



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXI, No. 6

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

East Bay Bonsai Society

June Meeting:

June 12, 2013 @ 7:30 p.m.

President's Note

As President, I have been naturally interested in how other bonsai clubs operate and what brings them success. Some function more as a thriving community than others. Our membership is very diverse, both in demographic composition and in artistic skill level, yet East Bay survives without a sensei's directions. As a democratic organization each member is at liberty to participate at many different levels. Each member owns their niche in this club, which can change as the member grows. The member's receiving and giving within the club distinguishes EBBS as healthy, as this contributes to our collective growth as well as to the reward we receive as members.

John N.

June meeting

The June meeting will feature a presentation by Jane Wirth. Jane has many talents, some of which include performing as a singer and playing the harp and banjo, making pottery and doing Chinese brush painting. Very important for our presentation in June, she is a master gardener and a bonsai enthusiast. She will speak on organic bonsai gardening which will address many of the issues related to fertilizers, pest and disease control. She will also point us to websites with loads of information on how to maintain healthy trees in ways that are environmentally friendly.

With her background as a master gardener she will provide a new look at how we grow our bonsai. The usual programs by the club focus narrowly on the current view of the art of bonsai, and master gardeners can provide a broader outlook that is refreshing. It should be an interesting evening.

Thanks in advance to Gaylen Roberts, Dennis Hawkins and Karen Lum-Nackley for offering to bring refreshments.

Field Trip

On Saturday, June 22, the club will sponsor a field trip to Lone Pine Gardens in Sebastopol. Lone Pine sells a wide variety of bonsai material, ranging from inexpensive starter plants to finished bonsai. Lone Pine is also a prime source of accent plants. EBBS has organized field trips to Lone Pine for the last several years. All those that participated have said that they had a good time and most have returned home with

significant additions to their bonsai collection. The Prices have been particularly gracious hosts in the past and allow a 10% discount on all purchases by club members. The schedule is to meet there at 10:30 for time to browse the nursery. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the nursery grounds.



Lone Pine Gardens are located at 6450 Lone Pine Road in Sebastopol. There is an excellent web site, www.lonepinegardens.com, which gives detailed driving directions to the nursery as well as a visual tour of the facility. Travel north on highway 101 to the Cotati/Sebastopol exit. Turn left toward Sebastopol onto the old Gravenstein Highway and proceed about nine miles to Lone Pine Road on the left. Turn on to Lone Pine Road and the Nursery is located on the right. If lost, the nursery phone number is 707-823-5024.

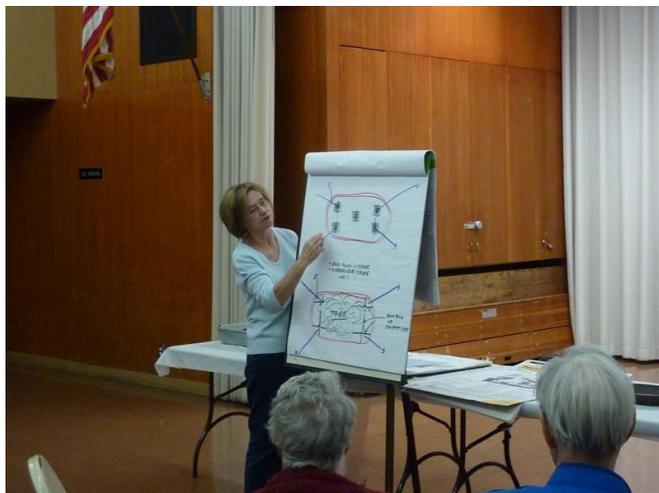
If you need a ride, sign-up at the June meeting. Also let us know if you are willing to be a car-pool driver. If you can't make the meeting, contact Janice Dilbeck by June 12 (925-458-3845, janicedilbeck@comcast.net). We are currently planning to have two carpool areas: 51st and Broadway in Oakland and in the parking lot of Target on Contra Costa Blvd in Pleasant Hill. You will need to be at your designated area by 9:00am.

May meeting

The May meeting featured a day in the life of a bonsai tree. It started with the idea that you had a bonsai that needed attention by repotting and wiring. It assumed that you had removed the tree from the pot and had removed some of the old soil and had trimmed the roots. Janice Dilbeck presented a short program on how to anchor the tree into the new pot. Linda Soliven discussed soil compositions that you could use to complete the repotting, and Bob Gould told you how to wire the repotted plant. Each of these speakers had extensive handouts to accompany their talks. Finally

Tom Colby talked briefly about tools needed to accomplish it all.

Janice showed how to make clips shaped like a double-T to hold the screen securely over the drainage holes of the pot. These clips are far more effective than a simple u-shaped clip in holding the screen flat against the bottom of the pot. She emphasized that developing a systematic procedure for tying the wires together not



only makes the job simpler but also does a better job of securing the tree. The ends of the screen clips as well as the tie-down wires below the pot should point toward the front and back of the pot in order to make them less obvious when displaying the tree. Consult her handout for an elaborate step by step guide to wiring the tree into the pot.

Linda discussed soils appropriate for bonsai. Fundamental requirements for bonsai soils are both good drainage and aeration. These can be met with a variety of specific soil compositions. An additional requirement is the ability of the soil to retain moisture. It is important to know the requirements of specific tree species and the climate where the tree is grown. Linda offered a useful catalogue of Japanese soil



components. Particularly helpful was a selection of local sources for soil ingredients. Samples of soil components were provided to illustrate examples of

desirable features of components for making bonsai soil. Her handout contains much valuable information on the subject of soils.

Bob reviewed a discourse by Marco Invernizzi on wiring which was originally presented to EBBS several years ago as part of a demonstration by Marco. Bob made this particularly noteworthy by demonstrating the concepts while applying wire to a branch. He emphasized that the copper wire should be one third of the size of the branch and should be wound in forty five degree spirals. A single piece of wire should be used to position two branches. To bend a branch down, the first loop of wire should be on the top of the branch whereas to bend the branch up, the first loop of wire should be under the branch. After his presentation Bob worked with interested people to wire cuttings he had supplied for practice.



Marco's 16 Commandments of Bonsai Wiring:

1. One piece of wire for 2 branches.
2. Branches should be almost the same thickness. Not too far apart and not too close.
3. Wire should be 1/3 the thickness of the branch (or about 1/2 in case of aluminum being used and the branch is long and leggy).
4. Distance between all the spirals must be the same.
5. Spirals must be at a 45 degree angle to the branch.
6. Wire must never lose touch with the branch.
7. When wiring, the branch should be at 45 degrees to the body.
8. When you want to bend a branch down the wire should start on top of the intended branch.
9. When you want to lift a branch the wire should start below the intended branch.
10. When you want to bend a branch to the front the wire should start in the back.
11. When you want to bend a branch to the back the wire should start in the front.

12. When the diameter of the branch changes, you need to change the size of the wire. 4 times around the branch will lock the wire.
13. Never take the wire all the way to the end of the branch so you don't risk damaging the bud.
14. Always hold the wire from the end or the point where your hands aren't inside the tree.
15. Always start wiring from the thickest wire to the thinnest.
16. Left hand has a firming grip on the branch as the right hand wraps wire (right handed). Left hand moves out on the branch as the right hand continues to wire.

Tom emphasized that the basic tool kit for working on bonsai consists of four essential tools. Wire cutters and pliers are used for wiring. Bonsai wire cutters have blunt ends which can cut wire close to branches without scarring the branch. Pliers have somewhat tapered blades that allow working easily in crowded foliage. Pliers are almost a requirement when working with larger diameter wire. Diagonal cutters allow removal of branches close to the trunk of your tree, leaving a slight divot in the trunk. Scar tissue will fill in the divot to create a level spot on the trunk where the branch was removed. Diagonal cutters are also used to shorten larger branches. Finally, one needs a pair of scissors for trimming small branches and leaves when the tree is defoliated. These four tools will satisfy nearly all of your needs for working on your bonsai. A fifth tool, a root cutter is useful and might be added to your tool box after you have acquired the basic four.

Bonsai tools vary in cost from somewhat expensive to very expensive with the top end tools costing as much as ten times more than the cheapest tools. High end tools are used by professionals in Japan who work eight to ten hours every day of the week, and sometimes under extreme pressure. These folks need tools that work reliably, are sharp and stay sharp.

Tom proposed three questions that you might ask before purchasing an expensive tool. Will a cheaper tool serve my purpose as well? Can I take advantage of the superior quality of the expensive tool? Will having an expensive tool make me a better bonsai artist? Each of us probably has somewhat different answers to these questions. Most of us work on our trees only occasionally and the cheaper tools work just fine. They might need to be sharpened a little more frequently than the expensive tools, but not so much that it is a bother.

Do not lose track of the fact that tools are only a means to the creation of a bonsai masterpiece. The essential feature in the process is your vision of what the tree should look like, and having an expensive tool is definitely not part of the process and has little to do with the creation of the masterpiece that you have envisioned. A better investment is to work on your bonsai vision by attending workshops rather than acquiring an expensive tool kit.

EBBS Member at KAZARI Competition

The Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture held the fourth KAZARI: Bonsai Display Competition. The competition focused on creating a harmonious display of hanging scroll, bonsai tree, and an adjacent plant or stone to display in a tokonoma alcove.

At our April meeting, Michael Hagadorn critiqued Joe Byrd's display which was subsequently entered in the competition. Although an old time bonsai artist, Joe is one of our newer club members. Joe appreciated the opportunity to have Mike help him with his entry, and went on to win third place in the completion!

Pictured below is his display at the competition. Joe wants to encourage all our members to participate in this event.



Auction

The July meeting is our annual auction. It is very important because it is one of the two major sources of income needed to fund the major expenses of the club which are room rent and speaker costs. The other source of income is the annual dues paid by the membership. Participation by everyone in the auction, not only by bringing in plants for auction but also by bidding generously, is vital to the success of the club. Donation of items for auction is especially appreciated because all the proceeds of the sale price go to the club instead of the usual eighty per cent which goes to the seller.

This year the board is trying something new for the auction. The minimum bid on any item will be \$10, so you should only consider entering items that you think are at least worth a bid of this amount. It is hoped that this will accomplish several goals.

The overall quality of the offerings will be improved, each item will receive the good price it deserves and the evening will be shorter.

Ultimately this also should make our auction more of a destination for outside bidders from other clubs.

Items with a potential value of less than \$10 are not only welcome but highly encouraged at the plant sale at our show in October, because here the prospective customers include not only bonsai people but also outsiders that are amazed and delighted with a small starter plant in a pot.



Dreamers: An Open Letter to Hopefuls of Japanese Bonsai Study”, which gives details of her experiences. Her comments mirror those of other people who have more recently gone to Japan as apprentices. Below are excerpts from her article.

“If you do not speak Japanese now, go to night school for at least a year. Without being able to converse easily with your sensei, much information is lost. It is not fair to your hosts and much more difficult all around.

You are going over as an apprentice to a businessman. This is not going to be a hobbyist that has time to spend catering to your wants. Be prepared to work long, hard hours in any weather. You will work most of the winter with fingers that are stiff and numb from the cold with no time or way to warm them. Many times you will be working in wet clothes, summer and winter.

Do you take time off from work when you are sick? You work here, everyone does.

Do you now complain at work about something you think is unfair, or dislike putting in extra time? You can't complain here—and it is all their time. No pay, no overtime bonuses.

You must be able to lift many heavy objects, and lift them carefully. Two people lift in the states are carried by one here, unless it's a very expensive pot. (Some pots cost upwards of \$9,000.) You might work on a tree that cost as much as your house.

Road trips to clients are a real mixed bag. The pressure is great. There is a time limit at clients' homes and you must work fast and accurately. This is not a time to make mistakes. Many times the working conditions are cramped or difficult at best.

At the workshop you find that there are no instructions for the first hour or two. You must be a self-starter and know instinctively what needs to be done, or what they want done.

Much information is gathered by observation and common sense. By observation I do not mean sitting around watching your teacher work. This is not a Convention demonstration or workshop. “

Having read Kathy's comments one would wonder why one would knowingly expose themselves to such a daunting experience. Her concluding remarks provide an elegant answer to this.

“If you think you can take it and lots more and do it for a year (less would not be fair to your hosts and will leave you with big gaps in your bonsai care information) and your life currently exists for bonsai, there is no better place to be! I would do it again knowing now even what was ahead.”

Roster Update

Please change Ron Hillenbrand's e-mail address to: ronhillenbrand@comcast.net .

If you have any updates to the roster during the year, let your editor know and it will be announced in the newsletter.

Our Editor

Most of us know Janice Dilbeck in her day job as the crusading editor of the Tree Shrinker, but did you know that she is an artist as well? Her handouts for the May meeting on how to tie down you tree were not only clear but elegant as well. It is not often that one gets such beautifully done handouts. But please Janice, don't quit your day job. Our newsletter needs you.

Our Webmaster

Jeff Clarkson is responsible for creating our web site and has elected to step down due to employment conflicts. We owe Jeff a very big thank you for a fine job well done. Jeff's efforts on the EBBS web site were rewarded by being voted as the best club web site by GSBF last year. He leaves very big shoes to be filled and the club is fortunate to have equally talented Michael Hylton as his successor. Thanks to both Jeff and Michael for providing the club with an outstanding presence in the web world.

Japanese Apprenticeship

In the early 1990's Kathy Shaner went to Japan to serve a five year apprenticeship with a Japanese master. At the time this was noteworthy because she was the first American to do so. Since Kathy's stay in Japan there has been a slow trickle of other Americans going to Japan to study bonsai with Japanese masters. While most of us will not go to Japan for study, it is of interest to learn about the life of an apprentice there. We may have visions of being able to frolic among extraordinary bonsai, but Kathy presents a view of apprenticeship that is sobering. Kathy wrote an article for the April-May issue of Golden Statements in 1993 while she was in Japan entitled “*For Apprenticeship*”

Merritt College

Workshops at Merritt College are held on the fourth Monday of the month only when the college is in session. The college will be closed for the summer until August so there will be no workshops until then.

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.

June 9: Monterey: Monterey Bonsai Club: 50th Annual Exhibition at the Monterey Buddhist Temple, 1150 Noche Buena Street, Seaside. Show hours are 11 AM – 4 PM with demonstration at 1:30 PM by Katsumi Kinoshita. Sales area will include bonsai pots and plants. For more information contact:

Dianne Woods at vinca27@comcast.net or Atsuko Kinoshita (831) 375-4290 or atsukokinoshi@aol.com

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
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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>

Also find EBBS on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/EastBayBonsaiSociety> and on Twitter at

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

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

Meeting Program

Jun	12	Organic Bonsai 101 – Jane Wirth
Jun	23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
Jul	10	Auction
Jul	28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Aug	17	Potluck picnic – hosted by Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm
Aug	25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – JD Lin
Sep	11	Preparing Trees for Show
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	Juniper Jubilee
Nov	24	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Dec	11	Holiday Dinner

Special Event

Jun 22 Field Trip

Oct 12-13 Fall Show – Peter Tea