



The Tree Shrinker

A MONTHLY BULLETIN
Volume XXXX, No. 1

East Bay Bonsai Society
January Meeting: January 11, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Opinion Poll

The board of directors of EBBS wants to be sure that the programs presented at the meetings are in line with the needs and expectations of the members. They would like to hear from you about your interests. There is a questionnaire attached to this newsletter where you can make your voice be heard. Please take a moment to fill it out and either return it with your dues if you pay by mail, or at the next meeting. The board will use your responses to provide the programs which are of most interest to you.

Dues

It is that time of the year when you need to be thinking about paying your club dues which are \$30 for single memberships and \$40.00 for couples. The dues are the major source of income for the club and are mainly used to fund our biggest expenses which are meeting room rent and the monthly programs. Our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to take your check in person at the next meeting, or you can mail in your membership renewal. The address is EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, 94618-2701.

December Celebration

The holiday party was once again a great success. The members outdid themselves in the fine array of side dishes, appetizers and desserts. One of the high points of the evening was the many decorated trees used as centerpieces. Many thanks are due to Jeff Clarkson for assembling images of the recent EBBS show as after dinner entertainment.

A part of the festivities was to start dinner with a celebratory glass of champagne. For many years EBBS has provided and paid for beverages for a number of events such as the summer potluck and the holiday dinner. Bob Callahan has done the actual selection and purchasing of most of these beverages. He delivers them and, where appropriate, provides them chilled. Once more, due to Bob's efforts, we had the champagne for the celebration of the holiday season as well as the other beverages. The club owes Bob a long overdue thank you for all his continuing efforts to supply our beverages.

January Meeting

Pines, maples and junipers make up the bulk of the trees in our bonsai collections. While these are fine subjects for bonsai, there is a world of plants out there

that potentially make splendid bonsai but are not seen as often as they should be. We are fortunate to highlight some of these trees in a series of three demonstrations. The November meeting, the first in the series, was devoted to Hinoki cypress. The January meeting will be the second program in the series and will feature a demonstration on Camellias by Marin club members Chris Ross and Candice Key. The smaller flowered Sasanqua hybrids as well as some of the Camellia species can make splendid bonsai. The meeting will be a much needed introduction to the selection, styling and care of this underused material for bonsai.

Unfortunately no one signed up to bring refreshments to the January meeting. If you have enjoyed refreshments in the past, do consider contributing something to the refreshment table. Otherwise, pickings will be slim.

February Meeting

Craig Thompson from the Marin club will present the third and final demonstration in our series of uncommon plants for bonsai. He will tell us about the joys and challenges of tropical bonsai.

Raffle Items Needed

Do you have too much of a good thing? Consider donating your extra bonsai items to the club at the monthly raffle. Besides adding to the fun of giving and winning charming bonsai items, the money from the raffle helps offset club costs. So please plan to bring an item to one or more meetings for the raffle.

Board of Directors

The board of directors of the East Bay Bonsai Society is responsible for the business of the society. If you would like to bring a matter to the attention of the board, contact one of the board members with your concerns or, even better yet, come to the board meeting in person. All members are always welcome to the board meetings with the only proviso that you may not participate in the final vote on issues discussed at the meetings.

One of the many duties of the board is to arrange that a room is available for meetings as well as access to our storage facility in the basement of the garden center when needed. This can be easily accomplished in theory by a couple of phone calls each year in which scheduling and facility requirements are worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. Practice is a different matter as those members can attest who

attended the November meeting when the building was not open. The Societies' complaint about this traveled far up the city food chain. One can only hope that this will not happen again. The shortage of both money and experienced personnel by the city has turned a simple job into an exercise in frustration. Our point man in dealing with the city is Bob Gould. Join the board in issuing a big thank you to long suffering Bob for his efforts in trying to make our interaction with the city work smoothly.

Winter Bonsai Care

As the Fall days grow shorter and cooler and we look towards our relatively short and mild winter the bonsai care tasks change. We no longer need to water as often nor as much, but other tasks take on importance.

We need to switch to feeding with no nitrogen 0-10-10 fertilizer or very low nitrogen with more potassium and phosphate. If we have a wet fall and winter with a lot of rain, then we need to fertilize more frequently as the rain will tend to wash the nutrients from the soil. Also be sure that you get the needed micronutrients into your fertilizer, either pre-mixed or added to the 0-10-10. These may include iron, calcium, magnesium, zinc and manganese.

Watch the weather carefully, don't let your trees dry out or stay too wet. If the weather is cold, dry or windy, the potted trees can dry very fast even though dormant and the weather cool. Trees and roots are more susceptible to frost damage or freezing if they are dry.

On the other hand if there is a lot of rain with the cool weather, the soil may stay too wet and you have a greater danger of root rot. If you have long periods of rain without one or two dry days in between, you may need to shelter some trees. Remember some species are more susceptible to root problems than others, so you have to know your trees and their characteristics.

It is best to shelter the trees either under the eaves or even under the benches from both extreme cold and wet. You may also shelter your trees by making aprons or covers of screening or plastic to put over the pots during extended periods of rain. With plastic you have to be careful it does not stop the air circulation to the soil, so put some small stones or sticks on the soil to hold the plastic away from the soil surface.

Winter winds can be damaging, depending on your exposure, and you may need to shelter your trees or tie them down to the bench so they don't blow over. If there are other large trees nearby, branches may be broken and fall onto your trees causing damage.

With the cooler weather don't stop examining your trees for insects. Spider-mites, aphids, scale and earwigs remain active with our mild winter temperatures. With the cooler damp weather, slugs and snails become a larger problem. Also, with the fall production of acorns, walnuts and other seeds and nuts, the squirrels and birds may dig in your pots. You may need to provide some protective cover for the soil surface such as screening or wire netting. One bonsai artist suggests using ground black pepper or a pepper spray as a general deterrent for squirrels.

Be sure to keep your benches and areas around them clean and free of fallen leaves, flowers and other debris to control slugs, snails and other pests. Check any larger pots that may be sheltered for ants. As the ground gets saturated they often look for a new home that is drier.

In the past it was recommended that we spray our trees with lime-sulfur three times during the winter to control and prevent insect problems over the winter and next spring. It was recommended that we spray once each in December, January and February. Be careful in February, if we have an early warm spell some deciduous trees may be leafing out and the spray may damage the new leaves. Also some trees such as the Chinese Elm, *Ulmus Parvifolia* do not tolerate lime sulfur. Lime-sulfur is no longer available commercially. You may make your own, a warning, it is a tedious and smelly process. Or you may choose a substitute with copper. Again be careful of specific species sensitivities.

Winter is also a time for many other training and maintenance tasks. Trimming, pruning and wiring may be appropriate for some species. Junipers always need pinching, even in winter. It is also time to remove old needles and do other branch development work on pines.

Take time to get ready for the transplanting and repotting work. Repotting deciduous usually begins in late January into February, and the evergreens later. Clean and sharpen tools, clean and sterilize pots and get your potting soil mixes ready. Give your trees the best possible start with potting soil that is clean and the right mix.

One of the things to be aware and careful of in our mild winters is the occasional deep cold. We get so used to milder temperatures that we forget that sometimes the arctic temps sweep down on us. An experienced meteorologist said that on average, about once every six years the northern cold can result in significant freezes for the Bay Area. I can remember a winter with ice on the ponds in Golden Gate Park, and a period of several days in Walnut Creek where the temperature did not go above freezing.

If you have some sub-tropical or tropical trees in your collection then you are used to providing protection for them from the more usual brief overnight frosts. We tend to think that most of our trees are not adversely affected by the cold. However, for our temperate zone trees, roots in our small pots do not have much protection and the great danger is that in an enduring cold snap, the soil can get so cold that the feeder roots freeze and you may lose a valuable tree. So if there is forecast of a significant cold spell, nights with sub-freezing temperatures and daytime temperatures only in the 30's, then you must provide some protection for the pots. Take them indoors or into a protected area, or provide some insulation for the pots. Leaves, pine needles, straw or other similar material may provide all the protection from the cold that those sensitive roots need.

Bonsai Shows

There will be two bonsai shows at the Lake Merritt Garden Center in the month of January that are worthy of your attention. The first is by the Bay Island Bonsai (BIB) club and is on the weekend of January 14. The second is by Bay Area Bonsai Associates (BABA) and is on the week end of January 28. Exact details of each show are given in the coming events listed else where in this newsletter.

These two organizations represent interesting contrasts as one (BIB) is a sensei club and the other one is not. Sensei is a Japanese word for teacher or instructor and the sensei clubs have a single person, the sensei, who conducts a demonstration or leads a discussion at each and every meeting. The non-sensei clubs (such as EBBS) rely on demonstrators for each meeting that are selected for having great expertise on their particular subject. Each system has strengths and weaknesses.

The sensei club can provide a depth and continuing experience that can only come from a single instructor. On the other hand the overall bonsai experience of the club members can be limited by the interests and ability of the individual sensei. The non-sensei clubs can draw from demonstrators that have a wide range of interests but do not provide continuing experience of the care and styling of the trees after the demonstration is completed.

Another difference between the two systems is that the sensei usually auditions each tree entered in the club show to be sure that the tree meets his standards of excellence whereas the non-sensei clubs usually welcome all comers regardless of style or quality of tree. The sensei for BIB is Boon Manakitipart who is an extremely talented bonsai artist with wide interests and has studied extensively in Japan. BABA is a club with no sensei and draws its members for a variety of local clubs. Most of the members of BABA have been active in the bonsai scene for many years. The two shows together will feature some of the finest trees in California. Do plan to come to both.

New Bonsai Postage Stamp

Check out the new 2012 bonsai postage stamps at the following website:

<http://www.beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview/#stamp-bonsai>

Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

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

Leading the workshops are two distinguished artists who are members of EBBS, Bill Castelon and Randall Lee. The meetings are on every 4th Monday except when the college is not in session. Meetings start at 7:00pm at the Landscape Horticulture Building. The college is located off Redwood Road in the Oakland

Hills. Members who have questions about the workshops can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-864-0841.

EBBS Needs a Newsletter Editor and Articles

The newsletter is the voice of the club and that means that it is your voice. If you have something that you would like to share with the rest of the club, jot it down and send it to Janice Dilbeck for inclusion in the newsletter.

If you have any interest in being newsletter editor, please let one of your board members know.

Newsletters and Rosters by E-mail

For each member, annual costs to produce and deliver monthly newsletters and a roster average approximately \$7. To save that cost, 21 members have notified your editor that they will accept their newsletters and rosters via e-mail. If you want to receive newsletters via e-mail, notify janicedilbeck@comcast.net.

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.

January 14-15. **Oakland, California. Bay Island Bonsai: Annual Bonsai Exhibit** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Hours are 10AM-4PM, both days. On Saturday at 1PM there will be an auction, with a preview at 12 Noon. Guided tours of the exhibit both days. Benefit Drawing (need not be present to win). Vendors; club member and educational bonsai material will be for sale. Free entry to the exhibit. Donations accepted. For more information call 510-919-5042 or visit www.bayislandbonsai.com.

January 28-29. **Oakland, California Bay Area Bonsai Associates: 31st Annual Bonsai Exhibition** at the Lakeside Park (Lake Merritt) Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are Saturday, 5-9PM and a demonstration by Ryan Neil starts at 6:30PM, followed by a raffle of the demonstration tree. Sunday hours are 10AM-4PM. A plant sale (including bonsai related items such as pots, tools, soils, wires, books, etc.) will be continuous both days. Admission is free. For more information contact John Roehl at bigbluemoon@comcast.net or 707-827-3206.

February 4-6. **Santa Nella, California. California Shohin Seminar 2012** at the Hotel del Oro. Registration forms and information will be available starting October 30, 2011. Visit the website at www.calshohin.org or email calshohin@yahoo.com.

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.

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2012
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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.gsbf-bonsai.org/ebbs/>.

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

Meeting Program

Jan	11	Chris Ross and Candice Key demonstration on Camellias
Jan	22	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Feb	8	Craig Thompson on Tropicals
Mar	14	Fun with Tim
Mar	25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Apr	11	Rick Garcia demonstration on Satsuki
Apr	22	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
May	9	Bill Castellon – details tbd
May	27	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Jun	13	Frolic in the Garden
Jun	26	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Jul	11	Auction
Jul	22	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Aug		Potluck – details tbd
Aug	26	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Sep	12	Preparing trees for the show – details tbd
Sep	23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Oct	10	No club meeting due to proximity to show
Oct	28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Nov	14	tbd
Nov	25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai
Dec	12	Holiday Dinner

Special Event

Oct Fall Show, John Thompson, featured artist

Dues:

If you will not attend a meeting, or just wish to mail your dues for 2012, make your check for \$30/yr. for an individual or \$40/yr. for a household and mail it with this form to:

Pat Cahill, 4933 Cochrane Ave., Oakland, CA 94618-2701

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Zip: 94 _____

Telephone: (____) _____ E-mail address: _____

Receive newsletter by e-mail? _____ OK to include e-mail address in club roster? _____

Opinion Poll

Your Board of Directors would like to have your opinion about meeting formats and subjects that are of the most interest to you. Please take a minute to answer the questions below and let them know your wants and desires. Let your voice be heard!

1. Please rank the items below in order of interest with #1 being of most interest to you, and #5 being of least interest to you.

- A demonstration by a noted bonsai artist on care and styling of a particular kind of tree
- A lecture/demonstration on a related bonsai subject such as pots, repotting techniques, and accent plants, etc.
- Work on my tree and get help from more experienced members
- Have less formal meetings and more workshop meetings where members work on their trees and exchange ideas
- Have focused workshops, for example, a short lecture demonstration on pine trees followed by a workshop in which you work on your own pine tree

2. Subjects of presentations that I would particularly like:

Subjects of presentations that I do not like:

3. About how many meetings did you attend in 2011?

Less than 3 4-7 8-11

Reasons for missing meetings (mark all that apply):

- Not interested in the topic of the presentation
- Didn't have transportation
- Don't like to drive at night
- Had a schedule conflict
- Other _____

4. How many years have you been a member of East Bay Bonsai Society? _____

5. The Board of Directors wants the club meetings to be welcoming to new members while retaining the interest of experienced members. What are your ideas about how this might be accomplished?
