



The Louisiana Bonsai Society Newsletter

March 2023

February Meeting

The topic of the monthly meeting on February 21st was wiring to enhance the look of the tree while preserving the health of the limbs. After watching a short video on proper wiring techniques, we practiced on trees we brought or on the club trees.



Thank you to the more experienced club members who provided guidance to the newer members and thanks to Wyler for the great pics.

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The Louisiana Bonsai Society (LBS) is a non-profit organization of people interested in the art of bonsai.

Mark Fields LBS Workshop March 31, April 1

LBS will host a workshop event with bonsai artist Mark Fields on March 31 and April 1. There will be a lecture/demo on Friday from 6-9 pm and 2 bring-your-own trees workshops on Saturday 9am-12pm and from 1-4 pm. If you need bonsai material, the club has several different varieties. The owner of a bonsai nursery in Indiana, Mark is well-versed in all types of trees and is an excellent teacher.

The cost of each workshop is \$35 for members, \$45 for non-members, limited to 8 participants. Lunch is on your own from 12-1pm. To reserve your slot in one of the workshops, notify Lowell, Robert or Marla. You can use Venmo, Zelle or send a check to LBS, PO Box 41661, Baton Rouge, LA 70835.

See Mark's on-line bio below.



My name is Mark Fields. My passion for bonsai began at about age 9. I was born in 1959 and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. My dad was a landscape contractor, as I am today. He used to purchase and dig nursery stock from a nursery, Line's Nursery, down the street from where we lived. Occasionally, I

would go with him and was wandering around the nursery one day and found some little mugo pines that the nursery owner had lined out and was training in the ground. I asked the owner, Mr. Line, what he was doing with them, and he said that he was training them as bonsai. I began asking him more about them and visited him more often. A few days later he loaned me two books he owned from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, "*Handbook on Bonsai: Special Techniques*" and "*Handbook on Dwarfed Potted Trees, The Bonsai of Japan*" and told me that I would learn more if I read them. He showed me how to start and grow plants from cuttings, how to prune properly and other skills I would practice as I grew older. He passed away in the early 1970's.

My dad used to bring home shrubs in the back of his

truck which were removed from a job and discarded. When I saw an interesting looking trunk or shape, I would remove it from the truck and pot it up. Most would die within days; some would survive for at least that years growing season. It was great practice, and I learned a lot.

When I married and moved out of my parent's house into a double in 1979, I moved my bonsai there. The neighbor next door noticed that I was growing bonsai and told me his father-in-law used to do bonsai. He went back to his house and got his wife and introduced me. I told her the story about how her father got me started in bonsai and that he had loaned me his two Brooklyn Botanic Garden handbooks more than a decade before. She told me to wait a minute and went back into the house. A few minutes later she brought out those very same books and told me to keep them. I was stunned. They are now a part of my book collection and I still use them as a reference to this day.

About that same time, I discovered a bonsai nursery on the southeast side of Indy called Mendel Gardens. There I began a relationship with the owner, Max Mendel. He sold starter trees, supplies, offered free advice and critiqued my trees when I asked him to. He became my second mentor and taught me much of what I know about bonsai today. I called him the father of bonsai in Indiana. I spent many weekends wandering around his nursery. He introduced me to the Indianapolis Bonsai Club, which I joined. I have been a member of that organization since 1979 and was president from 2009 - 2012. Max passed away in the mid 1990's and I bought a few of his trees and his personal set of Masakuni bonsai tools which I treasure.

In October of 2004 I traveled to Europe where I met and befriended Danny Use and his wife Ingrid at their Ginkgo Bonsai Center in Laarne, Belgium. I went back there in October 2005 and worked for Danny a couple days. I talked them into traveling to the US in June of 2008 to headline the Mid-America Bonsai Alliance in Indianapolis, their first time here in the US. They invited me to their nursery in April of 2009 where I spent 2 weeks straight working side by side with Danny on many of his world class bonsai specimens. It was truly an amazing

experience and I learned so much. I am a much better bonsai artist because of his teachings.

I worked for a major pharmaceutical company here in Indy from 1980 – 2010. I also owned and operated my own landscape business, Fields Landscape Concepts, LLC, which I founded in 1983 and closed in 2006. As part of the landscape business, I sold bonsai, pre-bonsai and supplies to club members and fellow enthusiasts since the early 1980's. In 2011, with a gentle push from friends such as bonsai artist and author, Craig Coussins, and bonsai artist Warren Hill, I founded my own School of Bonsai.

I am married, for the second time, with 2 grown children from my first marriage and a granddaughter and a grandson. My wife Allison delivered twins, a boy, and a girl, in November 2007. So, I am experiencing sort of a second life so to speak.

With the twins coming along, I was looking for something to do at home rather than being gone every evening landscaping. In 2006, with some prompting from my wife and IBC club members, I decided to start a website and open a new business, Bonsai by Fields, LLC. I perform demonstrations, lectures and workshops using a wide variety of trees. I also vend at a few major exhibitions throughout the US.

I recently updated a list of bonsai artists I have seen either in demonstrations, lectures, and workshops. They total more than 60 at this point. Names such as the great John Naka, Mas Ishi, Yuji Yoshimura, Danny Use, Ryan Neil, Masahiko Kimura, and Bjorn BJORHOLM are among them.

In the fall of 2013, I finally realized a dream I have always had of travelling to Japan to visit some of the bonsai nurseries there. I was also able to see one of the major exhibitions there, the Taikan-ten, held in November in the city of Kyoto.

In early January 2015, I traveled to Osaka, Japan to study at Kouka-en. A third-generation bonsai nursery owned by Keichi Fujikawa. It is the nursery where Bjorn apprenticed and is now a resident artist. I had secured a spot to study for a month there. What an amazing experience! It was 7 days a week, 8 - 9 hours a day of nothing but bonsai. I was also able to attend the 2015 Kokufu-ten Bonsai

Exhibition and the famous Green Club Sale. While there, I met Italian bonsai artist Mauro Stemberger. He visited here in the fall of 2015, and I am now his mid-west agent.

My bonsai nursery, Bonsai By Fields, has been in operation since 1983 - Located in Greenwood, IN.

LSU AgCenter Spring Garden Show This Weekend

The annual spring garden show will be held at the John M. Parker Coliseum located on the LSU main campus starting on Friday March 10 from 5-8 pm and continues on Saturday and Sunday from 9am-4 pm. The admission is \$7.00 for adults (13 and older), and free for students with ID and children 12 and younger.

Bring your root-over-rock bonsai projects so we can recheck the roots and repot. Anyone who wishes to help us man the booth on Saturday or Sunday, should let the registration desk know and should not have to pay the entrance fee. We will be handing out flyers to the LBS Spring Show and talk to visitors about the club and give a membership form if desired. Let Lowell know which day and time you plan to come. Thanks in advance.

LBS Spring Show

We will hold our annual LBS Spring Show on Saturday March 18th and Sunday March 19th. We will need to arrive at 8:30am to set up the displays.

The show will be from 11am-4pm with a lecture/demo each day at 2pm. Lunch will be on your own. You may bring some goodies to share with members during the show. Sweets, fruits, cheese and crackers, cookies, etc.

The lecture/demos will be presented by Randy Bennett on Saturday and by Joel Jenkins on Sunday at 2 pm.

We will place an order for food (\$10) on Saturday afternoon and eat from 4-5pm. Then Randy will present a bring-your-own tree workshop from 5-8pm. Cost for the workshop will be \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members, limited to 8 participants.

Pre-bonsai starter trees should be brought to the show donation table and labeled with the type of tree. Please clean the pots of dirt and make sure they are weed free. Wire can remain in place.

We would like for everyone to bring at least 1 tree from their collection for display. You may bring up to 5 trees, large or small. Just make sure they are presentable in a clean bonsai pot free of weeds. You may present it with a companion plant or without. Bring a stand if you want or you may use one of the club's stands.

Please stay during the show, if you can, to talk with visitors about the trees and the club. There will be membership forms at the front desk if someone wishes to join. Please remember to wear your nametag.

The show will conclude at 4 pm on Sunday when we will draw for the raffle tree, then clean up the Garden Center. Please don't remove your tree before 4 pm and please stay to help with clean-up. (Many hands make light work!)

Thanks to everyone in advance. We are going to have a great show!!

Happy St Patrick's Day!!



Membership dues can be mailed to PO Box 41661, Baton Rouge, LA 70835. \$20 individual or \$25 family. You may also pay by cash, Venmo or Zelle.

Coming Events

March 10-12, 2023, LSU AgCenter Spring Garden Show at the John M Parker Coliseum

March 18, 19, 2023 LBS Spring Show, BR Garden Center.

March 21, 2023, Monthly Meeting 7 pm BR Garden Center

March 31, April 1, 2023, Mark Fields Lecture Demo/Workshop, BR Garden Center

April 18, 2023, Monthly Meeting 7 pm BR Garden Center

May 16, 2023, Monthly Meeting 7 pm, BR Garden Center

June 20, 2023, Monthly Meeting 7 pm, BR Garden Center

June 24, 25, 2023, Mike Lane Shohin Education Series Class #1 of 4, 9am-4pm, BR Garden Center. If you have registered, you will be getting more info in emails.

Watch for future notifications regarding the LSBF Workshop with Jim Doyle in October.