is required for healthy bonsai and healthy bonsai are necessary to develop good bonsai.

Jack Pierce

## *Saturday Workshop*

During our Saturday Workshop following our Monday meeting, we will be working on Club trees that will be sold in the BBG Plant Sale in May. This will be the last opportunity for working on the trees for the sale.

Also, if you have a tree that you need assistance with, please bring it to the work-

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.

## March Bonsai Care

### “Finally...Lamb or Lion...I'll take it”

It has been a COLD winter, but the trees finally come out of exile this month and it's time to work! Hopefully we've all found a few warm days this winter to sift soil ingredients and scrub pots because the second week of March is prime-time for repotting. Repotting is different than typical bonsai styling because the amount of time one gets to see and work on roots is so short and infrequent; quite unlike the rest of the tree that we contemplate each day.

However, root work will make or break a bonsai. For that reason, and the fact that I have a horrible memory, I make it a point to photograph my bonsai as I work on the roots. This allows me to make a plan, and (more importantly) helps me remember that plan during the next repotting session!



Here is a Japanese Maple that has the foundation necessary to become a great bonsai; but the nebari needs further development and ramification. Here are a couple photos taken as I worked to shorten the circled root.

*This was in 2008. Notice the radial spread of the smaller roots. Keeping them combed out like this will make future transplanting easier, and keep branches growing outward predictably from the trunk.*



*This is the same tree in 2009. I hadn't planned to repot this year, but it had grown so much, that a minor trimming was necessary. It will be thoroughly worked over this spring, like the 2008 transplanting, and the root will be shortened again to the next "branch".*

After transplanting, pay close attention to watering and temperature for the next several weeks.

Trees whose roots have been greatly shortened have a diminished "reach" within the pot. While the soil may not seem dry, water within the pot isn't accessible unless it comes into contact with the roots. Shredded sphagnum moss slows evaporation and may buy an extra day between watering.

Freezes are bad for recently-transplanted trees; watch the temperatures and prepare to move trees if a late freeze is predicted.

Time to get those hands dirty! Spring is here...will it be in like a lamb or lion?

*Brian Van Fleet*