



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

December Meeting: December 11, 2013

President's Note

As the New Years changes are around the corner, I turn the chair of the Board over to Linda Soliven, who will write this article next month. Michael Hylton, as new vice-president will organize next October's show. Another welcoming trend for the new year is that more new club members have joined the work horses of the club in the monthly routines. This latter fact is exciting, as this participation means more members are taking responsibility for what take place at meetings and sharing in the success of the outcome. As the decades turn round, new growth in participation is a vital to the club's vigor, just as it is in our trees.

As a holiday gift, your 2014 Board pledges to:

1. Promote the art of bonsai with relevant and stimulating educational programs.
2. Stimulate an amicable and rewarding social comradery sufficient to draw like minded artists.
3. Provide venues for members to display their bonsai, and sell their excess materials.

Essential outcomes like these are the reasons for associating as a group, and easily within reach of the hard working group that EBBS enjoys. Contact any of us with your thoughts on how we can better achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

John N.

December Meeting

The December meeting is our traditional holiday celebration with a potluck dinner. Do plan to come and be part of the festive occasion. We begin the festivities at 6:30 pm with appetizers and beverages. Note that we start one hour earlier than usual. Doors open at 6:00 pm. We could use help setting up, and the appetizer-bringing folks should plan to arrive early.

The club will furnish ham and turkey as well as beverages. The rest is provided by attendees as follows:

Last name A-F Dessert
Last name G-L Appetizer
Last name M-R Salad
Last Name S-Z Side dish

Be sure to bring your own plate and eating utensils and decorative place mat to make a festive setting for the meal. Also bring appropriate serving utensils if required for the dish you are bringing. In past years the dinners have been memorable due to offerings of the many fine cooks in the club.

People are also encouraged to bring bonsai trees decorated for the season which greatly adds to the ambiance of the evening.



The special highlight of the evening will be a slide show of the club activities of the past year, focusing on our recent show. The presentation will be coordinated by our very own Michael Hylton and he is asking for your help in making the presentation a success. If you have digital images you would like to have included in the show, send them via email to Michael at mhylton@rocketmail.com.

January Meeting

The term bonsai comes from two Japanese words meaning tree in a pot. This means that to do bonsai it all begins with you having to know how to put your tree in a pot and how to keep it growing well in a pot. The January meeting aims to tell you how to exactly do this properly with a presentation on potting by Gordon Deeg.

Bonsai trees need to be correctly potted to ensure good growth of the tree. Success with your tree requires a judicious choice of pot and soil. Also an important part of the process is securing the tree into the pot. Gordon has presented many potting demonstrations to other clubs in the area, all of which have been very well received. This program is particularly valuable to the newer members of the club, but there is always something for each of us to learn.

November Meeting

The November meeting was a celebration of our Juniper Jubilee and featured a talk by Rick Trumm. He brought examples of five different species of Juniper that you might see in local collections. Three were collected from California sites, the Sierra Juniper, California Juniper and Utah Juniper. Two were examples of Junipers originally found in Japan, shimpaku and procumbens. Rick presented a handout with much detailed information on the care and maintenance of Junipers and the handout is attached to this newsletter for your future reference.

A recurrent theme in the presentation was that the overriding consideration in growing Junipers to perfection is to maximize the health of the tree. Rapid draining soil is absolutely crucial to these trees.

Styling of Junipers begins with the choice of dead wood. If dead wood is not already apparent on the tree, it can be exposed by careful stripping of bark from dead sections of the tree, taking care to leave the live vein. The foliage then frames or compliments the dead wood.

Rick's presentation provided us with a complete detailed guide on how to grow Junipers. Thanks Rick for a very informative evening. You left us with no excuses for a poorly grown Juniper.

EBBS particularly welcomed members of Diablo Bonsai club who visited the meeting. These folks are always welcome at our meetings and have been specially invited to our holiday potluck dinner in December.

Pomegranates

Civilization as we know it began with the cultivation of wheat in the fertile crescent of the Middle East and very shortly thereafter three fruits appeared on the menu, pomegranates, grapes and figs. Iran is thought to be the original home of the pomegranate but it quickly spread to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and as far to the east as China. The driving force for the spread of pomegranates was that they thrived in hot climates (there is a horticultural hint here) and produced abundant crops of delicious fruit.

We know from several sources that the spread of pomegranates from Iran occurred a very long time ago. The archeological record indicates that pomegranates were enjoyed in Jericho, one of the oldest cities known and dates to about the year 9500 BCE.

Pomegranates also figured in early mythology. The Greek myth about Demeter and Persephone was first written down in about the sixth or seventh century BCE and was probably transmitted orally centuries earlier. The crucial event in the story occurs when Persephone eats six pomegranate seeds in spite of being warned not to eat. As is the usual case in Greek mythology, bad things then happen to her and everybody else as well. Speaking of bad things happening, there is some thought among scholars who study the ancient texts that in the Garden of Eden, Eve is more likely to have eaten a pomegranate rather than an apple.

History aside, pomegranates make really cool bonsai. One of the most attractive features is the abundant crop of attractive flowers produced in the late spring and occasionally on into the summer. Most of the trees that we grow for bonsai have a growth cycle that starts with a flush of growth in the spring, a period of consolidation of the new growth in the summer and setting flowers in the fall. Winter is spent with the tree not growing but planning what it will do next. Our busy time with bonsai usually is in winter when we wire and repot and in the spring when we cope with the new growth.



Pomegranates have a different cycle. They are deciduous so nothing apparently happens in winter. They leaf out in spring, but delay new growth until hot weather of summer comes. They should be grown in full sun all year and particularly in the summer. The summer is a period of rapid and vigorous growth and, surprisingly, is the best time for repotting in contrast with most bonsai trees. Our busy time with pomegranates is in the summer. Fall is spent developing flowers in preparation for fruit.

Heavy pruning can be done in the winter as well as wiring, although this must be done with care since the wood is quite brittle. The new growth is in the form of very long shoots which need to be cut back in late spring

or early summer to retain the shape of the tree. Also during summer the tree will readily form new growths along branches which can be useful in developing and maintaining the shape of the tree. Pomegranates may also form suckers from the base of the trunk, and these need to be removed as they form.

So what is the down side of pomegranates? First of all, the fruit is very large and can appear to be out of scale with the rest of the bonsai tree unless the tree is quite large. There are dwarf forms of pomegranates that have much smaller flowers and fruit and these should be sought out if you want a smallish sized bonsai. Secondly, bare wood is susceptible to rot. Open cuts should be carefully sealed to prevent this.

In spite of these drawbacks pomegranates have a lot going for them as bonsai and if you do not have one in your collection, they are well worth your consideration.

Low Tech

We are certainly living in a high tech age and we are dazzled and delighted with the many new offerings that technology has recently bestowed on us such as the smart tv, smartphone, minicomputers and the many social web sites. We wait in eager anticipation of the many more wonderful things that we know will soon come. Wonderful as these things are, we should not lose track of the fact that low tech still has something to recommend it besides quaint nostalgia for the olden days. Take for example, what could be more low tech than the possibility of having a paper copy of a magazine delivered several times a year to your mailbox by a postman (remember him?). But wait--how about a magazine packed with information about bonsai?

There are many timely cultural tips as well as stories about the movers and shakers in the bonsai world. The magazine is filled with pictures in beautiful color of trees in recent shows which give you good information about how to style (or not how to style) your tree. The magazine also features general articles on topics relating to bonsai. The best part of all this is the low price.

If you really want to expand your knowledge of the bonsai world and all it contains, and having a subscription to a magazine like this appeals to you, and it really should, send your check for twenty five bucks to: Golden Statements, P.O. Box 348, Monterey, CA, 93942. If you are more technically inclined you can subscribe at: www.gsbf-bonsai.org/golden-statements/subscribe-to-gs/. If you are already a subscriber to Golden Statements, you know just how good the magazine is. Be sure to renew when your subscription runs out.

Dues

It is that time of the year that you need to be thinking about paying your annual club dues which are \$30 for single memberships and \$40 for couples. Membership includes a subscription to the really keen Tree Shrinker newsletter by email. If you prefer a hard

copy of the newsletter by snail mail there is an extra \$5 charge in dues to cover the cost of printing and mailing. The dues are the major source of income for the club and are mainly used to fund our biggest expenses of the year which are the costs of renting the meeting room as well as the monthly programs. Our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to take your check for dues at the holiday dinner or at an upcoming meeting. Dues can also be mailed to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

Roster Update

Please note that Gaylen Roberts e-mail address has been changed to gaylenr@gmail.com.

Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

These workshops are a splendid opportunity to learn about how to develop your trees into first class bonsai that you would be proud of. In these 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 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month when the college is in session. The meetings are in the Landscape Building at Merritt College, which is located in the Oakland hills off Redwood Road. Leading the workshops are two members of EBBS, Bill Castelon and Randall Lee. Interested parties can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-864-0841 for further information as well as holiday class scheduling. The workshops are a wonderful experience and all you need to take advantage of them is to just go and bring your trees.

Bonsai Calendar

- Water - Adjust automatic watering systems for winter, but ensure plants receive sufficient water
- Food - Never feed a dormant tree unless fertilizer is low in nitrogen
- Repotting – May be done with plants that are dormant
- Black pines – Remove old needles, reduce new growth, wire
- Improve design of trees: eliminate unwanted branches and twigs

Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Calendar for more details on seasonal care.

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.

December 7, Fresno, Fresno Bonsai Society: 5th Annual Bonsai Yard Sale, 736 West Browning Avenue. Hours: 9 AM – 2 PM. Pre-bonsai, bonsai, pots, accent plants, stones, books and all things bonsai. Anyone is welcome to buy or sell. Contact Ralph Schroeder for more information at alsch@sbcglobal.net.

January 18 – 19, Oakland, Bay Island Bonsai: 15th anniversary show "Born in the USA!", Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Hours: 10AM – 4PM Auction Saturday, at 1 PM, preview Noon auction. Only trees started in the US displayed. Bonsai demonstration by Boon on Sunday at 1PM. Guided tours of the exhibit Saturday and Sunday. Vendor, club, and educational bonsai material for sale. Entry to exhibit is free, donations accepted. For more information: (510) 919-5042 or www.bayislandbonsai.com

January 31-February 2, Santa Nella, California Shohin Seminar at the Hotel Mission de Oro, Santa Nella

California. Friday (Jan 31): Registration, Demonstrations, and Exhibit and Vendor areas Set Up. Everyone is invited to share their treasured Shohin Bonsai in the Exhibit. Saturday (Feb 1): Exhibit Opens for Viewing, Vendor Sales Critiques, Workshops, Bazaar & Benefit Drawing Sunday (Feb 2): Exhibit Open 10:30-Noon. Critique and Demonstration, Business Meeting Registration Forms available on the website on November 1st 2013. For general information email: calshohin@yahoo.com, website: <http://www.calshohin.org/> or phone: Randi Keppeler 650-598-0127

Articles or Services for Sale (or give-away)

Wanted to Buy (or for free)

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 2013-2014

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

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

Meeting Program

2013

Dec 11 Holiday Dinner

2014

Jan 8 Repotting – Gordon Deeg
Jan 26 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
Feb 12 Oaks – John Thompson
Mar 12 Pines – Bill Castellon
Mar 23 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Apr 9 TBD – Jay McDonald
Apr 27 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – J D Lin
May 14 Penjing – Tim Kong
May 25 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
June 11 Frolic in the Garden
June 22 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson

East Bay Bonsai Society “Juniper Jubilee” 11/13/2013

By Rick Trumm

I. Types of Junipers – familiar types of junipers include:

- Non-Native** Shimpaku - first collected in Japan 1850's; now facing extinction from over-collecting (best for bonsai: small needles)
 a) Kishu – larger, round needles
 b) Itoigawa – smaller flat needles w/ shorter internodes
Procumbens – low-growing, juvenile foliage, native Japan
Prostrata – both juvenile and scale foliage
San Jose – both juvenile and scale foliage
Chinese juniper – both juvenile and scale foliage, NE Asia
- Native** California – California coastal range and high desert, 500-4000'
Sierra – California to SE Washington, 7000-9000" elevation
Utah – Western states, needles in rows of three, branches can be heavy and sag, 3000-9000' elevation
Rocky Mountain – Western N. America, Canada, New Mexico, Short needles, opposite decussate pattern, branches can be heavy and sag, 1500-7500' elevation
Western – Western US, opposite decussate pattern or whorls of three, branches can be heavy and sag, 2000-8500' elevation

II. How Junipers Grow

- Moisture & Foliage** Moisture absorption through needles. When trees are in juvenile foliage, water droplets form between the needle and the new shoot. Juvenile foliage is accompanied by new root growth. Thick bark also retains moisture. Some reasons trees may live thousands of years.
- Roots** California Junipers can form roots from drooping branches touching the ground. One tree has been measured a mile from the original tree by low branch rooting over time and time again.
- Soil** (aerobic, Anaerobic) Need fast-draining soil, no organics (pumice, lava, acadama). Reason: organics slow water too much causing lack of oxygen. Anaerobic bacteria thrive causing ammonia which kills roots. Hot days will cook roots if in organic soil.
- Drainage** Need fast-drainage to force oxygen to promote aerobic bacteria (oxygen-loving). Shallow pot vs. deep pot.
- Sun Stressed Trees** Full sun when established. Native trees are more temperamental to grow when stressed. Filtered sun. Moisture more often on foliage.
- Tips of Foliage Auxins** Foliage tips are the most important, especially on natives. Tips contain hormone called auxins. Auxins activate biological properties which cause shoots to elongate and interact with roots to grow.
- Appical Dominance** When the auxins are activated and a shoot is elongating, this is called appical dominance. Appical dominance inhibits the growth of lateral buds. Once appical dominance slows, then side branches will start to grow from auxins. These branches should not be cut until long after the main shoot has been cut. Other-

wise, if all tips are cut, no more auxins, no more growth, tree will decline and could die. No ability to fight off pests and diseases. Pinching should only be done to slow strong areas, a few months before exhibit, only sparingly to slow areas outside outline. Do not cut tips. Cut long shoots back to new strong shoots.

III. Styling and Maintenance

- Trim and wire** Trim and to create a frame around dead wood.
- Clean needles** Spring is the time when old needles will start to yellow. This is the time to clean out old and dull-colored needles. Cut off long, leggy branches.
- Growing Season** During the growing season, work on tree, trim and wire. This allows the tree to recover faster from the stress. Remove down-hangers. Remove crotch-growers (only on strong branches). Cut to style.
- Large Bends** Large branch bends should be done in winter when cambium is hardened. Cambium is less likely to separate from wood when it is hardened.
- Trim for Shape** Large branches on bottom. Bend down to estimate position before wiring. Progress upwards. Branches above should extend less than the length of the lower branches. Trim to less length progressively upward. The crown of a mature tree should be shaped like an umbrella; the top of a young tree has a pointy apex.
- Bend branches down for light. Wire branches from bottom up. Position so foliage and branches have their own growing space. Majority of tips up. Trim down-hangers.

IV. Exposing Deadwood

- Evaluating Junipers** Deadwood makes good bonsai, especially on junipers. Nebari is not as important on junipers.
- Lifelines** The natural lifeline should be exposed. Deadwood is exposed in this process.
- Finding** Make sure the tree is well anchored.
- Deadwood** Remove all thick, loose bark. Bark not needed when propagating. After loose bark removed, remove non-loose bark to find edge of life lines. Over time, this is a maintenance task.
- Bulge Tap** Look for longitudinal bulges. With a tool, tap deadwood close to bark. Tap perpendicular line across bark, noting sound change from hard to soft noise. Exacto knife can do this too.
- Strip Bark** Strip bark working towards veins. Old bark close to wood hardens to the wood. Strip with wood-working tools. Don't gouge deadwood. Strip gradually, look for colors: brown, grange, red, white.
- Live White** White is live. Cut paste.
- New wood** Exposing new wood. Reducing live vein. Use grafting knife, exacto knife to refine life lines. Look for longitudinal depressions. Strip strands of fresh, green wood

- Jins to Sharis** Sharis can be made from the continuation of a jin and run down the tree.
- Old Wood** As wood ages, soft wood can be removed. Wet surface, several days of rain.
- Soft Wood** Use wire brush to remove soft wood. (Debate over wire brush).

V. Care of Junipers

- Water** Water foliage as well as soil daily, more often in hot weather.
- Fertilizer** Fish Emulsion, Fertilizer cakes, Slow release ozmocote, rhododendron fertilizer, acid-loving.
- Temperature** Temps above 90 degrees: cool pot edges of soil. Shade cloth for weak trees. Use Anti-stress before hot winds, and before freezes.
- Soil** Clean top layer of soil. Spring: clean old yellow needles, long weak branches.
- Cleaning Deadwood** Algae & Vinegar – clean deadwood and bark once/year. Use 75% vinegar, protect soil live parts; Bio dish soap & water, toothbrush, cover soil.
- Preserve Dead Wood** Cover soil, caution needles. Brush Lime Sulfur full strength on new wood that has cured for 1 year, 50% diluted with water on previously-treated wood. Tint with India ink (mix with water first, then mix tinted water with lime sulfur). Also consider PC hardener or other wood preservatives.
- Re-potting** Every 1-3 years depending on root growth and tree health
- Rotate** Rotate trees 90 degrees every month to get sun on all sides and balance growth

VI. **Summary and Conclusion** – Questions, resources (Merritt College, Mammoth Bazaar, Murikami Nursery, etc.)