

Next Membership Meeting!

August 22nd All Society Meeting ~ Show Preparation

AABS Bonsai Show is August 25th and 26th at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens!

AUGUST MEETING

Show Preparation Meeting

By Mike Simmons

In a lecture format, Bill Heston and Jack Wikle will lead a discussion that will provide tips and advice on how to prepare your trees for the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society Annual Bonsai Show. An explanation of new bonsai categories for the show will also be presented.

Regardless of your intentions to show a tree, this is a great opportunity to learn the “ins-and-outs” of how to really make your own trees look their best. So, even if you do not plan to enter a bonsai tree in the show, you should plan to attend this show preparation meeting to learn presentation techniques, positioning, tray cleaning, and many other bits of advice.

You will be surprised by the wealth of information that you will receive at this type of meeting. Questions such as; “*If I’m showing a tree, can I leave training wire in place?*”, “*How do I clean mineral deposits off the sides of my bonsai trays?*”, “*I’ve got a tree that is growing in the ground, is it ok to pot it up right before the show?*”. These and many other questions will be answered and can be applied to everyday bonsai cultivation.

This is as they say, “where the rubber hits the road”. You do NOT want to miss this meeting!

AUGUST SHOW DETAILS

Show Information/Schedule

By Hugh Danville

The 2007 AABS Bonsai Show, everything you may or may not have wanted to know.

Friday August 24th

10:00 am

We will be setting up the Auditorium to support the show. Paul Kulesa is managing the redesign of the Auditorium. We will need 10 people to help with this transformation.

We will also start accepting trees for the show at that time. (*See below: Dropping Off a Plant*)

12:00

At around noon, CSNursery and Basically Bonsai will arrive and need help unloading their pots, trees, tools, etc. Volunteers needed.

5:00 pm

Trees start arriving in earnest. Additional help will be needed for tree registration.

7:00 pm

No More Trees will be accepted after this time, as tree placement for the show will start.

Saturday August 25th:

10:00am

Doors open to the public.

11:00am

First of two Saturday demonstrations (*details to follow*)

2:00pm

Second of two Saturday demonstrations (*details to follow*)

4:30pm

Doors close to the public

5:30pm

Evening Club activities begin. AABS Members will enjoy conversation, good food (including sushi!) and critiquing the show trees.

Sunday August 26th

10:00am

Doors open to the public

1:00pm

First and only Sunday demonstration (*details to follow*)

4:30pm

Doors Close to the public and show take down will commence. (*See below: Plant Pick Up*)

Please observe the following guidelines

Dropping Off a Plant

Between Friday morning at 10:00am until 7:00pm AABS volunteers will be accepting plants for the show. All Show plants must be brought to the Show staging area, (porch area outside the Auditorium at Matthaei) by 7:00pm. This timeframe will be strictly observed.

When you drop off a plant, you will to fill out a form that will include: your name, the plant's common name, botanical name (as best you know), the age of the plant, and the number of years the plant has been in training. We have been asked to add the plant owner's name on the show card. For club members, we will provide a printed list of the show plants and owners.

Plant pick up

Between 4:30pm and 5:30pm on Sunday, plant owners must pick up their plants. If you cannot get your plant at the end of the show, then contact Hugh (734-776-4718). Arrangements can be made but this must be done in advance.

AABS ANNUAL SHOW SETUP

Call for Volunteers

By Paul Kulesa

On Friday, August 24, 2007 at 10 AM, members are gathering in the auditorium to transform the Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium into a bonsai gallery for the weekend show. I need your help! The work is generally light, especially if there are many "pairs of hands" to perform this necessary work. The setup is usually completed by 4 PM. If you have any question, I can answer them at the next meeting or call me at 313-930-1305.

APRIL MEETING MINUTES

Notes from the Sidelines

July 25th, 2007

By Paul Kulesa

On Wednesday, July 25, 2007, Society members began gathering in the auditorium at 7:00 PM. Old friendships were renewed with discussions centered on (what else) bonsai while viewing the Matthaei Botanical Garden bonsai collection in the growing area between the greenhouses. By the time the meeting started in the auditorium, thirty-eight members and visitors were in attendance enjoying coffee with light snacks.



With the absence of Bill Heston, Vice-President Alfonso Tercero opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. Alfonso welcomed thirty-two members and six visitors. With the large number of visitors, Lois Vorrath provided the proper pronunciation of bonsai, while Jack Wikle pointed out that the literal translation is, “tray – to plant in”.



On Saturday, July 28, 2007, the Society was hosting its most recent workshop. This Penjing workshop would be led by Robert Bishop. There was no cost associated with the workshop other than the supplies used to produce the trays.



Jack Wikle passed around a petition requesting that a bonsai theme be considered as a postage stamp by the

Jack pointed out the reasons tropical material is a good candidate as bonsai material. Tropicals are

US Postal System. Jack also presented a photo album of the bonsai on display at the 2006 AABS Show. Lois Vorrath had brought in a few bonsai pots for sale and Roger Gaede was offering a few remaining items from the AABS store.



Connie Crancer talked about the progress in developing the bonsai display garden at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. She thanked the AABS members who acted as an advisory group during the design process. Currently, there is a program to raise \$330,000 to fund the development of this plan.

Hugh Danville talked about the annual show that was scheduled for the last weekend in August. Ron Milostan asked for volunteers for the show setup and demonstrations that were scheduled during the show. Jack Wikle and others would like members' cooperation during the setup of the show on Friday early evening. The deadline for accepting bonsai for display is 7:00 P.M.

The Evening Program

Alfonso introduced the three speakers for the evening program, Jack Wikle, Connie Crancer and Robert Bishop. Jack was first and began by presenting a red flowering azalea that he passed around for close examination.

He pointed out that the only difference between a tropical bonsai and other woody material is that a tropical has to be protected from the cold and temperate materials need a dormant period. Jack offered a general suggestion, a bit of practical advice, for your tropical that is not doing well. He suggested that you warm the material with bottom heat. He suggested a heating pad, a grow mat, or, any other means to add heat to the root zone.



survivors that have developed in sterile soil, adapted to survive in low light areas and prosper when faced with intense competition from other material. The one element that benefits tropical material is the availability of plenty of water.

Most tropical material can be cut and will sprout from what remains. Even small pieces can be potted and reliably expected to develop into a viable plant. Jack mentioned that there were many tropical woody plants to choose from and suggested that everyone should experiment with material to see what works for them.

Connie Crancer spoke next on the propagation of tropical material. Basically, propagation is begun from one of three forms of cuttings; tip cuttings, mid-stem cutting and basal cuttings. They involve a minimum of two buds remaining with the cutting. At least one of the buds will be planted in the media to

allow for rooting. Air layering involves woody material that has the bark removed below a bud, with sphagnum moss surrounding the stem, all of which is enclosed in a moisture resistant container which allows light to pass through. When the material develops roots, the material can be separated from the parent stock and potted.

When rooting a cutting, the cutting should be supported in a well draining media that will hold some moisture. The cutting should be held within a controlled atmospheric environment. When a plastic bag is used, as condensation forms on the interior of the bag, remove the bag, turn-inside-out, and placed back over the container.

Connie pointed out that tropical generally do not need a rooting hormone to encourage rooting and the



cuttings should be chosen from healthy material with short internodes and interesting movement within the stem.

Robert Bishop closed the discussion with a few comments not covered earlier in the evening presentations. He pointed out that insecticides should be used carefully and after fully understanding the hazards related to their use. In many cases, a Safer Soap type of solution can be effective as more persistent insecticides.

This bought a close to the evening program.

We are well into the Summer Season, so there is no excuse . . . Go out and work on your bonsai

HINTS, TIPS, and ADVICE

Voices of Experience

Bill Heston, Cyril Grum, Jack Wikle
(The following originated as an email correspondence and all three of these gentlemen thought it a good idea to share this with other members via the newsletter.)

[Jack to Cyril and Bill]

“Cyril, you may remember telling me about Purell hand sanitizer and how well it works in removing pine resin from one's hands. Well, I bought some Purell. And, yesterday, while struggling to remove accumulated plant sap residue from hedge shears I'd been using -- scrubbing with steel wool and WD-40 -- I found myself wondering if Purell might work better. So I tried it. **Works very well**, a lot better than anything I've used to clean tools in the past. Smells a lot better than WD-40 too.”



“This morning I tried Purell on some limey bonsai pot stains. Didn't get the same magic wand result as I did with the gummy tool cleaning, but a limited effort on a stained pot I'd been unsuccessful in cleaning before is very encouraging. You guys may want to experiment with this.”
Jack W.

[Cyril to Jack and Bill]

I hadn't thought of that. But in addition to cleaning, Purell also sterilizes the tools (most bacteria and viruses). Probably worth a note in the AABS newsletter.”
Cyril

[Bill to Cyril and Jack]

I tried the Purell hand sanitizer on some gunky tools today. It works very well!
Bill

[NOTE: Purell contains - Active ingredient: Ethyl Alcohol 62%. Inactive ingredients: Water (Aqua), Glycerin, Isopropyl Myristate, Propylene Glycol, Tocopheryl Acetate, Aminomethyl Propanol, Carbomer, Fragrance (Parfum)]

JULY REPOTTING DEMONSTRATION

[At the July 2007 AABS Meeting, several AABS members participated in a repotting demonstration. Following are photos and notes from that monthly meeting.]

Thoughts on Repotting

By Jack Wikle

Like soil mix issues and bonsai fertilization, in repotting bonsai a lot of different people are doing a lot of different things and getting by . . . mostly. Keep in mind that what I am writing here is what I believe, what my experience seems to confirm. It may not all be true.



Think of repotting as stress to the tree.

Waiting too long before repotting bonsai increases the stress. But, at the same time, too frequent repotting causes unnecessary stress. I believe strongly that it is best not to inflict too many major stresses such as repotting, heavy pruning, or complete wiring all at the same time or even in the same year.

However, you can always get away with more stress on the extremely healthy tree. Even minor stress on a weak or declining tree can “push it over the edge.” The strong tend to get stronger no matter what we do and the weak tend to get weaker no matter what we do. The fewer roots that are cut and the smaller the cuts, the less damage (the less stress) we inflict. Even though repotting is a stress, there are times when repotting to get a tree into a more appropriate size pot and, at the same time, into improved soil mix can actually invigorate the tree that has been struggling. What will usually help the noticeably declining tree is moving it into a narrower (not wider) and deeper pot using coarser soil.



Why do we repot bonsai?

Basically, repotting is done to improve growing conditions for roots by eliminating congestion, matted roots and compacted soil. We are giving roots room to grow into fresh soil. Fresh soil is looser, better aerated soil. This does mean removing all field soil from the tree’s root system over time. But, personally, I don’t try to eliminate field soil completely until after a tree has become well established in a container. Typically at the first

potting, I knock off whatever field soil falls away easily and then fill around the remaining soil with looser mix. It is during subsequent repottings that I try to get rid of all field soil. Repotting is an opportunity to eliminate large, woody roots that take up a lot of space within the pot thus making more room for good soil and fine roots. (Feeling for heavy roots and root stubs with my fingers tells me a lot about what can be removed.)

Repotting also makes possible eliminating or repositioning tangled roots, circling roots, crossing roots, and overly large roots or “ugly” surface roots. Another reason to repot can be simply to get your bonsai into a better pot or to reposition it in the pot (to change its orientation). With an established tree, this kind of repotting can be done with no concern almost anytime one has the urge. Doing repotting or partial repotting, in which just the surface soil is replaced, is also an opportunity to give a bonsai more visual impact by exposing surface roots and even repositioning those that are moveable.

How does one know when repotting is needed?

Repotting is almost always beneficial when the soil seems to have hardened (to be resistant to pressure) and to be difficult to water (water not soaking into the soil quickly). Repotting should also be considered whenever a tree seems to be losing momentum, to be declining in vigor. This is especially true for the tree that seems slow to dry (that stands wet). Unusual soil wetness that comes on suddenly is often an early warning of sudden decline. Other signs that repotting may be beneficial are noticing that the soil has been lifting up, rising out of the pot and finding small roots coming out of the pot’s drain holes. Finally it is important to keep repotting records and refer to them regularly. Deciduous bonsai are typically repotted on a 2-3 year cycle. Conifers may go 3-5 years between repottings.

What is the best time of year for repotting?

Repotting before buds open in the spring is almost ideal timing. However, a lot of repotting is done after buds have opened but before new shoots elongate very much. It is common to repot deciduous material first because it usually begins new growth first. But reality is, with adequate aftercare, you can repot almost any time you can get to it.

However it is better to avoid doing this when lots of long, soft, new shoots are present. Also, “flowering kinds” of bonsai such as crab apples, quince and azaleas are often repotted shortly after flowering is finished with no problems. Another repotting opportunity for maples or any other tree you normally defoliate (leaf prune), is to repot immediately after defoliation. This widens the window of opportunity for work on these kinds of trees greatly. Figs are typically repotted in the heat of summer. Pines also can be repotted in the heat of summer. In our Michigan climate, I would avoid late season (beyond early August) repotting. However if you can overwinter your bonsai someplace where the soil won’t freeze, you can repot most any time after you begin to see fall color until you bring them out in the spring.



How much of a tree’s root system can one remove safely?

I have suggested many times that I don’t worry as much about how many roots I cut off as I worry about how many roots I’m leaving. In other words, the more roots the tree has the more you can remove comfortably. For the tree that is sparsely rooted, I try to keep every living root. In doing this it is often possible to coil long roots back under the plant or to cut the stiff root partly through and “hinge” it back under the plant. On a well established bonsai, I don’t hesitate in removing completely the lower half of soil mass and every root in it. Then I remove, working in from the edge, about a quarter of the diameter of the remaining soil mass and any thick roots I find there.

There may be a fringe of fine roots remaining here when I finish. In practice, working in from the pot wall an inch or so when removing roots works pretty well in all but the smallest pots.

Relationship between top pruning and root pruning.

There is a concept popular in the bonsai world which says the more top you remove, the more roots you can remove. That is, you can remove 50% of the roots if you remove 50% of the top, etc. I have passed this idea on many times but I am not completely comfortable with the concept. I suspect there are instances where not pruning the top at all would do more to enhance survival and speed of recovery after root pruning but I am not sure of this. Another idea some people have suggested is that if you cut off any major part of the top you must remove a proportionate amount of roots to keep the tree healthy. This seems questionable thinking to me. A final note related to pruning roots is that there are some trees (notably corkbark Japanese black pine and our native white-cedars) where one root does seem to feed one branch or one section of the tree but this isn’t the general pattern for most trees. However cutting off one very large root on almost any bonsai can result in loss of a major branch located above it on the trunk for most species.

Value of noticing where the roots are when repotting.

What really makes me feel good is to pull a bonsai out of its pot and find profuse, fine rooting evenly distributed throughout the soil mass. When this happens, everything is working well. On the other hand, there can be exceptions but finding roots concentrated toward the floor of the pot (lower half of soil volume) tells me that the plant has been too dry a lot. This indicates a need for soil that holds more water, or a need to water more often, or a need to water more thoroughly. Again there can be exceptions but finding roots concentrated toward the soil surface (upper half of soil volume) tells me that the plant has been staying too wet a lot. So this shows a need for coarser soil, for a narrower and/or deeper pot, and a need to withhold watering when in doubt.

Issues in getting the work of repotting done.

Work out of sun and wind if possible. Prepare the pot before exposing the roots too much. Have a plastic bag handy to cover roots if necessary to keep them from getting too dry. I am not personally convinced that it makes a significant difference whether cuts on large roots are made on a slant so that the cut faces up or faces down. Usually I make a perpendicular cut which results in less cut surface than if cuts are made on a slant. Be wary of undoing even distribution of your mix ingredients and losing precious pore space through unnecessarily poking the soil with a chopstick. Vibrate the stick (move it slightly side to side) rather than stabbing. You really don't need to do much more than eliminate any really large voids in the soil. Taking extra effort to secure your tree very well in the pot with wire seems to be well justified. The wire is its "seat belt."

Encouraging post-potting recovery.

Keep your tree out of direct sun and wind for a few days after repotting. Then try to bring it back into direct sun during a spell of cool, overcast or wet weather. If this is not possible, move it into full sun gradually over a five to seven day period. Misting the repotted tree once to several times a day is probably beneficial but I usually don't bother to do this unless it's a very weak plant . . . especially a weak conifer. How often to water the freshly repotted tree is one of the most difficult decisions we make in bonsai culture. You don't want to keep the soil full of water in trying to be nice to your tree. But, you don't want to let it get too dry either. In short, let it dry but don't let it get dry. I remember very clearly trying to explain this to a class of beginning bonsai enthusiasts years ago when the man directly in front of me said, "I think I know what you are trying to say. You let the newly potted tree go until it's dry then you water the day before." He explained it better than I did.

Repotting a Large Fukien Tea

By Alfonso Tercero

The tree I chose to repot during this meeting is my largest Fukien Tea tree. This is a subtropical species and must be kept indoors over winter as it will not stand even the slightest cold draft.

I purchased this tree over eBay from a well known nursery in Florida three years ago. It was announced to be more than 35 years old back then. What I found



very interesting was the movement of the trunk and the fact that the bark was not flat at all as it had appealing bumps and defoliating bark. The leaves have a deep, lush green color and it rewards me with beautiful fragrant small white flowers year around.

Everything is perfect about this tree, well almost everything...

This species of tree is prone to attacks from aphids, white fly and other insects that are attracted by the sweet aroma. It is a frequent battle against these bugs to keep your tree pest free. But it is well worth it. During the repotting session I suspected that the roots were kept too wet at all times and even though it grows very well, it could be doing even better. Upon removing the tree from its pot, I noticed that the soil was basic garden soil combined with beach sand, which is a normal ingredient for nurseries around Florida. There was one large root that started to circle around the pot and not too many fibrous roots. To encourage finer root growth, I used large coarse soil at

the bottom of the same pot (about 15%), medium size soil for about 70% of the pot and the remaining 15% was fine media. This combination of different soils in the same pot has worked out very well for my trees as it permits easier drainage and it will keep the tree in a healthier stage.

One thing that I always recommend is to firmly tie your tree to the pot. Two wires through the drain holes will do the trick. This avoids disturbing the finer roots if the tree is not firmly planted. I watered the tree immediately after and it will stay in the semi shade for a couple of weeks to give it a chance to



regain its strength. I am happy to report that the tree is doing very well in July and I will not repot it for another 2 years. I reused the same pot, as I view it more like a training pot rather than a show pot. Eventually I would like to replace it with a shallower, oval, glazed pot. Perhaps a light brown to match some hues of the bark. There was active participation from the members as they asked many questions about all of the featured trees.

I send special thanks to Connie Crancer, Bill Heston and Jack Wikle for their participation on this meeting. Their friendship and knowledge of bonsai is a real treasure to have.

ON THE WEB

Bonsai Notables on the Internet

By Mike Simmons

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion and a petition to get a U.S. stamp that features bonsai. This got me to wondering as to what countries have already featured bonsai on a stamp.

To learn more about this I googled “bonsai stamps” and found over 74,00 hits on everything from an entry in Wikipedia to Eunice Corp’s petition that seeks your signature. But the one that caught my attention was from the Phoenix Bonsai Society.

<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/Stamps.html>

This site lists countries that have incorporated bonsai as the artwork for their national postal services. There is even a listing for illegal and fraudulent stamps that have used bonsai images. Unfortunately, no one has taken credit for collecting this information and the many pictures of the bonsai stamps. Therefore it is not possible to determine if this is supposed to be a comprehensive list or not. In addition to stamps, the Phoenix Bonsai Society has compiled a very nice history of bonsai. The author appears to be a Robert Baran. A thorough list of historical references to bonsai may be found at:

<http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BonsaiHistory.html>

Hopefully, the petition to encourage the development of a United States Postal Service stamp depicting bonsai will be successful. In the meantime, take a look at the bonsai stamps from Japan, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Uganda, the Maldives and many others. My personal favorites are from San Marino.

Now I’m just trying to figure out why Mickey Mouse and his friends have ended up on bonsai stamps. Take a look, you’ll see what I mean. (*hint: See Gambia or Uganda*)



Invites you to the

2007 Bonsai Show

August 25th & 26th (Saturday and Sunday)

10:00 am to 4:30 pm

at

Matthaei Botanical Gardens

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January Meeting.....Jan 24th
Wiring Techniques --- Jack Wikle

February Workshop.....Feb. 24th
Beginners Class Series (5 sessions) &
Soil Mix Session – Get Together

February Meeting.....Feb. 28th
Vines Used for Bonsai -- Connie Crancer,
George Randall, Dustin Mann & Bill
Heston

March Meeting.....Mar. 28th
Trident Maples Grown in Northern
Regions --- Bill Heston

April Workshop.....Apr. 14th
Trident Maple Over Rock – Bill Heston .

April Meeting.....Apr. 25th
Repotting Trees Demonstration.

May Meeting.....May 23rd
An Evening with Suthin Sukosolvisit &
Special MBG Outdoor Bonsai Collection
Exhibit.

June Get Together.....June 16th
BBQ / Topiary / Bonsai Gathering at
Robert Bishop's place.

June Meeting.....June 27th
An Evening with Pauline Muth: Shohin
& Mame Demonstration

July Meeting.....July 25th
Bonsai Tropical Indoor Trees
Demonstration.

July Workshop.....July 28th
Penjing Workshop with Robert Bishop

August Meeting.....Aug. 22nd
AABS Show Preparation

August Bonsai Show -Aug.25th & 26th
2007 AABS Bonsai Show

September Club Meeting... .Sep. 26th
2007 AABS Club Auction

October Club Meeting.....Oct. 24th
Winter Storage Presentation

November Club Meeting.....Nov. 12th
AABS Annual Banquet and Mini-Exhibit

**NOTE: Always check the AABS website
for changes and added details to this
calendar.**

<http://annarborbonsaisociety.org>

2007 AABS EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Bill Heston (734) 662-8699

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Show Chairs: Hugh Danville (313) 455-
7922 & Pete Douglas (313) 867-8644

AABS AD HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President, Bill Heston, is
exofficio

member of all committees except
the Nomination Committee.

Auction Chair: TBD

Membership Chair: TBD

Show Staging: Paul Kulesa

Demonstrations: John Parks

Ways and Means Chair: John
Parks

Web Master: Mike Simmons

(webmaster@annarborbonsaisociety.org)

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is
affiliated with the American Bonsai
Society (www.absbonsai.org) and the Mid
American Bonsai Alliance.

Deadline for submissions to the
newsletter is the 5th of the month.

Contact us at:

aabsnewsletter@yahoo.com.

You can pay your Club's dues at
the next AABS meeting or mail it to:

Joan Wheeler

2295 North Harris

Ypsilanti, MI 48198

(734) 485-6306

Email: owheeler5@hotmail.com

Please make your check payable to
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Wanted. If you have a tree, bonsai
pot, tool or anything else bonsai
related that you don't need anymore
and it is still in good condition,
consider donating it to our club.

Donations to the club are always
accepted. In most cases many donated
trees or other materials have been
raffled among the attending members
during our monthly meetings.

*Please note: A reminder to all club
members that everyone is required to
give 10% of the total sales for any
items that sell at our monthly
meetings.*

*This is a long standing policy that
has not been consistently observed,
since it is starting to fade from our
collective memory.*

*The 10% fee will apply to all sales
at our meetings or through this
newsletter until the board approves a
change.*

Please send your comments or
documents to aabsnewsletter@yahoo.com.
Don't worry if you don't have a
"finished" article, we'll help you to
make it right. We will publish them
going forward in the member's corner
section.

Together we can further improve
this newsletter for our reading
pleasure.



Place
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1800 North Dixboro Road ~ Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9741
The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance.

Send To:



**AABS Next Club Meeting is Wednesday August 22nd
~ AABS Show Preparation
at 7:30 pm ~ Matthaei Botanic Gardens Auditorium
(Socializing begins at 7:00pm)**

Visit us on the Web:

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

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Hector DeBrabant
Bonsai Instructor