



# The Louisiana Bonsai Society Newsletter

April 2022

## March Monthly Meeting & Azalea Workshop

Pics submitted by Marla and Zachary



Lowell Tilley-President  
Marla Thompson-Secretary

[lowelltilley@gmail.com](mailto:lowelltilley@gmail.com)  
[marlajthompson@msn.com](mailto:marlajthompson@msn.com)

225-241-2396  
225-503-7397

Robert Reed-Vice President  
Jim Scarton-Treasurer

[reed19@cox.net](mailto:reed19@cox.net)  
[jimscarton@gmail.com](mailto:jimscarton@gmail.com)

504-494-4824  
225-287-5607

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

## LSU Ag Center Spring Show

Thanks to everyone who came out to help for the Spring Show at Parker Coliseum on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. There was a good turnout for the event, beautiful spring days but very cold! If you have never attended, you should plan to next year. It is quite an extravaganza of beautiful things for home and garden. There was even a petting zoo. We were able to hand out many flyers to invite the public to our Bonsai Spring Show and even had a new member join.



During the show, Lowell held a juniper root-over-rock workshop with members who had previously signed up; a total of 9. It gave a great opportunity for people walking by to stop, watch and ask questions about the club and how to create bonsai.



Another ROR workshop for tropicals will be held in May. Notify Lowell if you want to participate.

## From the President

Our bonsai club needs your help with the 2022 Spring Bonsai Show, April 2 and 3. We need your bonsai to be on display. The show is not a contest for who can show the best or most bonsai, it is to demonstrate different bonsai developing techniques and styles. All our bonsai are a work of art in progress in growing or deeper pots, sacrificial branches, longer bottom (or top) branches to develop taper, wiring, etc. We want to clean and dress them up to make them look good, but don't cut off branches or remove wiring too soon or anything that will interfere in their development. This show is a learning experience that we use to show our members' development techniques and to discuss and learn more bonsai techniques.

Also bring some pre-bonsai that you have started or are tending, for our pre-bonsai table, so visitors can pick a tree and donate to the club. We use these funds to bring in knowledgeable bonsai teachers and help new members (and established members) to enjoy the hobby of bonsai. If you have some of the club pre-bonsai that you have been developing and it is growing into something you like, you may keep it and replace it with something else you have or buy something from a nursery and do some pre-bonsai work on it for the club. You will be developing your bonsai skills while helping the club to pay for bonsai teachers. By working together, we will increase our bonsai hobby fun.

We will start setting up at 8:00 Saturday morning, April 2. Ron Benko will do an azalea bonsai lecture/demo Saturday at 2:00. Then after the lecture, since we ran out of time at the azalea bonsai workshop, he will assist members cut down their azalea root ball and plant into a pot. If you need his help, bring your pot and your azalea to the show.

I will do the lecture/demo Sunday at 2:00 using some junipers and rocks to create a mountain bonsai landscape scene.

We really appreciate your help with the show and will do our best to make it worth your effort. Please come and enjoy the fun.

# Blue Alps Juniper Design

By Randy Bennett

Blue Alps Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* “blue Alps”) is excellent material for bonsai. It is a fast-growing juniper and will grow up to 12 feet tall and just as wide, if given the room to grow. Shoots may grow 12 to 18 inches a year, depending on growing conditions. It is grown from climate zones 4a to 9b, so it is quite happy growing in the New Orleans area. Sadly, it is not readily available in nurseries in our area. But you can easily find them on-line and have them shipped to you. The foliage is very prickly, so you may want to wear latex gloves when working on them. The branches are quite flexible and easily bent into position, even fairly large branches.

In May of 2018, I attended Brussel Martin’s “Spring Rendezvous” at his nursery in Olive Branch, Mississippi. It was the first time I was able to attend Spring Rendezvous. During that event, I was privileged to observe Marc Noelanders design a large Blue Alps Juniper. He did an amazing job. It was one of the best demonstrations I had seen in a long time. I decided to attend Spring Rendezvous again the following year and when I saw that Marc Noelanders was back and conducting a workshop with Blue Alps Junipers, I decided to participate.



May of 2019 workshop with Marc Noelanders

Taking workshops is always a crapshoot. You never know what material will be afforded you through the luck of the draw. And true to my fears, my number drew a juniper with which I was not very impressed. However, one of the great aspects of bonsai has always been the possibility of creating an excellent specimen from a less than optimum piece of material.



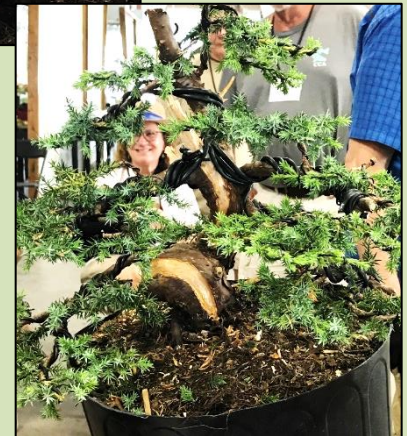
Planning the design.



Positioning of primary branches.



Creating shari on the trunk



The final design after detail wiring

I allowed the tree to grow freely for the remainder of the 2019 growing season. During 2020, I continued to let the tree grow, providing organic fertilizer and plenty of sun. The shari that was created had healed nicely and the wire was removed before it could cut in. All the while, I continued to study the design. I was not happy with the position and arrangement of certain branches. A couple of them were bar

branches and the lowest primary branch was smaller than all the rest – not a good element in the design.

In late January of 2021, I removed three of the primary branches in the original design, including the lowest primary branch and spent the better part of a day wiring every branch. For the rest of 2021, I let the tree grow freely, continuing my fertilizer regimen.

In late February of 2022, I decided the time had come to rework the tree and pot into a bonsai container.



Appearance of the tree in February 2022, before work began.

Closeup of the shari performed in 2019 as it appeared in February 2022

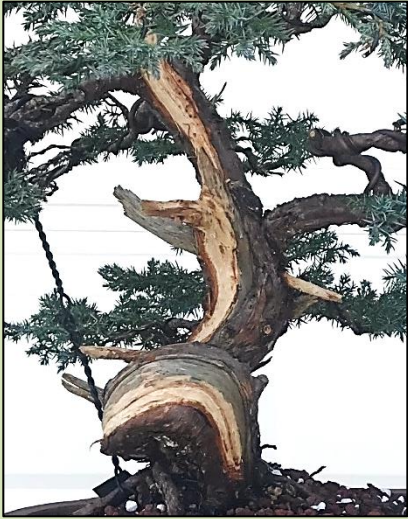


If you look closely at the above photo, you can see that the portion of shari leading up to the jin had begun to close. The decision was made to widen the shari by incorporating the jinned branches into it and extend it farther up the trunk. You can also see the three primary branches that were removed in 2021. The bark was left on those three branches at the time of removal.

The following actions were carried out on the tree near the end of February 2022.

1. The shari was widened and extended.
2. The bark was removed from the three branch stubs that remained after cutting them back in 2021. They were then carved to look more natural.
3. A couple of other jins were too large and were reduced in size.
4. In about a month, the wood where the bark was removed will have had a chance to dry out. At that time the jin and shari areas will be cleaned up and lime sulfur applied. You always want to allow newly created dead wood to dry out before applying lime sulfur.
5. Every primary branch was then wired and shaped into the desired design and position, starting at the bottom, and working upward.
6. After the primary branches were shaped, the secondary branches were selected, keeping in mind the need to have spacing between alternating secondary branches decrease as they transition outward toward the tip of each primary branch. Those that were not needed were removed.
7. The secondary branches were then wired, shaped, and moved into position.
8. This was followed by wiring all tertiary branches.
9. All shoots that were located underneath the wired branches and growing downward, were removed. NOTE: Never remove downward-growing branches until wiring is completed on a branch. Smaller secondary and tertiary shoots will often twist when wire is applied. So, if you remove small downward-growing branches and shoots before wiring, you may be removing what would have been side branches and shoots that were needed in the design.
10. Finally, all the upward-growing shoots were cut back hard and, in some cases, completely. Occasionally, a larger upward-growing branch was kept and wired to create an additional layer to the foliage.

## Member Tree Pics



You can see from this photo where the shari was widened and extended. Also, the stubs of the three branches removed last year have been jinned and a couple of the larger jins that previously existed have been reduced in size.

One of the key elements of good design in bonsai is a “layering” of branches. If you expand the size of the photo, you can see that some branches were wired on top of other branches to create depth in the foliage. The photo below shows the tree after all the work was completed.

The tree was then potted into an oversized bonsai container. While the width of the pot selected is appropriate, the depth is greater than what will ultimately be used. A more appropriate container will be selected in the next couple of years. A potting mix of 30% fir bark, 10% perlite, 30% Haydite and 30% crushed lava rock was used when the tree was repotted.



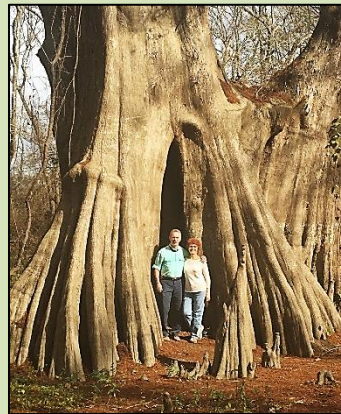
Blue Alps Juniper after pruning, wiring, and repotting -  
February 27, 2022

Shirley S.'s tiny Pink Pixie Bougainvillea in a Pauline Muth pot. Such a great accent plant.



From Marla T.

I thought that all the trees in my maple forest were the same. Is the tree on the left in the picture a different kind? It is the only one that produced whirligigs (samaras).



From Catherine A.

When Jim and I visited 1000 year-old bald cypress Methusaleh on New Year's Day, I rescued a great-great-great-granddaughter. She was so tiny I didn't know if she would survive. Well Missy just sprouted her very first bud, She's alive! Can't wait to see her grow up! Hopefully I will have her throughout my lifetime and be able to pass her down to future generations.

## Living-Root Bridges of India

[Pictures of Living Root Bridges in Meghalaya, India \(nationalgeographic.com\)](http://nationalgeographic.com)

India has a population of over a billion people and there are places on the sub-continent which are still almost inaccessible. Meghalaya in the north east of



the country is home to mountainous sub-tropical forests. To get around, especially during monsoon season, local people came up with an ingenious form of natural engineering – the living-root bridge “Jingkieng Jri”.



With an average rainfall of 463 in./yr., the Indian Rubber Tree Figs grow with abandon. Over decades the people gradually trained the aerial roots of the trees to grow across the gap until they took root on the other side (or met in the middle



with roots from the opposite riverbank). Over time the War Khasi people became very efficient at this feat of natural engineering. Some of these bridges are over 100 feet long and can even support the weight of fifty or more people at a time.

Efficient carbon dioxide absorbing, self-reinforcing, and self-renovating structures, many of the bridges are thought to be over 600 years old. While conventional bridges can disrupt the soil layers, root bridges can anchor different soil structures, help stabilize the soil and prevent landslides on riverbanks.

Meghalaya’s living root bridges have been included in the tentative list of UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites. At present, there are about 100 known living root bridges spread across 72 villages in the state. The root bridges highlight the important socio-cultural and botanical links between people and nature and need to be protected.

## Don’t Forget to Pay Dues for 2022

Membership fees are due January 1 of each year, delinquent on April 1. Some of you have already paid for 2022, so if you can’t remember if you are current, please call Marla 225-503-7397.

Your dues must be current to receive the member discount for workshops. You may pay at the next meeting or send payment to:

LBS, P.O. Box 41661, Baton Rouge, LA 70835

\$20/individual membership, \$25/family membership

## Welcome to New Members

Hank Davidson

Laura and Roy Gros

Wyler Murray

## Coming Events

### April 2&3, 2022 11am-4 pm both days

LBS Bonsai Spring Show at the BR Garden Center. Help set up around 8:30 am. Trees should remain on display until 4 pm on Sunday.

Don’t forget to print out a few flyers and post around your workplace, libraries, garden centers, etc. Also forward to your friends and neighbors.

### April 2&3, 2022, 9 am-4 pm both days

GNOBS will hold the City Park Garden Show

### April 19, 2022, 7-9 pm

LBS Monthly Meeting at the BR Garden Center

October 5, 2022- Lone Star Bonsai Federation touring artist Pedro Morales Workshop for LBS. Details TBA.

### November 12 &13, 2022 11am-4 pm both days

LBS Bonsai Fall Show at the BR Garden Center.

### January 13, 14, & 15, 2023

Mid-Winter Workshop featuring Jennifer Price . More details to come.