



# The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXI, No. 1

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

## East Bay Bonsai Society

**January Meeting:** January 9, 2013 @ 7:30 p.m.

### President's Note

Happy New Year to EBBS Members! Your Board has planned a very exciting schedule for the new year, which I think you will anticipate as much as I do. A group of very excellent presenters will cover topics which span the needs and interest of members at all skill levels. As EBBS has been awarded an educational grant by the Golden State Bonsai Federation, we are able to bring internationally famous Michael Hagedorn for our April 10 meeting. Later, for our October show, Peter Tea has agreed to highlight our program in the workshop, show tree critique, and demonstration.

Peter is returning from a Japanese apprenticeship in bonsai art. For those who have followed his blog (<http://peterteabonsai.wordpress.com/>), it is clear that Peter is on his way to bonsai stardom. These are just the highlights of what looks like a year of very good programs.

As a club, we come together as bonsai enthusiasts to promote each other's skills and knowledge. This goal is based on our common interest in bonsai. Remember this social aspect of membership at each month's meeting by actively engaging newer members and sharing your experience. Each member should consider him/herself a *greeter* for our club, making visitors and new members welcome. There is so much to look towards in 2013, including new members.

John N.

### January Meeting

The January meeting will feature a presentation on the care and styling of deciduous trees by Jay MacDonald. One of the trees he will work on is a high quality variegated juniper, which will be raffled at the end of the presentation.

This is a great time for a program on deciduous trees not only because this is the right time to be working on these trees from a horticultural standpoint, but because without leaves you can more easily see the branch structure of the tree, which is an advantage for the observers of the demonstration.

Jay is a fine bonsai artist from Marin who specializes in



large trees. Many of his trees are featured in the shows of several bay area clubs. Jay has presented several programs to EBBS in the past and all have been excellent. He is a high energy guy and his presentations are informative and entertaining.

Thanks in advance to Michael Hylton, Bet Neary and Polly Gould for providing refreshments for the meeting. No one signed up for being barista for the evening. Perhaps some good soul would be willing to heat some water and bring out the necessaries for tea and coffee.

### February Meeting

When we show a tree we present a composition which includes the tree, the pot and the stand. All too often we focus all our attention on the tree at the expense of the pot and the stand. Val Monroe will present a program on how to choose a pot which will complement your composition. Her program is interactive and members get to work on matching pots with trees. The program was given a couple of years ago at EBBS and was one of the best programs of the year. Don't miss it! It is not only a lot of fun but you will come away with a better idea of how to choose a pot for your tree.

### Holiday Party

Our holiday party was a great success and was enjoyed by all that attended. The food for the potluck dinner was extraordinary as usual. Of special note was the dessert table which had more than something for every taste and every waistline. The high point of the evening was a program of images from our show taken by Rick Trumm and Janet Nelson and was arranged into a slide show presentation by Michael Hylton. Thanks to Rick, Janet and Michael for their efforts. Thanks also to our hardworking president John Nackley who secured the ham and turkey entrees which were the clubs' contribution to the festivities. Last but not least, thanks to all the members who contributed goodies for the dinner. You made the evening a special treat.

### Cut Paste

So you went to the plant sale and found a big bush. As you looked at the bush with a lustful gleam in your eye you were sure that you had identified a potential bonsai masterpiece and so you bought it. When you got it home and carefully studied your treasure you found

that the bush truly had the potential of being a pretty good bonsai. However, it did have one little problem. It had a big old fat branch in the wrong place and no amount of wiring, bending, pushing or pulling could correct this flaw. In a perfect world you could simply cut it off and the trunk would heal over so well that no one would suspect that there had been a branch there. As you know the world is not perfect.

When you cut a branch off of a tree you put in place a process that may not quite turn out the way you wanted unless you handle it with some care. The role of the bark on trees is to retain moisture in the tree and to protect the tree from outside adversaries. In nature the protective bark is frequently penetrated in a number of ways from broken branches to woodpeckers digging a hole in the tree to hide a delectable acorn.



The resulting exposed inner wood is subject to attacks from many directions ranging from insects to bacterial infections to rot. The tree protects itself from these problems by attempting to heal over the raw wood with bark-like tissue which is called a callus. The tissues just under the bark at the edges of the cut slowly form a thickened lump. This is the callus and it may expand to finally totally cover the raw wood. The function of the callus is to protect the raw wood as well or perhaps even better than bark.

The interior of the trunk is wood that no longer is growing. The heavy lifting of nutrient and water transport as well as growth of the trunk is carried out at the outer edge of the trunk. The wood of the interior of the trunk is kept moist because it is covered by the outer edge of the trunk and bark. When you cut a branch off your bonsai tree you have exposed the inner trunk to the air and the wood surface there can quickly dry out. This is important because the callus which could heal the cut grows much more slowly if at all over dry wood. Sealing the wood after the cut keeps the area moist which ensures the growth of the callus. Here is where use of cut paste as a sealant to protect the moist wood is important.

There are at least three types of cut paste available. The most common is a Japanese formulation of clay with sufficient goo to make a very stiff paste. It is colored dark gray and generally blends well with the bark of most trees. It sticks to the wood and forms a water tight seal which keeps the wood moist. It is best handled with moist hands to prevent it sticking to you.

The second type of cut paste is sold by vendors at some local shows and is a Japanese formulation intended sealing grafts. It is juicier and stickier than the first type and is easier to work with, but has the disadvantage of being bright orange which makes it pretty obvious on your tree.

The last material used as a sealant is not really a cut paste. People have had success with Elmer's white

glue. The glue dries into a fairly transparent coating which can allow light into the growing callus. This is thought to increase the rate of growth of the callus although there are no clear data to support this hypothesis. The glue is not particularly attractive and has the disadvantage that it is degraded with time by water which means that it may have to be replaced before the cut is fully healed.

So how should you manage removing that big old fat ugly branch? Callus tissue is usually quite thick which means that the cut where the branch was removed should be somewhat concave so the resulting thick callus will be nearly level with the rest of the trunk. Any ragged edges of the cut should be trimmed with a sharp knife to provide a clean edge for the start of the growth of the callus. The cut is then sealed with cut paste. The newly exposed wood dries out quickly so the cut paste has to be applied within a few minutes of the cut to be most effective.

In many cases careful management of scars left by large branch removal will be completely sealed by callus growth. The callus will not bark over to totally obscure the fact that a branch was removed. However, it will leave the cut with an inconspicuous imperfection which adds to the character of the tree.

### **Electronic Age**

EBBS is working very hard to entice new and younger members to the club. Toward this end, a presence in the world of electronic communications is being established. Hopefully you are aware of our award winning web site masterminded by Jeff Clarkson. If you haven't yet looked at it please do so at [www.eastbaybonsai.org](http://www.eastbaybonsai.org). You are in for a treat. You must sign in to provide comments on the site, and the reason is for security. A sad fact of the times we live in is that there are folks out there who would delight in placing explicit advertisements for Viagra or dancing girls on our web site and signing in prevents this from occurring.

In other areas, Michael Hylton is in the process of giving EBBS presence on both Facebook and Twitter. For those on these sites, please

"Like" <http://www.facebook.com/EastBayBonsaiSociety>

Follow <http://twitter.com/eastbaybonsai>

A fair question is whether all this is really necessary and the answer to the question is most definitely yes because it is here that the new young members are most likely to be found. As a smart man once said, if you want to shoot a tiger, you have to go to a country where tigers live. EBBS owes a big thank you to both Jeff and Michael for their efforts. They are dragging EBBS into the twenty first century, albeit, with a bit of kicking and screaming.

## **Dues**

It is that time of the year when you should be paying your annual club dues which are \$30 for single memberships and \$40 for couples. Membership includes a subscription to our outstanding newsletter, The Tree Shrinker, by email. If you prefer to receive a hard copy of The Tree Shrinker by snail mail there is an additional charge of \$5 to cover the cost of postage. Our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to receive your check for dues at the next meeting. Dues can also be mailed to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

## **Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College**

Bonsai workshops are held at Merritt College and are available to all EBBS members. These workshops are an opportunity to work on your own trees under the guidance of fine teachers. Clearly they are the best deal on town for increasing your knowledge about the art of bonsai. Leading the workshops are two distinguished artists who are also members of EBBS, Bill Castelon and Randall Lee. The meetings are every fourth Monday except when the college is not in session. Meetings start at 7:00 pm at the Landscape Horticulture building. The college is located off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills. Questions? Contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-864-0841.

## **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 – 17, 2013: Fresno: “Bonsai in Winter Silhouette Displayed with Contemporary Art” - Thirteen displays by the Fresno City College Art Department and the Fresno Bonsai Society will be presented at the Art Space Gallery located on the Fresno City College Campus, 1101 East University Drive. The Gallery will be open from 10 AM until 4 PM, Monday and Tuesday and 10 AM until 7 PM Wednesday and Thursday, with reception from 5 – 8 PM on Thursday. Admission is free. Contact Steve DaSilva at [treekutter@hotmail.com](mailto:treekutter@hotmail.com) for details.

January 19-20: Oakland: Bay Island Bonsai: Annual Bonsai Exhibit. Oakland Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Auction on Saturday, with preview at Noon and auction at 1 PM. Bonsai demonstration by Boon on Sunday at 1PM. Guided tours of the exhibit both Saturday and Sunday. Vendor sales, Club sales, Educational bonsai material for sale. Hours: 10AM – 4PM Saturday and Sunday. Entry to exhibit is free, donations accepted. For more information: (510) 919-5042 or [www.bayislandbonsai.com](http://www.bayislandbonsai.com)

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

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

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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. 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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<b>East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2013</b>
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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.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.html>

**Meeting Program**

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

**Special Event**

**Oct 12-13** Fall Show

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