



# The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXX, No. 4

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

**East Bay Bonsai Society Next Meeting: April 11, 2012, 7:30PM**

## **President's Note**

My goal as President this year is to encourage membership growth and participation. Our survey was taken to find where we can strengthen our club. Tom Colby does a wonderful job summarizing the survey results. Your Board concluded that members want meetings to be more interactive, yet pertinent to their interests. We hope that meetings, such as Tim Kong's bonsai mind shop, were just in that vein.

With that in mind we have planned the April 21 field trip to the Lone Pine Garden Nursery. Sharing several hours in a pleasurable outing can build a spirit of camaraderie that brings future success for our club. Let us have a real good time. Discuss it with your bonsai friends, as we welcome non member guests on the outing also. Do ask around at the April meeting with whom you can ride share or caravan to Lone Pine. Satisfy your picnic desires with food and beverage. The weather permitting, we will picnic on the grounds there.

The Board continues to want your feedback by anyway you wish: person to person, telephone, email, or letter. It is your club, and it is your work that makes East Bay Bonsai Society an association where bonsai artists can find enthusiasm sharing their time together.

If you have not done so, be sure to check out the exciting new website for EBBS: [www.eastbaybonsai.org](http://www.eastbaybonsai.org). It has been done in award winning fashion by our very own webmaster, Jeff Clarkson, to whom the Board is very grateful. Thank you! Jeff.

John Nackley

## **March Meeting**

The March meeting was an evening with Tim Kong who proved once again to be one of the most dynamic speakers in the local area. His program was entitled *How to Improve This Tree*. Thirteen members brought trees for discussion at the well attended meeting, which was noteworthy considering the rainy night.

Tim started by asking the audience to name bonsai styles. Typical for Tim, he had a handful of chopsticks and awarded respondents with one, two or three chopsticks depending on the quality of the responses.

After the member identified a style, Tim asked if any of the trees submitted fulfilled the qualifications of that style and then if so, why or why not. One style mentioned was bunjin, characterized by a very slender trunk and only a few branches. One of the trees was

considered as a possible bunjin but was rejected as being this style because branches were only at the top of the trunk.

Another style was formal upright characterized by a very straight and tapered trunk. A tree partially met this qualification when viewed from one side, but, when rotated a quarter of the way around, showed a curving trunk. Tim emphasized that the tree must meet the criteria for a formal upright when viewed from all sides.

There was considerable discussion about the differences between clump style, group planting and forest style. In clump style all the branches originate from a single base. Group plantings feature several individual trees which are easily visible. There are usually an odd number of trees and generally the number ranges between five and nine. In a forest planting, there are many trees and single trees do not stand out. There were good examples of each of these styles among the trees present.

A maple tree submitted as a show and tell plant resulted in a discussion of the difference between cascade style and semicascade style. The end of the main branch must be below the rim of the pot for the cascade style.

Informal upright style also was considered for many of the trees. This is the most common bonsai style.

Tim then made suggestions for improving each individual tree. One of the trees was a maple tree collected from a garden. The tree was potted in a five gallon nursery pot. Tim said that his preferred potting technique for a collected tree is to fill the pot half full of plastic peanuts before adding the tree and potting soil. This serves a twofold purpose. It reduces the weight of the potted tree making it easier to move, and it encourages development of horizontal roots, which facilitates eventual potting of the tree in a bonsai pot.

A second tree had a hard ball of old soil. Although the bulk of the soil was good quality bonsai soil, Tim commented that the hard ball of soil around the root base was not good for the long run health of the tree and should be removed. Since the tree was an old tree, all the hard soil should not be removed at one time. The best way to remove the old soil is to divide the area of soil in the pot into quadrants and to bare root two of the opposing quadrants, and leave the remaining two quadrants with as much soil as possible. On the second repotting, the remaining hard ball of soil is removed. In

this way the hard ball is removed in two steps over several years which minimizes stress to the tree.

Tim's high energy presentation was very much enjoyed by the members. So much so, in fact, that during the break, Tim continued his discussion to a big group who were so enthralled that some passed up on refreshments. What higher measure of value of a speaker can there be?

Since there was no raffle tree, a call was made to club members to bring in raffle items, and the call was heard. There were a large number of items for the raffle and a big thank you to all who responded. Because of the number of goodies, some lucky ticket purchasers won more than one chance at taking something home. The club owes a special commendation to Janet Nelson who gave her winning tickets to new members after she had already selected some winners of her own.

The garden staff deserves special recognition. Mohhamed was the staff member on duty. He not only put tables on a cart for easier set up before the meeting but cheerfully mopped up the water draining from the pots of trees brought in to the meeting commenting that a "bit of water is what you expect on a rainy night". Let's hope that our contact with the city expresses our thanks for a generally pleasant and helpful attitude on his part.

#### **April Meeting**

The April meeting will feature a presentation on azaleas by Rick Garcia. Clearly the most spectacular sight of all bonsai is an azalea in full bloom. Many of the trees that we grow as bonsai such as pines and junipers naturally grow in environments that are dry and exposed to direct sun. Azaleas, on the other hand, grow in moist and protected areas. Attempts to grow azaleas under conditions that work for most bonsai frequently leads to failure which is a shame because the plants are easy to grow when their cultural requirements are met. Rick will tell us what we need to do to maintain these beautiful trees.

Thanks in advance to Dennis Hawkins, Ron Reed, and Virginia Callaham for offering to bring in refreshments, and to Joan Heady for offering to make coffee.

#### **Field Trip**

Circle you calendars! Last year Jim Blanton coordinated a field trip to Lone Pine Nursery in Sebastopol that was enjoyed by about 18 enthusiastic club members. The trip was so successful that Jim is again serving as a coordinator for a trip on Saturday, April 21.

Lone Pine is one of the largest bonsai nurseries in the country and features trees ranging from very inexpensive starter trees to nearly finished bonsai. They also carry a large assortment of accent plants. There is a lot to see at the nursery even if you are not interested in adding to your collection.

The plan is to meet at the nursery at about 10:30. There is a fine area at the nursery for a picnic lunch after touring the nursery, so bring your lunch. As an added incentive, Lone Pine usually gives a 10% discount for club visits. Lone Pine has a splendid web

site ([www.lonepinegardens.com](http://www.lonepinegardens.com)) where you may get a preview of the treat in store for you.

Directions to the nursery are to cross the San Raphael Bridge to Highway 101 north bound. Proceed to Cotati and the junction of Highway 116 west (the Gravenstein highway). Turn left on Highway 116 toward Sebastopol and travel about 5 miles. Watch carefully for Lone Pine Road on the left, which is on the outskirts of Sebastopol. Turn on Lone Pine Road and follow it to the nursery located at 6450 Lone Pine Road. If lost, the nursery phone number is 707-823-5024.

#### **Show**

Show time is coming! Although our show won't be until next October, it is not too early to start thinking about what tree or trees you would like to show. Branches that you wire now should be set by show time and in many cases the wire can then be removed to make an even better presentation of your tree. Plan now so your tree will be at its best for the show. Everybody should show a tree.

Also, be thinking about how you can help with the show. There are many jobs that need to be filled. Pick one or more that you would like to do. Show set up on Friday night and show clean up Sunday always needs lots of help. Everyone should participate by helping to show pride in our club.

#### **Questionnaire Response**

The Board was gratified to receive 20 responses to the questionnaire and wishes to express thanks to those who participated. The responses have been carefully reviewed by the board both for your preferences for programs as well as your suggestions for making the club more appealing to both new and old members.

A very significant finding was that the traditional demonstration was listed as a first choice of programming by well less than one half of the respondents. In the past, the demonstration involved the conversion of rough material into a relatively finished bonsai with the goal of producing a tree which could be shown at the annual show. A part of the conversion to a bonsai involved wiring of the pruned tree which was time consuming. There were comments in the questionnaire that the programs were too long and there were specific complaints about time spent wiring. Demonstrations do provide necessary information on how a bonsai is created by an accomplished bonsai artist and the only other activity where this information can be acquired is in a workshop setting.

While they will remain a part of the programming in the future the board will encourage the demonstrators to spend more time on the care of the tree and focus less on producing a finished tree. An attempt will be made to limit wiring to completing a single branch which will serve as a pattern for the lucky winner to duplicate for the remainder of the tree, or perhaps only to position the main branches of the tree. In addition to changing the focus of demonstrations, your comments clearly indicated the other programs besides traditional demonstrations would be appreciated.

There is little interest in having a meeting devoted to workshops in which you work on your own tree without

direction. Interest was little better for workshops where more experienced members could help you with your tree. Focused workshops where a short demonstration would be followed by working on your tree of the same species as the demonstration received favorable attention. The board will take this into consideration for future programming.

There were a number of suggestions for programs that you would like to see and will be considered in the future. One particularly intriguing comment was a program on bonsai activity in Japan. Another was to include as part of the program reports by members who attend other bonsai activities such as the GSBF conventions and special workshops.

Suggestions for bettering the club fell into several broad categories. There was strong support for a vibrant web site. Continuing recognition of members who contribute to the welfare of the society should be made both in the newsletter and more formally at the Christmas party at the end of the year. Information about the club should be made available to the public. In line with this the club has recently published post card size advertisements of meeting time and place for dispersal at the Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt and elsewhere.

The library should be available at each meeting. A particularly note worthy suggestion that was seized by the Board was to award each new member with a copy of our cultural calendar. New members should be introduced more than once to ensure that they are recognized and members should make an effort to introduce themselves to new members. Working on their own trees is important for new members and the workshops at Merritt College where this can occur needs to be better advertised.

In a general category there was interest in a field trip (see above in this newsletter). An effort should be made to increase the number of members who are active in the Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt. The meeting atmosphere was addressed in several responses. The comment was made that the club should maintain a friendly atmosphere and show respect for all regardless of experience level. This is an area that we all should be aware of and we all should do our part in improving the meeting ambiance.

Your response to the questionnaire has given the board for the first time a clear picture of your likes and dislikes as well as many valuable suggestions about making the club more appealing to all. The information gathered in your responses has provided much for the Board to think about. You should begin to see the results in the future.

#### **More Fertilizer**

A very valid question is do you need to fertilize your bonsai at all? The answer involves a quick look at plant physiology. The full story of what goes on in a growing plant is extremely complicated but here is a simplified picture.

Plant tissues are made from building blocks composed mainly of three elements, hydrogen, oxygen and carbon. The plant gets hydrogen and oxygen from

water. That is why, among other reasons, we need to water our bonsai. The plants get the third component, carbon, from carbon dioxide in the air.

The key step in the transformation of carbon in the air to carbon in plant tissues is brought about by chlorophyll, the compound responsible for the green color of leaves. Chlorophyll is activated by sunlight. Placing our bonsai in either bright light or direct sunlight makes this process work. Chlorophyll is a very complicated chemical that includes nitrogen in the formula. With no nitrogen there can be no chlorophyll and with no chlorophyll there is no carbon for plant tissues and with no carbon for plant tissues there is no plant growth.

In nature there are a variety of sources of nitrogen which include bird droppings, soil bacteria, and decaying plant and animal remains all of which recycles nitrogen to new plants. None of these factors are in play in our bonsai so nitrogen must be supplied as fertilizer to sustain the growth of healthy plants.

So there you have in a nutshell, why you need to water your plants, put them in bright light or direct sunlight and fertilize your bonsai.

#### **EBBS Website**

Thanks to Jeff Clarkson, our website is up to date and has a new look and feel. In addition to general information about our club, there are lots of pictures from our club meetings and events, and the events of others. Our newsletters are also now available on the site.

A great new feature is the EBBS Spotlights. These are located at the top of the webpage and include articles, pictures and videos on different things happening in EBBS and the bonsai world. Currently the topics included are: Ryan Neil's repotting of a collected Rocky Mountain Juniper, our March meeting with Tim Kong, Bob Gould's Chinese Elm, our January meeting on Camellias, accent plants, and our show last October.

If you haven't been to our website in a while, I think you will find it a treat. You can reach the site through the following link: [www.eastbaybonsai.org](http://www.eastbaybonsai.org)

#### **Newsletter Reporters**

It was great to get so many compliments at our March club meeting on the newsletter articles. Most of the thanks go to Tom Colby who is our star reporter! He has lots of bonsai knowledge to share and a wonderful sense of humor, and provides most of the articles in the newsletter. Other people who have submitted articles include Don Meeker, John Nackley, Bob Gould, and yours truly (Janice). But the newsletter would be pretty empty without Tom. Thanks Tom!!!

#### **Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College**

The only way you can become an expert as a bonsai grower is by actually working on your own trees in a workshop setting. Fortunately there is a continuing series of workshops available to EBBS members. Training is available at the Merritt College Bonsai Club which is open to all comers at all experience levels, from beginner to advanced. It is an opportunity that we all should be aware of and of which we all should make use.

Leading the workshops are members of EBBS, Bill Castellon and Randall Lee. The meetings are on every fourth Monday except when the college is not in session. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at the Landscape Horticulture Building. The college is located off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills. Questions? Members can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randal at 510-864-0841.

Bring your trees, roll up your sleeves and get involved personally in the wonderful world of bonsai.

#### **Newsletters and Rosters by E-mail**

The cost of mailing a newsletter to a household is about \$7.00 per year. When a goodly number of members desire a paper copy the cost to the club becomes significant. If you would like to try receiving the newsletter by email, contact Janice Dilbeck either in person or at [Janicedilbeck@comcast.net](mailto:Janicedilbeck@comcast.net). If you find that an emailed copy does not meet your requirements you can always switch back to a paper copy.

#### **Events by Others**

GSBF's Bonsai and Suiseki Garden: open Wed., Thurs., Fri. 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Sat. 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Sun. 12:00 noon–4:00 p.m. Enter at gate across from Boat House.

April 11-15. Garden Grove, California Bonsai Society: *55th Convention and Show* at the Crown Plaza Anaheim Resort, 12021 harbor Blvd. and starring the iron men of Naka, Frank Goya, Harry Hirao, Shig Miya, Ben Oki and Richard Ota. Also featuring Tomohiro Masumi, Ryan Neil, and Cheryl Manning, Kenji Miyata, David Nguy, Kathy Shaner and the members of CBS. There will be workshops, demonstrations, auctions, drawings, a huge vendor area and prizes & awards for early registrations. For registration information contact Elizabeth Partch at [elizabethpartch@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabethpartch@yahoo.com)

April 14-15. Sacramento, American Bonsai Association, Sacramento: 53rd Annual Spring Show at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Ave, Sacramento, CA. Show hours are Saturday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Demonstration each day at 1:30 PM by John Thompson followed by a raffle of bonsai (includes the demonstration tree) and bonsai related material. There is a large vendor area with club member trees, pots, etc. For information contact Greg McDonald at 530-62-2521, or [Gregandlee@comcast.net](mailto:Gregandlee@comcast.net), or visit our website at <http://abasbonsai.org/>.

April 21-22. Palo Alto Kusamura Bonsai Club: 52nd Annual Show at the Lucie Stern Community Center,

1305 Middlefield Road. Admission is free. Show hours are Saturday: 12 Noon - 5PM, and Sunday: 11AM - 5PM. There will be demonstrations, raffles, and club member tree sales both days. Guest demonstrator to be announced. For more information, contact Rita Curbow at 408-732-4957 or [kusamura@gsbf-bonsai.org](mailto:kusamura@gsbf-bonsai.org).

April 21 - 22, 2012. San Jose, San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 42nd Anniversary Exhibition at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, 640 N. 5th Street, San Jose. Hours are Saturday, Noon – 5 PM, and Sunday 11 AM – 4 PM. Demonstrations featuring Harry Hirao, "Mr. California Juniper" will be held at 1 PM on both days. At the conclusion of each demonstration the tree will be raffled off. Plants and bonsai materials will be available for sale. Free admission. For more information, contact Ken Azuma, 408-730-4506 or [kennethazuma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kennethazuma@sbcglobal.net).

April 22. Oakland, GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: BGLM Introduction to Bonsai. 1-3 PM.

May 5&6. Sacramento, 66th Annual Sacramento Bonsai Club Show: Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd., May 5 (12-5pm) & 6 (10-4pm). Demonstrations both days, 2 pm, by Boon Manatikivipart, followed by benefit drawings. Free admission, plant and tree sales.

May 12 – 13. Modesto, Modesto Bonsai Club: 31st. Annual Exhibit at the Modesto Centre Plaza, 11th and K St., Opens Saturday 11 AM - 5 PM and Sunday 11 AM - 4 PM. Demonstration both days at 2 PM by Sam Adina. FREE ADMISSION - Exhibit, Raffle and Bonsai Material Sale. For further information please visit us at [Modestobonsai.com](http://Modestobonsai.com) or please call 209-463-6279

#### **Articles or Services for Sale (or give-away)**

#### **Wanted to Buy (or for free)**

SOMETHING you need or want? Call or write to place an ad.

Each membership household, free of charge, may place a five-line ad related to bonsai in two newsletters each year. Members wanting to place either larger or frequent ads should contact the editor. Send a copy of ads to your editor by the fourth Monday of the month to appear in the next publication. To place an add call (925) 458-3845.

---

<b>East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2012</b>
--------------------------------------------------

**Regular Meetings:** Second Wednesday, every month (except August and October) @ 7:30 p.m.

Place: Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland.

Visitors welcome—for more information: call: (925) 431-0452

Visit EBBS' web site: <http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>.

Website for Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt<<http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.html>>

**Meeting**   **Program**

<b>Apr</b>	<b>11</b>	Rick Garcia demonstration on Satsuki
<b>Apr</b>	<b>22</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Bob Gould
<b>May</b>	<b>9</b>	Bill Castellon - pines and their care with a demo
<b>May</b>	<b>27</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Dennis Hawkins
<b>Jun</b>	<b>13</b>	Frolic in the Garden
<b>Jun</b>	<b>26</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with JD Lin
<b>Jul</b>	<b>11</b>	Auction
<b>Jul</b>	<b>22</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with John Nackley
<b>Aug</b>		Potluck – details tbd
<b>Aug</b>	<b>26</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Janet Nelson
<b>Sep</b>	<b>12</b>	Preparing trees for the show – details tbd
<b>Sep</b>	<b>23</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Tom Colby
<b>Oct</b>	<b>10</b>	No club meeting due to proximity to show
<b>Oct</b>	<b>28</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Bob Could
<b>Nov</b>	<b>14</b>	tbd
<b>Nov</b>	<b>25</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Dennis Hawkins
<b>Dec</b>	<b>12</b>	Holiday Dinner

**Special Event**

**Oct 12-13** Fall Show, John Thompson, featured artist

---