



April 2025
GLBS Newsletter

Message from The Treasurer

Happy Spring everyone! I hope everyone has been enjoying the warmer temperatures and getting the trees out of winter storage. I recently took the opportunity of my wife and kid's Spring Break to take a few days to transplant trees, look over options for the upcoming WBG show and clean up the garden. It has been a productive time for sure. In the not-too-distance past I found it difficult to find opportunities to do such things and I feel my trees, practice and art suffered for it. As with many art forms you must make the time to "strike while the iron is hot" and right now there are many hot irons to attend to. Between club and WBG events, the show and my role on the WBG Bonsai Board I have many new responsibilities but also many new friendships and connections in the artform from whom I am constantly learning new things. Back when I was teaching myself and a mere observer of the clubs I joined, I enjoyed the meetings, workshops and shows but I didn't feel it was paying the dividends that my investment is now. My wife and kids say I've taken on a second job and I'm sure others get similar reactions, but in my mind, it is all worth it because I feel we are at unique place for the bonsai scene in Louisville and the region. Between the Annual Bonsai Weekend, the Bonsai Certification Program at the WBG and Club Events, I am truly excited to be a part of it all and see, first hand, how all of this is resulting in growth in membership, a deeper interest and engagement in the programs, and a willingness, collectively, to help make each event better than the last. All of these are the metaphorical red-hot metal ready to be formed and I believe we are striking at exactly the right moment to make the most of it. The Board greatly appreciates everyone's assistance and involvement in all the things happening right now. I hope you all see some returns and that they play a positive role in your garden and your practice too.

All this talk of dividends and ROI comes with my current role as the Treasurer. In this role I feel I would be remiss if I did not address the financial standing of the club. To be sure it is strong, and we are well positioned to continue to bring great programs to the membership

in the coming year(s) thanks to the efforts of many. We look forward to seeing you all at these future events and especially the upcoming 3rd Annual Bonsai Weekend!

Keep those trees watered and those branches trimmed.

Jim Doiron GLBS Treasurer

Upcoming Event

April Meeting: Forest Planting Workshop

- Date: April 15, 2025, 6-8pm.
- Location: Waterfront Botanic Garden- Leslie Classroom
- Program:
 - Korean Hornbeam Forest Planting Workshop
 - Roundtable Tree Evaluation of members trees in preparation for the Annual Bonsai Weekend Show
- All are welcome to attend; however, the workshop is sold out
 - Observing is still a great way to learn!
- What to Bring
 - Bonsai and potting tools if you have them available
 - The club will have some available
 - GLBS will provide the trees, pot, wire, and soil
 - Trees for the roundtable evaluation

Calendar of Future Events

April 13: GLBS will have a booth at the Paristown Garden show. 10am-5pm

April 19: GLBS will have a booth at Tree Fest. Petersburg Park. 11am-3pm
5008 E Indian Trail, Louisville, KY 40218

May 20: General Meeting. 6-8pm at the Waterfront Botanic Garden

Program: Hands on experience in bonsai exhibition staging
(tree/container/stand/accent harmony)

May 30-June 1: Annual Bonsai Weekend Show at the Waterfront Botanic Garden

June 17: General Meeting. 6-8 pm at the Waterfront Botanic Garden

Program: Post show workshop.

July 15: General Meeting. 6-8 pm at the Waterfront Botanic Garden

Program: Foliage management and pesticides and slide show critique of the show

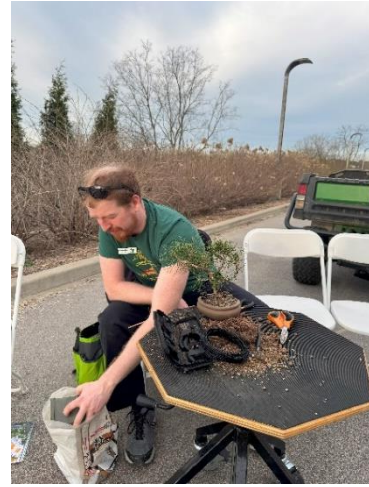
July 26: Road trip to Berea Bonsai Nursery

March Club Meeting

Our March meeting was a fantastic hands-on experience as we gathered to focus on one of the most critical tasks in bonsai care- repotting. Many members brought their bonsai for repotting, and experienced mentors guided newer enthusiasts through the process. It was a great opportunity to ask questions, exchange tips, and work

Highlights from the Meeting

- Understanding Repotting Timing – We discussed the importance of repotting at the right time, in early spring for our deciduous trees when they are emerging from dormancy
- Root Pruning Techniques – A live demonstration showed how to safely trim roots to maintain a healthy balance between foliage and the root system
- Choosing the right soil mix- Members learned about the different soil compositions to ensure proper drainage and aeration



GLBS to have a booth at the 2025 Paristown Garden Show and at the 2025 Tree Fest

Paristown Garden Show has been rescheduled for April 13th, from 10 AM to 5 PM

Tree Fest on April 19, from 11 AM to 3 PM

Come join us for an exciting day filled with nature, plants, and community! Enjoy the beautiful surroundings, share your passion for bonsai, and connect with fellow plant and tree enthusiasts. Whether you're a seasoned bonsai expert or just starting out, it's a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the art of bonsai with others who share your love for plants and trees!



3rd Annual Bonsai Weekend

We are incredibly excited to be doing this show again this year. Please start looking at your trees thinking about ones that may be good options to enter. If you have a tree, or trees, you would like to have considered for inclusion in the show, please forward a photograph of the trees along with the common name, botanic name, approximate age and style to Jim Keith at shimpaku65@icloud.com



**3rd ANNUAL
BONSAI WEEKEND**

WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS
Hosted by the GREATER LOUISVILLE BONSAI SOCIETY

May 30 - June 1, 2025

- Dozens of bonsai on display
- Guest artist & judge Owen Reich
- People's choice award
- Workshops & Demonstrations
- Bonsai vendors
- Food & Drinks



**WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS**



**Greater Louisville
Bonsai Society**

BONSAIWEEKEND.COM



3rd Annual Bonsai Weekend

May 30
11 AM - 5 PM

May 31
10 AM - 6 PM

June 1
11 AM - 4 PM

TICKETS

- \$12 in advance
- \$15 at the door
- \$10 Waterfront Gardens & Bonsai Society Members
- FREE for Ages 16 & under

SCAN FOR MORE INFO



Waterfront Botanical Gardens
1435 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
BONSAIWEEKEND.COM

Save the Date! May 29-31, 2026

Meet our guest Judge Owen Reich (All Workshops and Demonstrations at the 3rd Annual Bonsai Weekend will be conducted by guest artist, Owen Reich)



Owen Reich has been on a journey to become both a bonsai master of all species and styles as well as a plantsman. This required a complete understanding of horticulture (UGA '06) and direct interaction with Japan's native species. There is a great degree of crossover between bonsai moment and gardening, so understanding bonsai also allows for an expansion of knowledge about Japanese gardens. Central Japan is very much like the southeastern United States, so after building and managing Samara Farms LLC he spent three years of apprenticeship at Fujikawa Kouka-en in Osaka, Japan. Owen learned how to care for multi-generational bonsai of all species, instead of focusing on conifers only. Understanding the 3–5-year rhythms of deciduous trees commonly used for bonsai in Central Japan was primary interest for studying deciduous species and kusamono, with three years of styling time on tons of conifers. Exhibition preparation and container / stand harmony is a big part of Kouka-en's specialty, so Owen's approach to exhibitions is largely focused on overall display harmony and allusions to the current and upcoming seasons.

Owen's current focus is on deciduous and broadleaf evergreen species of all kinds, especially those native to the eastern half of the United States of America, utilizing these for bonsai is likely the future of introductory bonsai training. The ease of care and work of Arthur Joura at the NC Arboretum bonsai collection have proven that native species can translate to a massive decrease in synthetic chemical use of all kinds. Current habitat restoration and design / build project is Bask Retreat Center in Centerville, Tennessee. A Japanese inspired moss garden with all native species and their cultivars will be proof of concept for expansion of this garden style.



Article

What Works for Me

Lee Squires

February 2025 – GLBS

This article is a reprint and was originally written by me 32 years ago for the February 1993 GLBS Newsletter.

I had already been involved in bonsai for 21 years. These trial-and-error techniques and products have worked for me and helped with my success and I hope that they will work for you all too.

BONSAI ROOTS

Surface roots do make a good bonsai great, but don't put too much effort into uncovering them at the first potting of the tree. At some recent workshops I've seen members virtually destroy the root ball looking for "good" roots before trimming the first branch. This can only damage the root system and the tree and make the tree more unstable during the trimming and styling process. Instead, pull the potential bonsai from its nursery container, remove only loose soil from the surface to see where the best roots are, and then trim and wire the tree. Your last efforts should be root pruning with potting and watering to follow. Excessive root removal prior to styling can only lead to stress and decline of the tree. Don't plan your entire design on root placement alone. The best front of the tree may not have the best root flare.

LIME

All of our trees are grown in shallow pots and as the season rolls on (around August 1st), the soil becomes overly acidic and can lead to stress on the root system. I apply powdered

dolomitic limestone to the surface of all of my trees. Spread 1,2,3 tablespoons on the soil surface depending on pot size and water it in. It dissolves easily and doesn't wash off. Junipers, for example, like a more alkaline soil than other evergreens (pH 5.5 to 7.0). A pH reading shows the relative acidity (below 7.0) or alkalinity (above 7.0) of a soil. A yellowing juniper will green up in a couple of days after a lime application. This is especially true if organic material is used in the soil mix. Note in 2025: in the 90's we were still using pine bark in our soil mix which is acidic. This is not the general case now. Our mix now may be more alkaline. Clay runs from 7.5 to 10.0 pH, akadama is a clay product. Louisville tap water has an average pH of 8.7. Watering with tap water makes our soil more alkaline. You may want to add a fertilizer for evergreens that includes sulfur, iron sulfate or aluminum sulfate if your soil is more alkaline. Testing for pH is difficult and not always accurate. This can be complicated and what you do with your trees should be considered on a tree-to-tree basis. Some pH readings to ponder: 6.0 – 7.0 optimal pH for most plants, Junipers 5.5 – 7.0, Pines 5.2 – 6.0, Azaleas 4.5 – 6.0, Elms 5.5- 8.0, Japanese Maples 5.5 – 6.5, Pine bark 4.0 – 5.0, Clay 7.5 – 10.0, Lava rock 7.0 neutral, Pumice 7.0 neutral, Tap Water 8.7

STRESS REDUCER

I've tested this past year, a growth enhancer that stimulates roots, cells and shoots called ROOTS Organics. It is designed for soil and soilless mixes. It has a 2.0 -.25 -2.0 with .5% magnesium, N- P-K analysis. Epsom Salt is magnesium sulfate. ROOTS is a combination of several organic materials that include humic acid (1%) that contain some plant hormones, namely, auxins, gibberellins, and cytokinins and nutrients and is used in container growing by many professional nurserymen. Plant hormones can, immensely, help your plants and are used in addition to fertilizers. ROOTS increases root growth, promotes vigor, improves stress tolerance from heat and transplanting, and increases water and chemical uptake. I use about one ounce per gallon of water at least once, sometimes twice, in the summer on my trees and apply it on the soil with a watering can. My trees seem to thrive all summer and never seem to go into a summer dormant state. The application of this product will do the following for all container plants: Increase flow of water and nutrients into the plant, allows solutions to flow faster through the stems and leaves, increases photosynthesis and chlorophyll, delays aging of plant tissue, reduces transplant and drought stress, reduces dieback, and increases frost tolerance.

Note in 2025: Look for ROOTS Organics at your local garden center but they may not have it. New Earth Organics, in Jeffersontown on Taylorsville Rd., has it and several different formulations. I use the BUDDHA GROW formulation. They have some amazing products that you will like and I do not receive a "kickback". If you do go for a visit, let them know I sent you so they will know why they are having increased sales of ROOTS.

WORMS

We've all seen earthworms in our pots during Spring potting and sometimes we can pluck them out, but worms have a tendency to duck for cover when they see you coming. If you don't totally repot a tree, the worms can live in the pot all year and eat up most of your soil leaving only gravel, lava and pumice. Air pockets develop and roots die because of exposure to air. After I set all bonsai on their benches, I saturate the soil with a half strength solution of liquid insecticide. The worms immediately exit the soil through the surface. Of course, they die, so wait 15 minutes and hose down your trees and benches. Remove any dead worms so that birds will not eat them. This procedure also eliminates "Roly- poly bugs", that is, the pillbug, *Armadillidium vulgare*, infestations. A great scientific name!

CONCAVE PRUNER

Our concave pruners have become obsolete for the purpose that they were developed for, making concave cuts into the trunk when removing branches. Research has proven that if you cut into the trunk past the branch collar (the ridge of bark that connects the branch to the trunk), that healing greatly slows down. You should always leave the collar when pruning a branch so you will get quick healing. On the positive side, when you leave the branch collar, they do leave gnarly scars on the trunk that helps with the illusion of age and struggle. You can still make the cut with the concave pruner. The knuckle cutter, another gouging pruner, is totally obsolete since it was designed to scoop out trunk tissue like a melon ball scoop does to a cantaloupe. Don't buy one if you haven't already and never use the one you have.

CHICKEN GRIT

We all look for better drainage in our soil mix and if lava rock, pumice or some other new granular product isn't available you can always try some chicken grit. Actually, it is crushed granite used for chicken consumption, stored in their gizzards and used to grind grain to help with digestion. The angular, sharp texture has a tendency to create a fibrous root system by splitting large roots into smaller ones as they elongate through the pot. Round drainage particles in the mix, like pea gravel, causes a root to pass around the particle and not split, hence, a coarser root system. There are two sizes, starter and regular grit in 50 lb. bags. It is relatively inexpensive but is a lot heavier than lava or pumice in the pot. It can be purchased at stores that sell farm and animal supplies.

FERTILIZER

There are many types, organic and inorganic, but the best I've found for all around, easy to use is Osmocote 14-14-14 six-month, slow-release formula. It is an inorganic product, is very clean and easy to apply. Also, it doesn't attract insects and four-legged pests like organic fertilizers do. You put it on once in the Spring and it feeds for 6 months. If some gets washed off just add some more to the soil surface. It does help to slightly work it into the soil surface and it is not actively releasing nutrients until soil temperatures reach 70 + degrees. The slow-release factor is great since recent research (1992) shows that quick release of a full dose of nitrogen (the first number) in a short period of time can damage and kill the mycorrhiza, beneficial bacteria in the soil, especially in pines.

FOR BEGINNERS

Don't start with a one-gallon size plant pot to create a bonsai; start with at least a two gallon, maybe a three gallon. Smaller plants have many branches that are too small to wire and you may end up with a twig in a pot when you're finished styling. It could take 2 -3 years to develop into anything that resembles a bonsai. On the other hand, a larger plant has thicker branches and more foliage giving you a wider range of styling possibilities. Creating small bonsai is like buying a 10-gallon aquarium. In a month or so you'll want a 55 gallon. Just ask "Big Trunk Bob" Huebener, the 1990's King of the big trunks!

SULFUR

I discussed soil acidity earlier in this article but I do want to stress the importance of sulfur in your bonsai and in your landscape. Elemental sulfur can be applied to your bonsai, especially on pines and azaleas.

It is also important in your home landscape. Many people have great issues and problems growing azaleas around their home's foundation. The problem is soil alkalinity. Clay soil is naturally alkaline which azaleas hate. That's why you should always use ½ sphagnum peat moss with your soil backfill as you plant azaleas. The main problem is the concrete in the house foundation, around the sidewalks and patio. The lime in the concrete leaches out of the concrete over time and makes the soil even more alkaline. After planting or with your existing azaleas, work some sulfur into the soil. Spread ½ cup in a 3 ft x 3 ft area around your azaleas. This will drop the pH around one point. Azaleas do best with an acid pH of 4.5 to 6.0 range. You may have to add sulfur for a couple of years in a row to drop the pH low enough especially around newly poured concrete.

RED SPIDER MITES

These tiny mites are one of our main problems in mid to late summer when weather gets hot and dry. To prevent them from developing, hose down the foliage on your trees occasionally as you water. The water spray washes them off of the foliage. They hate wet conditions and will not develop until it's hot and dry. Insecticides will not kill mites. You must use a miticide. Mites have eight legs, not six, like their insect cousins. Pesticides containing a miticide are effective in controlling them but only spray as needed to prevent immunity to the chemical. If your foliage color starts to lighten up you should check for them and spray if present. You can easily check for them by holding a piece of white paper under a branch and tapping on it. Mites will drop off onto the paper and can be easily seen running for cover. You should spray again 10 days later since, many times, eggs have been laid by the adults and they hatch in 10 days after their parents have been zapped. However, if you're going on vacation, put a protective spray on your trees before you leave. Left alone, mites can wipe out a juniper in a couple of days.

JIN & SHARI WORK

To strip a branch or trunk of bark for jin or shari to create deadwood, first use a sharp knife to cut through bark around the base of the branch or on the trunk area. You can also strip bark down the trunk some so the areas look more natural. Then use pliers to crush the bark. It will easily peel off down to the wood if done before summer months. Paint all jin and shari work with full strength lime sulfur during hot months so it will dry and bleach quickly. I apply at least every other year. I, generally, use small artist brushes to apply it. This bleaches the wood to a whitish color and prevents the wood from rotting since lime sulfur is a fungicide.

WETTING AGENTS

Wetting agents are great for gardeners and turf professionals. They were developed for turf specialists for use on golf courses on greens that developed dry spots where the bentgrass would die. Nurserymen started using them for growing container plants in greenhouses and the landscape trade. In many soilless mixes peat moss and other organics are used. When peat dries out it become hydrophobic and repels water due to the surface tension of the material. Wetting agents break that surface tension bond, they "make water wetter" and allow water to penetrate the soil surface and run into all areas of the container thus providing water to all of the roots in the pot.

In late summer many of our bonsai suffer from some soil compaction and poor water absorption in spite of our well- draining mixes. I'm sure you have witnessed water running off of the surface of your pots or just entering the perimeter of the pots and not running down through the entire soil surface. This makes root formation poor in close to the trunk and creates excessive root growth around the pot lip.

A wetting agent can be applied and it will assist in getting water to all roots throughout the pot. There are several on the market, some inorganic and some organic. I would go with the organic one. Note in 2025: I have been using a product from New Earth Organics. It is a Saponaria extract made from the Soap Bark Tree. It comes in quarts and maybe gallons, mixes easily in water and can be applied with a sprinkling can along with liquid fertilizer if you want to fertilize too.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Bonsai is supposed to be a relaxing, no stress hobby. I agree as long as you don't have too many trees. You should only have the number of trees that you can maintain in 100% form. That is, proper pruning, wiring and repotting are a must to keep your collection in prime viewing shape. If you have too many trees, soon you will cut off a branch instead of wiring it or maybe miss a season for repotting. If you have 50 trees in March to repot before they leaf out, the stress will build on you and soon make a supposed pleasure a chore and aggravation. Remember how relaxed Mr. Myogi was in the Karate Kid movie? He only had 9 or 10 bonsai. Also, your neighbor has it rough if he has to water 100 trees a day when you're on vacation. Of course, I used to say 35 trees was the ideal number of trees to have in your collection. But, here in 2025, I have over 60 trees now. I guess it depends on how much stress you can handle. As Bob Dylan wrote in 1963, "The Times They Are a - Changin".

Dues for 2025

GLBS Membership dues are \$35.00 per year. If you have not already done so, please pay your dues online through the club website: <http://www.louisvillebonsai.org> or send a check made payable to the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society (GLBS) to 2102 Woodbourne Ave, Louisville KY 40205

GLBS Website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Discord

The Greater Louisville Bonsai Society has its own website, Facebook, Instagram, Discord and YouTube pages which can be found at:

GLBS website address: <https://www.louisvillebonsai.org>

GLBS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheGLBS/>

GLBS Instagram: Kybonsai502

GLBS YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@glbs1971>

Discord: <https://discord.gg/xjEKWxEV>

Purchase GLBS Swag: <https://kybonsaiswag.itemorder.com/shop/home/>

2025 GLBS Board

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