

# Bonsai Society of the Carolinas



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## 2020 At A Glance

Jan 11 - "Dog Tree" Swap  
Feb 8 - Repotting Workshop  
Mar 14 - Root Over Rock Workshop  
Apr 4 - Trip to Geneangel Postponed  
Apr 11 - Workshop Postponed  
May 9 - Tree Critique Panel/Expo Tree Judging Postponed  
June 13-14 - Arboretum Expo  
June 13 - Prep for DSBG Show  
July 11-12 - Member Show @ DSBG  
July 12 - Arthur Joura Demo @ DSBG  
Aug 8 - Annual Club Auction  
Sept 12 - Open  
Oct 10- Open  
Nov 14 - Collecting Trip  
Dec 5-6 - Winter Silhouette Show  
Dec 12 - Holiday Party

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## Executive Board

President - Carl Maxwell  
Vice President - Scott Telk  
Treasurer - John Farrell  
Secretary - Jeanne Anderson  
Past President - Bob Hampel  
Show Chairman - Brad Russell  
Study Group - Ken Buechele  
Email Coordinator - Gene Martin  
Newsletter - Gene Martin/  
Jeanne Anderson

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## President's Corner:

Since we are still in "lockdown" mode in NC & SC, our meetings are still on hold. But that does not keep us from sharing our love of bonsai with each other and the world! Vice-President Scott Telk came up with a great idea of how to use the chat app "Discord" to be able to share pictures and comments with other members of the club or anyone else we want to "invite". Send Scott an email and he will send you an "Invite" to join our Discord group. There is no cost and it is pretty easy to use.

Dave Hull said that since he had a bunch of "extra" trees, he would be willing to donate them to the club to use for an online styling contest. We will let you know how you can pick up a tree from him and you have a year to grow and style it. You can share your progress and pictures on the Discord chat app. We will bring our trees to the Christmas party & meeting for a "showing". But the final judging will be at our Annual Bonsai Show in July 2021 (hopefully at Daniel Stowe Gardens). All of the trees will be on display and judged by a bonsai professional. There will be prizes and awards for "Best Overall Design", "Most Interesting Tree", "Best Tree Presentation", "Best Flowering Species", and "Best Evergreen Species". I am still hopeful that we can have our June 13th meeting and should know by then if we will still be able to have our show this year at Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens. If we can, we will use the June meeting to review any trees that you would like to put in the show and do any refining or styling to make them "show ready". I will let you know by the end of May if the June meeting and the show will be held or not. Until then, stay safe !

Carl

## **Our New Chat App DISCORD is here!**

We have selected an online application to post pictures and discuss bonsai. This app will allow any member of our group to post pictures, comment on other pictures or just chat with other members.

The best part is that pictures are expandable so you can really see the details of what was posted. Anything bonsai related is fair game to share and discuss. A few members have started to post pictures and make comments.

This is a secure chat app and only members with an invitation can join. This will prevent unauthorized people from commenting or hijacking our chat room. To get your invite, please email me.  
Scott Telk

## **TIME TO SHOW YOUR MAD BONSAI SKILLS**

How's your creativity? Your styling skills? Your vision? Want to have fun and test them? The BSOC will be holding a contest for fun. Long time BSOC member, Dave Hull, is offering free trees to members that want one to style. But there is a catch. It will be part of a contest to support the club. Here are the rules:

1. Every member that wants one will receive a free tree.
2. Pictures are taken of the tree when taken by the stylist
3. All trees will be brought back to a club meeting in June/July 2021 (TBD) for judging and auctioning
4. All trees are put up for auction by the club
  - a. If no bid, tree reverts to stylist for no cost
  - b. Otherwise, highest bid takes the tree...
  - c. ....unless the stylist wants the tree (then they can buy it for 1/2 the top bid - to reward the stylist, still generate funds for the club
  - d. The original picture of the trees will be compared to the tree at the meeting. Awards for individual trees are given for:
    1. Most improved
    2. Most changed
    3. Most interesting
    4. Etc?
  - e. Awards are subjective and voted on by all members at the meeting and will be given to the stylist regardless of whether the stylist keeps the tree or not

Trees will be randomly given to people. There are several different species in different levels of growth/age/style, etc. The challenge is to see what you can do with what you are given. Remember, there are a bunch of different awards so let your imagination run wild!

If you are interested, there will be 2 weekends when you can pick up a tree from Dave. Email me and I will give you his phone and address.  
Scott Telk



Literati azalea in full bloom  
*Scott Telk*

### **BSC Meeting Information**

*Monthly meetings are held at various locations in the Charlotte area. Directions and parking information can be found on the BSC website. The BSC Newsletter is compiled and created monthly by Gene Martin & Jeanne Anderson. Contributions and feedback are welcome and encouraged. Please email submissions or comments to [BonsaiSocietyCarolinas@gmail.com](mailto:BonsaiSocietyCarolinas@gmail.com) by the 20th of each month for publication in the following newsletter.*

### **Shout Out**

*The BSC needs a Web Administrator. Primary functions will be to post Newsletter pdf files and maintain meeting information. If interested, please contact Carl or Scott.*

### **Dues Reminder**

*2020 BSC Membership dues are due. \$50. Bring a check to the next meeting or mail it to Treasurer John Farrell.*

### ***Even Monkeys Fall From Trees***

*This article is a reprint of an article that appeared in the October 1995 newsletter. There was no author noted but I thought it was a cute write up and good advice for all of us.*

During my first visit with Randy Clark, he shared a funny quote from John Naka. The context was a bonsai workshop he was conducting. While trying to bend and shape a large branch, the audience heard a loud crack - the feared nightmare of the bonsai artist. Mr. Naka's response was "Even monkeys fall out of trees." In other words, even experts make mistakes sometimes.

This cute expression can serve all of us well, particularly the bonsai beginner. No matter how big or famous the bonsai artist, they have all made their share of big mistakes. They have all had trees to die. They have all cut off branches that they shouldn't have. In short, they have made just about every kind of mistake that you or I are likely to make. So what's the difference? There are perhaps two important ingredients:

1. Learn something from the mistake
2. Try not to repeat the same mistake again.

If you are just getting started and your first tree dies, don't let that keep you from learning from your

experience and trying not to repeat the mistake. There are several things that you can do when you've made your blunder. First, you can bring your tree to the next bonsai society meeting and get some advice on what you did wrong and what you should have done. You can research good bonsai practice in a good book or magazine. Find out what others have done that you didn't do. You certainly won't be the first person who let a tree die because you didn't water it enough.

The important thing is to bounce back from your misfortunes. The good football quarterback doesn't quit after a few mistakes; he keeps on until he is successful. This is the proper attitude to keep as you are learning the fine art of bonsai. Always learn from your experience and try not to repeat your mistakes. It takes time but the benefits are easily seen every time you look at a specimen bonsai.

*As we go into the summer, we should remember Mr. Naka's words when we are discouraged after we lose a tree. Just profit from our mistakes and discuss with one of your society members to find out what you should have done. I know I will.*

Jeanne Anderson

## Soil Mix and Fertilizing

After my last month's article about reviving two large desert roses and a bougainvillea for a local dentist, I thought a discussion about soil mixes and fertilizer might be appropriate. The soil mix for the plants that I revived was a very course mixture of crushed granite, lava rock, and pumice. There was no baked clay or akadama, no pine bark, or any other organic material that would hold water. That was part of the dentist's problem. She had kept the plants at her farm in Rock Hill and watered them once each weekend. When I watered the plants, the water went straight through the bottom of the pot due to the course mixture, so the plant was basically dry again in less than an hour. Since I didn't have the authorization to replace the soil and repot them, I watered them twice a day. I felt that was sufficient since they were indoors and not exposed to any wind, and the temperatures in my shed ranged from 60 to 70 degrees most days. When she picked up her trees, I suggested that she get them repotted into a better mix and some nicer clay pots instead of the plastic training pots they were in.

I get asked often about what I use in my soil mixture. Believe me, in the past 20 years I have tried a lot of different components and a lot of recipes from other bonsai artists. I used to use Turface as my baked clay substitute, but it required sifting to get rid of fines, and it broke down and compacted after about a year of watering. My old teacher used river sand in his mix, but I found that a lot of it washed out the drain holes over time. I am not a fan of pumice, since most of what is available is almost white in color and I think it detracts from the tree. So for the past four years, I have settled on my current mix which has kept my trees very happy. I use equal amounts of the following five components: Baked Akadama Clay, Crushed Granite, Black Lava Rock, Agricultural Charcoal, and Pine Bark. I use one-quarter inch size of all of them. The akadama, charcoal, pine bark, and lava rock will all hold some water, so I only need to water once a day unless the temperatures are over 90 degrees, when I water twice a day. All of the components hold up well over time and are very slow to degrade, so my soil does not compress much. In fact, my plants tend to get "root-bound" way before the soil gets compacted. This gives the roots time and space to grow and expand, which keeps my plants healthy and prevents root rot. I mix by soil about 10 gallons at a time in a small electric cement mixer and keep some in a Lowes 5 gallon bucket and more in 1 gallon milk jugs that I have for sale.

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As far as fertilizer is concerned, I also get asked about my method quite often. I believe in the "Keep It Simple, Stupid" club, so I use good old Miracle Grow blue crystals. In the summer, I have a Miracle Grow sprayer that attaches to my garden hose. Normally you would fill up the one quart bowl with the crystals and spray your outdoor plants, but I use about 4 tablespoons in the container for bonsai. This means I am using about 10% of the normal concentration. And I fertilize every day that I water my plants. Because of the weak mixture and the fact that I water until water runs out the bottom of the pots, it is almost impossible to "over-fertilize" my bonsai. The plants will use whatever they need. I use about 8 tablespoons for the first month of watering (usually April) since I usually water every other day due to lower temps at that time of year. By mid-May, I am watering daily and drop back to 4 tablespoons. I also add a couple of tablespoons of Epsom Salts and Superthrive about once a week. That routine usually gets my plants off to a good start during the spring budding season and my plants all "green up" during that time. By June, I like to add a little Alaskan Fish Fertilizer to each plant and it gets "watered in" as the plants are watered. I find it is good to use some organic fertilizer once in a while in addition to the chemical variety. And you don't have to use Miracle Grow. You can use any water soluble fertilizer such as Peters, Schulz, Jobes, Scotts, or any other name you can find. Just look for the 3 numbers that represent the fertilizer component mix such as 10-10-10. I like to use one where the mix is balanced, but you can use a fertilizer with a higher middle number if you have a lot of flowering species. Hope you find this information helpful and please don't hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions. - Carl



Identify

I found this in my yard. It may be an elm in which case, I'll dig it up and bonsai it. Have looked on line but can't find anything conclusive. Help!

jeanne