



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXX, No. 9

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

East Bay Bonsai Society Next Meeting: Sept 12, 2012, 7:30PM

President's Note

Despite it being 10 years since I obtained my first bonsai, I still view the art of bonsai through the eyes for a novice. I only began learning more than the basics about 2 ½ years ago. Consequently, I am aware of the fear and anxiety new artists experience, especially when it comes to placing a tree in a bonsai exhibit. I recall showing my first tree just 2 years ago, and the encouragement and acceptance from the more experienced artists. This year I felt the same pangs of anxiety that I did not have a tree "good enough to show". However, at our August potluck I overheard a discussion among veteran artists describing the transformation that trees undergo when placed on exhibit. They mentioned how strong the tree's subtle beauty shown forth when placed with a backdrop or accompanying other trees and accent plants. Then, I heard the same veteran artists express insecurity about their trees. Being insecure is a common to all levels of artistry, but as an artist we make a statement: "*This is my work in progress. This is where I am striving in bonsai now.*" Then, step back and enjoy the support and acceptance you will get from the veteran artists. You too will be amazed at the magic of transformation in your "humble" tree when it is exhibited in show, appearing more than what you expected. So despite my anxieties, I decided to show some of my trees this year. I know that I will get the encouragement and help that makes me a better artist.



Our September meeting is directed to artists just at my level. Veteran members of the club will discuss and demonstrate the stages of "prepping your tree" for show. There will be a discussion on the final steps for tree and pot presentation. So bring your tree to the meeting if you want some early pointers on helping it to show. Then wait for the show and its magic.

John N.

August Potluck

The August potluck was held at the home of Rick Trumm and Janet Nelson. It was a wonderful event which gave the members the chance to socialize with one another. The weather was pleasantly warm, the collection of bonsai was breath taking and the food was superb. If your view of a pot luck dinner comes from

the times when every mother prepared her favorite version of rubber chicken for the elementary school benefit, were you in for a surprise. The extraordinary meal demonstrated once again that EBBS has some very talented cooks. The best part of the day was the gracious hospitality of the hosts. The club owes Janet and Rick a big thank you for not only hosting the potluck this year but for the many times they have done it in the past.

September Meeting

The September meeting will focus on how to prepare your tree for the upcoming show. The meeting will feature short talks by several EBBS members on specific aspects of tree preparation. Dennis Hawkins will discuss grooming of the tree and will address such matters as what to do about wire on the tree and what to do about dead leaves on the tree. Bob Gould will tell us about how to top dress the tree. Top dressing is important because it makes a major impact on the appearance of the tree. Tom Colby will discuss the problem of stands for the tree and will offer several suggestions for items which could be used as a stand. Polly Gould will present the case for accent plants. A strong point with EBBS is the fine quality of accent plants in our shows. Polly is the creator of many of these so her talk will be most informative. Inge Woefel will conclude with a discussion of the display of shohin trees. These speakers have had long experience in bonsai and so the talks will offer new information to us all.



There will not be a formal workshop scheduled for this meeting but time will be set aside for consultation with other club members on specific questions you might have about displaying your tree, so bring in your problem trees.

There will not be a major item for raffle, but please bring in that extra pot or tree to add to the raffle.

September Refreshments

There was no formal signup for refreshments for the month of September due to the long gap between regular meetings. If you have enjoyed refreshments in the past, now is the time to reciprocate by bringing an

addition to the refreshment table. Also we have no barista for the evening. Could you help with the coffee?

EBBS Show October 13 and 14

The EBBS 2012 show will be held at the Lakeside Garden Center on October 13 and 14. The hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday and 10:00 – 4:30 on Sunday. As usual, set up of the show will be on Friday night, October 12 from 6:00 to 10:00 PM. The headliner of the show this year is John Thompson who is a well known and well regarded local bonsai master. JT has wide ranging interests although bonsai oaks are his true bliss. He will present a demonstration on Sunday afternoon and will lead a workshop on Saturday in which members work on their own trees under the watchful eye of JT. If you are interested in the workshop be sure to sign up at the September meeting.

With our upcoming show on October 13 and 14 looming large, it is time to discuss just what our show is all about. Surprisingly, each club has a different take on the goals of their show. In one local club trees can only be entered in the show upon approval of the instructor. In another club trees can only be entered on approval of the instructor and are also judged by club members. The focus of the show for these clubs is the quality of the trees on display.



EBBS approaches the show somewhat differently. First, the show is a collective and collaborative effort by the club to present the art of bonsai to the public as well as the bonsai community. It is a major project to put on a show and EBBS relies on each and every one of us to help by doing what they can to make the show a success. When the show is over, each of us can have the warm fuzzy feeling that by working together we pulled it off. There will be a call for volunteers for the many tasks and join the fun by responding positively.

Secondly, the show is the place to show what you have learned in the past year. Some of the members have been in bonsai for many years and have acquired beautiful old bonsai whereas others are new to bonsai and their trees are a bit more humble. Apparent competition with fine old trees often leads new members to feel that their trees are not welcome or good enough for the show. These folks miss the point that it is not about the tree but what you have learned in the past year. When examined in detail many of the fine old trees have had little or no work done on them in the past year, implying that the owners have learned little in the past year. In contrast some of the more humble trees represent major strides by their owners in learning the art of bonsai and these trees are the real stars of the show. There is room in the show for everyone regardless of skill level and specially the newcomers who can be the real stars of the show. Do plan to enter at least one tree.

Show sign-up Sheets

Please be sure to sign-up for 1-2 shifts of work at the show. We need help in the kitchen, greeting folks at the front desk, security, and selling trees and raffle tickets. There will be sign-up sheets at our club meeting and at the show.

The services of every member will be needed in the set-up on Friday Oct. 12, at 6:00 p.m. and take down of the show on Sunday Oct. 11 at 4:30 p.m.

Something new this year, we also are collecting a list of the trees that you may put in the show so that we can create tags for the trees prior to the show. A list will be passed around at the September meeting, or you can fill out the form attached to this newsletter and return it to Janice Dilbeck at janicedilbeck@comcast.net. Then when you bring your trees to the show, find your labels and put them with your trees.

Our Editor

Those of you who attended our recent Frolic in the Park got to see some of the trees in the collection styled by Janice Dillbeck and clearly came away with the impression that Janice is an accomplished bonsai artist. Recalling last years show, Janice was the stager of the show. She arranged the trees in a way that each tree complimented its neighbor making the entire display a unified composition. A stager requires skills that many bonsai artists do not have and Janice can do it well. Janice serves as the EBBS secretary and is responsible for producing the minutes of each board meeting which she does in a highly accurate and timely manner.

EBBS owes Janice an enormous thank you for something that you may not be aware of. The story goes like this. For many years Bob Callaham was Mr. Newsletter. He did it all from writing the copy, formatting it and emailing and snail mailing each edition as required by the club members. His background as a professional technical writer was reflected in the high standard he maintained for the newsletter. The standard was so high, in fact, that it is reported that people joined EBBS just so they could receive the newsletter.

Last year Bob indicated that he would like to retire as the newsletter editor to enable him to devote time to some long overdue projects. A diligent search of the membership was made to find a replacement. One was found but was unable to produce the newsletter due to time pressures of his day job. As a result, one month there was no newsletter. The night of our club meeting, only seven members showed up and this included four board members. It was truly a dark and stormy night for EBBS.



A few days later Tom Colby met with Bob Gould to discuss the situation. Two significant things emerged from the conversation. First, there had to be some sort of meeting announcement each month or the club would rapidly dwindle away. Second, the job of newsletter

editor is so big that it is unlikely that a single person could be found to fill the job in the current EBBS membership. The two of them felt that between them perhaps some thing could be worked out. Tom, as three time winner of the Silver Shovel Award from his former employer thought that he could write a few words to introduce the subject of the next meeting. Bob had long experience in printing and mailing hard copies. It was a promising start, but there was a gap.

Both Tom and Bob have love-hate affairs with their computers. They love their computers but their computers hate them. At this point they asked Janice if she could help converting the written words into a format for emailing or for printing and snail mailing and she agreed. This ultimately led to the current production of the newsletter by a committee.

Over the past year there have been some changes. Bob has passed the job of snail mailing hard copies on to John Nackley but remains as an editorial adviser. John has become a regular contributor of articles. Most significantly, Janice has become far more than a formatter of the newsletter. She serves as a true editor, soliciting articles, proof reading, and maintaining the coming events section of the newsletter. Last, but by no means least, she graciously accepts last minute changes and additions to the newsletter. For all this she deserves a big pat on the back. She is a vital part of the newsletter. The big thank you is for when she agreed to help Bob and Tom with producing a newsletter. It is entirely conceivable that if she had declined EBBS would have dwindled to non existence.

Bonsai Styling

Let's imagine that you have just purchased a big bush and you want to make it into a bonsai. The first step is to determine where the front of the future tree will be, you remove any branches that are not needed and finally you very carefully arrange the remaining branches of the tree to positions that best compliment the composition of the tree. All of this is well and good, but have you ever thought about just what is the target of what you are trying to accomplish?

Long ago the Japanese developed a deep love of nature which stems from both Buddhism and Shinto religions. What better way to express this appreciation of nature than to have a potted plant which you could admire at your leisure. How does one do this? What exactly is nature? It is easier to discuss the attributes of nature than it is to define it in a way that is useful in creating a potted plant. Think of a pine tree growing at very high altitude in the Sierras. Clearly this tree represents the forces of nature. These forces should be reflected in our bonsai. An immediate attribute is very old age. We like bonsai that have short fat trunks and trees get these trunks only after many years of growth even though the actual age of our tree may be only less than ten years. A second attribute is survival for many years. Many of our



trees have areas of bare wood. When the bare wood is on a branch it is known as a jin and on the trunk we have a shari. Both of these signify that in spite of setbacks, the tree is still growing. To be a first quality bonsai the new tree must show age and survival.

The Japanese view their bonsai as a symbol of nature, not a scale model of a particular tree. The careful placement of branches on our bonsai creates an idealized tree. In keeping with the value of a symbol, it is more perfect than any tree you will see growing in the wild. Trees in nature lose branches to lightning or fire or insect attack and the results are in random locations of the tree. If the bonsai tree that you create from your bush is successful, the viewer will be reminded of a tree that he has seen in the past even though "real trees" are far less perfect and the symbolic value of your tree has been fulfilled.

In California probably the two most popular trees for bonsai are collected Sierra and California Junipers. Both of these trees grow in harsh environments that lead to very slow growth. Trunks grow an inch in diameter every 75 years or so. Many of the collected trees have trunks which can be four inches or more in diameter, indicating that the tree could be several hundred years old. Many of these trees have jins and sharis when they are collected. Knowing that demonstration of great age and survival is crucial to quality bonsai these trees don't have to look old and look like they have survived adversity---they are in fact old and they are survivors. They still need to be transformed into idealized trees but the hard work has been done for you by nature.



Next time you go to a bonsai show look carefully at each of the trees in the show. Do they show great age? Are they survivors? Are they a good symbol for trees in the wild? When the answer to these questions is yes, admire the skill of the artist who created the tree.

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. If your find that an emailed copy does not meet you 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.

September 22 - 23, 2012 Penryn: Sierra Bonsai Club Show at the Placer Buddhist Church, 3192 Boyington Road is in conjunction with the Annual Placer Buddhist Church Teriyaki Festival & Bazaar. Cultural arts, food, & entertainment may be enjoyed at this free admission event. Hours are Saturday, 11 AM-5 PM and Sunday, 11 AM - 4 PM. For more information, please contact Mark Knittle at (530) 401-2610.

October 6, San Jose, Midori Bonsai Club: 51st Annual Show at Northside Community Center, 488 North 6th Street. Hours 10 AM-5 PM. Display of fine bonsai, bonsai plant sale & bonsai vendors. Headliners: Kathy Shaner and John Thompson dueling Bonsai Demonstration starts at 1 PM, trees will be raffled. Beginners workshop 10 AM - 1 PM create your own bonsai for a small fee. Local

parking is available. For more information see www.midoribonsai.org

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.eastbaybonsai.org>.

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

Meeting Program

Sep 12	Preparing trees for the show
Sep 23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Tom Colby
Oct 10	No club meeting due to proximity to show
Oct 28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Bob Gould
Nov 14	Junipers
Nov 25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai with Dennis Hawkins
Dec 12	Holiday Dinner

Special Event

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

Show Trees

Common Name of Tree _____

Botanical Name _____ Estimated Age _____

Owners Name _____ Initials _____

Common Name of Tree _____

Botanical Name _____ Estimated Age _____

Owners Name _____ Initials _____

Common Name of Tree _____

Botanical Name _____ Estimated Age _____

Owners Name _____ Initials _____

Common Name of Tree _____

Botanical Name _____ Estimated Age _____

Owners Name _____ Initials _____

Common Name of Tree _____

Botanical Name _____ Estimated Age _____

Owners Name _____ Initials _____

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