



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXX, No. 11

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

November Meeting: November 14, 2012

President's Note

Despite the planning conflicts with the Festival of Lights, I am so satisfied how well our October show came off. The exhibits were clean and looked very elegant. Real congratulations are due to the many who toiled to make this happen. Among the many who contributed to this end, special mention is due to our senior member, Ron Reed. Ron donated several auction items which raised hundreds of dollars for EBBS. His generosity in giving back to our club deserves special recognition, as these donations from Ron literally pushed the event into a financial success. Thank you, Ron. I hope your model of giving will shine for the rest of us who enjoy membership in East Bay, and that EBBS will experience more donations from its memberships in future events.

The elegance of the display reflects Janice Dilbeck's and Inge Woelfel's design skills which created the ambience of beauty. Such presentations don't just happen without their unique artistic vision of the whole picture. Again this year, I heard the same comments echoing from last year: "*Your shohin display is remarkable, and unique as a collection of very fine trees.*" Indeed, they were stunning. Thank you, Inge. The *tokonoma* displays were just outstanding for the quality of fine trees. Though JT's critiques were informative, nothing can diminish the level of artistry displayed in those trees.

None of this would have happened without the set up master, Bob Gould, and all his willful minions who assisted him in set up and clean up. As usual, the dynamic duo of Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm were everywhere, not just in the workshop and demonstration which they respectively chaired and ran, but in set up and clean up. I was really gratified to see rookie members Michael Hylton and Roger Brady so actively involved in helping wherever a hand was needed. They are a welcome addition to our club.

The quiet hard work of Dennis Hawkins running the plant sales and collecting for the auction and donations made accounting a piece of cake.

The frosting on the cake came from Bet Neary's work to have food and refreshments available. It was unfortunate that Bet became so ill she could not participate in the weekend. (Fortunately, she is back to herself now.) But, up stepped her assistant, Pat Cahill, who does the hospitality gig without a misstep. Deservingly so, Pat was rewarded by winning the raffle

of John Thompson's demonstration tree. Well merited, Pat. From all of us who enjoyed these hospitality pleasures, I thank all the food contributors. What a pleasurable time we all had. Thank you all!

A special thanks to Gordon Deeg for lending from the BGLM the Guzman juniper cascade, and the music machines we enjoyed Sunday. Also, grateful acknowledgement is due to Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm who generously provided, at their own expense, several tickets to the Festival of Lights for those who worked until 9:30 PM Saturday at the plant sale. In the end, the show raised enough money to pay for itself, which is our goal.

John N.

Tree Labels from the Show

If you still have your tree labels from the show, you may hang on to them until next year or return them to Janice Dilbeck for safe keeping.

November Meeting

You are cordially invited to the first annual Juniper Jubilee which will be held at the regular EBBS meeting on November 13 at the Lakeside Garden Center. The meeting will focus on the styling and care of Junipers.

Many of us began our journey to become an accomplished bonsai artist with a Juniper which came from a four inch container or, if we were lucky, a larger plant from a gallon can. These humble plants cheerfully endured the indignities and abuse that we inadvertently heaped on them in spite of our good intentions. and some even eventually grew into fine bonsai. As we became more adept at maintaining bonsai, our collections expanded into other species of trees. but there was usually a fine Juniper or two somewhere in the collection. When we arrived at the pinnacle of success as bonsai artists we may well style and maintain a collected Juniper that is truly a masterpiece.

As you can see, Junipers really form the backbone of our bonsai experience, but somehow they are the Roger Dangerfields of the bonsai world since they don't seem to get the recognition that they deserve. EBBS is



determined to rectify the situation by celebrating an annual Juniper Jubilee.

Bob Gould will demonstrate how to style several young Junipers to start them on the way to being fine bonsai. As a special treat he will bring in several of his Junipers which have been under cultivation for many years. These trees are masterpieces and show what the young trees in his demonstration can become in future years. The difference between the starter plants and the nearly finished bonsai is a metamorphosis that would make any self respecting butterfly jealous. The premasterpeice trees that Bob will style in his demonstration will be added to the raffle. Any addition to the raffle that you might like to bring in is most welcome. In keeping with the theme of the evening, your Junipers would be especially welcome for the show and tell table.

After the show and tell table has been discussed, there will be a workshop where you can either work on your own trees or get advice from more experienced members of the club on what the next steps in styling the tree should be. Bring your tree, wire and tools. Unfortunately we cannot allow repotting of your tree. Oh, and by the way, Junipers are especially welcome as trees to be worked on in keeping with the theme of the evening.

Special thanks in advance to Janet Nelson, Roger Brady and Joan Heady for offering to bring refreshments, and to Janet Nelson who will be our barista for the evening

Bet Neary

EBBS owes a big thank you to Bet Neary. She has, several times over the years, secured the main ingredients for the holiday dinner and, also several times, has been in charge of the hospitality lunch at our shows. The latter may look easy, but do you know how many loaves of bread are needed for sandwiches, or how many tomatoes are required for sandwich trimmings? Bet does, and EBBS relies both on her knowledge and her willingness to help.



This year she purchased supplies and organized the food offerings during the show setup on Friday night, but was unable to attend the show on the weekend. Her organization made the hospitality lunches go smoothly in spite of her lack of presence.

Thanks Bet for your help. not only for our show. but for the many times in the past that you have been in charge of the food.

EBBS Web Site

Jim Harbaugh, coach of the San Francisco 49'ers football team has a question that he loves to ask his team. "Who has it better than us?" The answer from the team is "nobody." EBBS can take a page from Jim's book and ask "Who has a better web site than EBBS?" Our answer is "nobody." The Golden State Bonsai Federation has had a competition this year for

the best club web site. The goal is to improve the overall web sites of the member clubs as well as to give recognition to a superior web site. The winner of the best web site was announced at the recent convention and it was EBBS! Congratulations to our web master Jeff Clarkson. We all knew that we had the best web site but it is nice to have recognition from the bonsai community at large. Thanks Jeff for all your hard work. It really makes a difference.

Why Do I Need to Register?

In last month's newsletter we asked folks to post a comment on our website. A few members were put-off when they found out that they had to register at the site before they could post a comment. Jeff offers the following explanation to help you understand why you need to register first.

Just like the ability to lock your home or car doors, it's important to have a level of protection on our website. After all, our website is a place where we can catch up on club related events, enjoy images of fine bonsai, and simply relax. Allowing strangers in would disrupt this.



We have cutting edge security measures in place, one of which is our user registration system. Individuals can register on the site by simply supplying an Email address. When you register on the site you will be allowed to choose a user name and password. The Email address you supply to register is confidential and will not be used for any other purposes. Becoming a member allows you to comment on all the wonderful content that our club posts.

Without registration, we could have unrecognized strangers trying to solicit money or sell viagra in our comments section. With registration, abusers can be identified and locked out of the site.

We hope you are able to register and participate in our comments soon!

Yamato Show

Yamato Bonsai Kai held their annual show at the Buddhist Temple in Union City the week after the EBBS show. The show was very nice and well worth your effort to attend it. There are at least two reasons why you should attend the shows of other local clubs. The biggest reason by far is to show your support of their club show. By attending you are stating that you expected the show to be worth the time and trouble to spend an hour or two there, and further, that you expected to come away from the show a little richer in knowledge about the fine art of bonsai.

We are delighted when members of other clubs come to our shows and the reverse is equally true. Years ago when the local bonsai clubs were more heavily oriented toward Japanese gardeners, it was almost mandatory that you attended other club shows as a sign of respect to the other club and, incidentally, that you donated generously to the donation jar.

Unfortunately, this social aspect of the bonsai movement has been somewhat neglected in the recent past.

If you missed the Yamato show, there are a number of other shows in the bay area starting with one by the Marin club in early November. Details of this show as well as other upcoming shows over the year are presented each month in the Events by Others section of this newsletter.

Each club has unique aspects of their show and it is instructive to reflect on how the Yamato show differed from the EBBS show. Yamato is a sensei club with Johnny Uchida being the sensei. All trees in the show must have the sensei's approval. In contrast, EBBS is not a sensei club which means that there is no approval needed to show a tree. Do you think that this made a difference in the trees shown at the two shows?

Only one tokonoma was shown at the Yamato show. Do you think that the presence of a number of tokonomas add to the show?

There are, of course, no right answers to these questions but only your subjective opinions. These questions and others that might be asked certainly are not directed to who had the best show, a useless exercise that misses the whole meaning of bonsai as an art form, but rather help to you to see more at a show than simply bunch of very nice trees. You can begin to appreciate both the planning and artistry that went into the presentation of that particular clubs' show.

Bonsai Soil

A popular soil for conifer bonsai is an equal mixture of akadama, pumice and lava. The amount of akadama is increased to as much as 50% for deciduous trees. The advantages of akadama have been recently discussed, but what about the pumice and the lava?

First of all just what are lava and pumice? Both are formed in nature's most spectacular event, a volcano. Beneath the earth's crust is a sea of molten rock which contains dissolved gas under high pressure. The molten rock breaks through in a violent and spectacular way in the form of a volcano where ever there is a weak spot in the earth's crust.

In most cases the dissolved gas bubbles out of the erupting goo leaving a spongy mass. This process is sort of like what happens when you suddenly open a freshly shaken can of soda on a hot day. The spongy mass is of course, lava. Pumice is formed somewhat differently. The composition of the molten rock differs a bit from place to place and in some cases is less gooey and more solid. Here the ejected material partially solidifies before the dissolved gas can bubble out. The trapped gas then blows up the ejected material much like popping pop corn. The net result of these two processes is that lava is relatively hard and looks a lot like a sponge with relatively large pores. Pumice is somewhat softer and when looked at with a hand lens has relatively small pores.

All this is great but what does it have to do with bonsai soil? Adding these two materials to our bonsai soil mix has two obvious advantages. First is cost.

Both of these products are about one fifth the cost of akadama and their use significantly reduces the overall cost of the soil. Secondly both of these products are relatively light in weight. Older formulations of bonsai soil called for gravel or decomposed granite as a significant part of the formulation. This meant that large bonsai trees were so heavy due to the weight of the soil that moving them became a major event.

The horticultural advantages of lava and pumice are far less obvious due to lack of valid test results. It is possible to speculate that the relatively hard and rough surface of the lava helps prevent the soil from becoming compacted due to erosion of the akadama and, to a lesser extent, the pumice. The pumice should absorb a little water which should help to keep the soil moist. Sadly there are no data to support either speculation.

One of the attributes of a good bonsai soil is that it remains moist but does not become water logged. Pure akadama retains more water than many bonsai would prefer. Neither pumice nor lava retains much water, so mixing akadama with pumice and lava gives a soil that retains a reasonable amount of water, but does not become waterlogged. Again, sadly, there is no firm data to support this speculation.

Water retention is only a part of the story. The other huge side of the equation is how frequently the tree is watered. Collected junipers can be not only established, but grow well in pure pumice, which dries out relatively quickly. They just get watered a bit more. So what is the bottom line?

The popular soil mix of equal parts lava, akadama and pumice works well. The use of lava and pumice reduces both the cost and weight of the mix. The most important criteria for success with your bonsai is to adjust the frequency of watering of whatever mix you use to your particular conditions so the soil is moist but not waterlogged.

Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

These workshops are a splendid opportunity to learn about how to develop your trees into first class bonsai. In the workshops you work on your own trees under the guidance of an experienced bonsai artist. The classes are open to all and to all experience levels.

The workshops are held at 7:00pm on the fourth Monday of each month in the Landscape Building at Merritt College, which is located off Redwood Road in Oakland. Leading the workshops are two members of EBBS, Bill Castellon and Randall Lee. Interested parties can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-864-0841 for further information. The workshops are a wonderful experience and all you need to take advantage of them is to just go and bring your trees.

Newsletters 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. If you find

that an emailed copy does not meet your requirements you can always switch back to a paper copy.

information at www.marinbonsai.org or Alison Seaman, 415-789-1167.

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.

November 9-10, Ross, Marin Bonsai Club: Fall Show at the Marin Art & Garden Center, Livermore Pavilion, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Friday hours are 5:30-9:30 PM, demonstration by Bob Hilvers, silent auction, raffles, sale. Saturday hours are 10 AM - 4 PM, with several demos, vendor and club sales, show critique and raffles. Admission free. More

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. 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 - 2013

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

Nov	14	Juniper Jubilee – Bob Gould
Nov	25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Dec	12	Holiday Dinner
Jan	9	Deciduous Trees – Jay MacDonald
Jan	27	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – JD Lin
Feb	13	Selecting Pots for Trees – Valerie Monroe
Mar	13	War of the Bonsai Chefs – Tim Kong
Mar	24	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
Apr	10	tbd
Apr	28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson
May	8	tbd
May	26	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Jun	12	tbd
Jun	23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
Jul	10	Auction
Jul	28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Aug		Potluck picnic – details tbd
Aug	25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – JD Lin
Sep	11	tbd
Sep	22	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
Oct	9	No club meeting due to proximity to show
Oct	27	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson
Nov	13	tbd
Nov	24	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Dec	11	Holiday Dinner

Special Event

Oct 12-13 Fall Show
