

January  
2009



SPRINGFIELD BONSAI SOCIETY

**Palmatum Press**

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

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Welcome to the new Bonsai year! We hope everyone had a happy holiday season!

The first meeting of this year is not until February 9th – but this issue should get you warmed up to the 2009 SBS bonsai season. A calendar of events for 2009 is included with this newsletter. Please mark your calendars and join us for each and every meeting.

## Future Tense 2009 SBS Bonsai Preview

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**SBS Officers for 2009** - last year's SBS Officers have agreed to continue on in 2009. SBS President Gary Trammell lead our bonsai club through an event filled calendar last year and I'm sure this year will be as exciting! If you have any questions, the best way to contact one of the officers is by phone -

President, Gary Trammell – 217-529-4080 (R)  
Vice President, Scott Day – 217-585-8473 (R)  
Treasurer, Tom Applebee  
Secretary, Manish Sumant, 217-652-9619 (M)

**Guest artist workshops** – there are two guest artist workshops planned for 2009. Spring workshop with Erik Wigert will be on **Saturday, April 4** at Cass Bonsai. Fall workshop with Michael Persiano will be on **Saturday, September 5** at WPBG. All guest artist workshops will be free for current SBS members – this includes artist fees, cost of supplies (soil, wire, screen, raffia etc). Tree and pot will be at your own expense unless otherwise stated. Your active participation throughout the year and especially at the auction fundraiser ensures SBS can afford to organize such events.

Erik Wigert recently won the Best Tropical Award at the First National US Bonsai Exhibition held in Rochester, NY. Erik will be bringing along variety of trees at various price levels (Bougainvillea, Bald Cypress, Buttonwood etc.) so please make plans to register for this workshop. Erik's web site is <http://www.wigertsbonsai.com/>. This workshop will be held at Cass Bonsai Gardens (about an hour south of Springfield) – some members have already talked about car pooling.

You might be already familiar with Michael Persiano's work. Michael was the guest artist for our spring 2008 workshop and has written Bonsai articles in various magazines and on the internet. His new web site is <http://www.wix.com/mpersiano/Michael-Persiano-Bonsai-Studio>. Michael's workshop will be a BYOT, so start picking out the tree you want Michael to work on with you.

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(Continued from page 1)

Once Michael has worked on the tree you will most likely end up with a masterpiece, so you want to pick a good sized tree with lots of possibilities!

### Special Events:

– May 9th and 16th, Beginners workshop offered through LLCC. Registration fee for these workshops is \$15 and supplies cost \$40. To register, call LLCC Community Learning 217-786-2292.

– SBS Fall Show and Japanese Festival at UIS. SBS Officers are working with UIS faculty and staff to see if we can hold this event.

**Online Discussion Group:** Last year I started an online discussion group through which you receive this e-newsletter. You can post your own observations / questions to the group by sending an email to [BonsaiSBS@yahoogroups.com](mailto:BonsaiSBS@yahoogroups.com). If you wish to respond to someone's post just hit Reply on the email. By default the reply will go out to the entire group so everyone can learn and benefit from your answer.

**SBS Monthly Meetings:** Regular meetings will be on the second Monday of each month, from February through November. Meetings will be held at Washington Park Botanical Garden unless otherwise noted in the calendar of events. Each meeting is like a mini-workshop — we usually have a few experienced members eager to help out. So we hope to see you all there!

Meeting Date	Topic/Activity	Presenters
Monday, February 9	Dessert Social Bonsai Styling and refinement	Roland Folse videos
Monday, March 9	Repotting – BYOT*	SBS members
Saturday, April 4 (at Cass)	Bougainvillea & Tropicals Workshop	Guest Artist - Erik Wigert
Monday, April 13	Pest Control	Dick Adorjan
Saturday May 9 and 16	Beginners Workshop	SBS members
Monday, May 11	Non-Traditional Bonsai Mums, Lantana etc.	Gary Trammell Milt Ciskowski
Monday, June 8	Azaleas	Roland Folse
Monday, July 13	Tropical Bonsai & Companion Plants	Milt Ciskowski, Jim Reynolds (?)
Monday, August 10	Wiring, Shaping and Refining Trees	SBS members
Saturday, September 5	Demonstration/Workshop Bring Your Own Tree	Guest Artist - Michael Persiano
Saturday, September 12 (UIS?)	Fall Show and Japanese Festival	SBS members
Monday, September 14	Photographing Bonsai	Dick Adorjan, Dick Hendee
Monday, October 12	Evergreen Styling	Scott Day, Roland Folse
Monday, November 9	Election of Officers, Planning Meeting	
At Washington Park Botanical Garden unless otherwise noted	* Bring your own tree to style or repot or wire as the case may be	

## Past Tense 2008 Review

2008 started with a Dessert social in February and we all enjoyed a great Powerpoint presentation prepared by Scott for this meeting. Mike brought in his Makita and we saw first hand how useful a power tool is for carving deadwood. I have a couple of trees that need carving and I hope to use my Dremel tool set this winter.



One interesting bit of information came from Dr. Folse's observation of fertilization practices in northern California. Golden State Bonsai collections were using empty tea bags filled with organic fertilizer mixes to fertilize their trees. Communication with GSBF revealed the practice of using extensive organic and inorganic fertilizers since their soils contain no organic materials. "Note that our soils contain no organics we use akadama, various sands lavas, crushed granite and charcoal, thus the organics in our fertilizer are very important. This system is not unlike that done in Japan, although most bonsai practitioners use much more fertilizer than they did in this country just a few years ago. We don't starve our plants; we feed them very well and keep them healthy and pinch and prune them often to keep them in shape." ... quoting Linda Ferzoco, Recording Secretary, GSB Collection North Committee., trustee of GSBF Board.



In April we had a workshop with guest artist Michael Persiano. This event was very well attended. Michael also worked on Dr. Folse's private collection and the tree they worked on will be appearing in Bonsai Focus magazine pretty soon. Everyone really enjoyed Michael's work so we invited Michael for a repeat trip in 2009 and he agreed to come to Springfield in September. The September 5th, 2009 workshop with Michael will be a BYOT workshop.

Gary Trammell and fellow SBS members conducted a Bonsai Basics workshop in April. This workshop was offered through LLCC's community learning series and went full capacity. This workshop was so popular that we will be offering it again this year on Saturday May 9th and 16th. Please see *Upcoming Events* section of this newsletter for more information.



A Japanese garden was established at UIS on the southwest corner of Sangamon Auditorium building and it was dedicated to the university on May 16th. Scott Day, Gary Trammell and Dick Adorjan helped in creating this unique landscape. We hope this can be a part of the SBS fall show in 2009.

At the May meeting David Sturgill showed us how easy it is to make cement slabs for forest style bonsai landscape. In June a few SBS members attended the MABA Bonsai Convention in Indianapolis. This year the St. Louis club is hosting a Shohin Bonsai Convention from April 24 through 26th. They have quite a few workshops and demos organized along with a awarded exhibition. Please see *Upcoming Events* section for details.



During the June meeting we created some landscape Bonsai (Saikei or Penjing style) and we styled Tropical trees during the July meeting. Milt had brought in some Pomegranate trees and anyone how likes fruiting tree bonsai would like the little Pomegranates on this tree!!

Dr. Folse did a great presentation on styling a nursery bought Spruce tree in the August meet-

ing. He showed us how easy it is to create fairly inexpensive bonsai using common nursery stock.



In October we hosted guest artist Cheryl Manning. This was Cheryl's third trip to Springfield and everyone thoroughly enjoyed working with her again. We styled collected Ponderosa Pines.



On October 25th we had our Fall Bonsai Extravaganza at Lincoln Memorial Gardens. This included a Bonsai exhibit made of trees from the club members' collections and the SBS annual bonsai auction and fundraiser.

The display in the visitor center of the garden complemented the fall color of trees outside. More pictures from the show can be viewed at <http://picasaweb.google.com/bonsaisbs> – many thanks to Dick Hendee for taking professional quality pictures of the exhibition.

## Chemistry of Bonsai Soil Mix – Organic or Inorganic - my first attempt at an original article!

Organic food is the trend in groceries, in bonsai quite the opposite is true. The use of completely inorganic soil mixes in bonsai appears to be increasing based on my discussions with various bonsai practitioners. Soil mixes are one of the most controversial topics in bonsai and everyone has their own formula. Some believe the use of a totally inorganic mix "creates a high maintenance condition which must be constantly monitored" and therefore it is not ideal for non-professional bonsai enthusiasts.<sup>1</sup> Others believe inorganic mixes do not work for pines.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there is no one soil mix that is ideal for every condition or every tree, so this article is a general observation.

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

Inorganic mixes are composed of materials like turface, akadama, crushed gravel, sand etc. and do not have any organic material like pine bark, peat moss, oak leaf mulch etc. Inorganic soil relies totally on fertilizers to provide the macronutrients (N-P-K), micronutrients (Magnesium, Sulphur, Zinc etc.) and microorganisms (mycorrhiza) the roots need to provide the plant.

For organic soil mixes the decay of organic materials in the soil will provide nutrients the root system needs (N, P, K and some micronutrients), however organic bonsai soil mix is also quite inert and will need regular fertilization as well.

Organic materials will retain moisture and nutrients better than inorganic materials even if the inorganic components include water absorbing material like akadama or turface. This makes the organic mix friendlier to irregular watering or fertilization schedule.

Inorganic mixes can be fertilized with either organic or inorganic fertilizers or a combination of both.<sup>3</sup> Inorganic fertilizers include MiracleGro, Scotts or other garden fertilizers. Organic fertilizers can be made by combining blood meal, bone meal, lime sulfur etc. Plant-Tone is a premix organic fertilizer available at local garden centers like Lowes.

Jagged edges in soil particles will encourage better root division thereby creating more feeder roots<sup>2</sup> and a more actively growing bonsai. It is possible that the lack of soft organic matter will expose the roots to more sand particles causing better root division (sorry I do not have any reference for this!)

So in summary the use of inorganic soil mix might be preferable for more experienced bonsai growers. Refer to local experts on usage guidelines.

References:

<sup>1</sup> "Soil and Soil Amendments – a two part program presented by Paul Weishaar for the Indianapolis Bonsai Club" <http://www.indybonsai.org/files/Bonsai%20soil%20presentation%20revised.PDF>

<sup>2</sup> "Bonsai Soil" by George Buehler <http://www.louisvillebonsai.org/post/2006/02/Bonsai-Soil.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> "Proper Fertilization Techniques For Bonsai" by Randy Clark <http://www.bonsailearningcenter.com/Tips&Advice/fertilization.htm>

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## January Bonsai Care Tips

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Disclaimer: This is a general guide. Times can vary as much as a month depending on the weather trends. Some species of trees do not follow the general category guidelines of deciduous, evergreen or tropicals. Know your trees!

- Check outdoor covered trees weekly for moisture. Keep moist but not too wet.
  - During times of snow cover turning to rapid thaw, check uncovered outdoor trees for excessive moisture and pooling water.
  - Check conifers for signs of pests.
  - Check your tools, clean and sharpen them – for reference , sketch trees for future styling ideas – without leaves the deciduous tree branching is easily visible.
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SPRINGFIELD BONSAI SOCIETY

Gary Trammell, President

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## Upcoming Events

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**February 9 – Dessert Social, Bonsai styling and refinement, Roland Folse –**

**March 9 – Repotting workshop – bring your trees to repot.** If your bonsai are showing signs of budding this is a great time to repot your trees.

**April 24-26 – Shohin Bonsai Convention in St.Louis** visit [www.stlbonsai.org](http://www.stlbonsai.org) or call 314-952-1317

**May 9th and 16th – Bonsai Basics –** To register, call LLCC Community Learning 217-786-2292  
Bonsai, literally “potted plant,” is the art of styling miniature trees in a container. This workshop introduces you to the basic styles and principles of bon-

sai. You will get hands-on experience styling and potting two trees (a tropical and an evergreen) for you to keep and enjoy. *A \$40 supply fee is payable to the instructor the first day of class.*

**Instructor:** Gary Trammell and members of the Springfield Bonsai Association

**Course Code:** CEW 106-X40 (summer session)

**Dates:** Saturdays, 5/9/09 – 5/16/09

**Time:** 10 a.m.– noon

**Number of Sessions:** 2

**Registration Fee:** \$15    **Limit:** 15

**Location:** Washington Park Botanical Gardens, 1740 W. Fayette, Springfield

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## Administrivia

Your 2009 Officers are:

President – Gary Trammell 217-529-4080 (R)

Vice President – Scott Day 217-585-8473 (R)

Treasurer – Tom Applebee

Secretary – Manish Sumant 217-652-9619 (M)

& newsletter editor

Annual membership is \$20 (family \$30).

Email [msumant1@netscape.net](mailto:msumant1@netscape.net) to sign up or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BonsaiSBS/>