



Monthly Meeting

The Louisiana Bonsai Society met in person (in masks, of course) for the first time since February, welcoming guest speaker Dr. Allen Owings, Senior Horticulturist at Bracy's Nursery and Horticulturist at Clegg's Nursery (consultant). He has a BS in plant science from Southeastern University, MS in horticulture from LSU, and a PHD from Mississippi State in horticulture. Former LSU Horticulture Professor, former Horticulture Professor at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station and is now Emeritus Professor at the Hammond Research Station. The attendees received quite an education on plant/tree horticulture from the use of fertilizers/nutrients, pH and mineral needs, to microbiomes and amending soil. He suggested that perhaps we should be sending more samples of our bonsai tree water runoff and/or leaf cuttings to determine what deficiencies a tree may have, especially if it looks unhealthy.



There was a lot of good information in the presentation which was videotaped. If you were not present (or would like to hear the presentation again), you can request a copy be e-mailed to you by sending an e-mail to: marlajthompson@msn.com. It is a large file and the video is about an hour long.

Our monthly meeting in July will be a speaker presentation. The tool sharpening has been postponed for now and will be announced at a later date as a workshop.

Show and Tell

Thanks to those of you who brought trees to show and tell. There were some very interesting specimens that we learned about.



Jean and Howard observing the mask requirement of the Garden Center. Aren't they cute?

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Robert Reed brought an interesting specimen that he obtained from Wigert's Nursery, which sported



small purple
fragrant
flowers and
large thorns as
pictured here.
Desmodium is
a genus in the
flowering plant
family



Fabaceae with
dozens of
species. These
are mostly
inconspicuous
legumes: few
have bright or
large flowers.
Though some
can become
sizeable plants,
most are herbs

or small shrubs.

Their fruit are loments, meaning each seed is dispersed individually enclosed in its segment. An internet search reveals little else about this specific species.

Description

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Desmodium Unifoliatum*
COMMON NAME: Desmodium

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS: RARE*
DESMODIUM produces a beautiful fragrant purple flower that smells like grapes and large thorns. Gnarly bark and great nebari!
Desmodium likes full sun and moderate water and fertilizer. Tropical tree, please keep away from freezing temperatures.

From the President

I would like to thank everyone for wearing your masks at the bonsai meeting. I know it is uncomfortable, but it can protect your fellow members from the virus. Just remember your mask protects others from you more than it protects you. The virus can collect on the outside of your mask and can be transferred via your hands when you handle it. So, wash your hands and your mask, sanitize, or discard if disposable.

I understand Japan and South Korea have done better than most because people there have been wearing a mask anytime they have flu or cold to prevent spreading it. This has been their custom for years. We need to do anything we can to slow down the spread of diseases as we go about our daily lives.

Forest Community Park Bonsai Study Group/Workshop

At the Saturday study group meeting we did some wiring, trimming, pruning, and caring for exposed roots. Lowell Tilley pruned, trimmed, and wired the strangler fig (Ficus) he repotted and posted on the group email last month.



End of May before any work was done





Saturday before pruning, trimming, and wiring



After the Saturday work was completed

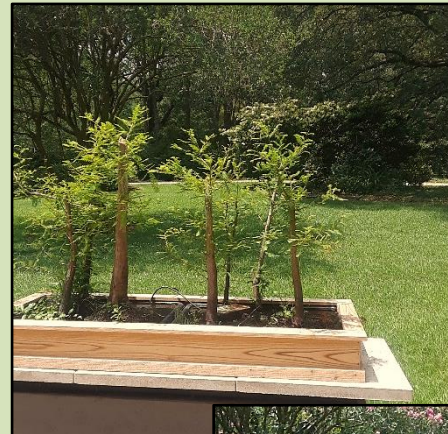
Pruning is done for styling the bonsai. It needed the top lowered and the sides maintained to conform to the pot size. Generally, you always want new growth lower and closer to the trunk to improve the taper of the branches and trunk (big close to the trunk and bottom and getting smaller as it goes up and to the outside). The greater the variations in size (taper), the older the bonsai will look. A good

way to do this is to cut the main branches back to first good side branch. Then wire the side branch to be the new end of the main branch. You should never leave a big cut off branch as the end. This technique can add some very interesting bends in the branch, but don't leave the wire on long enough to scar. It may have to be removed in four weeks and rewired if necessary or desirable. Rewiring can add more interesting bends.

Then all the branches were trimmed back to one or two bud internodes and any leaves that were shading any interior buds to encourage back budding. The tree should now grow more and smaller leaves. I will now pinch off the new buds and leaf prune to keep the internodes (distance between leaves) short and continue to encourage more back budding.

Gulf Coast Bonsai Foundation

On Saturday, June 13, we did a workday/study group meeting at the bonsai display at LSU AgCenter Burden Gardens and Museum. We removed weeds, trimmed a trident maple, leaf stripped the bald cypress, and fertilized them. We are developing bald cypress group planting and below are pictures before the trees were leaf stripped and after.



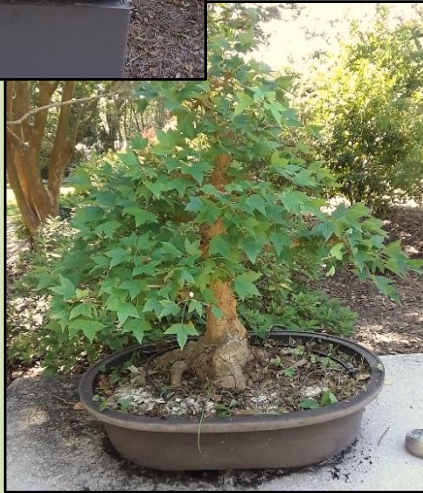
Before leaf stripping

2 weeks after leaf stripping





Trident Maple
before
trimming



After trimming

We are planning to do another bonsai workday/study group meeting at Burden this Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m., July 4. We plan to do some styling on the bald cypress group planting and the trident maple. Please let me know if you are interested in participating. lowelltilley@gmail.com or 225- 241-2396.

Bald Cypress Defoliation

By Zach Smith, Bonsai-South.com

It's Bald cypress defoliation time, that time of year when we get to remove all the foliage from our BC's and get a fresh new round of growth before the end of summer and fall show time. This is important because most of the time, most BC's will get "shaggy" foliage by about August. If left alone, it really doesn't get better and you won't want to show your tree if you belong to a local club and they put on a fall show.



The problem of shaggy foliage is easily rectified by taking all of it off. For us down South, it's often a July 4th event as that makes for good timing as the new growth takes a few weeks to really kick in. As long as your tree is strong, you can do this every year.

This specimen is going on to a new home in a few weeks. Not only is this the perfect time to take all the foliage off, it also allows for some styling work as the tree's structure will be easy to see.

While you do have to exercise some caution when pulling off the foliage (always away from the base of the branch, and you need to hold the base of new shoots or you'll pull them right off), this work goes quickly. Here you can see that I've allowed the "vestigial" branches to throw some up-pointing shoots. Why? Because this BC, just like every last one of them, is powerfully apically dominant. Lower branches get less energy as a result, so one way to remedy the



situation is to encourage and allow upward-pointing sub-branches. This helps thicken up those vestigials quickly. But ... time to take them off (for this round).

Here's where I ended up after a final trim and some wiring. This bonsai has come a long way in a short time and is pretty much at the pinching and light pruning stage. The trunk chop will be completely healed over in another year or so, and at that point the tree will be in its maturing phase as a bonsai.

I have several other BC that I will be defoliating next weekend. Visit my website for more:

www.Bonsai-South.com



Thinking Outside the Box

Wouldn't this make a great companion plant for a conifer?



Have you ever seen a daisy/chrysanthemum bonsai?



Coming Events

July 4, 2020 9 a.m. LSU AgCenter Burden Gardens and Museum, GCBF bonsai tree styling on bald cypress and trident maple

July 21, 2020 7 p.m. Monthly Meeting, Baton Rouge Garden Center. **Please remember that masks are required to be worn inside the building.**

We will continue to observe social distancing and make plans one month at a time for now. We hope you are all safe and well.



Just for Laughs



