

ISSUE

07

July
2026

A Publication
of The San
Antonio
Bonsai

SA BONSAI NEWS

Upcoming Bonsai Events

July

July 9th

**Club Meeting on
BYOT Tropical
Repotting Bonsai,
Lions Field, 5:30pm**

July 18th

**Rainbow Gardens
Lecture/Demo, RG
Thousand Oaks,
10am**

July 22nd

**Progressive
Workshop & BYOT
Workshop, Lions
Field, 5:30pm**

**Additional events
listed on page 5**

Meetings held at the
Lions Field Center 2809
Broadway, SATX 78209
unless mentioned
differently



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Vice-President's Message P.2

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President's Message by Richard M., millermlaw@aol.com

**NEW CLUB MEETING TIMES AT LIONS FIELD
5:30 PM TO 7:45 PM**

The June meeting was a lot of fun. Brandon Baldauf conducted a repotting lecture and showed everyone his great skill at repotting several bonsai. We had a great raffle, and Brandon even brought some sale trees. Utilizing the skills we learned from Brandon, it is totally appropriate that the July 9th meeting be conducted as a bonsai repotting session. The more experienced bonsai members will, of course, be present to lend a helping hand where needed. Members can bring 2 bonsai trees along with pots, wire, soil, and repotting tools. The meeting should be fun and a great experience regarding this most important bonsai activity.

I could not attend the San Antonio Botanical Garden exhibit presented by the club as I was quite ill at that time. I heard that the exhibit went great and I would like to thank all members that participated. John Troy sent me some pictures of the event, and I was quite impressed by the quality of bonsai.



Former SABS member Sally Cotter
won 1st Place in the Bonsai
Exhibition with the Bonsai Society of
Portland. Congrats Sally!!



Please Welcome our Newest Member(s)

Gabriel S., Ida S.,
& John V.

*Those considering
joining SABS may attend
a free meeting.
Membership forms
available at each
meeting and on website.*

Congratulate these Members on their Membership Anniversary in 2026

5 years

Gabe, Karin,
Richard, Kurt, &
Janet

10 years

Diane & Steve

20-30 years

Louie (20), Nancy
(20), Tom (20),
Irene (20), Jay (25),
Kevin (26), Hattie
(26), Donna (27),
Chuck (30), & Pat
(30)

31+ years

Alfred (35), David
(44), Paul (45),
Dawn (45), & Jack
(46)



Vice-President's Message

by Carl D. Richard M.,
mcdixon117@gmail.com

Let me start off with a plug for all the benefits of reading the Newsletter soon after it is published, usually shortly after the first of each month. Lately, I've talked to several club members who have missed club opportunities because they didn't read the Newsletter or only read it too late to take advantage of an event.

Why read the Newsletter?

1. See a detailed description of all monthly Club events. Don't miss an event that occurred before you read the Newsletter. Often you must sign up for events well before the actual event date. If you missed the email delivery of your Newsletter, you can search for the latest version at "San Antonio Bonsai Society Newsletters". This site also has Newsletter editions dating back many years.
2. Ryan O., Richard M., I, and additional contributors dedicate on average a combined total of 4 hours every month composing and publishing it. Many thanks to Ryan, Richard, and other contributors!!
3. There are descriptions of the previous month's events. You can catch up on happenings that you may have missed.
4. It is the only thing that has the potential to connect every one of us together every month. In that way, it is the heartbeat of the Club.
5. It contains timely educational information on multiple bonsai topics, usually again, the result of Ryan's and others hard work. Any member can submit information they may have come across for publication which would make the Newsletter even more valuable.
6. It comes to you at no cost!!! - Enough of preaching.

June was not as packed with events as the previous month. The June 11th regular club meeting featured Brandon Baldauf of "Hawk Eye Bonsai", a bonsai nursery located in Bastrop. He styled and demonstrated repotting of a Sea Hibiscus tropical explaining in detail each step of the process. He brought along several smaller tropicals with which several new club members got hands on repotting experience supervised by Brandon. All the newly minted bonsais were then raffled off. Many club members used their soft drink cups, club soil, and cuttings from the Sea Hibiscus to take home their own freebie pre-bonsai. A fun and educational meeting!

The June 27/28th San Antonio Botanical Gardens Bonsai Exhibit went very well. We were displaced to a smaller classroom like venue which limited the number of trees we

Vice-President's message continued on page 6.

Monthly Food/Bev. Host(s)

July

Ester R. & Evelyn K.

August

Carl D., Irene V., & Louie C.

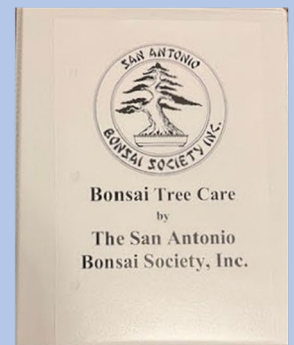
Soil/Book Sale



Club Soil

\$25/6.5 gal.
(Club Members)

\$30/6.5 gal.
(Non-Members)



Care Book \$30

Email Ryan O. at bonsaiode@gmail.com for details or delivery to meetings



Photos/Recognitions

SA Botanical Garden's Bonsai Exhibit



Additional Photos are [here](#).



Monthly Tips by Michael Hagedorn of Crataegus Bonsai

How Hard Water Can Limit Plant Growth

Do you have white buildup on your faucets? If so, you have hard water, which can cause yellowish foliage, few blooms, and lack of vigor in your bonsai.

If you see whitish stains on sinks and leaves, the problem is hard water from dissolved salts. This isn't table salt, sodium chloride, but rather calcium and magnesium. Both of those are essential to plant health, and yet high amounts are a liability.

Hardness is easily tested with inexpensive, digital units, which can also test for pH and alkalinity. Be sure to clean the tester nib, as they can misread if dirty.

Hardness and pH are closely related. They generally move in the same direction: as hardness rises, the pH will rise.

If you have high pH and low dissolved salts (which isn't that common), you may be in OK shape to grow bonsai. It is high dissolved salts that create the worst problems for plants, with the worst case being high pH with high salts.

We see high hardness most often in drier climates, or when municipal sources or private wells come from aquifers surrounded by limestone. Some dissolved salts are good for plant growth, with between 30 and 60 ppm (parts per million) considered optimum. High hardness, above 120 ppm, is where the fun begins.

High hardness (and therefore, usually, alkalinity) causes several problems 1) Hard water may limit the root's ability to draw in water - an osmotic issue, 2) Even moderately hard water limits the uptake of nutrients - nitrogen (causing chlorosis), and zinc, manganese and copper, 3) Phosphorus binds to the calcium in the soil—a macronutrient needed for many plant processes, 4) Stunted leaves and leaf damage may result from these nutrient lockouts, and 5) Poor root growth is another factor.

These are serious issues that add layers of stress to bonsai, which are already stressed by being in a small pot. In moderate situations of high hardness an acid injection into your hose system can work to mitigate these bad effects. This is an industry standard way of combating high pH and high hardness (and I'll cover this shortly in another blog post).

If your electronic test kit shows much higher hardness, 400 ppm or higher, consider collecting/using rainwater or set up a reverse osmosis (RO) system. Do not use a water softener, which introduces sodium chloride into your water and can kill your bonsai.

Correcting Water pH For Better Plant Health

When we drink water, our kidneys adjust the blood pH to 7.35-7.45. Plants also have the ability to change pH around their roots, up to 1.5 pH points. But in more extreme pH situations, plants suffer.

Species Highlight

Yaupon Holly

Ilex vomitoria is a species of holly that is native to southeastern and south-central US. The word yaupon was derived from the Catawban *yápa*, from *yá* = tree + *pá* = leaf. Early Europeans gave it the Latin name based on misunderstood Indigenous purification ceremonies - where vomiting was part of the ritual.

Yaupon holly is an evergreen shrub/small tree with smooth, light gray bark & slender, hairy shoots. Leaves are arranged in alternate, oval to elliptical shape & glossy dark green. Flowers are white, and the fruit is round, shiny, and red.

As bonsai, Yaupon Hollies are an exceptional and highly forgiving shrub that makes an outstanding bonsai. Prized for its tiny leathery leaves, reliable back-budding, and pale gray bark, it responds beautifully to aggressive pruning and the "clip-and-grow" method.

Placement: Thrives in full sun to partial shade.

Watering: Yaupon hollies naturally tolerate moist, occasionally flooded soils.

Pruning/Wiring: Use clip-and-grow" technique to 1 or 2 nodes.

Fertilizing: Use a balanced NPR liquid or slow-release fertilizer from spring to fall.



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August

August 13th
Club Meeting,
 Educational Panel
 Discussion, Lions
 Field, 5:30pm

August 25th
Progressive
Workshop & BYOT
Workshop, Lions
 Field, 5:30pm

Monthly Tips cont.

Water pH measures the concentration of hydrogen ions. If you have more hydrogen ions, you have acidic water. If you have more hydroxide ions, it's alkaline. The pH scale runs from 0 to 14, with 0 being ridiculously acidic and 14 being obnoxiously alkaline. 7 is neutral.

For the best plant health - and to grow the broadest range of species - we should aim for the middle. 6-7 pH is usually ok, with 6.5 being about optimal.

The thing is this isn't a simple scale. A pH reading of 2 is not twice as alkaline as 1. It's 10 times as alkaline. It's logarithmic. This means a pH of 8 is 100 times as alkaline as 6.

That might seem like a scary range, but plants are pretty tough. Your pines and azaleas will prefer things acidic, junipers are famously adaptable, while crabapple and elm can perform well in alkaline situations. Many plants do OK if things are not ideal.

But when we're well beyond a good pH range, mineral deficiencies and toxicities show up 1) In highly acidic situations, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus become insoluble, so the plant can't take them up, 2) Metals like aluminum and manganese become soluble in highly acidic conditions, which results in toxicities, 3) Highly acid water can damage root cells, 4) In highly alkaline situations, nutrient lockouts happen, seen in stunted top and root growth, and 5) Leaf chlorosis, or iron deficiency, is seen with highly alkaline water.

How then do we know the pH of our water?

There are several methods of testing water, the easiest being a hand-held, battery operated, digital tester, which gives readouts of both pH and dissolved salts. Alternatively, you can use drops from an aquarist's store to test pH. Avoid litmus paper, which is a vague reading.

A digital tester for both pH and TDS (dissolved salts) tests both key measures of water quality, this is the recommended way to test. Stick the end in water and hey presto, a digital readout.

For just testing pH, an aquarist's drop test kit is good enough. Fill water to the white line, add three drops of test solution, cap it, and shake. This test came out about right for bonsai - about pH 6.2 or 6.3. A pH of 6.5 is ideal.

If you've soft water that is alkaline, you may be fine. Usually, a high pH comes with hard water, and that's a real challenge for a plant. (See this post for more on hard water and how it affects plant health.) In general, changing your pH to be mildly acidic corrects moderate hard water issues.

How then do we adjust the pH coming out of our hoses to get the best bonsai health?

Most water problems will be too alkaline. In that case, the easiest fix is to use a siphon and inject acid. Fertilizer siphons come in many sizes and complications and expense levels, the simplest being a siphon with a hoselet that goes into an acid dilution. A system with more control is the Dosetron system. It's more expensive than the simple siphon and has a tangle of plumbing to sort out at the bib, but it does have several controls which can make either acid injection or liquid fertilizing a top end experience.

Additional info can be found at <https://crataegus.com/blog/>

Vice-President's Message (cont.)

could display, but viewing traffic was considerably better than I expected. Ryan and Kevin presented clinics to a group of interested students, signed up by the Botanical gardens. The Botanical Gardens is by far our best exhibit venue we have access to. It is always rewarding to interact with people who appreciate the time and effort we have invested in our trees. Very motivating and makes the effort of preparing trees for the exhibit seem worthwhile. I would encourage you to get your best trees ready for the next exhibition.

Thursday July 9th

The main July event is the regular Club Meeting. Summer is tropical repotting season. Bring in your tropicals that may need repotting if you would like advice and guidance from more experienced club members on the technique. It is always fun to “Bonsai” with a group of like-minded friends. The advice is “usually” reliable. This is a less formal format with a lot of interaction with other club members. Hope to see you there.

Saturday July 18th

Kevin and Ryan are presenting the Art and History of Bonsai while working on nursery stock at Rainbow Gardens Thousand Oaks from 10:00am to 1:00pm. They will bring a few trees to exhibit. Their last demonstration, in December 2025, had over 25 guests. I believe they have acquired a group of followers!!!

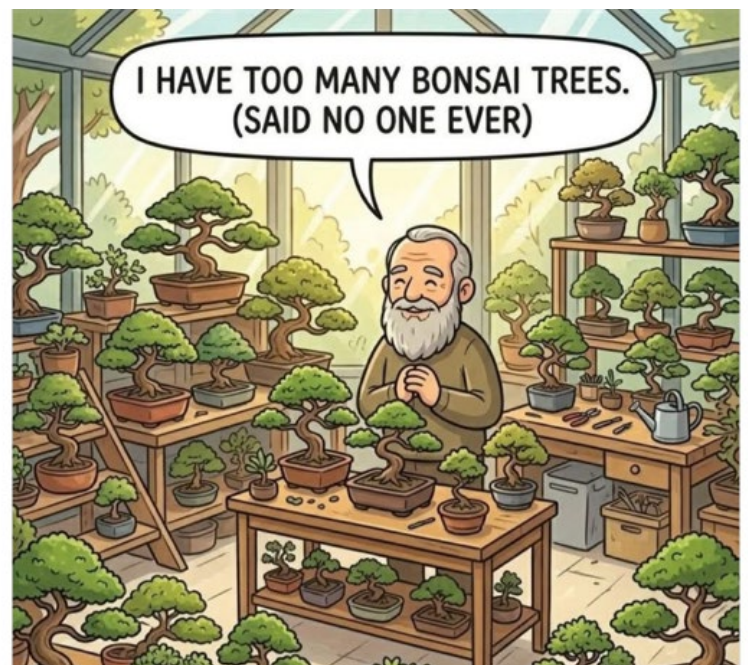
Wednesday July 22nd

Progressive Workshop and BYOT Workshop: This is again the 4th Wednesday of the month workshops for those who purchased trees for Kevin's hands-on instruction class and Ryan's individualized advice for any tree on which you might like an opinion on how to proceed - bend this branch? Cut this branch? More water - less water - etc, etc, etc. Come on in, the water's fine.

Keep a close watch on your trees in this kind of weather. Be sure you are watering daily, if not twice daily.

Side Note

Kevin is working with Mark Fanick of Fanick's Nursery for a **Day of Bonsai** on Saturday, September 12th. SABS will be filling a large area of Fanick's with a large exhibit and vendor booths. Our potential list of vendors includes SABS, High Water Bonsa (Drew and Martin), Little Jade Bonsai (Gilbert Cantu), Hawk Eye Bonsai (Brandon Baldauf), Red Hawk Bonsai (David Whitaker), Austin Bonsai Pots and Japanese Maples (Jonathan Wood), and many more. A sign-up will begin in August for those who want to exhibit.



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Gill P.

The informal upright style (Moyogi) is considered the most popular shape in all bonsai, especially suited to our native Ashe Juniper.

Our logo, represented by this informal style stands for the informal nature of the San Antonio Bonsai Society, Inc. This popular, interesting style depicts the objectives of the Society - promoting participation and enjoyment of Bonsai.

The emblem was adopted as the official logo in September 1977.

For additional information please visit SABS at

Website: Sanantoniobonsai.org

Facebook: @sanantoniobonsai

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YouTube: [Click Here!!](#)

Annual Membership Dues:

Individual	\$30
Family	\$50
Senior (65+) Individual:	\$25
Senior (65+) Family:	\$40
Individual Nametag:	\$15

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SABS is a non-profit 501c (3) organization.

Newsletter Editor: Ryan O. at bonsaiode@gmail.com

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