



## Monthly Meeting Recap

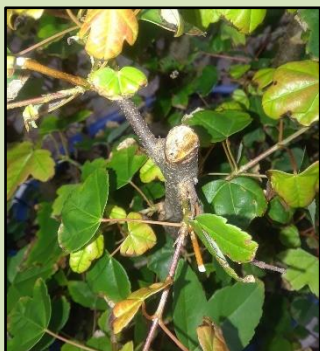
No monthly meeting due to social distancing.

## Show and Tell

Since we can't meet in person, here are some show and tell pics and info submitted by members.

By Lowell Tilley

About four weeks ago, Tom Campbell brought his trident maple group planting (forest) to my house and we pruned and trimmed it. It is the one designed by Brussel Martin at the LABS Louisiana Day of Bonsai last summer. It budded out in the spring and was growing well.



It was getting too tall so we pruned the tops by cutting them down to a branch that could grow into a new top. This helped to create taper in some of the trees. The pruning and trimming were pretty much for

healthy trees.

There was also some erosion around some of the surface roots, so we used some muck to cover some of the surface roots and added more soil to the pot. We also added some bone meal, Kelp meal, and Espoma "holly tone".



On Saturday, May 9, Tom brought it back to my house for more work. The new growth was not as vigorous as the first growth due to roots not being well established as a mature bonsai, and some of the

leaves were curling around the edges which indicates that the leaves are not getting enough phosphorus for the cell walls in the leaves to stand up to the heat. Some of the branches were growing well. By examining the bases of the trees, we could tell that some of the roots were not firm yet and there was some soil erosion leaving some surface roots exposed. So we put some muck (clay, cow manure, and peat moss) around the exposed roots and tree bases. We then put about a



tablespoon of kelp meal and bone meal of each over the surface. Then watered it into the soil.

Next, we covered the surface with a layer of fine pine bark mulch to protect the surface roots from sun, rain, and wind, and to help keep the surface moist to protect

and grow surface roots.

We also pinched the growing tips off the strong branches to stop the branch nodes elongation and to encourage back budding. We cut some of the damaged leaves off to let light into the inside.



Tom will move it into more shade, and we will look at it in about two to four weeks.



### Joey Dupré

I dug this bald cypress in mid-January of this year. It has put on a lot of growth. I carefully bent down the branches that were pointing straight up. It's 8" diameter at soil level and 6" at 2 inches above the soil. It's an unusual specimen for a bald cypress. Looking forward to seeing what it will do in the future.



### Dane Hupp

My Juniper is browning. Can anyone tell me if this is an issue? It doesn't appear to be on the new growth, the brown is back on the branch. Not sure if this is normal.



### Member Advice

Robert- Either spider mites or fungus. Remove dead foliage, then spray with 3 in 1 from BioAdvanced weekly. It takes care of both.

### Joel Jenkins

Looking for some words of wisdom from the group. I have a zelkova, Chinese elm, trident maple, and Japanese maple that are all about 3 years old now and wanting to see what the thought is on development.



I am in it for the long game on these trees and don't need instant gratification with them. I'm

wondering if I should take some growth off the top to direct growth and energy to lower branches, just let them run out and grow out unrestricted, or



selectively trim around to begin selecting branches that I want to grow out in the future? The

more I look at them, the less confident I am with what my overall path is to achieve the end goal. Please let me know your thoughts on what you would do or what you might recommend.

### Member Advice

Joey D-My first suggestion is to be honest with yourself on how big a diameter you ultimately want with these trees. If it's 3/4" or 2 3/4" makes a BIG difference in the procedure. The smaller size can probably be achieved in the containers you have now, but that will take several years. If it's towards the larger end, you'll use up most of the 25-year timeline. My suggestion would be to put them all in the ground for a few years and grow the size and shape of trunk you want and THEN worry about growing the branches. Branches come along fast after the trunk is established.

Dawn- If you want some movement now is the time to put it on the trees. Wire ( short term since you are early and growing out-will need to watch close) or let them get some size (depending on your wishes) and trunk chop low to start a new leader and change of direction. Again, all depends on your eventual size as to container or ground, or you can even do a container ON the ground to allow escape roots and great growth while maintaining

bonsaiable ( a verb at my house!) roots within the container.

Lowell- The first step is to develop a good root system, next develop a good trunk, and then branches. You are well on your way with a shallow growing box to encourage the roots to grow radially. That will broaden the base of the tree. Use organic fertilizer and mulch to keep the top of the soil moist to encourage surface root growth. Good surface roots will give the tree an older look.

You want fast growth to fatten the trunk, but you want to encourage growth on the lower trunk. Pinch the growing tips of top branches and it will reduce the axons (growth regulators) that are slowing the growth of the lower branches. The axons also slow down back budding. In other words, the growing tip is directing the food production directly to the roots bypassing lower buds and branches. Pinching the growing tip instead of trimming the branch will keep the leaves producing food, but not bypassing the lower buds and branches.

You want to transfer the growth to have more and bigger bottom branches, so keep all the growing tips on the top two thirds of the branches pinched. Don't pinch the growing tips on the bottom branches and let them grow to be taller than top branches, letting the bottom branches become the top of the tree. Growth on the bottom branches will fatten the trunk at the bottom to create trunk taper. Remove bar branches before they get big enough to leave a scar.

By having it in a growing box you can get fast growth and be able to observe it at eye level. Once you understand the way the growth regulators (axons) work, you can control what part of the tree grows faster. You can also wire the branches to control the direction of growth, but don't leave the wire on more than four weeks to prevent scars. Take wire off and rewire it.

The more branches you have the more options you have in your design. You can then decide how big you want it to be. You always have the option to cut it back and create a shohin later.

### Joel Jenkins

I have a bald cypress still in a nursery pot that I did some initial work last year and its foliage this year looked bright and green. It's now fading grey. Does anyone else think it's an insect? The new growth seems to be bright green and as it matures it's fading in color which is what is making me think it's a bug getting to it.

### Member Advice

Lowell-It is probably root bound in the pot. It also may be a victim of soil mealy bugs attacking the roots. There are insecticides that will kill them, but you also kill them by putting them in water for a few days. In fact, the bald cypress may like to be in water during the hot summer. In the water, the roots can grow through holes in the pot, then you can re-pot next spring.

### Michael Cavanaugh

Friends, I repotted this elm a couple of months ago, choosing to leave a root sticking out that I really didn't like.



I can't now remember, and didn't take a photo then, but I suspect I left it because it had many small

roots attached. I'd LIKE to remove it now and have taken a photo to show you why -- if I removed it, the larger root under it would look better nebari-wise. From what you see (and I realize you can't see what you really need to, because it is under the dirt, though I've brushed it back as much as I could), can I remove the root now?

### Member Advice

Dawn-The best time to remove roots in deciduous trees is at spring potting, but from what I see - a robust root to take its place - you are fine cutting this one off now. You can cut it off and pull the attached roots if it doesn't upset the remaining soil or rock the tree too much (hold the tree and pot form when you pull) or you can just cut the eyesore and get the remaining dead roots out later. They will decompose but shouldn't be a huge issue if there aren't that many-our pine bark is decomposing all the time.



### Joel Jenkins

I have another question on best practice for some young Japanese Black Pines. They are all in tiny seedling pots, as you can see from the pictures. I'm wanting to get opinions on if you think they will do ok in the summer to grow in that small of a container or should I slip them into a colander of some kind before it gets too hot?



### Member Advice

Dawn-Those are some great seedlings! Robust! If you are looking for a small tree or shohin, save all the lower needles and branches as they or their buds will develop into your tree with nice movement at the base. The rest is your sacrifice branch to develop a base/trunk. You can up-pot these guys into a larger terra cotta azalea or bulb pot now. No root work, just up-pot. The terra-cotta pots are heavy and won't blow over easily. A colander is fine if you can set it in something to keep it upright in the wind. Use wire to stabilize in whatever pot you use.

### Lowell

A word of caution-Be very careful when you up-pot. If the soil is wet enough it will tend to fall off the roots and if that happens it will probably die this time of year. I lost one last year just changing the angle the trunk was coming out the soil.

### Jorge Munoz

I have a bunch of shimpaku junipers and one nana in terrible pots and soil that haven't really had much attention over the years (got them from an enthusiast). I'm pretty sure I missed the repot window, but I was wondering whether I could do some initial pruning (the shimpaku are really "Pom-Pom-y") and wiring without really shocking these plants. What are the limits of juniper work this far into Spring? Thought I might slip pot them but that would require at least a bit of root hassling.

### Member Advice

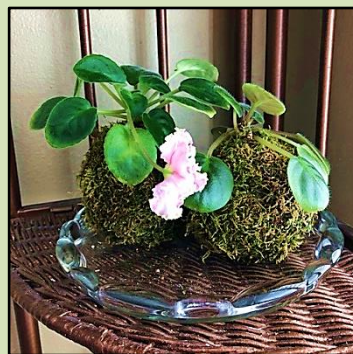
Lowell- As a rule of thumb, I don't work on junipers in June, July, and August. In the hot weather of South Louisiana, juniper growth slows down and insects and other pathogens growth speeds up. I would wait until the end of September or October to repot, depending on the break in the summer heat.

This week I would clean out any dead or weak branches to let in more air and light to the interior. Also remove all the dead needles from the pot and any moss growing close to the trunk. Add bonsai soil (use 50% or more inorganic material) around the base of the bonsai to cover those exposed roots at the base. It is very important to keep those abutting base-roots strong on junipers. Then I would put a layer of small gravel, Haydite, Turface, or other inorganic material over the surface that will protect the surface roots from the heat. They don't need any fertilizer now. Organic material can lower the pH and grow pathogens.

Robert- I totally agree with Lowell. Junipers have another growth spurt in the fall.

### Marla Thompson

Here are a couple of pics of the Kokedama I planted last month. I'm deep soaking in a bowl of water weekly and misting the moss a couple of times a week. They seem to be doing well in my kitchen. One African Violet is blooming.



### Flowers Across Sydney

Check out this beginner's guide. It has some good information from the start to finish of bonsai.

<https://blog.flowersacrosssydney.com.au/bonsai-for-beginners/>



## Trident Maple Redesign

Lowell Tilley

At our last study group meeting at Forest Park, I showed a trident maple root over rock bonsai that had a top that was not to my liking. It also needed to be repotted into a little bigger pot.



The recommendation was to cut the top off and grow a new top. After studying it, I decided it would be an interesting challenge to notch the trunk and bend it to make one of the side branches the new top. I figured there was nothing to lose. If it broke, I could still cut it off and grow a new top.



I cut a notch in the trunk below the branch that is going to be the new top.



About two thirds of the trunk is cut away to enable it to bend to make that branch point upward.

Next, I put two coils of wire on the trunk in such a way that there was a wire in each side of the notch to provide the most holding power at that point and not create a scar.



Then I bent the trunk



over until the branch was pointing upward and the trunk was starting to crack. I put a guywire to make sure the bend stayed in position.

Then I just let it grow until the crack was healing.



When healed, I removed the wire, cut the top off and trimmed the cut.







*Trident Maple After Top Redesign*

It is now ready to have some trimming, pinching, and wiring for further development.

## Guardian of the Spirit

Info and excerpts from

<https://www.huntington.org/verso/2019/03/guardians-spirit>  
and <https://www.bonsai-nbf.org/collections#Chinese>

May was a time to remember John Yoshio Naka for his almost endless contributions to the art of Bonsai as international diplomat, author, teacher, and Bonsai Master. He died in May 2004, at the age of 90 years old.



Naka was born in the U.S., but moved at age 8 to Fukuoka, Japan, with his parents to care for his aging grandfather. It was here he began to learn about bonsai. He returned to the U.S. at age 21 working with his brother as a farmer and continuing his passion for Bonsai. In 1946 he began his study of Bonsai under the tutelage of Sam Takekichi Doi. In the early 1950s, he began to lecture widely and

exhibit his works to great acclaim. One of his greatest and most widely recognized masterpieces, which was begun in 1958 “Goshin,” or Guardian of the Spirit, is a forest-style planting of 11 Chinese junipers (*Juniperus chinensis*). Each tree represents one of Naka’s grandchildren. The upright trunks and outstretched branches evoke a sense of hope in the promise of the future.



*John Naka pictured with “Goshin” at the entrance to the Upper Courtyard (2003.)*

In 1976 he helped to launch the National Bonsai Foundation, which aimed to establish a permanent display of North American Bonsai. This dream became a reality when the multimillion-dollar North American Pavilion was created at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum in Washington, D.C., located on the grounds of the U.S. National Arboretum. The Pavilion was dedicated to Naka in 1990 where “Goshin” is prominently displayed at the entrance to the pavilion. The trees of this collection are on exhibit in the North American Pavilion from Spring through Fall, then in the Chinese Pavilion for the winter.

Naka wrote that he felt “honored and proud” that his work would reside in the nation’s capital where it would be viewed by many people, bonsai experts and neophytes alike. He expressed a wish that it would inspire others and “encourage the future generation to look upon this living art with pride.” And so, it has.

## Second American Elm Trimming

By Lowell Tilley

This a follow-up on the American elm with exposed roots from last month. As you can see it grew wild in four weeks. The weeds are also growing well, so the fertilizer is sufficient.



Last time I did pruning, wiring, and trimming. The pruning is to improve the tree style by cutting some of the branches off back to a side branch to shorten the branches, increase the taper of the branches, and add some crooks in the branches. The side

branch is the new end of the branch. Sometimes wiring is required to move the new branch ends into the desired position and set them up for more pruning this fall.

Branch trimming is when you cut the branches back to two or three leaf nodes. This is to promote back budding to increase the number of branches which will reduce leaf size. Notice the new buds at the leaf nodes after the branches were trimmed.



As you can see there is a lot more refinement to be done. As I go into refinement, I will need to start bud pinching to reduce the leaf inter-node length (the distance between leaves). The top and outer branches'



leaves should get closer together as they get farther from the trunk and root base. This is done by pinching off the growing tip when the desired

distance between leaves is reached. Notice that the branch will never bud between inter-nodes, only at the leaf node.

Therefore, the leaf spacing will determine future branch spacing and the only way to correct some problems is cut out the branch and grow a new one.

In summary –

- You prune to maintain the style and increase the taper of the main branches.
- Trimming is done for back budding to increase the number and size of branches. The bottom branches should be bigger with more space between branches. Don't trim the branch until it reaches the desired diameter.
- Bud pinching is done to control distance between leaves (and future branches). As a branch grows, the distance between leaves get longer until the growing tip is pinched, or it starts back budding.
- Remove any of the big leaves that are shading the interior of the tree. This will help you see the branch structure and help balance the growth.
- You may need to prune off some branches are too far apart, too close together, or too big. To get the branch structure you like may take some trial and error, but don't get too quick or try to make it perfect. Think very carefully before you prune.

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## Just For Laughs





## Tropical Work

### Lowell

This is the time of the year to start work on tropical bonsai. This is a strangler fig that needs to be repotted. As you can see, it is going to require some serious root pruning to fit this pot.



## Repotting Miniature Jade

A native of South Africa, the Miniature Jade (*Portulacaria afra*, also called Elephant Bush), which is not related to Jade (*Crassula ovata*), is an easy-care evergreen Bonsai that should never be exposed to temperatures below 30° F. A great choice for both high and low light conditions, the Miniature Jade tree is a great low-maintenance Bonsai which can be placed outdoors in



warm temperatures or grown indoors where it can get plenty of natural sunlight.

A good rule of thumb for repotting your jade is if you can remove the root/soil ball in one piece and it's the same shape of the pot, it's time; usually about every 2 years. Jades are a succulent plant and very susceptible to root rot. So, wash the soil out of the pot with water, being careful not to bruise the roots. Wash and trim the roots as required. Leave the plant to dry in the shade and out of the rain for three to five days. Pot it, but don't water for a couple of days, then water lightly until you see new growth.



## From the President

I am checking on when and how we can go back to monthly and study group meetings. I would like to get a horticulture expert from LSU come and do a program, also do a program on tool sharpening and care. I really appreciate how so many members have participated and helped with our online programs and we can expect our programs to improve as more people take part. Please send me any questions and suggestions you have.

## 2020 Texas Bonsai Convention

Hosted by: San Antonio Bonsai Society

Date: August 6 – 9, 2020

Location: Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio

823 North Loop 1604 East, San Antonio, TX 78232

The San Antonio Bonsai Society (SABS) in coordination with The Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF) invites you and the whole family to attend the 2020 Bonsai Convention held in San Antonio, Texas on August 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th. We have assembled an A-List of guest artists including Tyler Sherrod, Arthur Joura, Roy Nagatoshi, for Boon Manakitivipart who is attending for his third year in a row. We will be keeping these featured artists busy through numerous workshops on Junipers, Maples, Hollies, Anaquas, Vitexes, and Podocarpus as well as bring your own tree (BYOT), exhibit review, and live demonstrations. SABS has also selected various Club members to lead workshops on carving, bonsai basics and a kid's workshop.

Your convention experience also includes daily raffles, a live demonstration by all three featured artists, exhibit review by all three featured artists, emerging talent competition, awards presentation, silent and live auction, free area to work on your trees if you didn't finish your tasks within the workshop, a presentation of Japanese Gardens of Texas with a tea ceremony, and a shohin workshop.

### From Lowell

As you know the Texas Bonsai 2020 Convention scheduled for this weekend has been moved to August 6-9. Anyone who has registered has



automatically been moved to the new date with the option to cancel for a refund. This means you can register now and get the reduced amount until June 15. I have attached the information packet and you can register on-line.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-texas-bonsai-convention-registration-77963704539>

or by mail. You can bring your spouse and the hotel will provide breakfast and dinner for both of you. Thanks to the convention committee. They are working hard for us.

If enough people are not planning to attend, it will be canceled, and the registration fees will be refunded. I sent this out in an e-mail but if you have not done so already, please complete the survey below.

**Please complete this survey by June 5th, so both the SABS and LSBF Boards can decide whether to hold the conference.**

<https://s.surveypal.com/cJVTBtew7>

## Proposed Meetings and Events

President will send out an e-mail regarding meeting dates when we may safely return to meeting in person.

**June 16** 7-9 p.m. Monthly Bonsai Meeting, BR Garden Center. Watch for e-mail

**July 21** 7-9 p.m. Regular Meeting Time, Kim Naquin, Tool Sharpening Class, BR Garden Center

**August 6-9** (Rescheduled from May) Lone Star Bonsai Federation Bonsai 2020 Convention, by San Antonio Bonsai Society, San Antonio, TX. Please check the website or Facebook.

**August 18** 7-9 p.m. Monthly Bonsai Meeting, BR Garden Center

**September 15** 7-9 p.m. Monthly Bonsai Meeting, BR Garden Center

**September 29** 6-9 p.m. Jennifer Price Workshop, BR Garden Center

**October 20** 7-9 p.m. Monthly Bonsai Meeting, BR Garden Center

**November 14-15** 11a.m.-4p.m. LBS Fall Show, BR Garden Center

**December 15** 7-9 p.m. LBS Member Potluck Christmas Party, BR Garden Center

## Googlegroup LBS E-mail Chat

Remember to let Michael Cavanaugh know if you would like to join the Googlegroup chat mail with other LBS members. So far, it's been lots of fun as well as informative.

Please remember that this is your newsletter. Submit pics of your trees, good or bad, ask for advice, show them off!! We would all like to see other people's collections or anything of interest regarding Bonsai. [marlajthompson@msn.com](mailto:marlajthompson@msn.com)

Many thanks to all who contributed this month.

We look forward to the time when we can be together again. Until then, stay safe.

