



# The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXX, No. 7

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

**East Bay Bonsai Society Next Meeting: July 11, 2012, 6:30PM**

## **President's Note**

Summer is here. Most of the major bonsai work, except for the pine decandling, has been done. So now we relax and enjoy the fruits of our labor. The next two meetings allow us these pleasures with the stimulating experience of July's auction and the relaxation of August's potluck soiree. The latter is the social highpoint for our club as we enjoy not only great food and conversation in a very relaxed ambience, but the wonderful Trumm-Nelson collection. In the same relaxed vein, I'll keep this short and sweet and look forward to seeing as many of you as I can at 6 PM on auction night. John N.

## **June Meeting**

The June meeting was the annual frolic in the park. It featured a tour of the Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt collection hosted by two members of EBBS who are both very active in the garden. Janice Dilbeck is in charge of maintaining collected junipers and Bob Gould has his hand in much of the overall operation of the collection.

The history of the garden was briefly reviewed as an introduction to the tour. The garden was conceived in 1993 when funds became available for construction. Actual work began in 1996 and the garden opened to the public in 1999.

Many members of EBBS were influential in developing the garden, notably Bill Castellon (who presented our May meeting on pines) and Randall Lee. Probably the most important person in the origin of the garden was John North who was also a member of EBBS. While much of the work was accomplished by volunteers, it was mandated by the city that the peripheral fence be installed by a licensed contractor. Again EBBS came to the rescue. Steve Faulk, a member of EBBS at the time, had a day job as a contractor and he was responsible for construction of the fence.

The entry gate was built by Hioshi Sakadoshi who lived in Southern California. Next time you are in the collection take a minute to carefully examine the gate. It is built in the Japanese style with each of the components fitted together without any fastenings such as nails or screws.

The multipurpose room was constructed in 2001 and Jim Heady was involved in the design.

Many of the trees in the collection were either donated or worked on by EBBS members. A number of particularly interesting trees were singled out for special comments.

A Sierra Juniper located near the entrance was worked on by Rick Trumm who focused on the deadwood and wiring. Rick used a wood hardener with various tints to preserve the wood against rot and color the wood. The current preferred wood hardener used at the garden is PC Petrifier. It is water based so it mixes easy with tints, absorbs well into the wood, and is easy to clean-up.

Joan Scroggs, a current member of EBBS, donated a splendid Sierra Juniper which probably is the gold standard for collecting a tree. She found the tree and then spent three years slowly cutting main roots and even watering the tree during the summers before she finally dug it up.

Janice showed the very first tree that she worked on by herself, a magnificent Sierra Juniper. Her skills are certainly reflected in the many trees she has worked on in the garden.

Jeff Clarkson has been busy root grafting a Trident maple and in spite of his "aw shucks" comment, great things are in the future of the tree. Jeff has also done an excellent job taking over responsibility for the watering systems in the garden. As you can well imagine, this is a demanding and critical task.

A huge pomegranate made an entrance to the garden worthy of something from the grand opera. It was planted in a big box and while unloading at the garden, the box fell and broke. Emergency repotting was called for, but the biggest pot available was much smaller than the original box. Simply cutting roots to make the plant fit in the pot was not advisable since each root on a pomegranate feeds a single branch and, if the root was cut, that branch it was feeding would die. With much huffing and puffing, most of the roots got squished into the pot. The tree has pretty much recovered from the ordeal and is now awaiting styling.

A fine cascade juniper is on display from the collection of Ruben Guzman, a long time member of EBBS who recently passed away.

Linda Soliven is fostering a pine tree which has very interesting deadwood. By removing small strips of wood, Linda gave the remaining deadwood a twisted form not usually seen on pines.

The tour ended with the Daimyo Oak. The story of this tree begins in the mid 1860's when President Lincoln sent an emissary to China. In 1863 on his way back to the United States, the emissary stopped in Japan where he was given an oak bonsai tree which he brought back to the United States. He purchased a considerable tract of land for his home on the peninsula which now includes the city which bears his name, Burlingame. The tree remained in his family for many years and then passed into the hands of a second family. From them it fell into the hands of a Japanese bonsai artist who gave it to the collection.

Over the years it had been neglected and the immediate objective was to restore it to good health. Clearly this has been accomplished. The city of San Mateo has requested cuttings from the tree for planting in the city. This tree appears to be the tree which has been cultivated for the longest time as a bonsai in the United States.

After the garden tour was completed the attendees enjoyed good fellowship and refreshments supplied by the club. The evening was a less formal event than the usual meeting and was enjoyed by all. The members left with the warm fuzzy feeling that they had truly frolicked in the park.

### July Meeting

The July meeting is our annual auction. This is the major fund raising event for the year and the profits from the sale help support the fine programs that we enjoy throughout the year, as well as pay for our meeting room.

We are fortunate to have the same team of auctioneers who did such a fine job last year, Bob Callahan and Jim Blanton. We all need to do our part in making the auction a success. There is still more help needed and if you haven't yet volunteered, contact Janet Nelson who is coordinating the event. All members please plan to help with set-up and take-down.

Bring in your bonsai related items that you would like to sell at auction. Be sure that your trees are free of bugs and snails and that they are in good health. **Plant material will be removed from the sale if it is considered unhealthy or infested with diseases.** You may enter as many as 12 items in the auction. A box of several pots or seedlings would be considered a single item.

Twenty percent of the sale price goes to the club, and the rest goes into your pocket. Use the attached **Seller's List of Consignment Items** form to list your items. Place a completed, three-part white tag on each item.

If you wish to donate items to the club so that the club gets 100% of the sale price, use the attached **Donation of Merchandise** form to list the items, and place a pink three-part tag on each item.

Tags and extra forms will be available at the auction. To avoid duplicate tag numbers, please use three initials instead of two.

Needless to say, the auction is a fine way to add to your collection. Be sure to bring your checkbook (we do not take credit cards) and be generous in your bidding. We all will benefit.

People outside of the club may sell their items at the auction following the same guidelines and rules as members, without any fees other than the 20% charge for the items' sale price. So spread the word to your friends in the bonsai community.

### Schedule:

6:00-6:30	Room set-up
6:30-7:15	Sellers bring and tag items
7:00-7:30	Preview and numbers issued to bidders
7:30-9:30	Auction
7:45-9:45	Payment for and claiming of auctioned items
9:30-9:45	Claiming items not sold (Unclaimed items go into the dumpster)
9:30-10:00	Take down tables and chairs

### October Show

One of the high points of the year is our annual show which will be held in October. That may seem like a long time in the future, but now is the time when you should be thinking about what tree or trees you would like to show. All trees need to be displayed on something which elevates the pot from the table. Usually this something is a stand or a thin slab of wood cut from a tree branch. If you do not have something to display your tree on, now is the time to be shopping for one.

Jerry Braswell is a stand maker and he can be contacted through his web site at [www.artofthedaiza.wordpress.com](http://www.artofthedaiza.wordpress.com). Stands sometimes show up in the EBBS auction. The Redwood Empire Bonsai Club show held in Santa Rosa on the last weekend in August has many vendors who may also be sources of items for display of your trees. Details about the REBS show are in the events section of this newsletter.

### EBBS Audit

A committee of Tom Colby and Dennis Hawkins was appointed to audit the finances of EBBS as required by the club bylaws. The committee met with Pat Cahill, our treasurer, and is pleased to report that the finances are in good order. The committee was particularly impressed with the meticulous record keeping.

The big sources of income for the club are dues and the annual auction. The big expenses are room rent and demonstrations. Typically the balance in the treasury is in the range of \$2500 at the start of the year and falls to as low as \$1500 late in the year. While the balance is large enough to fund the usual expenses, there is not much room for error.

Pat has served for many years as the voice of fiscal accountability to the Board. She is usually a very nice person, but on occasion at Board meetings, she can get all steely eyed and gravelly voiced and then tell the Board in no uncertain terms that their current plan is

splendid but we can't afford it. Pat's effort to keep the Board on the straight and narrow path and to keep the club solvent are an even more important contribution to the club than her fine financial records.

We all owe Pat a big thank you for all her hard work and concern about the club finances. She has been treasurer for many years (in her words since the Bronze Age) and we hope that she will continue as Treasurer for many years to come. Thanks Pat.

### **Clay**

You don't get very far into the world of bonsai as a newcomer until you confront the terms *akadama* and *kanuma*. No, these are not the daily specials at your favorite Japanese sushi restaurant, but are the names of clay products that are used as components of potting mixtures.

Clay refers to a whole family of minerals which are closely related, varying only slightly in chemical composition and crystal structure. As a potting soil component, clay has some significant advantages. Clay absorbs a lot of water, much as a sponge does, and it slowly releases it. This property means that the potting soil is moist over a longer time than, for example, a gravel based mixture. If the water contains dissolved fertilizer, the fertilizer is also released along with the water over a period of time and at a rate that the tree can utilize it.

There are a couple of other possible advantages of clay in bonsai soils. Many forms of clay have ion exchange properties which allow the ability to form chemical bonds with the materials in fertilizer. The bonds are reversible over time. So at first, the fertilizer is chemically bonded to the clay. Then it is slowly released into the potting material.

Plants require tiny amounts of a large number of chemical elements to grow at their best. These include trace amounts of copper, zinc, magnesium and a host of others. Drinking water in the bay area contains very small amount of some of these trace elements which is sufficient for plant growth. Clay also can provide some of these trace elements.

Over the years, properties of clay have been extensively studied but, unfortunately, there has been no study of clay used in bonsai soils. One can only speculate about to what extent these good things really happen in our bonsai pots.

The bay area hills have soils very rich in clay and it would appear that all you need to do to take advantage of all that clay offers is to shovel up some dirt from the hills, pick out the rocks and weeds, and plant your bonsai tree is your new found cheap and wonderful potting material. You would be right in having a great potting material except for a small problem. When you water the tree the clay would coagulate into a lump of black goo in the bottom of the pot which would take forever to dry out, and you would quickly lose your tree to root rot. Lord help you when the goo finally did totally dry out. You would then have a brick that water would never penetrate.

The question therefore is can there be a form of clay that retains the good properties and does not coagulate into an evil lump? Leave it to the clever Japanese. They mine a special form of clay and then refine it in a process that includes forming it into small pellets, water washing, and heating. These procedures make the product sterile and reasonably resistant to coagulation. This product is akadama which is a splendid component of bonsai potting mixtures. It is usually combined with other components such as pumice and lava to form a potting mixture that holds moisture, yet quickly drains excess water. A popular ratio is equal amounts of akadama, pumice and lava, although there are many other soil recipes.

Kanuma is a slightly different form of clay and is processed slightly differently, but is closely related to akadama. Kanuma is a favorite potting material for azaleas, either as a sole component or in combination with lava. Both akadama and kanuma are available in at least two size pellets.

Both akadama and kanuma are clay based components of potting soils for bonsai and should be considered when you prepare bonsai soils. Both have the disadvantage of being an expensive imported product, but as a gentleman once said about a great bottle of wine, they are expensive but well worth the money.

### **Merritt College**

The workshops at Merritt College have been discontinued for the summer but will resume in August. Questions can be directed to Bill Castellon at 510-569-8003 or Randall Lee at 510-864-0841.

### **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 your 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.

July 22, Van Nuys: Sansui Kai of Southern California 2012 Bonsai Show, at The Japanese Garden at the Tillman Water Reclamation Facility, 6100 Woodley Ave. Hours are 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM for bonsai display, 1:00 to 3:00 PM Demonstration by Cheryl Manning, 3:15 to 4:00 PM gates closed to new visitors and garden closed at 4:00 PM, 4:15 to 5:00 PM, light reception and raffle for any bonsai club member. Sale table with pots, plants, bonsai trees, and bonsai related material. Free entry to bonsai show and display area. Japanese garden entry only

\$3 / Adult \$2 / Seniors. Visit [www.sansui-kai.com](http://www.sansui-kai.com) for club information.

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

Aug 4 – 5, San Francisco: San Francisco Suiseki Kai: 31st annual exhibit at the Japan Center, 10 AM - 4 PM both days. Location: Union Bank Hospitality Room, Japan Center, 1675 Post Street.

August 25 - 26, Santa Rosa: Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 29th Annual Show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave. The show will be held on Saturday from 10 AM - 5 PM and Sunday from 10 AM - 4 PM. There will be 200 trees on display for public viewing, members' sales room, large vendor area, benefit drawing, and silent auction. Demonstration both days at 1 PM by club sensei Kathy Shaner. Refreshments, parking, and admission are free. For more information,

contact Bob Shimon at 707-884-4126 or [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org).

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

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

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

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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.

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## **East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2012**

**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>Jul</b>	<b>11</b>	Auction
<b>Jul</b>	<b>22</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with John Nackley
<b>Aug</b>	<b>11</b>	Potluck
<b>Aug</b>	<b>26</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Janet Nelson
<b>Sep</b>	<b>12</b>	Preparing trees for the show
<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>	Junipers
<b>Nov</b>	<b>25</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Dennis Hawkins
<b>Dec</b>	<b>12</b>	Holiday Dinner

### **Special Event**

**Oct 13-14** Fall Show, John Thompson, featured artist

# EBBS

## Seller's List of Consignment Items

Seller's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Area Code/Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Directions for using this form:

- List items for sale.
- Enter a minimum bid if there is any.
- Complete and attach a white tag to each consignment item.
- Leave the *80% to owner* column blank. This will be completed by the Treasurer after the auction.

Tag # (Initials-No)	Item (tree type, style, size, pot, tool, etc)	Minimum Bid	80% to owner
- 1			
- 2			
- 3			
- 4			
- 5			
- 6			
- 7			
- 8			
- 9			
- 10			
- 11			
- 12			

Total number of items submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Any items submitted for auction that do not elicit a minimum bid must be picked up immediately after the auction or the owner will forfeit them.

**Plant material will be removed from the sale if it is considered unhealthy or infested with diseases.**

To facilitate descriptions of each of your items by the auctioneer, tape will be provided for you to attach a brief list of attributes.

## Donation of Merchandise

East Bay Bonsai Society  
Lakeside Garden Center  
666 Bellevue Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94611

The East Bay Bonsai Society is a no-profit organization established to benefit the educational, preservation and service programs of the bonsai community. (Tax Exempt # 94-6099646).

Directions for using this form:

- List items donated.
- Estimate the value of each item, if you wish.
- Date the form and print your name and address in the spaces provided below.
- Complete and attach a pink tag to each donated item.

Tag # (Initials-No)	Item (tree type, style, size, pot, tool, etc)	Value
- 1		
- 2		
- 3		
- 4		
- 5		
- 6		
- 7		
- 8		
- 9		
- 10		
- 11		
- 12		

Total number of items submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Area Code/Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Received By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_