



SPRINGFIELD BONSAI SOCIETY

Palmatum Press

August 2012

From the Editor's Desk

With the lingering drought and water restrictions in mind, I am reminded of the comments of Henry Mitchell, gardening columnist for the Washington Post and reprinted in *The Essential Earthman*.

It is not nice to garden anywhere. Everywhere there are violent winds, startling once-per-five-century floods, unprecedented droughts, record-setting freezes, abusive and blasting heats never known before. There is no place, no garden, where these terrible things do not drive gardeners mad.

For information about the impact of the drought for home gardens, crops, and livestock check out the [Illinois Drought Resources](#) website from the University of Illinois Extension.

Future Tense August Meeting

August 9 - Ken Schall - Observations at a 30 Year Old Prairie Restoration

SBS member Ken Schall will present a program on his prairie restoration project which he began in 1978. The program is presented at the Illinois Native Plant Society, August 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary in Springfield.

August 13 - SBS Meeting

The August meeting will be held on Monday 8/13/2012 at Washington Park Botanical Garden at 7:00 p.m. Roland Folse will present a demonstration on Finish Wiring to refine our trees. Please bring a tree to wire.

August 17 - SBS Exhibit at Synaplex 2012

The Jewish Federation of Springfield, Il is hosting Synaplex, a community event to promote culture, socializing, eating and learning. This year's theme is focused on Japanese culture and will include Japanese food, music, and arts. We have been invited to bring some trees (about 6 total) and give a 20-30 minute presentation on the art of bonsai. Synaplex is scheduled for Friday August 17 at the Temple Israel, 1140 W. Governor, Springfield, IL. We are scheduled scheduled from 7:45-8:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We are requested to arrive about 7:15 p.m.. All of you interested in participating please contact Gary Trammell (trammell.gary@uis.edu) by August 10 and let me know if you will bring trees and how many.

October 6 - Mark Fields Workshop for SBS

Mark Fields from Indianapolis will present a workshop for SBS members on Saturday October 6 from 12-4 p.m. at Cass Bonsai in Edwardsville. Mark is a longtime bonsai enthusiast, past president of the Indianapolis Bonsai Club and owns a bonsai nursery in Indianapolis (Bonsai by Fields - <http://www.bonsaibyfields.com/>).

October 13 - SBS Show and Sale at Lincoln Memorial Garden

Our fall show will be held on Saturday October 13 at Lincoln Memorial Garden. Remember to prepare some bonsai for our plant sale. This is our big fundraiser for the year and pays for the facilities at Washington Park, materials for our meetings, and guest artists. We need your help to make this a success.

Neighboring Bonsai Events

August 17-19 - Mid-America Bonsai Society Show and Sale

The annual show will be held at the Chicago Botanic Garden from noon to 5 p.m. August 17 and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. August 18 & 19. . For more information check out the Midwest Bonsai Society website (<http://www.midwestbonsai.org/augustshow.html>).

September 1-3 - Japanese Festival

The annual [Japanese Festival](#) will be held at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Featuring Bonsai Exhibit and workshops by St. Louis Bonsai Society and other Japanese cultural displays.

Upcoming SBS Meetings

Meeting Dates	Topics/Activities	Presenters
Monday, August 13th 7:00 p.m.	Finish Wiring (BYOT*)	Roland Folse
Monday, September 10th 7:00 p.m.	Group Planting	SBS Members
Saturday, October 6 12-4 p.m.	Fall Workshop at Cass Bonsai	Mark Fields
Monday, November 12th 7:00 p.m.	Planning Meeting for 2012	

*BYOT – Bring your own tree(s) to work on.

Past Tense - July Activities

Slab Workshop July 8

Roland and Hazen Folsie hosted a potluck supper and slab workshop. Participants made ceramic slabs for grove plantings using hand building techniques. All of us novice potters enjoyed the opportunity to use Roland's excellent workshop and try our hand at making a slab for our trees. Some of us tried making free form pots as well. A potluck supper provided a wonderful chance to socialize. Thanks to the Folsies for their hospitality.

July Meeting - July 9

Roland Folsie presented a brief discussion on the literati style of bonsai and a demonstration on a Scotts Pine. Literati style originated in China as a tree with no formal shape. Typically literati trees are tall with a curved trunk and only 3-4 branches. Evergreens are the usual material for this style. One advantage of the slender curved trunk of the literati style is that you can start with a young tree. Literati trees are planted in a simple round, shallow pot. A nice review of this style may be found on the Art of Bonsai Project website (http://www.artofbonsai.org/feature_articles/literati.php).



Before



After

Members worked on their trees. Ken Capps showed a nice bougainvillea and discussed its care. For more information see the article below. He recommended defoliation about 8 weeks before you want it to look great.

Guest Artists Update

Michael Persiano has been a guest artist for the SBS several times. His book on Japanese black and white pines has been reprinted by [Stone Lantern](#).

Bjorn Biorholm was also a guest artist. His website, [Bjorvala Bonsai Studio](#), is a great resource for techniques and information about bonsai and Japan.

Bougainvillea Development

Erik Wigert of [Wigert's Bonsai](#), North Ft Myers, FL

I decided to approach this article with the intent to share some tips I use to collect and develop bougainvillea stock into finished bonsai. As such, I will open this article with the assumption that all of us as Florida bonsai enthusiasts have seen, and know what a bougainvillea is. They would be very hard to miss in the landscape during our drier months when they are in full glory. Their beautiful color is certainly what enchanted me initially and continues to reward me daily when I look out at my collection.

First of all, I can say that almost any collected bougainvillea has potential to become an interesting bonsai. Granted some of us want large impressive trunks, others shohin, some need to see movement. The end result in all cases that we need to remember is however: to build a canopy that will support the colorful bracts! With that in mind lets move on to the process.

When you look at that large thorny bush in your yard, (or your neighbors yard) realize that all you need is the trunk. Disregard the tangle, and focus where the trunk emerges from the soil. Look at the trunk and make some initial choices. Remember the ratio we may have all heard: The height of the tree should be equal to or less then 6 times the diameter of the trunk. This gives us good proportion in our bonsai. With this in mind you can cut the top out of the tree after you make your mental measurements. Now, get it out of the ground. I usually expose the nebari by hand. I have seen shovels damage nice surface roots in the past. Pull back the soil, to find where the roots flare away from the trunk. Then either with a electric saw or a hand saw cut through your lateral roots, then rock the tree and dig until you can get under it to cut any tap roots. Don't worry about losing small feeder roots or soil – these trees are tough. I've picked up bare-root stumps at the curb on garbage day and potted them and had them survive with no problems.

The next step is to cut it back to an initial trunk line. At this point design is not critical, don't worry where the 'front' is. I prune the trees for an appealing trunk line, leaving extra options for branches and alternate trunk lines. I cut off anything lacking either movement or taper. You will grow in a new apex and branches over the next year so don't worry! Now it needs the roots pruned further. Bare root the tree, if its not already, and cut back roots with the goal to remove anything large that may hinder you getting it into a shallow bonsai pot. Most of the time you are now left holding a ugly stump with a seemingly hopeless chance of survival. This is the process however, and the

bougainvillea can handle this treatment. I prefer to do this in the warmer months, but I have carried out these steps even in December with good success.

Trees are immediately planted into mica pots. These pots have excellent drainage. I use a soil mix of 1/3 Lava Rock, 1/3 Turface, 1/3 sifted pine bark. They are wired into the pots for stability and are placed in full sun directly after potting. This seems to go against repotting ethics for most tropicals, but bougainvillea do best in the sun. When they get new shoots of growth that are 4 to 8 inches in length I begin to wire them. Select your primary branches, then return later and wire the secondary growth. I defoliate each time I wire as it makes it easier to work and forces more back budding. I begin to choose a front based on how the tree sprouts. The next stage is to begin to prune for the silhouette. Transition away from your rule book and prune the top of the tree like a topiary. Repeated pruning of the top of the tree will build a dense canopy of branches so at the next styling you will have more branches to work with.

Often we must remove large branches at the initial styling. It is critical to make sure water does not collect on these scars. At the first styling I do not worry though, I later come back after I have established a design and smooth the dead wood back until it is contoured and looks natural. I prefer to use the 'King Arthur' brand power tool. It has abrasive carbide sanding disks that work great, plus its lightweight and easy to use. Healing is very slow on Bougainvilleas. Make sure after carving the wood to be sure to treat with a preservative. I prefer 'Minwax Wood Hardener'. Paint it on liberally to the dead wood at least once a year.

Once your tree begins to develop a shape it's important to at least once a year defoliate it and assess the branch structure. Branches tend to thicken, and cross randomly if left to their own devices. Prune back and rewire as needed. You will likely find that defoliating is the most reliable way to force blooms on your tree. I time a defoliation prior to exhibitions to obtain a full canopy of blooms. If your tree shows signs of yellowing or lack of vigor its likely root bound, or the pot is retaining too much water. I keep all my large specimens in mica pots as they have extra drain holes, and switch them to ceramic pots only for exhibitions.

To Recap: The Key to developing Bougainvillea fast is to stay on top of them.

- Cut hard in the first styling, don't waste time!
- Bare-root and repot in Bonsai soil at first styling.
- Wire first growth as soon as its long enough to set the primary branches.
- Allow a few months growth then wire again to set secondary branches.
- Then get in a pattern of 'topiary trimming'. Work to build the silhouette of your Bonsai.
- Defoliate and prune for proper branching, then rewire every year.
- In between continue 'topiary trimming'.
- Keep in full sun, fertilize well and use well-draining soil.



Bonsai Care Tips

The Columbus Bonsai Society (Ohio) has a [calendar](#) for bonsai care for USDA Hardiness Zones 5 and 6 (us). These are their recommendations. Keep in mind this is a very unusual summer and temperatures are above average and rainfall below average.

August - Late Summer

- Continue pruning, but watch for buds and think about next year's growth.
- Use lime-sulfur on jin and deadwood in summer. The heat and sun helps it absorb into the wood, and the sunlight bleaches it quickly.
- Most deciduous and pines have a semi-dormant period in the extreme heat of summer. Be cautious of watering.
- August-September is the ideal time for repotting tropical trees.
- You may start lowering the Nitrogen content of your fertilizer to slow foliar growth in preparation for fall and winter.

Administrivia

Your 2012 Officers are:

President	– David Kerwin	217-891-8853 (M)
Vice President	– G. Jackson	
Treasurer	– Tom Applebee	
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Annual membership is \$20 (family \$30).

Email: BonsaiSBS@gmail.com to sign up or visit

<http://www.BonsaiSBS.com/>