



# The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXII, No. 2

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

<http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>



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## East Bay Bonsai Society

**February Meeting:** February 12, 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

### **President's Note**

Greetings!

Looking over our membership roster, I counted about 23 members that have joined East Bay Bonsai Society in the last two years. Many can be categorized as beginners and a few as advanced in their pursuit of the growing and art of bonsai. I guesstimate the remaining 57 or so members have bonsai experience anywhere from 10 to 40+ years.

Such a range of bonsai experience brings forth the impact of different needs and interests. Under the thrust of Michael Hylton, a new member who had joined the Board in 2013, and a "tuned in and listening" Board of Directors, a Retreat was hosted by John and Karen Nackley last June to share perspectives from new and longtime members. Ideas and discussion produced a brainstorm of ideas that could support new members. For the past 7 months discussion has continued at Board meetings and adhoc work meetings to sort out a program in which both new members and more experienced members might be meaningfully engaged. Standby to learn more about this proposal!

A portion of each club meeting is devoted to Show and Tell about a tree or bonsai related item. You get 3 free raffle tickets if you bring something. I am proposing that we add Engage to the event of Show and Tell! Show/Tell/Engage time need not be limited to sharing really great trees. Since the presentation this month is on deciduous trees, consider bringing a deciduous tree for Show/Tell/Engage that may not be to its ultimate stage. Do you have a deciduous tree that you have a burning question about? Would you like to get suggestions for where to take the tree next? We may be limited by time as to the extent of Show/Tell/Engage. But, don't be shy. Let's give this a try!

At each club meeting, you are encouraged upon arrival to put on your provided name badge and remember to take it off before you leave. During break time, from time to time, seek out a member with whom you are not familiar.

Speaking of BREAKTIME, there are those "always there" members who consistently do the set up for the refreshments, bring the goodies and clean up. If each

member takes responsibility for one meeting to provide some part of hospitality for the evening, break time can be enjoyed by everyone. This would entail coming a half hour earlier (7PM). There will always be helping hands. But someone has to be in charge for the evening. A sign-up sheet is circulated each club meeting. Please take your turn. It requires getting out and putting away the items for coffee/tea, and filling and plugging in the pot for hot water.

Looking forward to seeing each of you at our next meeting!

Linda

### **February Meeting**

There has been a change of programs for the February meeting. Rather than a presentation on oaks by John Thompson there will be a program on deciduous trees by Jay MacDonald. Jay's program was scheduled later this year, but it was decided that late winter is a better time for a demonstration on deciduous trees. For those of you looking forward to a presentation by JT, rest assured that he will do a program on oaks for EBBS later this year.



Jay is a fine artist from Marin who specializes in large trees, many of which are deciduous. Many of his

trees are featured in the shows of several bay area clubs.

This is a great time to be working on deciduous trees from a horticultural stand point. The trees are still without leaves so you can more easily see the branch structure of the tree which is an advantage both for the person working on the tree as well as for observers of the demonstration. It is possible that Jay will bring trees in full flower because of the unusually warm and dry weather this winter. If he does, the presentation will be spectacular.

Jay has presented several programs to EBBS in the past and all have been excellent. He is a high energy guy and his demonstrations are both entertaining and informative. This will be a demonstration that should not be missed.

Thanks in advance to Pat Cahill, Linda Soliven and Joe Byrd for their contributions to the refreshment table.

### **January Meeting**

The January meeting featured a program by Gordon Deeg on repotting. Gordon introduced his presentation with a brief outline of his life in bonsai. He started in the 1960's and his interest has continued steadily since, sometimes as a club member and sometimes on his own. He is now a part time apprentice to Matsuo Mitsuya of Japan who is one of the premier bonsai artists currently practicing today. Gordon goes to Japan each year to help during the season for repotting. Many of you know Gordon as the recent director of the bonsai collection here at Lake Merritt.



Gordon started his demonstration by distributing a handout which is attached to this newsletter. It gives in great detail how to go about repotting your bonsai tree. As an unusual and fun way of getting the attention of the audience, he enumerated what you should NOT do when you are repotting your trees. This approach pointed out mistakes that you should avoid and emphasized what you SHOULD do.

Among the important items to keep in mind are proper choices of pot, soil and position of the tree in the pot. The tree must be securely fastened in the pot to

prevent loss of delicate roots. Wire is used to secure the tree. Gordon showed examples of how wire was applied to the pot depending on the number of drain holes. A point that is perhaps less obvious is to not grab the tree by the trunk while repotting it. This is particularly true for pines where the bark on the trunk is so important to the appearance of the tree, but it can be easily brushed off with rough handling.

After repotting, the tree should be thoroughly watered and treated gently for a month or so with a bit of shade and minimal fertilizer until the roots have had a chance to recover. Right after repotting is a poor time to extensively wire your tree because of the additional stress to the tree.

Gordon then demonstrated all of the points he had raised by repotting a pine tree. He removed the tree from the pot, eliminated old potting soil, and trimmed the roots. He cleaned the pot, placed the tree in the pot and fastened the tree into the pot securely with wire. Finally soil was added, being careful not to leave air pockets by working the soil into the roots with a chop stick.



Gordon commented that repotting introduces a conflict to the tree. It wants to grow vigorously, but you want to maintain the styling of the tree. You balance this by selecting a pot that allows it to grow well, but also makes the tree look the best that it can. The overriding factor in all bonsai is the health of the tree. A beautifully styled tree that is sick is at best a sick tree. A major step in the direction of good health is the proper repotting of the tree, and the demonstration showed us how to do it.

### **March Meeting**

The March meeting will be devoted to the care and feeding of pines by our very own Bill Castellon who is one of the artists in residence at the Merritt College workshops. Bill has long had an interest in pines and grows them superbly. Pines are one of the mainstays of bonsai. Their care is not difficult, but is somewhat different from many of the other trees that we grow. Bill will tell us in detail how to make them flourish.

## **Demonstrations**

You have just read in the fearless EBBS newsletter that the next program will be a demonstration on Peruvian Kumquats (a fictitious name used to protect the innocent. Kumquats are real plants but they do not grow naturally in Peru.). You have no current interest in Peruvian Kumquats, so should you go? The answer is most definitely yes for three reasons.

Most of us started in bonsai with a Juniper tree or perhaps a maple tree. These trees satisfied our wants for bonsai and we found that we could grow them well. Not surprisingly, the next tree that we acquired was another one of the same species. Why diddle with success? There is a world of trees out there that make wonderful bonsai. Many are not seen as often as they should be. Real examples of seldom seen trees are the Korean lilac, rosemary and camellias. Over time you will find that your taste in bonsai will change. Although you may not be currently interested in Peruvian Kumquats, someday they may suddenly strike your fancy and the information you gained in the demonstration will come in handy. The demonstration on the mythical Peruvian Kumquat may introduce you to a tree worthy of your collection beyond that which you currently grow.

Perhaps you have been attracted to Peruvian Kumquats in the past and found that you could not grow them well. Because you were not successful, you have turned your back on these trees. If the demonstration on the Peruvian Kumquat is well presented, it will reveal abundant cultural information about how to grow, style and maintain the trees. Here in the demonstration you may learn how to correct your growing conditions so you can enjoy these hypothetical trees. Azaleas are an example of trees that might fall into this category for you. Many people grow them to perfection but, on the other hand, some people struggle to grow them well due, in part, because their cultural demands are quite different from most of the commonly grown bonsai trees.

There is a final reason for going to a demonstration on a species of tree that you are not interested in and probably won't be interested in the future. You should have at least a speaking acquaintance with the whole world of bonsai if you are to consider yourself an accomplished bonsai artist. Noted bonsai artists have broad interests, and although they may have favorite trees they most like to work with, they are proficient in the care and styling of most species of trees that are grown as bonsai. You should be able to appreciate a finely grown specimen of Peruvian Kumquat you might see in a show even if you don't particularly want to have one yourself.

So there you have three good reasons for going to demonstrations. They acquaint you with species of trees that make fine bonsai, they tell you how to make them flourish and they expand your knowledge of the bonsai world. See you there!

## **Dues**

If you have not yet paid your annual club dues best do so soon because time is running out. Rush your check for \$30 for a single membership or \$40 for couples to our treasurer, Pat Cahill. 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 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. The club 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 rooms as well as the monthly programs. Our treasurer will be delighted to receive your check at the upcoming meeting or by mail to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

## **New Members and Roster Updates**

We have three new members in the club, Roberto Hernandez, Dennis Baum, and Nick Goncalves. Please introduce yourselves to them at our next club meeting. Their phone and e-mail addresses are:

|                                   |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Roberto Hernandez:                | 510-837-0109, |
| roberto.ayala.hernandez@gmail.com |               |
| Dennis Baum:                      | 510-306-0152, |
| <u>spurt_radio@yahoo.com</u>      |               |
| Nick Goncalves:                   | 510-499-7455, |
| Juiceboxkids@gmail.com            |               |

Also, please update Kay Guzman's phone number in the roster. The correct number is (323) 254-0985.

## **Mammoth Fundraiser**

The excitement is building for the Mammoth Fundraiser which will be held on Saturday, February 22 and Sunday, February 23, at the Lake Merritt Garden Center. The Fundraiser is one of the main sources of income for the bonsai garden.

Saturday features an auction of everything from very affordable starter trees to finished bonsai projected to sell for many hundreds to a few thousand dollars. Exceptional pots, stands and suiseki are also usually offered. There will be something for every taste and budget, and there is nothing better to get the adrenaline flowing than a good auction. Preview of the auction items starts at 12:00 pm and the auction starts at 1:00 pm. Auction items may be seen in advance on the garden web site ([www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt)).

Sunday will feature sales by a number of vendors starting at 9:00 am. Consignment sales start at 10:00. If you have bonsai related items that you would like to sell with the understanding that a percentage of the selling price goes to the garden, bring them to the sales area before 10:00 am. Further details of the sale can be obtained from Linda Soliven or Bob Gould. The Sunday sale is a must attend event. There you will see all you could want in the way of trees in all stages of development as well as supplies and tools. Not only is Sunday a great opportunity to sell, buy, admire and wishfully think about all you could possibly desire, but

there is more. Sunday from 11:30 am to 3:00 pm will feature demonstrations by Kathy Shaner and her students.

As you might imagine, it takes a lot of work to produce the Fundraiser and, of course, it is all voluntary help that makes it happen. If you are willing to help, contact Bob Gould. Working at the fundraiser is a lot of fun and you get to meet some great people. Best of all your help is much appreciated. See you there!

### **Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College**

These workshops are a splendid opportunity to learn how to develop your trees into first class bonsai and how to make them grow at their very best. 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. Best of all, they are free. There is, however, a small fee for parking.

The workshops are held at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month when the college is in session. The meetings are held in the Landscape Building at Merritt College, which is located in the Oakland hills off Redwood Road. Leading the workshops are two fine bonsai artists who are also 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 do is to go and bring your tree.

### **Bonsai Calendar**

- Watering – Reduce watering, but ensure plants receive sufficient water
- Fertilizing – Feed with 0-10-10.
- Repotting – Repot deciduous trees and junipers
- Styling/Pruning – Do heavier pruning. Cut large limbs on pines.
- Graft – All species

*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.

February 22-23, 2014, Oakland, GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: Mammoth Fundraiser – 2014 at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Saturday (Feb 22): Auction of fabulous bonsai

1PM-4PM with preview at 12 Noon. Sunday (Feb 23): Mammoth Plant Sale and a huge gathering of Vendors, 9AM-4PM. Round Robin Demonstrations noon to 3PM by Collection Curator, Kathy Shaner and Team. For general information email: [www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com), website: [www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.htm](http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.htm) or phone: Randi Keppeler 650-598-0127

February 22 & 23, 2014, San Marino, Bonsai-A-Thon XVIII at The Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; annual fundraiser for the GSBF Collection at The Huntington Botanical Gardens. Admission to the event is free with Bonsai-A-Thon "early bird" registration between 8 AM – 9:30 AM. Event hours are 8 AM – 4:30 PM both days. Sunday morning: bring-your-own-tree workshop led by Ted Matson – limit 10 people (for details contact Ted, [tmatson@earthlink.net](mailto:tmatson@earthlink.net)). Pancake breakfast, tour hosted by Jim Folsom (Director of the Garden), demonstrations, lunch, bonsai exhibits, large sales area, raffle, and auction. For more information, contact Marge Blasingame, (626) 579-0420 [margeblasingame@att.net](mailto:margeblasingame@att.net).

February 25th, 2014, Sacramento, American Bonsai Association Sacramento (ABAS): Bjorn Bjorholm will be featured speaker at ABAS' monthly meeting. Bjorn has been studying under contemporary Japanese master Keiichi Fujikawa in Osaka, Japan since 2008 and he is also the co-founder and co-instructor of the Fujikawa International School of Bonsai. ABAS welcomes the public to attend this event free of charge on Tues, Feb 25th, at 7 PM at Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Bjorn's visit is made possible in part through a GSBF grant.

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

Bonsai benches for sale:

9 ft by 21 inches by 40 inches high - \$75

5 1/4 ft by 27 inches by 50 inches high - \$40

Contact Chuck Gallagher at 925-937-9936 for details.

### **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.

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| <b>East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2014</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

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

**Meeting Program**

|             |           |  |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| <b>Feb</b>  | <b>12</b> | Deciduous trees – Jay McDonald               |
| <b>Mar</b>  | <b>12</b> | Pines – Bill Castellon                       |
| <b>Mar</b>  | <b>23</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins |
| <b>Apr</b>  | <b>9</b>  | Oaks – John Thompson                         |
| <b>Apr</b>  | <b>27</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – J D Lin        |
| <b>May</b>  | <b>14</b> | Penjing – Tim Kong                           |
| <b>May</b>  | <b>25</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley   |
| <b>June</b> | <b>11</b> | Frolic in the Garden                         |
| <b>June</b> | <b>22</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson   |
| <b>July</b> | <b>9</b>  | Auction                                      |
| <b>July</b> | <b>27</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby      |
| <b>Aug</b>  |           | Picnic                                       |
| <b>Aug</b>  | <b>24</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould      |
| <b>Sept</b> | <b>10</b> | Show Prep                                    |
| <b>Sept</b> | <b>28</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins |
| <b>Oct</b>  |           | No club meeting due to proximity to show     |
| <b>Oct</b>  | <b>26</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – J D Lin        |
| <b>Nov</b>  | <b>12</b> | Juniper Jubilee                              |
| <b>Nov</b>  | <b>23</b> | BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley   |
| <b>Dec</b>  | <b>10</b> | Holiday Dinner                               |

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## Things to do in Repotting

East Bay Bonsai Society, January 9, 2014 Presented by Gordon Deeg

- Repot all of your trees on a regular schedule
- Use good soil when repotting
- Secure the tree in the pot
- Use chopsticks, bamboo, corks, and string, along with wire to make sure the tree is secure
- Use an appropriate pot with your bonsai
- Clean out the old dead soil around the base of the tree
- Clean out wood, roots and crappy soil under the trunk
- Sharpen some chopsticks to use in cleaning out the old soil
- Have extra chopsticks
- Do use a gentle soak or spray to clean out old soil
- When cleaning out the roots, clean radial outward from the trunk
- All the roots of the nebari should radiate out from the trunk like the spokes on a wheel
- Make sure your pot is level when putting the bonsai in it
- Look at the bonsai from all angles to make sure the tree is positioned properly
- Soil additives are a good think, such as charcoal, bone meal and mycorrhizas
- After positioning the tree in the pot and adding all your soil, the soil level should be level with the edge of the pot
- Use a tapper to secure the top of the soil
- After repotting, water gently to not disturb the soil
- Put the newly repotted tree in a protected spot in your yard
- Using Anti-Stress 2000 or Cloud Cover will help reduce the water loss through the foliage and reduce the stress of the tree
- Fertilize after four to six weeks if the tree is showing signs of new growth
- Remember, repotting normally does not kill a bonsai, the aftercare does